

**The Incorporation of Sustainable Development within Land Use
Development Planning: Examining Constraint and Facilitation
in the English Planning System**

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**Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Sheffield
Department of Town and Regional Planning
March 2002**

Summary of Thesis

This thesis explores the extent to which the arrangements of the English land use planning system have influenced attempts to incorporate the concerns of sustainable development. This is achieved through an examination of both the procedural and communicative aspects of development plan preparation. The research inquiry is defined by an assumption that the existing statutory requirements and institutional form of development planning may both constrain and facilitate the requisite incorporation.

Sustainable development is a very broad notion with both consensual and conflictual aspects, characteristics which render an examination of its assimilation into any sector of governance problematic. The tendency within the planning literature has been to concentrate upon specific criteria relating to sustainable resource management or implementational capacity. This thesis argues that such an approach is inappropriate at this early stage in the notion's assimilation. The essential issue in terms of management and implementation is the extent to which environmental resources are re-evaluated under the auspices of sustainable development – without such a foundational underpinning research in the field is open to become an arbitrary activity.

With a line of inquiry founded upon 'sustainable re-evaluation' the research reveals, through survey and case study work, that present arrangements within formal development planning are predominantly constrictive. The planning system has undoubtedly come to include reference to sustainable development within its decision making but in a detached, partial and criteria driven manner. The thesis concludes that the crucial need to sustainably re-evaluate our environment, as the integral root of policy and proposal formulation, is being deflected or partitioned off from playing a foundational mediatory role. More tellingly, communicative and procedural activity is smothering the motivation of actors and stakeholders to take on the necessary re-evaluation. In theory opportunities do exist but current practices, agendas and vested interests deny them their potential.

Acknowledgements

In the completion of this thesis I am indebted to a great many people. First and foremost I must thank all of those who, through their interest and enthusiasm, voluntarily gave their time in offering the necessary information, insights and opinions upon which the content of this study is founded. The list is a long one covering a diverse group of individuals from local authority officers and councillors, to business men and women, to community representatives and members of the public. Without the willing and unconditional input from these people this research could simply not have been completed. Very special thanks must go to Dave Winder for his constant assistance and encouragement.

For financial support I am indebted to both the ESRC, for their grant award, and the Department of Town and Regional Planning at Sheffield University. For both academic guidance and personal support, my supervisors Heather Campbell and Bob Marshall have stood as second to none and have offered a level commitment and assistance far in excess of my expectations. I would also like to acknowledge the support and friendship of colleagues at Sheffield in particular, Hugh Ellis, Andy Wild, Liz Sharp, Ed Hobson and Stuart Glossop.

Finally, I am very grateful for the support and patience displayed by my family. I am especially indebted to Julie and Marilyn Heather.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Peter Taylor (written in your lasting shadow) and Trinity (written in your new and shining light).

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THE INCORPORATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN LAND USE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: EXAMINING CONSTRAINT AND FACILITATION IN THE ENGLISH PLANNING SYSTEM

Introduction

This thesis examines the extent to which the arrangements of the English land use planning system have influenced attempts to incorporate the concerns of sustainable development within the formal preparation of its development plans. The driving supposition is that contemporary practice within this sector of governance has the potential to both facilitate and constrain such an incorporation. The research goal is to identify, locate and subsequently critically appraise these facets through a detailed examination of documentary and empirical evidence pertaining to development plans and their preparation. In a broader sense, such an examination has a meaningful role and position in a wider debate over the influence of public policy in regulating the interface between the physical environment and human development, or perhaps even human existence.

It is contemporary concern with how environmental resources have been, are, and will be exploited, as a product of this human-environment relationship, which supplies the macro context for the thesis. A concern which the notion of sustainable development addresses by tackling the tripartite puzzle which has driven so much of the environmentally orientated debate in international, national and local circles of governance during the closing decades of the 20th century and into the 21st. This questioning may be structured as follows:

1. How can contemporary socio-economic development be sustained without irreversibly compromising essential elements of the natural and built environment (considered as resources) for present and future use?

This overarching puzzle being supported and circumscribed with reference to the following pair of more specific composite questions:

2. What are these essential resources and what is an appropriate level of utilisation (incorporating issues of who decides and how it is decided)? and,

3. How is such an appropriate level to be achieved (incorporating the issue of which tools and processes can be employed)?

There is of course a significant body of literature suggesting that this line of questioning is fundamentally untenable [Ward, 1974; Bookchin, 1989; Skolimowski, 1992; Pepper, 1993]. That our current mode of development, founded upon economic growth and the motors of modernisation, inherently compromises the physical environment and must consequently be thoroughly reworked. In the context of this study however, such a meta-economic critique is

not the issue - even though it may ultimately support it. The aim, as introduced above, is to examine the influence of the institutional dispositions of the English land-use planning system in its own sectorally limited response to such questions.

From conflict to consensus and back again

Since the term *sustainable development* broke into political parlance, via the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development's report '*Our Common Future*', it has taken governmental rhetoric by storm. The now famous definition of

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” [WCED, 1987, p.43]

is notional rather than conceptual with characteristics akin to those of a philosophical assertion [Dryzek, 1997]. At this abstract level it has an unassailable ethical quality, but in the arena of public policy its conceptual translation is far from so assured and undisputed. As a meta-narrative, it has in many ways removed the sting from the raising of environmental concerns in political discussion [Hajer, 1995]. Prior to the publication of the WCED report, arguments on the subject of *environmental sustainability* were consistently considered at odds with economic growth and development, and subsequently often peripheralised. By demonstrating, through an impressive linguistic turn, that such a conflictual relationship was notionally unnecessary, '*Our Common Future*' precipitated one of the most significant transformations to political discourse in the latter half of the twentieth century. The 1992 Rio *Earth Summit* provided a politically and widely acceptable blueprint for sustainable development at the international level in the shape of Agenda 21. Governments across the globe signed up to this vision of 'our common future' and to greater or lesser degrees attempted to map it into their own national policy programs.

This consensual notion of sustainable development appears to offer the opportunity to construct conceptual frameworks in which conflicting economic, social and environmental demands can be harmoniously united with reference to the notion's key tenets of environment, futurity, equity and participation [Elkin *et al.*, 1991; Jacobs, 1999]. Concepts abound, some more radical than others, and, from these, principles, policies and delivery proposals all fan out to illustrate an overwhelming depth of difference. One conceptualisation, however, stands out as dominant in liberal western societies and is referred to as ecological modernisation [Hajer, 1995; Dryzek, 1997; Blowers, 2000]. Unsurprisingly this places great store in the ability of existing institutional arrangements to manage socio-environmental demands and embrace new technology in a manner which redirects economic growth onto a sustainable trajectory. The means by which humanity can get from 'here' to 'there', however,

are considerably less certain. It is into this 'implementation gap' that land use planning has been specifically and formally requested to step.

Context

The rhetoric behind this request has been strong. The status of the development plan was elevated in parallel with this new responsibility and crucially stands as a central instrument in central government's strategy to promote sustainable development. The present New Labour administration appears especially keen to enhance the reconciliation of environmental, social and economic claims over land use rights [Griffiths, 1998].

The level of sectoral responsibility placed upon land-use planning, and specifically the instrument of the development plan is thus of some gravity. If the development planning function, in its current state, proves an unsuitable or only partially effective medium for promoting sustainable development, then this must be revealed sooner rather than later in the face of continuing cumulative degradation of the biosphere. It is too early to attempt such an assessment in terms of implementation on the ground, however, there is clearly a need to review strategies and approaches together with the presence of any constraining or facilitating factors. Additionally, any research which highlights the potential of alternative practice or structural revision, at this immature stage, can only be of benefit to policy-makers and practitioners alike.

The challenge for development planning is to take on the contested level of the new agenda which swirls beneath appealing but vague conceptualisations. A challenge which goes straight to the heart of its established procedural and communicative arrangements and is unavoidable if progress is to be made:

“Sooner or later – usually sooner – the deceptively simple concept of ‘living within our environmental means’ is transformed into a set of problematic questions about social priorities and values” [Owens, 1997, p.298]

It is in this procedural and communicative field of activity that constraint and facilitation are open to the empirical research gaze.

The research approach and format

There can be little doubt that the explicit introduction of sustainable development into the tightly defined sector of land use planning opens up a rich seam of inquiry for the willing researcher. The sheer dimensions and contested meanings of the notion of sustainable development (akin to the likes of democracy and liberty), however, present a major methodological hurdle. One requires an independent variable which is not undermined by the

vagaries of conceptual difference or policy translation. The nature and validity of such a variable in the shape of the *re-evaluation of environmental resources under the auspices of sustainable development* is established from the outset and carried through the text as a permanent point of reference. The nature of the re-evaluation, assuming it lays claim to addressing ideas of environment, futurity, equity and participation, is not of immediate importance. The research process is consequently not allowed to drift into a relativistic mire of contested concepts, principles, policies and delivery mechanisms. These upper level entities are, of course, to be identified and appraised, as they are revealed, while the inquiry as a whole is securely anchored to the notion's ontological bedrock.

Even though reference to 'sustainable re-evaluation' offers the researcher some genuine cognitive security it is still a relatively amorphous entity. In an effort to make it more tangible, for both analysis and empirical study, it is helpful to consider it as a product of techniques for 'sustainable resource management' (SRM) and the 'implementational capacity' (IC) to ensure that such techniques are appropriately instilled and installed. Crudely SRM pertains to the tenets of long term environmental protection and IC to the tenets of inter- and intra-generational equity and inclusive participation. These elements can be further supplemented through reference to what might usefully be termed 'application principles'. These cover a broad array of approaches from the proactive to the reactive through which 'sustainable re-evaluation' may be translated into concepts, policies and proposals.

These analytical devices are introduced in detail and subsequently used throughout the thesis to facilitate cohesion and coherence which, for purposes of clarity and access, is presented in three parts as follows.

Sustainable development and land use planning

The first instalment of the three is essentially a conventional literature-based review of the subject matter. Presented in three chapters, the intention is to offer the reader a detailed understanding of sustainable development, its evolving entanglement and expression within the formal arrangements of land use development planning in England, and a commentary on the theoretical repercussions of attempting to incorporate sustainable development within this sector of direct interventionist governance.

Much has been written about sustainable development in the past fifteen years since its political inception. Most accounts, however, step into its multi-dimensional field of influence with terms of reference which are blurred or tend towards ambiguity. The roots of arguments advocating 'sustainable' concept 'A' or 'sustainable' policy 'B' have often, either, been cut away and lost sometime previously, or, buried out of sight. The format of Chapter 1 explicitly endeavours to nullify such an accusation by being very clear as to the initial premises on which this study is founded, i.e. that the sustainable re-evaluation of environmental resources

(abbreviated to 'SR' in the text) is the substantive root of all legitimate translations. From here the notion is progressively mapped out to illustrate a diverse array of principles, concepts, policies and delivery mechanisms – all growing and fed from this crucial commonality.

This foundational understanding and unification is then used to outline the institutional context, in the form of the English land use planning system, to be explored as it has responded to the incorporation of sustainable development foisted upon it (Chapter 2). Historically there are many links between the 'new' environmental agenda and that which has always played an important role in decision making over the right to develop land – traditionally expressed through the mantra of 'protect and enhance'. The present situation is as much a function of this past as it is of contemporary design. As the planning system has not changed (*to date*) in many ways since its conception, so this chapter is important in not only reviewing the prepared ground on which sustainable development is required to find purchase, but also in detailing its administrative framework against which modifications in procedure or communicative activity will need to be related. As well as supplying the essential land use planning context of this study, Chapter 2 should be viewed as the first research phase. It presents a non-empirical desk-based assessment of the origins of environmental evaluation and its subsequent conflation with the agenda of sustainable development.

There is a significant body of literature which has sought to describe and explain, often with at least normative overtones, the emerging relationship between land use planning and sustainable development. Chapter 3 draws upon this to frame the areas of empirical inquiry, specifically in terms of the system's role in facilitating or constraining a move towards a sustainable trajectory of development. This paves the way for Part 2 to formulate the research questions in detail and progress them through methodology, methods and findings.

Methodology

Studies and surveys exploring the links between land use planning and sustainable development have, to date, tended towards one of two positions. Some have sought to examine the output of plan preparation through extensive survey work offering assessment against sets of criteria which exist some way downstream from the foundations of SR. Others have focused more intensively on particular aspects of development planning in particular locations and thus have, to a degree, methodologically side-stepped the need to find a means of empirically assessing the notion in the round.

The issues of institutional facilitation and constraint raised in this thesis require a research methodology which permits an assessment of SR at both the procedural and communicative

interfaces of development plan preparation. To this end, Chapter 4 presents two streams of inquiry which feed into generating a meaningful and valid response to the central question of : *how does the contemporary English planning system, through the process of development plan preparation, influence (in terms of facilitation and/or constraint) the incorporation of policies and proposals to promote sustainable development?*

From this, two phases of requisite empirical work emerge. The first one is an extensive baseline survey of local planning authorities (LPAs) to ascertain the state of procedural response to the sustainable development agenda and, the second, is an intensive case study focusing upon pertinent communicative activity during the formal stages of development plan preparation. The findings from these separate, but mutually supportive, pieces of work are presented in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively with a subsequent summary of the evidence in Chapter 7.

Analysis, reflection and conclusions

The final part of the study relates the empirical findings laid out in Part II to the theory, guidance and direction, pertaining to the general and sectoral incorporation of a notion of sustainable development, presented in Part I. This is achieved over two chapters, the first of which (Chapter 8) discursively draws together, through critical analysis and reflection, the survey and case study output. The former focusing upon the procedural facets of plan preparation, with specific regard to guiding principles/concepts and re-evaluative mechanisms, and the latter upon the essential communicative elements of SR and what this is seen to amount to in the plan preparation process.

The last chapter (Chapter 9) concludes the thesis through summarising the state of facilitation and constraint as a final response to the research's central question. It subsequently reflects upon what this tells us about implementational capacity and sustainable resource management in land use planning. An outline of the most apposite possibilities for future progress is then presented together with a consideration of the potential influence of significant changes to the planning system presently being proposed by the Government. The thesis closes with a reflection on the research process, possible directions for future investigation in the field, and some final remarks.

Sustainable development: mapping understanding from notion to delivery

The concept of a sustainable society which lives in a state of harmonious equilibrium with the natural environment is not an especially novel one (for example Benedict of Nursia, Saint Francis, Pierre Proudhon, [Nisbet, 1976] and William Morris, Peter Kropotkin, Ebenezer Howard [Ward, 1974]). As the twentieth century draws to a close, however, taking practical steps in this direction has become something more than simply wishfully struggling to realise a utopian ideal. The ecological crisis which humanity has instigated through technological advance combined with ignorant, irresponsible or insidious political economy, is now at a stage where failure to respond in a positive, speedy and long term manner will see extended and potentially irreversible environmental degradation [Ramphal, 1992; Cartledge, 1992]. It has been posited that the human population of the planet lives in a risk society [Beck, 1994; Smith, 1996] in which not only standards of living but actual life itself are consequently in peril at a scale to which humanity has never been threatened before. Governments across the globe, by way of response, have sought to integrate economic, social and environmental policy under the banner of ‘sustainable development’ [WCED, 1987; Keating, 1993].

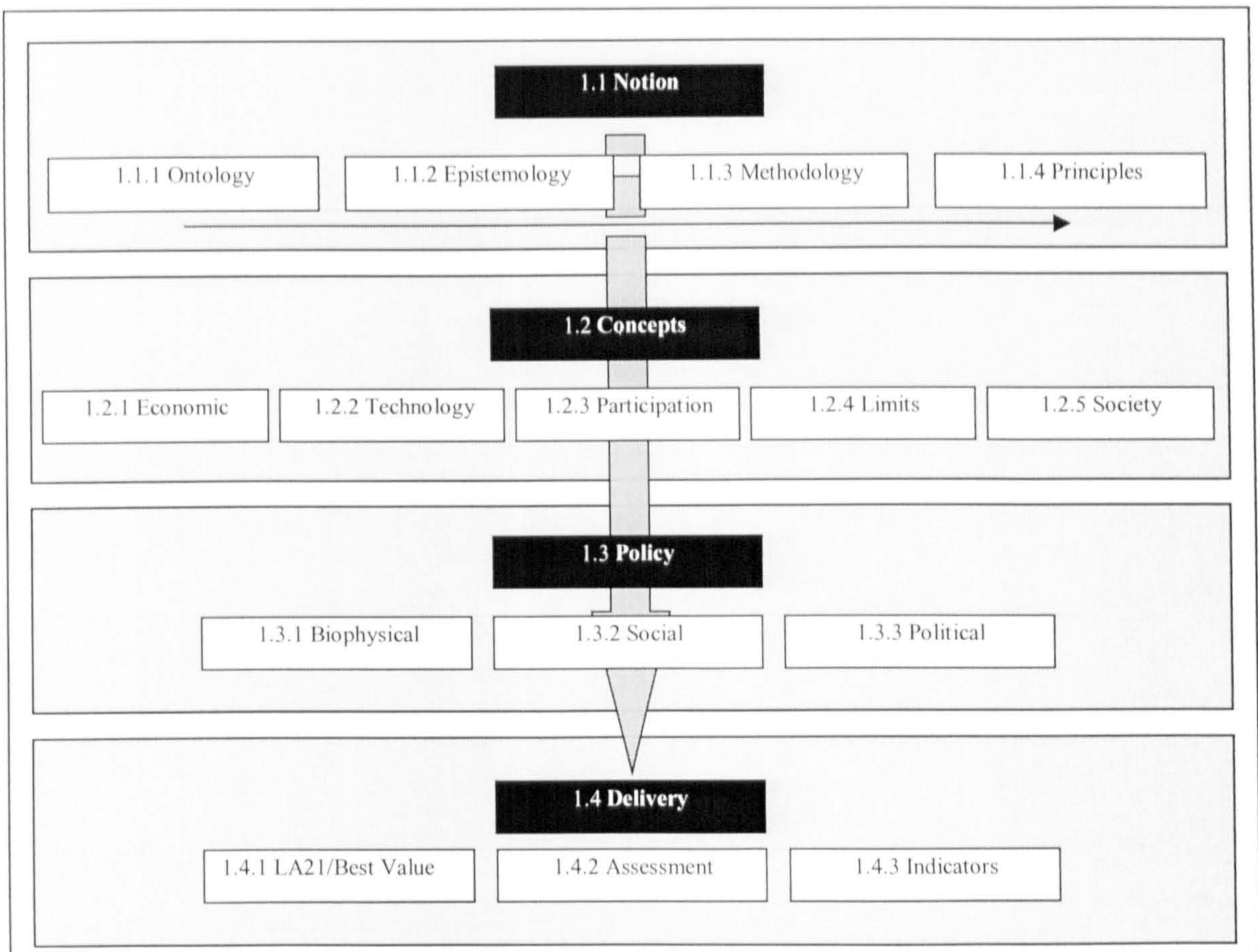
The intention in this opening chapter is to examine this integration in generic terms. The model adopted for this examination is that of a cognisant linear transition from notion, to principles, to concept, to policy and finally to delivery. In linking these five elements of translation together it will become clear that there are many paths which vary according to belief, interpretation, interests, structural relations and circumstance. As a helpful point of reference, Figure 1.1 overleaf maps out this progression.

1.1 The notion of ‘sustainable development’

The last decade and a half of the twentieth century will go down in history as one in which environmental concern and uncertainty [Ludwig *et al.*, 1993] with regard to an increasingly apparent and potentially universally damaging ecological crisis were faced and tackled within the discursive framework emanating from a notion entitled ‘sustainable development’. The dimensions of development in these terms relate to the following variables: the quality of human existence; the context against which this is placed - embracing environmental, economic, social and political issues; the scale at which these elements operate, and; the rate of existing and envisaged change. The overall vector of progress is thus a complex one with

a potentially infinite number of values. The specific focus of this study (i.e. the English land use planning system) helps to scope these dimensions within more empirically manageable boundaries.

Figure 1.1 – Mapping sustainable development from notion to delivery



The trail followed here, from notional understanding through conceptualisation to implementation, will illustrate that the need for change is not only acknowledged but is being addressed, albeit frequently superficially. The heart of the matter however, - the “long-term issues of durability and generality” [De Young, 1993, p.500] - implies a restructuring at the very foundation of strategies, procedures and decision-making. This deeper modification in terms of outlook, thinking and approach is thus of ultimate significance and it is upon detection at this level that the research effort will be most attuned. The academic language of ontology, epistemology and methodology will be helpful here. These terms maybe used as anchors upon which to secure understanding in the disorientating swell emanating from the multiple and interrelated discourses which threaten to knock such efforts off course or to sink them in a storm of relativism.

1.1.1 On ontology: upon what ‘reality’ is the notion of sustainable development founded?

The answer to this question can be found in the increasing concern for the state of the environment and its subsequent very real impact upon the quality of people’s lives – i.e. it is

embedded within the discourse of environmentalism. Industrial and post-industrial activity has not adequately produced

“a condition of social and physical systems which meet our needs in the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet theirs” [Sancar, 1994, p.322],

i.e. not a condition of sustainability. We must therefore question the content and direction of our current developmental path in order to make it sustainable - an inevitably contentious issue. As Torgerson [1995] puts it:

“the many meanings and connotations of ‘sustainable development’ ... signal no neat concept, but a range of ideas whose very indeterminacy and contestability help to suggest previously unheard of possibilities ... uncertainty about the direction of development suggests an element of choice” [p.16].

Each ‘idea’ will ontologically vary to greater or lesser degrees, coalescing around a number of non-specific tenets, which make up anthropocentric ideals of ‘civilisation’. These produce a formidable network of discourses founded upon different assumptions regarding environmental concern [Myerson & Rydin, 1996] and collectively located under the heading of environmentalism.

It can be argued that sustainable development is the nebulous embodiment of modern environmentalism [Hajer, 1995] At this pre-conceptual point in the discussion however, it is necessary to clarify the key notional root from which any subsequent conceptions may be traced. For the purposes of this study it is suffice to say that concern over the environmental impact of human activity generates an array of discursive activity which calls into question, to varying degrees, the form of the social, economic and bio-physical systems which organise our lives - a questioning that points towards the building of a ‘new *environmental agenda*’ [Healey & Shaw, 1993a, emphasis added] in which human preferences are reconsidered. The boundaries of this re-evaluation are broad but are circumscribed with reference to the following four tenets (Table 1.1):

Table 1.1 - The non-specific tenets of sustainable development

1. Environment (global and local management and protection)
2. Futurity (intergenerational distributive justice)
3. Equity (intragenerational distributive justice)
4. Participation (a co-operative framework of social and individual

[After, Elkin *et al.*, 1991]

In order to understand what this re-evaluation amounts to in a substantive sense (i.e. one which can be related to policy and proposal formation), and shed some light on its epistemological and methodological ramifications, it is useful to reflect on the distinction

between 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability'. These terms are frequently used interchangeably by many authors: this is not necessarily unacceptable but to do so is to miss an opportunity to achieve an invaluable degree of ontological clarity. Notwithstanding its contemporary environmental context, 'sustainability' can baldly be considered as the 'ability to sustain'. There is clearly nothing new here, it is an issue as old as life itself - a biological imperative. If a lifeform does not adapt or adopt preferences which allow it to compete effectively and efficiently for resources to sustain itself within the environmental limits it experiences its survival will be threatened. For humanity as a species, as with all other lifeforms it is an 'end state', a point at which we achieve the ability to sustain ourselves in perpetuity. It is of course not a uniform or static condition - spatial and temporal variations mean that the term must be used with caution and qualification. As an issue, sustainability has surfaced strongly over the past two decades because as a species we can envision an unsatisfactory environmental state to which our current developmental path, or mode of adaptation, is moving. The direction of contemporary human development, with the modern motors of instrumental rationality, industrialisation, technical innovation and political economy is seen as threatening its own future (re. Beck's [1997] theory of a 'risk society'). The nature of the threat manifests itself as a degraded bio-physical environment, the notably damaged facets of which have been exploited as 'free' resources in a 'modern' developmental process dominated by economic growth. Currently therefore, a central feature in envisioning a secure future is a healthy global environment - a state in which the elements of this environment have been *assigned new or revised values*, taking into account issues of futurity, equity and participation. How this value is to be viewed (epistemological considerations) and developed (methodological considerations) will subsequently be highly contentious - resolution being sought through

"policy making as the dominant form of regulation of social conflict in modern societies" [Jäkinen & Koskinen, 1998, p.58; Hajer, 1995].

A strong and increasingly seductive argument has been made that concerns for environmental sustainability be conflated with contemporary models of socio-economic development in order to steer humanity back onto a sustainable track. It is this conflation which we may term 'sustainable development'. It is the *process* through which we draw concern with environmental change - environmentalism - into humanity's present and future development. The environmental root gives the process its conceptual foundations, with these being based upon a need to re-evaluate the use of the our environment in the light of established social, economic and political needs, demands and aspirations. The social reality of sustainable development hinges upon this re-evaluation - how do we attach sufficient value to

environmental resources in order to give us the ability to sustain our present and future forms of development? To put this another way, the ontological assumption underlying sustainable development is *that human well-being is being threatened by inadequate or inappropriate environmental resource valuation*. This statement stands as the touchstone of conceptual understanding. From an academic perspective it has very clear epistemological and methodological connotations which will relate well to an examination in practice of policy and proposal formulation. The proceeding section will review and develop the line of inquiry which this assumption sets in motion. To simplify expression and textual clarity this environmental re-evaluation under the auspices of: environmental protection and management; intra- and inter-generational equity, and; co-operative social and individual responsibility will be referred to throughout the text as '*sustainable*' re-evaluation or 'SR'. Without SR, sustainable development has nothing to give it substance or move it forward. The language of SR contains a very broad normative-descriptive vocabulary. This is because implicit within valuation are ideas of comparison and 'weighing up' in terms of relative benefit and disbenefit. The theoretical language of sustainable development broadens this further, with development being viewed through a compound social/economic/bio-physical lens, whilst simultaneously the key tenets of futurity, equity, environment and participation introduce a weak level of commensurability. It is this idea of evaluation/weighing/balancing in relation to the key tenets which defines the reality of the notion regardless of the context [Foster, 1997b] – promoting a kind of "enlightened self-interest" [Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996, p.7] in the sense of countering Humes's suggestion that

"it is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the itching of my little finger" [quoted in Almond, 1995, p.20].

1.1.2 On epistemology: what counts as knowledge in the notional makeup of sustainable development?

In an epistemological sense, contingent knowledge grows from the broad ontological assumption outlined above as evidence of sustainable re-evaluation. Part of the relativism so readily attached to sustainable development is a product of the many different ways through which such a valuation may be achieved. The deontological aspects of sustainable development may temporarily bring worldviews together but the deviations in perspective are thrown back into stark relief as soon as issues of determining value are broached. The required judgement reflecting any combination of the ecological, economic, social, political, scientific, cultural or spiritual norms and beliefs held by those implicated in valuation. Each hinges upon the ontological assumption that humanity, at every demographic scale, must

proactively re-evaluate the way he or she uses/exploits bio-physical environmental resources. A re-evaluation which fans out on the wings of interpretation - interpretations differentiated by our ideas over what counts as appropriate knowledge with regard to valuation and how it should subsequently be used to modify the content and direction of development. Knowledge which (following Galbraith) Murdoch and Clarke [1994] describe as that allowing

“us to retain a hold on the ‘natural systems’ which threaten to run out of control, while simultaneously permitting us to pursue the forms of life with which we (the West) feel comfortable and contented” [p.115].

Many commentators [e.g. Gibbs, 1994; McLaren *et al.*, 1998] have offered analytic representations to illustrate this varying interpretation - expressed as scales, ladders or spectra running from weak to strong positions. These principally derive from breaking social and biospheric resources down into three categories - natural capital (soil, atmosphere, forests, water, wetlands, etc.), human or social capital (people, their capacity levels, institutions, cultural cohesion, education, information, knowledge, etc.), and human-made capital (houses, roads, factories, ships, etc.) [Goodland & Daly, 1995] - and then deciding which must be maintained (critical) or can be substituted (tradeable), with contemporary views of ‘strong’ sustainability typically placing the emphasis on the role of ‘natural’ capital in a balanced end state and ‘weak’ sustainability on economically derived substitution. The implication of this structuring is that certain epistemological (and subsequently methodological) responses reduce the risk to environmental integrity more than others and hence are ‘stronger’. As Myerson and Rydin [1996] point out however:

“‘strength’ is not always perceived or presented as a virtue...; rather a ‘weak’ position may be held as a mark of reasonableness, practicality and serious policy intent” [p.104].

In terms of this research, such labels of dilution can be seen as only useful in an abstract sense. The degree of overlap between levels renders ordinal categorisation of this type problematic, the heterogeneity from which knowledge is constituted [Murdoch & Clarke, 1994] makes a nominal framework more appropriate in this instance. What is of interest to us here is the nature of the knowledge drawn upon or constructed and how this influences attempts to incorporate sustainable development - i.e. how do decision-making arrangements mediate SR under the auspices of sustainable development? As David Harvey points out,

“(a)ll versions of revealed values in nature rely heavily upon particular human capacities and particular anthropocentric *mediations* [1996, p.158, original emphasis].

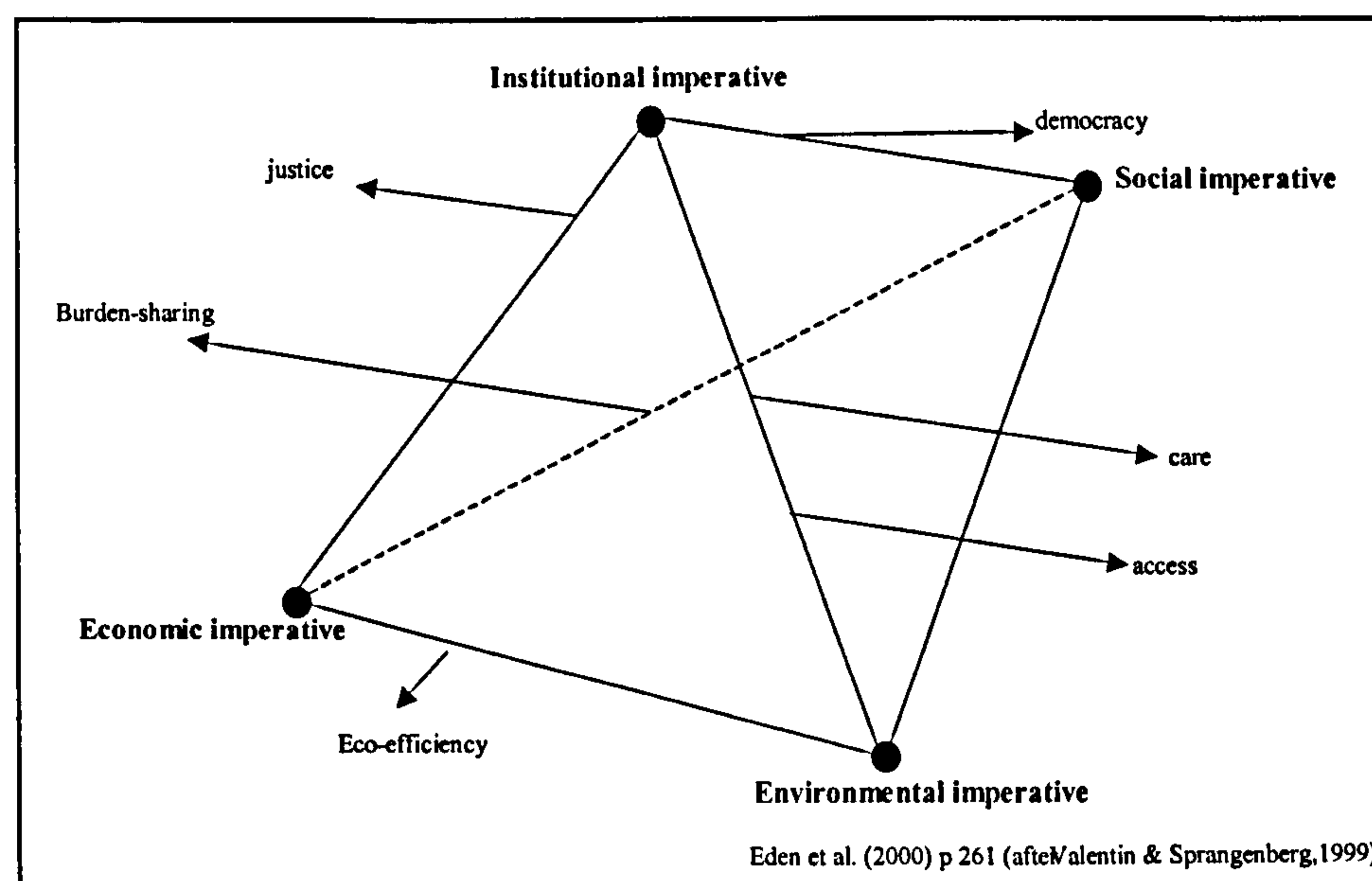
It is the epistemological ramifications of this statement which fractures opinions on what counts as essential knowledge in advancing the process of sustainable development. The bio-physical, economic and social contexts, which were notionally less significant, now come into

their own. Each expresses what counts as knowledge with regard to re-/evaluating environmental resources in different ways. As one moves from notional understanding to conception and delivery the need to lend substance to values, and subsequent valuation, becomes increasingly pressing:

“Values, as it were, can be left to disport themselves in happy plurality when off-duty, but the need for decision calls at least the relevant ones rather sharply into line” [Foster, 1997b, p.235].

The following diagram (Figure 1.2) is a general expression of these dimensions which

Figure 1.2 - The dimensions of sustainable development



illustrates the broad range of perspectives from which varying interpretation on what counts as sustainable knowledge will emerge. Each of the aforementioned contexts is viewed as a developmental imperative. These interact to produce a range of issues which collectively will begin to shape principles and conception. Additionally a fourth dimension is introduced – that of the ‘institutional imperative’. This reflects the fact that SR is carried out against a backdrop of established beliefs, views and opinions as to how activities are approached, organised and executed. It embraces the importance of participation, inclusiveness and empowerment in striving for sustainability and hence much of the political context of the process of sustainable development.

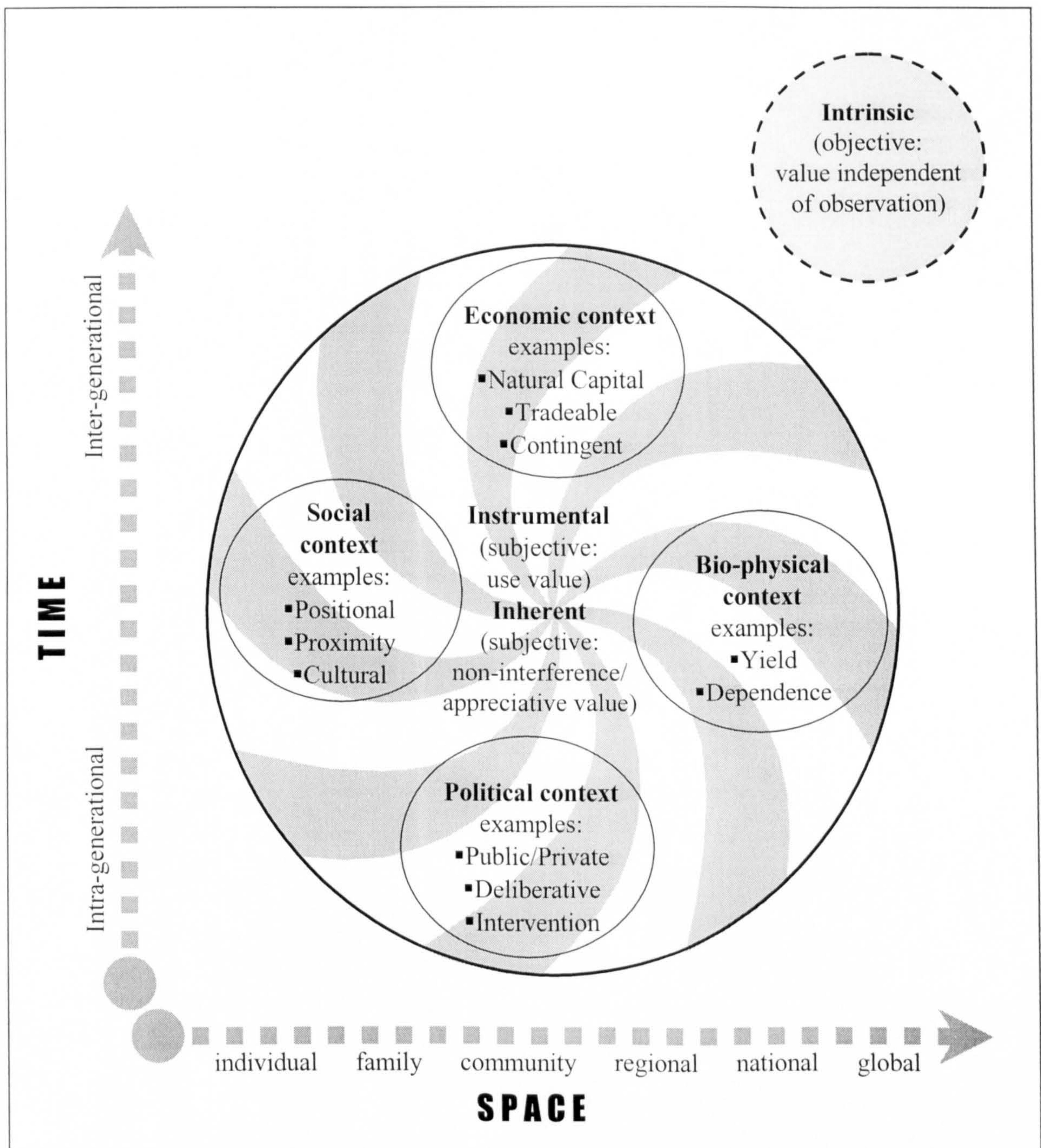
At this juncture, with both analysis in mind and the need to progress the discussion, it is necessary to outline the principle characteristics of value as they pertain to environmental resources. It is through these that an idea of worth is both described and ascertained essentially in relation to benefits and disbenefits, i.e. value is attached to resources in terms of what is to be lost or gained through the effects of human intervention. These values may be considered as an input into a form of cost-benefit analysis which, although the term is

economically derived, may be socially, ecologically or indeed institutionally founded. As Foster states:

“(T)he evaluative claim that the benefits of doing ‘A’ outweigh the costs is not, in fact, typically a claim of the form: ‘The benefits sum to ‘x’, the costs to ‘y’ therefore...’. Instead it constitutes, as it were, a single interpretive move by which the various relevant aspects confronting us are bought into a unitary motivating relation” [Foster, 1997b, p.233].

The multiplicity of these ‘aspects’ is illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 1.3): the values tied to the essentially anthropocentric shape of sustainable development are either instrumental or inherent and subject to the context(s) through which they are viewed and set against the dynamics of time and space.

Figure 1.3 - The variables of environmental valuation



At any one point in time and space the 'unitary motivating relations' will be different – the 'value' of an environmental resource is not a static or universally acceptable entity. Values may be in conflict or subject to circumstance. The product of SR as process is therefore far from neutral or stable and no more likely to be attained in this state as is a lasting realisation of 'sustainability'. What will be of specific interest to us here is ascertaining which SR elements are employed in land use planning and why they are given precedence over others. In this sense sustainable development is lexically driven by terms such as motivation, preference, mediation and choice within a semantic founded upon the validity of knowledge as environmental valuation. In methodological terms the issue of choice over how knowledge is to be used is clearly going to be a dominant one, but it must be remembered that such processes are preceded by motivation and choices over where such knowledge comes from.

1.1.3 The methodological character of sustainable development

The links between the epistemologies and methodologies of sustainable development are strong and derive their shape from the form, content and extent of high level, frequently academic, discursive activity. A methodology of sustainable development will strategically develop and go on to employ 'sustainable knowledge' in an effort to foster specific conceptual understanding. This link between knowledge and its use may be cohesive but in subsequent policy terms the relationship can generate significant uncertainty. The principal bone of contention at this level rests with *how* 'sustainable knowledge' should be strategically cultivated to regulate environmentally detrimental processes of consumption and production.

The need to regulate, in its broadest sense, is the normative foundational assumption behind all such conceptions. This assumption stands as the methodological consensual nexus uniting a remarkably broad range of perspectives on what we have established as the essential ontological and epistemological characteristics of sustainable development. At this level necessity may be viewed as the 'mother' of consensus as well as invention - a situation that accounts for the long-term survival of the seminal Brundtland definition of sustainable development. This definition's non-specific wording and tenets can be made to resonate with so many different worldviews that it temporarily blurs difference and glosses over conflict; with regard to the direction and shape of an appropriate model of regulation, all is implied:

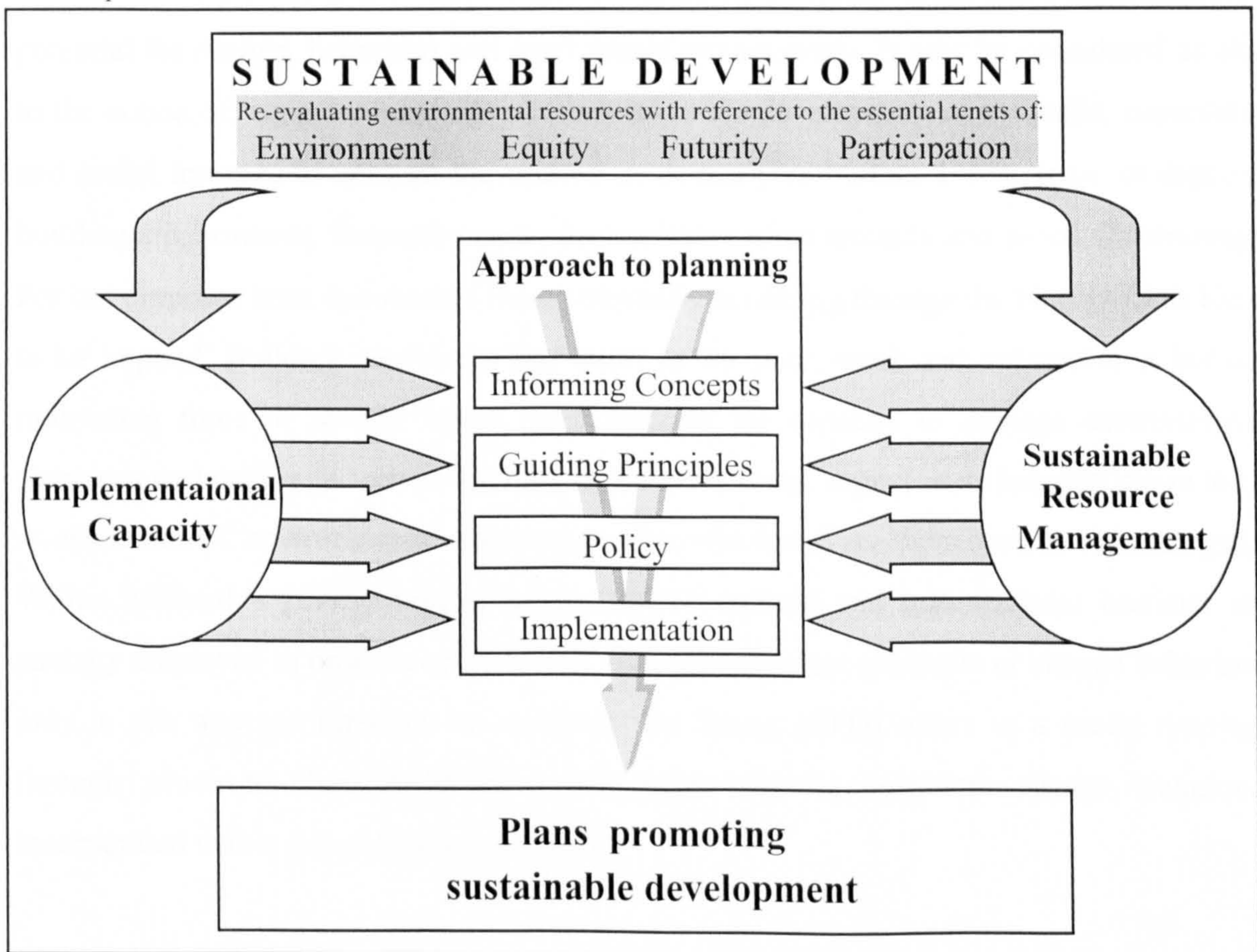
"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"
[WCED, 1987, p.43]

It creates a shared point of reference for a diversity of belief systems when in environmental ('green') mode such as: 'Green Keynesianism' (the Brundtland view), free-market environmentalism, market interventionism, steady-state theory, smaller-scale advocacy, eco-

feminism, eco-Marxism, ‘mirror nature’, or the constant natural capital stocks criterion [McManus, 1996]. Each system is founded upon a ‘vision’ of socio-economic organisation into which an assumption regarding environmental valuation has been built. Such analytically induced categorisations are not mutually exclusive. This implies that composite strategies may be constructed drawing upon shared elements of appreciation and outcome, if not perspectives and beliefs.

Each belief system has differing views on what (from the Brundtland mantra) development is, what needs are and perhaps most importantly where to draw the ‘compromise’ line. In mapping a route to sustainability each conceptualises the regulatory link between the social and the environmental from varying standpoints. In terms of promoting the process of sustainable development it is useful to consider such positions as comprising interest specific versions of both the implementational capacity required to achieve the desired change, and, what is perceived as the most appropriate approach to sustainable resource management. From this understanding the following schematic (Figure 1.4) may be put forward to generically illustrate the methodology underlying sustainable development and through which SRs are given genuine social purpose.

Figure 1.4 - Methodological schematic illustrating the strategic promotion of sustainable development



Within this representation the strategic ontological and epistemological implications of sustaining human development are thus interpreted as the socialisation of sustainable resource management – the...

“recognition that attention needs to be given not merely to stocks and qualities, but to environmental and social *relations*, the destruction of which leads to degradation” [Healey & Shaw, 1994, p.434, original italics].

The terminology of ‘implementational capacity’ and ‘sustainable resource management’ gives us an appropriate analytical language for examining SR as it is embedded and finds meaning within a notion of sustainable development. *Implementational capacity* and *sustainable resource management* make up the melting-pot of mediation from which fundamental choices crystallise into informing concepts, guiding principles, policy, implementation programmes and ultimately delivery. If we are to use this terminology to engender understanding and explanation it is important to be clear about the meaning attached to each term. In the light of the discussion to date, *sustainable resource management* (SRM) is relatively self-explanatory, i.e. it refers to the strategic position adopted in promoting the management of environmental resources in a manner which sustains their use for as long as is deemed necessary to safeguard the desired quality of human existence in perpetuity. Such approaches are driven by the *implementational capacity* (IC) to achieve them. This very general term embraces the social issues of empowerment, equity, knowledge, social capital, participation, potential for change, behaviour and institutional arrangements. It may be considered as akin to the notion of ‘capacity building’ as it relates to the development of the skills, capabilities and social leverage to achieve the desired outcomes [Warburton, 1998]. Ideas of capacity building are, however, frequently centred upon issues of community and social disadvantage. For our purposes here, this renders them potentially confusing through the bias which is likely to be implied. Building confidence and skills in the poor, weak and vulnerable is but one motivating force of several which may inculcate the capacity to manage environmental resources sustainably. IC relates existing or potential social capital in its broadest sense to the re-evaluation of environmental resources in ways which will see them sustainably managed. Within Milbrath’s [1995] vein of psychological, cultural and informational barriers, any strategy employed in order to achieve long term success must moderate or change behaviour, only in this way can direction be sustained. De Young [1993] offers us a useful typology through which to characterise any action taken via the behaviour change techniques incorporated within it (see Table 1.2, below)

Table 1.2 - Typology of selected behaviour change techniques

Source of change	Behaviour change techniques		
	<i>Information</i>	<i>Positive motivation</i>	<i>Coercion</i>
<i>Environmental/ Others (Tangible)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declarative knowledge - Procedural knowledge - Feedback - Modelling - Prompting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Material incentives - Social support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Material disincentives - Social pressure - Legal mandates
<i>Internal (Intangible)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct experience - Personal insight - Self-monitored f/back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment - Intrinsic satisfactions - Sense of competence - Sense of confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sense of duty - Feeling of remorse

Source: from De Young, 1993, p.492

Though he is specifically looking at conservation measures, two very valid points are made which are of genuine relevance to us here. Firstly, behaviour relating to SR issues will frequently be far from obvious in every day life –

“their effects are spread thinly through time and space reducing any immediate accomplishments” [*ibid.*, p.499];

and secondly,

“assessing the immediate effectiveness of an intervention is no longer sufficient; the long-term issues of durability and generality must also be addressed” [*ibid.*, p.500].

It must be remembered that modes of SR add to an already highly complex and sophisticated web of social judgement. In an anthropocentric world everything, tangible or intangible, is assigned a value consciously or otherwise, but the objects perceived as environmental resources belong

“to a world that is not *mine* or *yours* but *ours* in an epistemological sense” [Sagoff, 1989, p.119].

This study explores such relationships in the UK as part of the western ‘developed’ world. Here the intersubjectivity, which Sagoff expresses, is typically brokered by the forces of liberal political economy, but there are alternatives relating to other cultures. In either case, however, both radical and reformist approaches are found which are apparently united under the patronage of sustainable development. Within the ideal notion, it is assumed that opposing positions can be integrated through balance and compromise, but to assume that such an integration is founded upon a tolerance amongst equals is highly questionable.

1.1.4 Application principles

Before moving on to outline contemporary western conceptions of the notion of sustainable development it is helpful to draw out what will be termed the key SR *application principles*. It is through these, in either individual or composite form, that sustainable knowledge is applied. The five listed below (Table 1.3) cover, to a lesser or greater degree, the conceptual approaches outlined in the following section.

Table 1. 3 - Key application principles which can ‘activate’ ‘sustainable knowledge’

1. The Precautionary Principle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to regulate against development where there is a significant degree of uncertainty over whether substantial or irreversible damage to the environment may result, or, are directed at preventing or solving a perceived environmental problem before scientific proof is available. • [Land use context example: advising that when the environmental impact of a proposed development is uncertain, that a precautionary approach should be adopted (such as instances where inconclusive evidence is presented as to the influence of development on drainage patterns, adjacent wildlife, quality of life etc.)].
2. Environmental Thresholds / Limits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to, either, make judgements about the ability of environmental resources to accept demands upon them without irreversible or otherwise unacceptable loss or damage, or, set limits / thresholds for development beyond which demands could no longer be met without damage. • [Land use example: advising against development if a specified socio-environmental threshold has been breached (such as barring further development in an area once either specified traffic or air pollution levels pass calculated thresholds; or if a specified area value for available public green space was threatened; etc.)].
3. Environmental Compensation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks compensation for any developmentally induced loss of socio-environmental value, with commensurate socio-environmental benefits. • [Land use context example: advising that the loss through development of a particular socio-environmental resource should be compensated by some means on a ‘like-for-like’ basis or otherwise (such as requiring in instances where development will lead to the loss of habitats or environmental amenities in one location that they be reinstated in another)].
4. Demand Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to modify forecasted demands for environmental resources rather than simply accommodating them, on the grounds of maintaining or improving socio-environmental conditions. • [Land use context example: advising that demand should be reduced for activities or services which are considered to be environmentally degenerative (such as minimising travel requirements through encouraging mixed-use or brownfield development)].
5. Best Practicable Environmental Option
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to meet demand for development whilst applying performance standards to minimise environmental degradation. • [Land use example: permitting development so long as certain specified socio-environmental standards are met (such as low energy use design and public transport access) or encouraging/requiring new technologies to minimise environmental impact (such as renewable energy plants or combined heat and power schemes)].

Each of these principles has a certain relevance to both radical and reformist methodologies. As a consequence they may be utilised to translate 'sustainable knowledge' into policies and proposals across both camps. For the policy-maker this situation exacerbates the uncertainty alluded to earlier and without a very clearly expressed strategy is likely to re-emphasise the relativism which has so dogged conceptualisations of sustainable development to date.

To summarise the discussion so far: sustainable development has much in common with other contested notions such as democracy, freedom and justice [Dryzek, 1997; Owens, 1997] it manifests itself in the host of socially constructed circles relating to the re-evaluation of developmentally threatened environmental resources. These shape the human condition as

“a discourse rather than a concept which can or should be defined with any precision” [Dryzek, 1997, p.125] ... “It is at the discursive level that dilemmas are dissolved by sustainable development, not at the level of policies and accomplishments. That is, sustainable development is not proven or demonstrated but, rather, asserted” [*ibid.* p.123].

Such policies and accomplishments are thus substantive reflections of the value-orientated environmentally-founded discursive activity that is sustainable development. A process through which concepts progressively evolve which in turn give rise to strategies, policies and proposals. Conflict is inevitable as opposing interests and beliefs are brought together over fundamental issues regarding appropriate resource utilisation. Some conceptualisations, such as that specifically developed by the Brundtland Commission from their universal definition (which acts as a point of departure for many Western governments, the UK included) attempt to side-step the conflict but ultimately the battles must be fought somewhere [Owens, 1997].

1.2 Conceptualising sustainable development

Throughout the discussion to date we have employed the Brundtland definition (as contained in the 1987 WCED report *Our Common Future*) of sustainable development as a metaphorical celestial orb around which other conceptual entities turn in conditions of lesser or greater perpetual reference. This is largely because, firstly, the Brundtland Commission led the way in bringing a significant degree of mainstream political acceptance to the term (through timing as much as content):

“Rather than directly confronting neo-liberalism, the seductive notion of 'sustainable development' formed an effective counter hegemonic rallying point” [McManus, 1996, p.51].

Secondly, as already introduced, its in-built latitude predisposes it to the vagaries of political, corporate and organisational expedience.

Our Common Future, however, did more than define terms and open debate:

“(i)t contains within it two key concepts: the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs” [WCED, 1987, p.43].

These concepts were brought to bear with a strong pro-‘South’ bias in efforts to reconcile global ‘North-South’ inequities. Although covering much appropriate conceptual ground and accepting that the need to establish an aspirational ‘level playing field’ at the global scale is a valid one, other conceptualisations are more directly drawn upon in considering the institutional microcosm upon which this research focuses. This is not to pass over the content of the Brundtland Report as inadmissible for our purposes, but rather to acknowledge its foundational position and to examine some of its more directly pertinent relations. With this in mind, the following key conceptualisations are selected as ones which may have a bearing upon implementation in the field of land use planning:

- i.) neo-classical environmental economics;
- ii.) ecological modernisation;
- iii.) Agenda 21;
- iv.) environmental capacity and space, and;
- v.) social ecology and eco-socialism.

Each will be outlined in terms of the template put forward in Figure 1.3, presenting characterisation with reference to *sustainable resource management, implementational capacity* and application principles. It should be noted that these concepts are not mutually exclusive and that they all make a contribution to the broad-ranging notional discourse of sustainable development.

1.2.1 Neo-classical environmental economics

- **Prioritises** interests relating to economic benefit and growth
- ***Sustainable resource management***: attempts to ensure that all environmental resources are effectively managed as priced commodities. ‘Internalises’ socio-environmental costs imposed on third parties – a procedure sometimes referred to as ‘triple bottom lining’. Once the values of such costs have been ascertained they are brought back into conventional micro-economic analysis. Management exists on the margin of benefit, i.e. costs are calculated and the monetary equation re-balanced to reduce the total amount of resource degradation to the point at which marginal costs equate to marginal benefits. It is a means reacting to the disbenefits

of resource exploitation founded upon the principles of economic rationality. Environmental resources are typically broken down into three categories - natural capital (soil, atmosphere, forests, water, wetlands, etc.), human or social capital (people, their capacity levels, institutions, cultural cohesion, education, information, knowledge, etc.), and human-made capital (houses, roads, factories, ships, etc.) [Goodland & Daly, 1995] - and then assessed as to which should currently be maintained (critical) or which can be substituted (tradeable). With contemporary views of sustainability placing the emphasis on 'natural' capital, three interpretations of sustainable development, running from 'weak' to 'strong' to 'very strong', might respectively be:

“(i.) development that passes on at least the same total capital stock to future generations; (ii.) development that achieves (i.) but passes on at least the current stock of critical natural capital intact; otherwise different types of capital may be traded off against each other to maintain at least the same total stock; (iii.) development that keeps critical natural capital intact as well as handing down no less natural capital than the current generations enjoy.” [Owens, 1994, p.443]

- **Implementational capacity:** this capacity is principally held by a professional elite with scientific-type training to permit the value of resources to be assessed as 'neutrally' and objectively as possible, and subsequently entered into a cost-benefit analysis. The processes of environmental economics are, in their social context, principally applied from the top-down. In re-/evaluating all environmental resources as commodities, value is typically measured from the perspective of the consumer as opposed to 'citizen', especially via methodologies employing contingent valuation [Sagoff, 1988].

“Missing from economic rationalism is any notion of active citizenship; indeed economic rationalism abolishes citizenship” [Dryzek, 1997, p113-114].

Hence, resources which are 'public' in nature (and thus central to sustainable development) are essentially treated within a 'private' agenda:

“(t)he key issue is whether decision criteria based only on aggregated private benefit should be used to make decisions about environmental goods whose production is for the public good” [Bilsborough, 1997, p.99].

An apposite course of management from this perspective is motivated by material self-interest and pursued rationally. Administratively those involved in managing the process must not be actors themselves or have the capacity to stand outside of their own interests in assessing the inherently competitive claims for resource exploitation.

- **Application principles:**

Precautionary principle: unfavoured as implies an inability to apply/attach monetary value.

Environmental thresholds and limits: unfavoured as the existence of absolutes does not rest easily within a liberal market system.

Environmental compensation: favoured as monetary based mechanism to redress imbalance.

Demand management: unfavoured as implies potentially destabilising interventions.

Best practicable environmental option: favoured as pragmatic solution to maximising benefit whilst minimising cost.

1.2.2 Ecological modernisation

- **Prioritises** technical and managerial resolution

- **Sustainable resource management:**

“...(a) systems approach which takes seriously the complex pathways by which consumption, production, resource depletion and pollution are interrelated ... The key to effective action is therefore to anticipate and prevent unwanted environmental ramifications of production and consumption decisions” [Dryzek, 1997, p.144].

The essence of the concept thus focuses upon the proactive management of contemporary socio-economic activity in such a way that environmental resource capacities and balances are not overwhelmed in the name of progress. The strategy is one of positive-sum development in which the integrity of the environment is not traded off against economic growth and vice versa. The key rhetorical plank of the argument being that minimising the deleterious effects of environmental exploitation makes both sound economic sense in the long term whilst maintaining jobs and revenues in the more immediate term. Ecological crisis challenges business to innovate, principally in terms of efficiency, the common fields of production, transport, organisation and consumption. The concept does not call for structural change. The suggestion is that

“economic and environmental goals can be integrated *within* the framework of an advanced industrialised economy through new and innovative forms of policy intervention” [Hajer, 1995, p.5, emphasis added].

Efficiency and technology are the by-words of success in the world of modern business and government as encapsulated within the *Factor Four* concept: doubling wealth whilst halving resource use [Von Weizsacker *et al.*, 1997].

- ***Implementational capacity:*** The capability to advance this concept is held within the existing structure of society but working within an ‘enlightened’ view as to the importance of the issues of environmental resource management. The key capacity issue is whether the principle sources of influence within this structure are capable of adopting the requisite long term systems view to facilitate the necessary change in productive and consumptive processes. This requires complex integration between government (political ‘will’), industry (appreciating the long term economic benefits to modifications in technology and practices) and consumers (being prepared to take on new preferences and lifestyle changes). Intransigence within any group will hinder, if not nullify, efforts made by the others to ameliorate environmental degradation.

- ***Application principles:***

Precautionary principle: unfavoured in practice in many areas as a hindrance to economic growth.

Environmental thresholds and limits: unfavoured in practice in many areas as too inflexible within a largely unchanged hierarchical social arrangement.

Environmental compensation: favoured in the short term to redress imbalances caused by modified activities and practices.

Demand management: favoured as a means of modifying unsustainable supply side activity.

Best practicable environmental option: favoured as technological improvements will progressively minimise environmental impact.

1.2.3 Agenda 21

- ***Prioritises*** participation.
- ***Sustainable resource management:*** emphasis upon the global and the local. Social systems are seen as existing within other social systems and are linked by a common environmental thread. Effectively addressing SRM issues may require shifts in power as the issue of participation is central to the entire concept. To quote from the 1992 Agenda 21 document:

“(n)o one nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can – in a global partnership for sustainable development” (para. 1.1) ... “the broadest public participation...should also be encouraged” (para. 1.3) ... It is particularly important to focus capacity-building at the local level in

order to support a community-driven approach to sustainability” (para. 3.12).

The key to positive sum strategies is co-operation – epitomised in the radical slogan ‘think global, act local’. The relationships of capitalist economy are taken as read but the principle of competition as the driving force is replaced by a co-operative ethic. Exclusive economic rationalism as an approach to SR is to be replaced by inclusive economic rationalism. As a direct relation of the Brundtland Report the concept of environmental equity is explicitly propounded whilst more radical ideas of environmental justice are merely alluded to: the latter has at its heart the notion of

“righting a wrong, or correcting an unjustly imposed burden” whereas the latter “typically focuses on sharing the burden equally among all people” [Agyeman, 2000, p.321].

- **Implementational capacity:** the key capacity for change within Agenda 21 is perceived as belonging not in the national or state spheres of governance but either within networks at the inter-governmental/-organisational level or at the grassroots level of local government and group activity. The 1992 Rio Earth Summit (and subsequent follow-up meetings) epitomises the former and Local Agenda 21 plans/initiatives the latter.

“Greater participation of the *civil society* in *sustainable development* is a ‘political/power’ and not an ‘ethical/technical’ issue” ... “social mobilization of the local *civil society per se* is necessary but not sufficient. This mobilization has to come up with a way of breaking the global inertia and building more effective coalitions and networks across sectoral and geographic boundaries” [Schuftan, 1999, p.232 & p.235].

Capacity building within communities, government and the private sector is a pre-requisite of successful cross-sectoral action.

- **Application principles:**

Precautionary principle: provisionally favoured – scientific uncertainty is not to be used to postpone cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Environmental thresholds and limits: provisionally favoured – environmental protection constitutes an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation.

Environmental compensation: provisionally favoured – nations to co-operatively develop international laws to provide compensation for damage that activities under their control cause to areas beyond their borders. The polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution.

Demand management: provisionally favoured – environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens. Nations should facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making environmental information widely available.

Best practicable environmental option: provisionally favoured – environmental policies should not be used as an unjustifiable means of restricting international trade.

1.2.4 Environmental capacity and space

- *Prioritises* bio-physical thresholds and limits
- *Sustainable resource management*: clearly located within the sphere of environmental constraint upon human activity in the sense

“that at certain levels the environmental effects of human activity undergo a qualitative shift, passing from a condition more or less acceptable to one in some way undesirable” [Jacobs, 1997]. The conceptualisation is given its spatial function as: “the share of an area and its resources that its human population may use without depriving future generations of the resources they will need” [McLaren *et al.*, 1998, p.6].

The difference between what may be used and what is being used is termed the ‘sustainability gap’. Both concepts explicitly hinge upon the assumption that there are environmental thresholds or limits to the expansion of human activities. They are strongly linked with Wackernagel and Rees’ [1996] ecological footprint analysis: an accounting tool that relates population/economy to land area in terms of resource consumption and waste assimilation requirements. Environmental equity is also an issue with the appreciation that the

“inequitable distribution of control over resources can be a driving force for local and wider environmental degradation, especially of renewable resources” [McLaren *et al.*, 1998, p.26].

Tools for achieving more sustainable and equitable resource use are: eco-efficiency, market regulation and tax-reform to produce multiple payoffs in an integrated policy regime.

An earlier radical representation of the concept of environmental space is found in the seminal literature of ‘deep green’ decentralism in the shape of ‘bioregionalism’: here human activity is delimited and characterised within boundaries “determined by natural rather than human dictates” [Sale, 1974, p.78]. Environmental resources are re-/evaluated systematically in the light of a population’s reliance upon them for sustenance.

- *Implementational capacity*: the capacity for change comes from two sources. Firstly re-education to move away from a judgement of progress based upon economic indicators

and to establish equality of opportunity outside of the monetary sphere. Secondly, to reorientate political systems in ways that give a quality environment priority over economic growth. Even in its less radical form such factors require those with vested interests within the contemporary economically driven developmental model to moderate their activity for the wider public benefit. Thus despite a significant conceptual emphasis upon equity, poverty reduction and social inclusion, the principle motivation is envisaged as existing within an enlightened political system and central planning. Subsequent strategies will respond to distributive inequality and be supported through more meaningful indicators of progress.

- ***Application principles:***

Precautionary principle: favoured where limits are unknown.

Environmental thresholds and limits: favoured and conceptually fundamental.

Environmental compensation: unfavoured for economically driven trade-offs.

Demand management: favoured as a vehicle for education and modifying excessive/misdirected consumption.

Best practicable environmental option: unfavoured where what is practicable is either inequitable or produces a trade-off which comes down in favour of economic returns over environmental loss/degradation.

1.2.5 Social ecology and eco-socialism

- ***Prioritises*** social relations and organisation.
- ***Sustainable resource management:*** within the radical domains of social ecology and eco-socialism the key to sustainable resource management is to be found in more equitable social relations. As a radical concept it differs from the more romantic responses of 'deep ecology' by emphasising intra-human relationships as much as those with nature. The root of unsustainability is deemed to lie in the hierarchical arrangements between groups and organisations in society. The desire to dominate through competition leads to collateral damage amongst environmental resources (paralleling the concept of eco-feminism). It has been argued that both capitalist and socialist arrangements induce such deleterious scenarios. Eco-socialism, with its explicit Marxist relation, attempts to counter such criticism by pointing to the fundamentally unsustainable nature of human existence within an unjust and inequitable capitalist society as the central issue. Humans themselves are not naturally given to unsustainable lifestyles, the cause of which is more likely to be the prevailing socio-economic system in which they are played out. Resource

management will be most sustainably realised through collective action for the collective good. The key implementational difference which eco-socialism has over the many arcadian arrangements proposed under the auspices of deep ecology is that whilst advocating the small-scale, the self-sufficient and the local it also acknowledges the need for planning “through an enabling state or similar institution” [Pepper, 1993, p.233]. A political-economic analysis comes as part of the package. The local arrangements for sustainable resource management might be decentralisation, autonomous communities, producers collectives and freely entered mutual associations but

“(i)f one is honest about the objectives which an ecologically enlightened society would set for itself, it is difficult to avoid concluding that the state, as the agent of the collective will, would have to take an active law-making and –enforcing role in imposing a range of environmental and resource constraints” [Ryle, 1988, p.141].

- ***Implementational capacity:*** the capacity for implementing SR through the concepts of social ecology and eco-socialism is contained within alternative movements seeking to fundamentally change society:

“if we begin to change human relationships, then we simultaneously change the relations of humans with the rest of nature” [Marshall, 1995, p.246].

Implementation is a highly political project which would require the social mobilisation of the local civil society to break the global capitalist inertia (confrontational ‘think global, act local’) and to develop an ecologically founded sense of a common cause. As the required consciousness presently exists outside of the mainstream the key vehicles for change will be networking, coalition building and inter group solidarity in an effort to create a politically astute reality for people in the civil society. A reality in which SR is based upon what Bookchin [1989] describes as a new ecological sensibility that recognises the integrity of the ecosphere as an end in itself.

- ***Application principles:***

Precautionary principle: favoured to protect vulnerable groups.

Environmental thresholds and limits: favoured as a means of focusing upon the environmentally destructive tendencies of capitalist systems.

Environmental compensation: not favoured where it perpetuates societal hierarchies –

“rather than equal shares, the principle of the equality of unequals would apply” [Marshall, 1995, p.429].

Demand management: favoured in line with an equitable distribution of power and wealth across society.

Best practicable environmental option: not favoured where the best option is a question of private interest expedience.

1.2.6 Conceptual acceptance

The above conceptualisations for SR are essentially theoretical in character. Each is tied to the same social reality underlying the discourse of sustainable development, i.e. the need to re-examine and reposition the benefits/disbenefits of environmental exploitation in relation to the progress and form of human development. All accept, in their own ways, the importance of inculcating a new or revised 'sustainable conscience' and that this awareness

“requires major shifts in the way governments and individuals approach issues of environment, development and international co-operation” [WCED, 1987, p.310].

“The challenge is to put this understanding into action and make the transition to sustainable forms of development and lifestyles” [Keating, 1993, p.vii].

The onus of this challenge falls, in the first instance, upon central government, where its context has become increasingly acknowledged and vocalised¹. Specific strategies for delivery are required as the global institutional acceptance of sustainable development (in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the consensual endorsement of the UNCED's Agenda 21 [Lovejoy, 1992; Keating, 1993]) leaves much to discretion, giving room for manoeuvre to all the conceptualisations outlined above. The strengths and weaknesses of these documents

“lies in the absence of detailed and ready-made policy prescriptions on discrete environmental problems” [Backstrand *et al.*, 1996, p.227].

In the United Kingdom the former administration's White Papers *This Common Inheritance* [HMG, 1990] and *Sustainable Development: the UK Strategy* [HMG, 1994] and the present one's *A Better Quality of Life: a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom* [HMG, 1999] have supported the Rio rhetoric, but at headline level, been noticeably reticent in the area of prescriptive content. In the former the then Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer, stated:

“Economic development is just as important a concept as environmental protection, and we must find ways of achieving both together...The United Kingdom is determined to make sustainable development the touchstone of its policies...Year by year we shall need to revise and refine our policies so that our economy can grow in a way which does not cheat on our children” [HMG, 1994, p.5].

and in the latter Prime Minister Tony Blair states:

“The last hundred years have seen a massive increase in the wealth of this country and the well-being of its people. But focusing solely on economic growth risks ignoring the impact – both good and bad – on people and on the

environment” ... “Now, as we approach the next century, there is a growing realisation that real progress cannot be measured by money alone” ... “All this depends on devising new ways of reassessing how we are doing” ... “Together we can ensure that our economy, our society and our environment grow and develop in harmony” [HMG, 1999, p.3].

These statements illustrate both the apolitical and political elements of sustainable development – as a notion through which to map out the future of socio-economic progress there is cross-party consensus but the means of delivery will be inevitably contested depending upon its conceptualisation in relation to political allegiances and priorities. The location of this conflict is partially pointed out by Welbank’s [1994] conviction that

“unless demand management in some zone of activity is a vote winner, sustainability will not happen - at least it will only happen by stealth through gradualism” [p.14].

The dangers of this political minefield have been indirectly acknowledged by both governments as convictions become blurred, indeterminate and abrogated as discussions struggle to become more specific. Reactionary negative statements abound and the direct responsibility for positive action is predominantly passed over or passed on:

“Sustainable development does not mean having less economic development: on the contrary, a healthy economy is better able to generate the resources to meet people’s needs, and new investment and environmental improvement often go hand in hand. Nor does it mean that every aspect of the present environment should be preserved at all costs. What it requires is that decisions throughout society are taken with proper regard to their environmental impact” [HMG, 1994, p.7].

“We have to find a new way forward. We need greater prosperity with less environmental damage. We need to improve the efficiency with which we use resources. We need thriving cities, towns and villages based on strong economies, good access to services and attractive and safe surroundings” [HMG, 1999, p.8]

1.3 Policies for advancing sustainable development

UK governments, of both the ‘new’ left and right, have taken a strategically reformist stance in their acceptance of sustainable development as a policy shaping framework. This situation, however, certainly does not negate the entry and possible influence of more radical views in the policy-making process. Policy is a far from simple and sometimes counter-intuitive field of societal evolution as the following facets illustrate [Hill, 1997]:

- decision networks are complex and their subject matter is long lived and likely to stretch links back to the original policy-making process;
- policy direction and understanding is frequently defined incrementally over a series of decisions;

- policies change over time as a consequence of circumstance, feedback and alternative interpretations of need, i.e. the process is a dynamic one;
- partly as a result of this dynamism, favourable policy closure is constantly sought by interested parties;
- Non-decision-making is often as important as positive decision-making;
- Policy may be seen as a pattern of actions over time without any specific decision-making.

The previous section outlined a range of conceptualisations of the notion of sustainable development which as cognisant entities are predominantly theoretical. It is policy which may translate them, partially or fully, into a tangible existence.

“In the policy process there is a continual debate and struggle for the success of ideas and their attendant interests. What causes policy variation and change is the way in which certain ideas are selected” [John, 1998, p.19].

Within the public arena, institutional arrangements (such as the planning system) have laws, rules, beliefs, skills etc. which delimit and offer continuity to the decision-making process. This is not an insular process however, as while it simultaneously shapes the understanding of issues to inform sectoral policy content, it also takes account of , and/or is influenced by, the forces of socio-economic interest.

The rhetorical headline statements of intent quoted above appear to lack a tangible conceptual coherence. Such high level commitment is, as often, a casualty of the apparent space for politically damaging conflicts of interest. The need for this circumspection may be explained by reference to the array of possible policy approaches to advancing sustainable development. The following stand as three broad examples. They loosely prioritise i.) bio-physical dimensions [Marshall, 1997], ii.) social dimensions [Redclift, 1999] and iii.) political dimensions [Hajer, 1995].

1.3.1 Bio-physically founded policy approaches for sustainable development

Differentiation between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ forms of intervention. The former involves an amelioration of environmental impacts within a frame which does not fundamentally alter the existing production and consumption arrangements. For example ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ policy responses regarding transport issues might respectively be a.) investment in certain areas of public transport especially where they are technologically advanced or have modern consumer appeal, or, b.) reduction in car use with a large shift to public transport. Similarly with regard to land use a ‘soft’ response might be a.) to reduce slightly the rate of land

consumption through urban and regional planning, and a 'hard' response might be to b.) cut the rate of land urbanisation (or de-ruralisation) to approximately zero percent.

1.3.2 Socially founded policy approaches for sustainable development

Based upon three strategic responses: a.) to accept present 'wants' but to change how they are delivered – more or less radical technological fixes as envisaged through the concept of ecological modernisation; b.) to modify those areas of consumption where there is conclusive evidence of direct and irreversible environmental resource damage – as envisaged within ideas of demand management and ecological modernisation; c.) to both reactively and proactively modify the makeup and content of the overall package of consumption by focusing policy upon changing what people think they want – as envisaged within ideas of the precautionary principle and demand management.

1.3.3 Politically founded policy approaches for sustainable development

Policy in which the purpose is to achieve 'discursive closure' over problems of environmental resource exploitation. This requires that a problem be given a clear and acceptable public definition through which policy can readily contain any potential social conflict which might erupt. The policy (and subsequent delivery) must be seen as an effective means of resolving ('closing') the problem as previously defined. This approach reflects the managerialism contained within the concept of ecological modernisation.

When examining national policy (which the hierarchical arrangement of the English Planning System directly reflects into policy-making within local planning authorities) it very soon becomes clear that overall strategy invokes a blend of approaches of the types outlined above. For example *A Better Quality of Life* [HMG, 1999] adopts the following ten themes to scope its normative policy-making frame:

- putting people first – a better quality of life both now and in the future;
- taking a long term perspective – safeguarding the interests of future generation whilst not ignoring present needs;
- taking account of costs and benefits – including intangible and public resources;
- creating an open and supportive economic – flourishing trade to aid competitiveness and act as a stimulus for growth and greater resource efficiency;
- combating poverty and social inclusion – everyone should have access to high quality public services, education and employment opportunities;
- respecting environmental limits: there are likely to be limits to environmental resource exploitation;

- the precautionary principle – preventing environmental degradation through assessing costs and benefits of action whilst ensuring transparency in decision-making;
- using scientific knowledge – deciding early on in the planning process where scientific advice or research;
- transparency, information, participation and access to justice;
- making the polluter pay – ensuring the social costs of pollution are not publicly drawn.

This example illustrates the difficulties in scratching the academic itch to neatly classify policy along a scale from ‘strong’ to ‘weak’, or, ‘light’ to ‘dark’, or, ‘eco’ to ‘techno’, as so many commentators seem to feel obliged to do. The politics of sustainable development defies such classification. The reason for this is simply that the environment and development are inseparable [Luke, 1999] and, despite suppositions to the contrary, the variables involved are sufficiently complex and diverse to escape heavily ordered academic entrapment. At the national and international levels so little is knowable and/or provable that prescriptive policy is inevitably unfocused and sectorally vague. The more significant issue at this scale is that of the moral political will to create

“a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs” [WCED, 1987, p.9].

Sustainable development strategic policy thus exists as a composite, shifting and uneven staging point from which conceptually framed statements may or may not be launched into delivery. The line between ‘may’(substance) or ‘may not’ (rhetoric) is a fine one and is defined by the aforementioned ‘will’. If the will is lacking, for whatever reason, then the rhetoric will persist (as to talk in the language of unsustainability is clearly unacceptable) but the hidden negative hand of policy in the shape of ‘non-decision making’ will come to the fore. In such situations

“the powerful act to ensure that only those issues that are comparatively innocuous to them ever reach the point of decision” [Harding, 1996, p.639],

or, as Meyer-Abich [1993] puts it, in discussing climate change policy, everything will be done to do nothing at present. From this perspective, and in a western context, only sufficient is done in terms of implementation to reduce the threats to capitalism posed by the global ecological movement [Finger, 1993]. Banuri [1993] goes as far as to suggest that the 1992 Earth Summit was only so well attended because governments were hoping to protect themselves from the costs of global degradation and clean-up strategies. If, however, the will

to think sustainably is driving policy then a positive SR of environmental resources is likely to be carried into delivery and eventually into the essential realm of people's day to day lives. The following section considers such substantive delivery from three overlapping perspectives. The first focuses upon participative/consultative user-orientated processes and initiatives as the conduit for putting SR on the ground; the second is generally more formal and managerial, and; the third is likely to inform both of these through the use of monitoring, measurement and indicators.

1.4 Delivery

When it comes down to the final step of actually 'delivering' SR the train of understanding from notion, to conception, to policy and ultimately delivery becomes ever more fragmented. Almost every social action and reaction can somehow be tapped into the discourse of sustainable development. What separates the committed from the disingenuous, however, is that justification in the case of the latter is to be found in arguments based upon activity being 'more sustainable'. Statements of this type equate more readily with the expression 'less unsustainable'. Having said this, the 'less unsustainable' position is often as far as some activities/sectors can go without change elsewhere in the arrangements of production and consumption.

For the purposes of this area of discussion therefore we will consider delivery mechanisms which cut across this structural inconsistency and web of dependency in the form of:

- i.) Local Agenda 21 and Best Value
- ii.) environmental assessment;
- iii.) indicators and targets;

1.4.1 Local Agenda 21 and Best Value

Central government administrations over the past decade have, from at least superficially different perspectives, attached increasing importance to community enablement in policy implementation:

“(c)ommunity in its many guises has become a popular notion and has gained political credibility. Though a difficult concept to define, community has become an apparatus, a vehicle and a mechanism for righting all wrongs” [Webster, 1998, p.182].

Probably as a part of this shift, the 'local' function of sustainable development in the shape of Local Agenda 21 (LA21) has achieved some degree of purchase. In more formal terms this project is the local embodiment of Agenda 21 which involves developing partnerships among local authorities, the business sector, NGOs and citizens to improve quality of life through the management and enhancement of the local environment and social and economic conditions:

“Many of the problems and solutions listed in Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, so local authorities have a key role to play in making sustainable development happen” ... “Local officials should consult citizens and community, business and industrial organisations to gather information and build a consensus on sustainable development strategies. This consensus would help them reshape local programmes, policies, laws and regulations to achieve Agenda 21 objectives. The process of consultation would increase people’s awareness of sustainable development issues.” [Keating, 1993, p.47]

Local government in Britain is proving a considerably active agency with regard to this sphere of delivering sustainable development [Voisey *et al.*, 1996] with principles and targets being developed in a partnership between local authorities and local ‘stakeholders’ [Macnaghten *et al.*, 1995]. Significant central government pressure was applied to encourage each authority to develop an appropriate Local Agenda 21 by the year 2000, “i.e. a locally based environmental strategy of action, developed in conjunction with members of the community” [Hollins & Percy, 1996]. LA21 strategies were to take into account environmental issues and social dimensions which Agyeman and Evans [1994a] divided into the following four themes:

“community environmental education; democratisation; ‘balanced partnership’; and integrated/holistic policy making” [p.20].

Each strategy, therefore, was to be developed with the full participation of the local community. They are *community strategies*, the key features of which include: a long term vision statement; a prioritised action plan; implementation mechanisms, and; monitoring and reporting through the use of indicators. On behalf of the WWF-UK Webster [1998] identifies the following firm principles which must underpin such work [p.183]:

- The issues being addressed have real local relevance.
- Making real the links between environmental sustainability and lifestyle decisions and expectations.
- The process of community engagement seeks to improve the relationship between ‘top and bottom’ in order to find new directions together;
- Increasing meaningful dialogue between communities and local government, leading to more informed policies.
- Identifying and removing the blocks and barriers that inhibit community participation.
- Enabling all participants to develop and practice new skills.
- Local people prepare a local plan which identifies their own role, as well as that of other organisations.
- There is no single right answer.

The implied increase in the diversity, complexity and more nature-based interest of social organisation suggests that LA21 initiatives gravitate toward the more absolute,

preservationist, 'deep' green ideals, than the more relative, utilitarian, conservationist aspirations typified by U.K. central government policy [Jacobs, 1995].

The LA21 initiative in the UK was launched after 1992 by a number of key individuals with some local government association support. A cross-sectoral LA21 steering group was set up to promote the initiative and support local authorities [Morphet & Hams, 1994]. The former Local Government Management Board (LGMB) sustainable development unit drove and co-ordinated much of the work on behalf of LA associations, with some financial support from central Government. By way of guidance this body produced a set of six key action areas (see Table 1.4, below) which together illustrate the need for an interdepartmental approach, the most vital departments being land use planning, transport, economic development, environment, and housing [Manchester City Council, 1995].

Table 1.4 - LGMB LA21 Steering Group's 6 action areas for the Local Agenda 21 process

[N.B. columns 1 and 2 indicate action to be facilitated within the local authority and columns 3-6 indicate action to be facilitated in the wider community]

<i>Managing and improving the local authority's own environmental performance</i>	<i>Integrating sustainable development aims into the local authority's policies and activities</i>	<i>Awareness-raising and education</i>	<i>Consulting and involving the general public</i>	<i>Partnerships</i>	<i>Measuring, monitoring and reporting on progress towards sustainability</i>
Corporate commitment Staff training and awareness raising Environmental management systems Environmental budgeting Policy integration across all sectors	Green housekeeping Land use planning Transport policies and programmes Economic development Tendering and purchaser / provider splits Housing services Tourism and visitor strategies Health strategies Welfare, equal opportunities and poverty strategies Explicitly 'environmental' services	Support for environmental education Awareness-raising events Visits and talks Support for voluntary groups Publication of local information Press releases Initiatives to encourage behaviour change and practical action	Public consultation processes Forums Focus groups 'Planning for real' Parish maps Feedback mechanisms	Meetings, workshops and conferences Working groups / advisory groups Round tables Environment city model Partnership initiatives Developing-world partnerships and support	Environmental monitoring Local state of the environment reporting Sustainability indicators Targets Environmental impact assessment (EIA) Strategic environmental assessment

Source: Manchester City Council, 1995, p.35

The potential of the LA21 process to promulgate essential lifestyle changes and overcome barriers to environmental re-/evaluation, many of which Milbrath [1995] describes as “in the head” phenomena [p.117], has been widely recognised. For example, with regard to urban regeneration via City Challenge or Single Regeneration Budget projects, Bennett and Patel [1995] suggest LA21 plans may hold the key to sustainable regeneration, reducing

“the impact of time constraints on the bidding process and also the pressure to present a “united front” at the time of the bid” [p.145].

The Countryside Commission’s 1995 report, *Ideas in Action for Local Agenda 21*, and the U.K. National Council’s 1996 *Selection of Best Practice for Habitat II* [Dwelly, 1996] illustrates many specific examples of grass-root support and interest.

Despite some degree of success it seems likely that the term Local Agenda 21 will soon be lost and subsumed within the terminology of Best Value and ‘community planning’ which the New Labour government have introduced in the same vein as linguistically equating sustainable development with ‘quality of life’. So long as the underlying tenets and principles are maintained, however, this is probably a positive change: public perception and understanding has constantly struggled with and/or been mystified by the initial vocabulary.

The more populist definition of sustainable development introduced by New Labour, as

“the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come” [HMG, 1999, para.1.1],

resides more comfortably within their project of modernising government. The rhetoric is that ‘modern’ government will be both inclusive and integrated with the aims of: ensuring that policy making is more joined up and strategic; making sure that public service users, not providers, are the focus, by matching services more closely to people’s lives, and; delivering public services that are high quality and efficient. Both Best Value and community plans are presented as tools for achieving this and although neither are explicitly environmental the potential for full integration with social and economic policy is well made. The extent to which this will be achieved and the degree to which any one element may become a greater imperative has yet to be illustrated. In theory Best Value was introduced to replace the economic imperatives of Compulsory Competitive Tendering and as such gives more room for manoeuvre in terms of SR in public service delivery. The key elements are auditing, monitoring (where indicators play a central role) and review with emphasis on outcomes rather than processes. Community planning embraces a new duty for LAs to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the local area and to prepare a long term strategy, with their partners, to improve the quality of life in their local areas. The DETR published list of Best Value indicators for 2001-02 illustrates the shift away from LA21 as the rallying point for local sustainability.

Indicator BVPI 1 2000-01: “Did the Authority adopt a Local Agenda 21 Plan (as set out in Sustainable local communities for the 21st Century) by 31 December 2000? – Yes/No” [DETR, 1999a, p.24]

Indicator BVPI 1 2001-02: “Has the authority established a timetable for preparing a community strategy that works towards a long-term sustainable vision for the area? Yes/No” [DETR, 2000a, p.22]

1.4.2 Environmental assessment

Assessing human activity for its effect upon the environment is clearly a direct SR procedural function. Assessment in these terms has come to play a key role in the delivery of advances towards sustainable development. The defining characteristic of such procedures, outside of their explicit environmental posture, is the level at which they operate. Three distinct scales of operation have emerged: i.) at the organisational level – Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS); ii.) at the project level – environmental impact assessment (EIA), and; iii.) at the policy level – strategic environmental assessment (SEA);. These procedures have certainly not evolved or been presented as an integrated package and therefore we should not expect to find them neatly dovetailed into each other.

i.) Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

EMAS is a voluntary European Commission Scheme to register organisations which have established an environmental management system (such as the international standard ISO 14001) and produced an independently verified public statement about a site’s environmental performance. The scheme was established by EC Regulation 1836/93 and came into operation in April 1995. It applies to manufacturing sites and those engaged in waste disposal, recycling, mining and power generation. It has been extended in the UK to include local authorities. EMAS enables participating sites to take a systematic and comprehensive approach to their environmental impacts, and offers consequent savings on energy and raw materials, as well as marketplace advantages through the environmental statement and the site’s inclusion on a Europe-wide register. The local authority version turns the standard into a much more ambitious environmental management system. This is achieved by extending the scheme from single- to multi-site registration and validation of all an authority’s environmental impacts, including the service effects of its policies as well as the direct environmental impacts of its operations. Internally EMAS may be adopted voluntarily on a piecemeal basis but registration requires a far more integrated and corporate-wide commitment. Typically the scheme anticipates production activity to have negative environmental impacts and for these to be actively minimised, however, in local authority

mode it must also take account of the fact that some of the service effects of an authority will be environmentally beneficial [Jackson, 2000].

ii.) Environmental Impact assessment (EIA)

EIA has been developed as the principle formal means of transcribing environmental re-evaluation from a scientific perspective into the political and professional context. It is a project orientated systematic procedure for analysing the possible effects of developmental proposals on the environment as an aid to deciding whether a project should be given approval to proceed. The substantive output of the process is an Environmental Statement (ES) which is a comprehensive multi-part document reporting the findings of the EIA – an important element of which is the non-technical summary that reports in a deliberately publicly accessible manner. Consultation and participation are integral to the procedure which originated in the United States in 1970 with the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act. EIA has subsequently been adopted by governments the world over. Within the European Community the 1985 directive on EIA has been binding on member states since 1988. Within the UK the word ‘impact’ is often dropped hence the competent administering body is The Institute of Environmental Assessment (also covering EMAS). The EC Directive lists the types of projects where assessment will be mandatory (e.g. power stations, motorways and airport runways) and those where it is discretionary (e.g. agriculture and processing industries); significant omissions include housing developments, golf courses and water treatment works).

In the UK, as elsewhere, the procedure consists of the following stages (not all of which are statutory requirements [Wood & Jones, 1997, p.1238]:

- determining whether an EIA is necessary (screening);
- deciding on the coverage (scoping);
- describing the project and the environment in the ES;
- assessing the magnitude and significance of impacts in the ES;
- presenting the alternatives and mitigation measures in the ES;
- reviewing the ES
- consultation and participation
- synthesising the findings from consultation and reaching a decision; and
- monitoring the impacts of a project if it is implemented.

Several problem areas have arisen with regard to EIA which have repercussions for SR:

- the definition of ‘significant impact’ is inevitably open to interest bias – especially as it is the developer who is generally charged with producing the ES and they are therefore

liable to downplay deleterious effects which will reduce economic viability [Connelly & Smith, 1999];

- it often appears too late in the decision-making process to have any profound effect – alternatives are limited as the process does not entail analysis of policy, plan or programme from which the project was developed (see below) [Wilson, 2000];
- as representatives at local, regional and national scales may be faced with decisions which are not necessarily in the interests of the majority of people they represent, political distortion is inevitable –

“politically naïve application ... is likely to result in its being banished to the back rooms of government, rather like cost benefit analysis” [Simpson, 1996, p.215].

- being project based, they do not respond to pressures for an integrated regional/national response to environmental assessment [Glasson, 1995].

iii.) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Therivel *et al.* [1992] describe SEA as

“the extension to an earlier stage in the decision-making process of project EIA as more commonly practised” [p.31]

and more specifically as

“the formalised, systematic and comprehensive process of evaluating the environmental impacts of a policy, plan or programme and its alternatives, the preparation of a written report on the findings, and the use of the findings in publicly-accountable decision-making” [p.19-20].

In terms of advancing sustainable development, this ‘extension’ is important as it creates a greater potential for both vertical and horizontal integration in SR. Within the UK, formal response to this approach has been in the form of guidance and exhortation as opposed to new regulatory mechanisms (the closest to a statutory requirement is to be found in the environmental appraisal of land use development plans). As with EIA, the lead on formal mechanisms comes from the European Community where it has been introduced into the procedures for the allocation of the largely spatially based programmes of Structural Funds [Wilson, 2000]. The importance of gaining access to these funds within the UK is probably the most significant rationale for the recent identification of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as a procedural mechanism in the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance [DETR, 2000b] by Regional Planning Assemblies and Regional Economic Strategies by Regional Development Agencies. The methodology promoted is one of integrating objectives (economically, socially, environmentally and with regard to resource efficiency) and iterative application with methods centred upon benchmarking and target setting. It is too early to assess the

effectiveness of this approach but the implications are of course potentially highly significant for land use planning as a whole [Smith and Sheate, 2001; Counsell and Haughton, 2002].

1.4.3 Indicators and targets

With respect to an appreciation of sustainable development in the terms presented here the use of indicators and targets is of particular importance. SR in the light of long term and irreversible socio-environmental degradation will by default throw a spotlight upon measurement and future goals with regard, respectively, to the questions of whether things are getting better or worse and what levels should be maintained or achieved in order to ensure that the quality of life and environment settle upon a sustainable trajectory. Such assumptions, however, rest upon the nature, context and motivations behind each indicator which themselves emanate from the beliefs, principles, conceptualisations and material interests held by those either creating, administering or being guided by the indicators and targets in question. Notwithstanding this crucial issue (which is expanded upon below) the role of these indicators and targets in delivering sustainable development may be characterised by some or all of the following attributes [Bell & Morse, 1999; Lawrence, 1998; DETR, 2000c]:

- i.) to supply a firm base for formulating policy and proposals;
- ii.) to help understand what is happening or may happen to socio-environmental resources;
- iii.) to allow comparisons between what *is* happening and what ought to be happening;
- iv.) to raise awareness of 'sustainable' imperatives amongst the public and policy-makers;
- v.) to help people understand what they themselves need to do;
- vi.) to measure progress;
- vii.) to provide direction for policy initiatives and material propositions;
- viii.) to facilitate the prioritisation of activity;
- ix.) to allow decision-makers to be held accountable;
- x.) to encourage democracy through transparency and ownership;
- xi.) to encourage a long term view.

Reflection on the above list makes it clearly apparent that the actual figure(s) associated with an indicator or target is only the tip of the iceberg – their meaning as relevant sources of knowledge to the complex societal over-arching nature of sustainable development is supplied by the processes through which they are generated. Conventionally indicator data has been collected sectorally, the 'new environmental agenda', however, renders such an approach methodologically inappropriate. This change in thinking has recently been taken up by the Environment Agency which now sees its 'state of the environment' reporting as a much more holistic process involving explicit conflation of the issues of 'viewpoints', 'stresses and strains' and 'risks and appraisals' [Environment Agency, 2001]. Such

methodological reassessments illustrate that steps are being taken in some fields to meet the demands of the integrative notion of sustainable development, requiring that

“influential indicators reflect socially shared meanings and policy purposes as well as respected technical methodology” [Innes, 1990, p.4].

Only once such meanings have been addressed and some degree of agreement reached, through discussion amongst all relevant stakeholders, can a more scientific approach be employed. The evidence so produced will then relate to the policy direction of sustainable development through a shared meaning in which implicit value judgements have been made explicit and any subsequent decision-making a more transparent process. Throgmorton [1993] supplies an additional perspective to this dualism in stating that these meanings have a ‘rhetorical’ or persuasive function. The analysis required to generate indicators is both technical and disciplined by objective methods (i.e. scientific and professional) as well as subject to outrageous manipulation (i.e. rhetorical and political). Indicators have a tropal characteristic (as figures of speech) which give them a supplementary persuasiveness – they are

“rhetorical tropes that reply to prior utterances (hence are part of larger narratives), seek to persuade specific audiences, create open meanings subject to diverse interpretations, and help to constitute characters and communities” [p.22].

Irvin [1995], however, suggests that at present public policy with regard to the environment, whether it be based on ‘expert’, ‘democratic’, or ‘pragmatic’ approaches, still has scientific analysis as its core function while

“the bulk of the population has been reduced to an essentially ‘passive’ status – as *witnesses* rather than active participants” [p.78, original emphasis].

The persuasive characteristic which any measurement may possess is thus typically firmly lodged within the orthodox modernist framework, dependent on trust in expert knowledge and faith in policy to promote growth/development for the greater good.

The role of local indicators in lending substance to SR is rendered especially potent if they facilitate a shift from ‘soft’ (easy) to ‘hard’ (difficult) choices as introduced previously as an essential outcome of genuine SR. Lichfield [1996] outlines the problematic nature of such distinctions in which two attempts at categorisation are of particular relevance to us here. Firstly, that in which hard choices are related as those in which values must be traded off but, unfortunately, such values are apparently incommensurable – lacking a general standard of evaluation which cannot be resolved rationally. These hard choices are considered “neither rational or irrational but arrational” [p.29] and can only be resolved intuitively or as a consequence of social consensus as regards the trading off of values. Thus sustainable

development, in somehow establishing a new set of values, requires some means by which to make the values incorporated in a conceptualisation commensurable in the decision-making process or, in ‘hardening’ previously ‘soft’ options, they will at best be peripheralised or at worst alienated. A key role for indicators is to ensure that this requirement is met and they are patched commensurably into people’s value systems and thus are more likely, assuming that alternatives are offered or may be innovatively generated, to be incorporated into their lifestyles. The second categorisation is a variation on this theme and comes from Garrett Hardin’s ‘Tragedy of the Commons’ hypothesis; the emphasis here is on decision-making being hindered where individual or group interests compete with those of society at large. The argument for sustainable development attempts to resolve this by advocating the ‘think global act local’ approach to encourage decisions at the individual/local level to reflect the needs of the greater good. Indicators again have a crucial role to play in illuminating this link and bringing it within a recognised individual/local sphere of influence.

Maclaren [1996], in outlining a nine step process for urban sustainability reporting, describes six separate indicator frameworks (see Table 1.5 below). The differentiation between them is largely a result of the audience at which the output is aimed. Each has its own weaknesses, whether the results are oversimplified or overcomplicated, though combinational frameworks may inevitably prove the best compromise for extended comprehensiveness. The key to the success of each is the degree to which they take account of the multitude of links involved in generating ‘sustainable knowledge’ in the process of considering them in relation to domains, goals, sectors, issues, causes, or some combination of these.

Once an appropriate framework has been agreed upon then the process of identifying potential indicators, that incorporate the characteristics and fulfil the roles outlined previously, can be considered.

The goals of an indicator within the context of sustainability are fundamentally to supply interpretative linkages which operate bi-directionally between evidence and decision-making. As already discussed it is the process involved within a particular framework in establishing these links which will dictate their contingency in achieving the conceptual goal and it is the nature of these processes which we will now consider.

Table 1.5 - Indicator frameworks [based on Maclaren, 1996, p.191]

Domain based	Goal based	Sectoral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment - Economy - Society <p>Notes: Accentuates integrative aspects; shows either moving to or away but does not link to goals; e.g. Sustainable Seattle ‘report cards’.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carrying capacity - Basic human needs - Social well-being - Economic prosperity - Participation in governance - ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing - Welfare - Recreation - Transportation - Environment - Economic development - ...

	Notes: goals linked to themes, sub-themes, then indicators; only considers indicators relating to goals; weakness is that it does not cover some complex interrelationships; e.g. U.K. LGMB approach.	Notes: applies to sectors of municipal government i.e. this is the principle audience; determines accountability but compartmentalising may fail to show weaknesses.
Issue based - Urban sprawl - Solid waste management - Crime and safety - Job creation - Industrial pollution - ... Notes: easily understandable; but tends to be 'shotgun' approach; no attempt to cover the three dimensions of sustainability; lacks structure.	Causal - Pressure (automobile use, inadequate education, air quality, etc.) - State (air quality, unemployment, human health, etc.) - Response (bus lanes, special training programs, pollution warnings, etc.) Notes: Attempts to answer - what is happening? why is it happening? why is it significant? what are we doing about it? Can be difficult to differentiate economic/social pressures from economic/social conditions; can be very complex	Combination Attempts to overcome individual framework weaknesses through combination.

Innes [1990] proposes that for knowledge to be effectively represented by a social indicator it will need to possess 5 tenets that separate it from that derived via an orthodox scientific model in which values are neutral and the results are acted upon by 'rational economic man' (*sic*). Firstly to be influential it must be socially constructed within the community; secondly it influences as it becomes internalised within a communal common understanding; thirdly it is the product of intermingled professional and ordinary knowledge; fourthly it is often in the form of mutually understood myths and stories; and finally it comes in an undisable package of facts, theories, values, means, and ends. These challenge the view of knowledge contained within a conventional modernist framework in which faith is put in expert systems, the state is trusted, and there is a belief in economic development and progress within certain limits. Such a framework is typified by the former DOE's *Indicators of Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom*, [1996a] and to a lesser extent by the more nuanced DETR's *Quality of Life Counts* [1999b] and subsequent handbook *Local Quality of Life Counts* [2000c]. Macnaghten's [1996] research into public perception with regard to the type of indicators contained in the former DOE document suggests that their effectiveness to promote the personal and institutional changes required to achieve sustainable development is severely limited.

"The further removed information was from people's immediate dwellingness, the less likely they were to find it credible" [Macnaghten, 1996, p.9]

and hence react to it. He calls for indicators to be 'culturally resonant' and, in line with the approach proposed by Innes, suggests that indicators will only generate the essential public

action and support if the knowledge they portray: a.) is reflexive to cultural conditions; b.) creates trust in the promoting organisation; c.) encourages agency to overcome fatalism; d.) outlines the effects of 'instantaneous time' and 'globalisation' cumulatively on people's aspirations; e.) connects to the lived-in world, and; f.) leads to action in which people can actively contribute.

Indicators developed from the bottom-up, as envisaged in the Local Agenda 21 (see below) process, are therefore considerably more likely to meet the guidelines suggested above. Both Levett [1996] and Mullaney and Pinfield [1996] point to the DOE [1996a] report's failure to adequately tackle the vital social aspects of sustainability, most notably quality of life (confused with the income and material facets of standard of living and apparently directly tackled by the present administration's response) and equity, which will considerably diminish the effectiveness and impact of any such approach in assisting in the realisation of sustainability in the U.K.. Despite reference to the use of a Pressure-State-Response framework the published DOE output responding to this was very one-dimensional –

“they tell us about the *environmental* efficiency of *production* or *consumption*, but not about the *consumption* efficiency of *welfare*” [Levett, 1996, p.329].

Even within this singular dimension the all important linking was inevitably crude as none of the indicators were made-to-measure with regard to the sustainable development agenda and were simply pulled together from specific sectoral 'state of the environment' type reporting. The result therefore tended towards a more sectorally oriented herding together of statistics into a domain based framework with a heavy bias on clumsy environment-economy connections. In its defence however the report describes itself as merely preliminary and “intended to stimulate discussion about how we measure whether or not development is sustainable” (p.i.).

Even though the above criticisms do in principle still hold, the DETR [1999b] with its *Quality of Life Counts* document has added significant depth, gravity and focus to the subject of sustainable development indicators and targets. Under the 'quality of life' banner (which is seen as synonymous with that of 'sustainable development') around one hundred and fifty indicators are put forward with fifteen being given key national significance as headline indicators to provide a 'quality of life barometer' and seen as a powerful tool for simplifying and communicating the main messages to the public.

“The Government's aim is for all the headline indicators to move in the right direction over time, or, where a satisfactory level has been reached, to prevent a reversal. Where a trend is unacceptable, the Government will adjust policies accordingly, and will look to others to join it in taking action” [DETR, 1999a, p.13].

Table 1.6 - DETR headline indicators of sustainable development [DETR, 1999b]

Themes, issues and objectives	Headline indicators
Maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment	
• Our economy must continue to grow	Total output of the economy (GDP)
• Investment (in modern plant, machinery as well as research and development) is vital to our future prosperity	Investment in public, business and private assets
• Maintain high and stable levels of employment so everyone can share greater job opportunities	Proportion of people of working age who are in work
Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone	
• Equip people with the skills to fulfil their potential	Qualifications at age 19
• Improve the health of the overall population	Expected years of healthy life
• Reduce the proportion of unfit housing stock	Homes judged unfit to live in
• Reduce both crime and fear of crime	Level of crime
Effective protection of the environment	
• Continue to reduce our emissions (of greenhouse gases) now, and plan for greater reductions in the longer term	Emissions of greenhouse gases
• Reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve through the longer term	Days when air pollution is moderate or high
• Reduce the need to travel and improve choice in transport	Road traffic [volume]
• Improving river quality	Rivers of good or fair quality
• Reverse the long-term decline in populations of farmland and woodland birds	Populations of wild birds
• Re-using previously developed land, in order to protect the countryside and encourage urban regeneration	New homes built on previously developed land
Prudent use of natural resources	
• Moving away from disposal of waste towards waste minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery	Waste arisings (volume) and management
Improving quality of life	
• Achieving a better quality of life for everyone	Satisfaction with quality of life (to be developed)

It is envisaged that these headline indicators (see Table 1.6, above) will remain largely unchanged to provide consistency in annual reporting. *Quality of Life Counts* has received significant support from environmental NGOs in its central recognition that the quality of economic activity is critically important, not just the quantity. The criticisms have come, however, with regard to the choice of indicators which are not seen as appropriate reflections of this thinking, for example the use of Gross Domestic Product over more inclusive measures such as the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare [Friends of the Earth, 2000].

The complete national framework for indicator development and subsequent outcome orientated target setting is still in its infancy but it seems clear that it will reflect, as with other

policy areas, the hierarchical arrangements of contemporary English government i.e. a national / regional / local format.

There is clearly a place for national indicators as guides for central government policy - monitoring distributional issues, bridging the divide between the 'local' and the 'global', reporting upon the U.K.'s international influence (e.g. the overseas 'ecological footprint' of consumption), and supplying a touchstone to smaller scale endeavours. It is however at the local community (LA21) level where these measurements will potentially have most meaning and represent motivationally conducive knowledge.

1.5 Where do we go from here? Operationalising sustainable re-evaluation

Once a sustainable re-evaluation of environmental resources has been conceptualised, expressed in policy and given a conduit for delivery it can then be put into action through the use of an appropriate array of operational tools. The creative and adaptive use of such implements should then shift the incumbent society onto a 'sustainable' trajectory. The delivery mechanisms outlined above can then be used to monitor the effectiveness of these implements which in turn may signal the need to modify policy. If such a modification is not possible without compromising the adopted conception of re-evaluation then this itself would be required to change. So the *process* of sustainable development moves forward through an iterative and adaptive mechanism.

Within the arenas of local decision making, the tools of change are frequently expressed as criteria to be applied to meeting public or private perceived needs and objectives. For example a decision may be made to fulfil 'Objective A', 'Development B' or 'Initiative C', criteria will then be attached to ensure that it is achieved in keeping with broader public commitments 'X', 'Y' and 'Z'. Within the UK, the most privileged commitment is now that of sustainable development and this has been disseminated from national to local government (re. "The United Kingdom is determined to make sustainable development the touchstone of its policies" [HMG, 1994, p.5]).

1.5.1 Central government legislation

Whatever the issue, legislation is the most formal and obvious illustration of making things happen that governments can project. To minimise reference to the courts and other judgmental arenas legislation must be clear, implementable and policeable. Even though "political parties and governments are falling over each other in their eagerness to appear

green” [Ball & Bell, 1994, p.3] the commitment required in steering and passing acts through parliament readily creates hesitancy and uncertainty.

The principle means by which central government may operationalise SR in the running of the country are statutory regulation, tax reform (which may be viewed as redistributive environmental compensation at a national scale) and discretionary/voluntary advice and guidance. A comprehensive multi-sectoral examination of the depth, breadth and integration of these elements is beyond the scope of this study. A basic contextual outline, however, is a necessary pre-requisite to an understanding of the detailed position which will be presented in what follows with regard to land use planning

The legislative context of this research is covered by two quite distinct central administrations. The first being the late and post-Thatcher neo-liberal governments covering the period until late 1997 in which sustainable development as a policy discourse became high profile. The second being that of New Labour and the ‘third way’ which carries us through from their landslide 1997 election win to the present. Most of the legislation which framed considerations regarding sustainable development for the empirical phases of this research was passed by the former Conservative government but it will of course be important to reflect upon the findings in the light of the approach, direction and legislature of the contemporary New Labour administration. During both periods land use planning has been given a pre-eminent role in the interpretation and implementation of ‘sustainable’ policy and guidance. Understanding of this sectorally directed activity is obviously of critical importance to us here and will subsequently be considered in more detail. At this point however it is important to appreciate the bigger picture as sketched out by the wider body of statutory instruments. The intention in the two sub-sections below is not to explore the many critical analyses of legislation, but simply to outline environmentally related criteria within the bounds of UK national policy during the period in which the discourse of sustainable development increasingly found political purchase, i.e. from the late 1980’s onwards. From an analytic and research perspective it is helpful to divide this picture between the two administrations which it covers.

i.) Principle Conservative legislation covering environmental resources (1980’s – ‘97)

This largely centred on pollution control of the by-products of Britain’s (post-)industrial economy. The modern trend has been to concentrate legislation into a reduced number of Acts, for example The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (air pollution, waste management, integrated pollution control), The Water Industry Act 1991 (water supply and sewerage), The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (nature conservation), The Town and Country Planning

Act 1990 (land use planning and control, sustainable development) - significantly amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (development plans) [Ball & Bell, 1994; Moore, 1995]. The White Papers *This Common Inheritance* [HMG, 1990] and *Sustainable Development: the U.K. Strategy* [HMG, 1994] have, as discussed earlier, emphasised government commitment to a planned environmental policy guided by the principles of sustainable development. This policy was extended into legislation by the Environment Act 1995 which theoretically gave local authorities more power in pollution control, bolstered recycling policy, increased conservation grants, and perhaps most significantly paved the way for the creation of a cross-sector environment protection agency [Carter & Lowe, 1995] by bringing together the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution, the Waste Regulatory Authorities, and some units of the then Department of the Environment dealing with technical aspects of waste and contaminated land. This body finally came into being as the Environment Agency towards the end of 1996 with its principle aim, as set out in the Act, "to protect or enhance the environment, taken as a whole, in order to play its part in attaining the objective of sustainable development" [Environment Agency, 1997, p.1]. In an effort to deliver this aim the Agency set out to develop Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs) for every part of England and Wales: each LEAP being

"an integrated plan for identifying, assessing, prioritising and solving local environmental issues related to the Agency's work to protect and enhance the environment, taking into account the views of local government, communities and industry" [Environment Agency, 1997, p.24].

A very significant proportion of influential legislation emanated from international (e.g. the Montreal Protocol on CFC's) and supranational sources. The influence of the latter, in the form of European Union Directives, has had a significant impact in introducing and speeding up the generation of environmental legislation [Haigh & Lanigan, 1995] - that pertaining to the use of Environmental Assessments is of particular relevance to us here. The Assessment Directive (1988) cuts across many previously discrete fields and is explicitly concerned with land-use development.

"It reaches deep into the heart of administrative decision-making"
[Macrory, 1993, p.30]

and, although fundamentally a control mechanism, will be considered in its planning context later (re. Section 2.3.4).

In the area of taxation the Conservative administration only introduced a handful of environmental resource based measures (despite commitments to use economic instruments in place of regulation wherever possible [HMG, 1992]): a duty differential between unleaded and leaded petrol; a structured escalation in road fuel duty; VAT on domestic fuel; and a

landfill tax which perhaps most innovatively allowed landfill operators to divert up to 20% of their tax liabilities into 'environmental bodies' for spending on approved projects of their choice.

ii.) Principle New Labour legislation covering environmental resources (1997 - present)

The New Labour Government came into power in 1997 with an overall governing philosophy termed the 'Third Way' which may be viewed as a new interpretation of the values and policy principles of the centre-left. Key to this discourse is the need to 'modernise' British society and its economy in the light of wholesale changes in the shape and form of contemporary societies the world over. This response would seem to resonate with notions of sustainable development and the linkages with several policy areas can be readily made, for example in the form of integrated 'joined-up' government, urban regeneration (focusing upon neighbourhood renewal and local strategic partnership) and social exclusion. Several significant pieces of legislation have been passed with clear repercussions regarding a re-/evaluation of environmental resources. These include:

- the merging of the Departments of the Environment and Transport into one overarching portfolio entitled the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) – dismantled and re-organised in 2001;
- the Road Traffic Reduction Act (1997) requiring local authorities to produce Local Transport Plans focusing upon reducing local area road traffic and a strengthening of the requirement to review and assess local air quality;
- commitment of the UK to the 1997 Kyoto protocol to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases by 12.5% against 1990 levels by the Kyoto commitment period, 2008-2012;
- the creation of Regional Development Agencies (operational from April 1999) to regionally integrate regeneration, inward investment and economic development functions whilst placing "the principles of sustainable development at the heart of their programmes" [DETR, 1997,p.39];
- the Human Rights Act (1997) now sheds doubt on the adjudicative role of the Secretary of State in relations to appeals and call-ins under planning law, although a recent test case indicates that extensive legislative changes will not be necessary [Eaglesham, 2001];
- the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) strengthening wildlife protection, protection of diversity of species and habitats and tougher action against wildlife crime together with access rights of the public in the countryside;

- the Climate Change Levy (CCL) introduced from April 2001 placing a 'downstream energy tax' on all commercial energy users in the UK (except the transport sector);
- Waste Resource Action Programme (2000) to set statutory targets for local councils to significantly increase the recycling of household waste, which is likely to be supported by changes/ removal of the landfill tax scheme redirecting resources towards Government priorities on sustainable waste management;
- the statutory duty for local authorities to obtain Best Value from April 2000;
- the Local Government Act (2000) requirement for every local authority to prepare a 'community strategy' for "promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom" (para 4.1);
- planning policy guidance on housing [DETR, 2000d] encourages local authorities to utilise brownfield sites in order to conserve greenfield land - major housing developments on the latter will require consultation with the Secretary of State;

Despite all of the above however New Labour is still frequently cited as failing to grasp the environmental imperatives of the modern era. As Jacobs [1999] reflectively states the current Government has to date failed to engage in an environmental discourse despite its understanding of the importance of discourses in politics:

"The Government has far-reaching environmental commitments in key fields, and faces a number of difficult decisions where public opinion is at best anxious. Yet in none of the key areas has the Government presented a simple account of its values and purpose in a form which the public can easily grasp and recognise. There has been no 'ideological narrative', no 'story to tell' of the kind which New Labour has developed in other fields. In contrast to such areas, it would be difficult for most members of the public to say what New Labour believed or where it was going on environmental questions" [p.6].

Both the implicit and the explicit legislative elements outlined above clearly show that some quite valid steps are being attempted in a 'top-down' approach to the implementation of sustainable development - the legislation is becoming more integrated and shifting from reaction to prevention. One can say that the perspective adopted by the U.K. governments over the past decade have been based upon the concept of ecological modernisation, characterised as it is at this level by: management strategies which rely on science, modelling, and prediction; a framework of self-regulation through a corrected market economy; political structures of centralised national power and new international linkages; and an overall philosophy predicated on win-win scenarios.

1.6 Summary

Sustainable development thus has much in common with other nebulous ideas, such as democracy and freedom, in that it commands significant consensus in its national/international form but then as it is forced to find substance in the social constructs of governance and everyday living so it becomes highly conflictual. As sustainable re-evaluations can be put across through applying principles with very different societal repercussions, so they produce an array of different conceptions which, in turn, fan out into an abundance of policies and means of delivery depending upon the context of operation. Everything we do relates to our environment in some way: sustainable development asks us to re-evaluate this environment so that we relate to it, as a consequence of our impacts, in a new way with ethical undercurrents which are hard to overtly resist. Policies and proposals either do this for us through regulation, or, encourage us to do it voluntarily. The English planning system, as one small sector of national governance, has been directly tasked with drawing up such instruments of environmentally enlightened and imperative change.

ⁱ For example, the following excerpt from a speech by Prime Minister Blair ('Environment: the next steps', March 2001):

"When my parents were growing up the world's population was under 3 billion. During my children's lifetime, it is likely to exceed 9 billion. You don't have to be an expert to realise that sustainable development is going to become the greatest challenge we face this century.

We have already seen enormous changes over my lifetime. The six warmest years of the twentieth century occurred in the last decade. 25% of the world's land area is affected by soil erosion or other land degradation.

Snow and ice cover is estimated to have decreased by 10% since the 1960s according to satellite photography. Since 1980 10% of the forests in the developing world have been lost. 27% of the world's coral reefs have already been lost.

This process is accelerating. For some parts of the world, particularly the poorer parts, the effects will be catastrophic.

By 2100 the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere could be between 90% and 250% higher than in 1750. Increases in temperature over this century without precedent in the last 10,000 years, with the earth's temperature expected to be up to 6 degrees above 1990 levels by 2100. By 2025 up to two thirds of the world's population may experience some form of water stress. Yet climate change will also mean ever more extreme rainfall and flooding, and increasingly severe tropical storms."...

"Here in Britain, the Hadley Centre predicts that the UK will have wetter winters, more summer droughts, extreme weather and heavy rainfall. England and Wales can expect to see 10% more rain by 2100, Scotland 20%. If sea levels rise as forecast over this century, storm surges and flooding which we currently expect once a century may come as often as every four years.

Some of our most familiar plants will disappear, ones we consider exotic will become common-place, and many of our animals and insects will be forced to migrate northwards or disappear altogether.

We would be irresponsible to treat these predictions as scare-mongering.

They represent the considered opinions of some of the world's best scientists. We cannot afford to ignore them."

The formal history of environmental evaluation in the English land use planning system: the evolution of ‘*protect and enhance*’

The previous chapter examined the sustainable development agenda in a generic sense, providing an appreciation which lends itself to both sectoral review and empirically based research. It is the former element here, that of sectoral review, which now takes centre stage. The following sections cover the formalities of the English planning system – government guidance, direction, policy and legislation as the institutionally specific complement of this research study. The planning system has, since its inception, been the subject of many policy agendas. By and large such issues are not slotted in and cleared out once some specified objective has been realised. They overlay each other. The privilege attached to an agenda may subside but the institutional marks left have a lasting affect upon procedure, communicative activity and what are deemed acceptable outcomes. Environmental considerations, through the very nature of the system’s subject matter, have always been tied to decision making. This conventional attachment has typically been expressed in terms of ‘*protect and enhance*’. The introduction of sustainable development requires this entrenched appreciation to be re-thought and re-orientated particularly with regard to equitable and inclusive resource management whilst considering long term implications, global impacts and engendering shared cross-community responsibility. To appreciate this extension to an established field, the following text adopts a predominantly historical aspect. This format is important as, in order to understand the effects and potential of asking the planning system to assimilate sustainable development, it is vital to appreciate both the point of departure and the dimensions of change to be spanned as the parameters for sustainable re-evaluation (SR) within the planning system. The concluding chapter of Part 1 will bring together the generic discussion of the previous chapter with the sectorally specific narrative of this chapter to introduce opportunities and constraints relating to the incorporation of a notion of sustainable development into the English land use planning system.

2.1 Introducing a chronology of environmental evaluation in land use planning

For literature review purposes, a purely study-centred chronology is presented below, one which employs the formal 1992 introduction of sustainable development into the English land use planning system as its watershed. From this perspective the intention is to focus upon the key issue of SR across three phases in the evolution of the modern centrally prescribed system:

1. Pre-sustainable development – the historical context of environmental evaluation before 1992;
2. Introducing sustainable development into land use planning – initial steps, 1992 to 1998;
3. Sustainable development and land use planning – the agenda moves on, 1998 to the present day.

If 1992 exists as a relatively established date for any review of the subject matter, the selection of 1998 as the other key divide has perhaps, to date, been less fully acknowledged. In 1997 the running of the UK Government transferred from the Conservatives to the New Labour party for the first time in almost twenty years. The new administration, although not fundamentally altering the planning system or the rhetoric of sustainable development did begin to introduce a new vocabulary and delivery framework under the banner of ‘modernising government’ with a string of supportive and formal advisory publications from 1998 onwards. The timing of this research’s empirical work (1997/98) means that it is directly tied to the second of the above periods (1992 to 1998). The links with the previous and subsequent periods are however ones that must be made and carefully examined if the research is to contribute more than a fleeting historical snapshot. The intention within the following sub-sections is to present a detailed review of the history of environmental evaluation within the English land use system up to and including the period covered by this study’s empirical work. The premise being that the incorporation of sustainable development into the system, and what it means in terms of SR, can only be fully appreciated and understood through reference to what came before – opportunities and constraints will be essentially grounded in this past. Environmental evaluation has overtime reflected various priorities held both ‘in’ and ‘of’ land use planning, however, as Lee-Wright [1997] states:

“(t)he point is not that these are merely passing fashions. Each new priority tends to add to a list of planning issues, rather than substituting one for another” [p.44].

At this point in the text, the post-research period (1998 to the present day) will only be given summary coverage. Further consideration will be presented in Part III as the empirical findings will be used to reflect upon current directions, guidance and policy.

2.2 The English land use planning system: a general overview

The relevance of planning in the twentieth century has hinged upon the fundamental debate between government intervention and laissez-faire [Klosterman, 1985, (1996)]. Consensus, born from the perceived conditions and needs following the end of World War II, came down strongly in favour of the former and the modern land use planning system became one small part of the instrumentalities of state concerned with

“the appropriate mix of activities in space of all the diverse elements that make up the totality of physical structures” and their “proper” location [Harvey, 1985, (1996), p.176].

The context of seeking

“to determine *where* development of various kinds takes place” is “the thing which primarily differentiates it from other forms of control or intervention” [Reade, 1987, p.2, original italics].

This remit of proper location is further developed by applying the idea of resources - planning is

“a general framework for resource allocation which would ensure the best use of resources throughout the country” [Rydin, 1993, p.29].

From a process perspective

“(t)he essential characteristic of the British planning system is that it is one of discretionary development control operating within a framework of indicative policy guidance” [Rowan-Robinson *et al.*, 1995, p.271]

which attempts to balance vested interests and property rights with a minimum of judicial intervention. Its instrumental role within this sense has varied within a relatively stable structure - highly centralised and inherently flexible [Quinn, 1996] - in response to differing, and in recent years antagonistic, central government ideologies [Holt, 1996].

“The bedrock principle on which planning has been based since 1947: namely that no change should be made in the use to which land is put without the prior permission of a public authority” [Nuffield Foundation, 1986, p.55]

has been maintained via the three broad functions of development control, development plans, and central government supervision - the latter in the form of Circulars and also, since 1988, in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) [Newman & Thornley, 1996]. The discretionary nature of the system in granting ‘prior permission’ is encapsulated in PPG1: *General Policies and Principles*:

“ “In principle...any consideration which relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a planning consideration. Whether a particular consideration falling within that broad class is material in any given case will depend on the circumstances” (*Stringer v MHLG 1971*). Material considerations must be genuine planning considerations, i.e. they must be related to the purpose of planning legislation, which is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. The considerations must also fairly and reasonably relate to the application concerned (*R v Westminster CC ex parte Monahan 1989*). Much will depend on the nature of the application under consideration, the relevant policies in the development plan and the surrounding circumstances.” [D.o.E., 1997a, para.50]

Development planning as it is enacted today, is a product of some of the findings expressed in the Planning and Advisory Group's 1965 report, many elements of which were subsequently incorporated within the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act. This Act created the two tier system of strategic structure plans and detailed local plans with the key aim of co-ordinating public sector policy and introducing more concern with social and economic issues. In practice however, despite the apparent theoretical appropriateness of this approach, more or

less conspicuous failings began to manifest themselves. The most vociferous criticisms were process-oriented, centring upon the plans' inflexibility, working durability, and slowness of production [Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994]. The overall system has been severely tested in recent years, at the height of the Thatcherite era it was crucially threatened by deregulation [Brownhill, 1993] in the name of neo-liberalism and market-led regeneration. The early 1990s have seen something of a revival in development planning as new legislation inserted a presumption in favour of the content of the development plan when determining land use matters. The implication is that the planning system is now 'plan-led' [DoE, 1997a], assuming plans are up to date and formally in place. This positive reversal emphasises the importance of the research subject matter as, at the time the empirical studies were carried out, there were scant obligations within development control toward sustainability issues as governing principles or material considerations [Winter, 1994]. The realities of this plan-led influence are, however, debatable as Jones [1996] claims that

“although it introduces a significant change in emphasis in the spirit of the system, there has been no practical change in law and procedure” [P.62].

The fact that the overall structure has remained largely in tact may lead one optimistically to reflect, as Cullingworth and Nadin have, that a system

“which has absorbed so much energy in the last fifty years must, at some point, give way to substantive progress” [1994, p.19].

This energy, as expressed in socio-economic and political pressures, may have been absorbed by the system but at what cost in terms of running with a system that is responsive to public and private demands in a world socially, economically, environmentally, politically and communicatively very different from that in which it was conceived. The contemporary dominant faith in market mechanisms, whether translated through New Right or New Labour ideologies, and the new environmental agenda have increasingly sharpened and added to a longstanding complex array of tensions. These frame the aforementioned hope for 'substantive progress' within a deeper questioning of the entire architecture of the system. To sustain its utility and make progress the integrity of the existing arrangement will rest with its ability to reconcile the elements between which tension exists. The following is a summary list of the elements which engender damaging confrontation and friction with the system:

- a more or less overt presumption in favour of allowing applications for development;
- a perennial desire to foster economic growth and regeneration;
- a degree of consistency and certainty regarding the opportunities and potential for development;
- a need to speed up the preparation of development plans so that LPAs do not find that they are being overtaken by changing circumstances and policy direction.
- An open system which facilitates public involvement in decision-making;

- A need to ensure that the benefits of land use development are equitably distributed;
- A need for some kind of compensation for those clearly disadvantaged in changes of land use and physical infrastructure;
- A highly entrenched concern for the quality and protection of the locally extant natural and built environment.
- An increasingly accepted concern for the long term integrity of the environment across regions, nations and the world.

The parallels between elements of this list and the components of SR described in Chapter I under the banner of sustainable development are bound not to be lost on the reader. The planning system thus presents itself as a test bed in microcosm for the operationalisation of sustainable development. Before the new environmental agenda surfaced, the issue of balancing benefits and disbenefits stood at the discretionary crux of practical decision-making. Whether this quiddity can continue to prevail is a key question to be explored.

One very important characteristic of land use planning in England is that, despite claims of objectivity and neutrality, it is inevitably a highly political activity. The principle reason for this is that it is a significant and precursive element in virtually every other sector of state responsibility. Allocations and regulatory criteria are thus subject to a diverse range of preferences, assumptions and agendas. One might assume that, in order to respond consistently and constructively to such pressures, a robust framework would exist for achieving resolution. One constructed from a fixed set of substantive goal-orientated, professionally embraced principles which would guide trained practitioners to similar conclusions. This, however, is not the case. A substantive body of universal theory, expressed as rules, simply does not exist as a prerequisite of forethought followed by choice, decision and action (i.e. *planning*) [Lichfield, 1996]. Since the 1970s at least, *en vogue* frameworks have been perpetually subject to such a broad range of temporally circumstantial variables that they are robbed of the chance to lend the profession a substantive ideology and respected principled position. As Vigar *et al.* [2000] state:

“promoting the proper use of land is of value, not in itself, but because it achieves some purpose of environmental management, social welfare, cultural conservation or economic development” (p.7).

What has been termed the ‘art’ or ‘science’ of planning [Keeble, 1969] is therefore left to be wrapped up in the *process* of resolving/mediating conflicts over the right to develop land. Such conflicts conventionally centre upon the Janus-faced conundrum posed by new development versus preservation [Mega, 1997]. The following defining quotes highlight this procedural pre-eminence and subsequently the professional arena for local government planners:

- A need to ensure that the benefits of land use development are equitably distributed;
- A need for some kind of compensation for those clearly disadvantaged in changes of land use and physical infrastructure;
- A highly entrenched concern for the quality and protection of the locally extant natural and built environment.
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“It (the planning system) has a ... role in organising economic development, and in balancing economic, political, social and environmental factors to do with development in a democratic context” [Bell, 1997, p.217];

“planning is defined as *the activity of the state organising the use of space*” [Hajer, 1989, p.21, original emphasis];

“Urban planning ... is about the process of bargaining, negotiation and compromise over the distribution of scarce environmental resources, in which the planning authority, in attempting to mediate between conflicting claims on land, may promote particular interests above other” [Adams, 1994, p.2];

This focus upon how planning operates, over what it actually achieves, is commensurate with a notion of sustainable development as an ongoing and iterative process. The idea that the planning system might or should have a formula for achieving a state of sustainability is fundamentally flawed. Interested parties depend upon discretion and many would not tolerate, for example, a system with rigidly fixed zoning rules regarding the development rights of land. Therefore, theoretically at least, marrying sustainable development with land use planning is clearly a workable proposition. Success may be measured against substantive results (for example reductions in private car use or the preservation of greenspace) but how this is achieved in terms of an entrenched SR is the key issue in sustaining the process of human development.

2.3 Key elements pertaining to environmental resource evaluation within the English land-use planning system pre-1992

As the 1999 TCPA inquiry into the future of the UK’s land use planning system states,

“the overall purpose of planning is to manage change, and change is never a value-free process” [p.43].

Values have changed and evolved quite considerably since the creation of the contemporary UK planning system in 1947 and, although for the purposes of this review we are dealing with the period from 1947 to 1992 within this one section, this is purely a compositional device permitting us to focus more sharply upon the introduction of the sustainable development agenda as a watershed in environmental resource evaluation within the system. Commentators of environmental policy frequently skim over the first four post-war decades, aggregating them simply as a period in which environmental concerns in policy-making were of little immediate influence in relation to the imperatives of economic growth and consumer spending [for example Macdonald and Heaney, 1999]. Healey and Shaw [1993b], however, introduce a much more usefully nuanced account of this period in their historically derived paper on the treatment of ‘environment’ by planners (building on the work of Newby and Whatmore through a review of development plans and Government guidance). They identify four discourses relating to environmental evaluation which have developed and subsequently *co-existed* within the arrangements of land use planning in the 1947-’92 period:

- “i.) a welfarist utilitarianism, combined with a moral landscape aesthetic (1940s on)
- ii.) growth management, servicing and containing growth while conserving open land (1960s on)
- iii.) active environmental care and management (1970s on)
- iv.) a marketised utilitarianism, combined with conservation of naturally important heritage (1980 on)” [pp.14-15].

Notions of ‘environment’ and land use planning are inherently inseparable. This bonding exists at two distinct levels, both of which are of interest to us here. Firstly, the general level of the economic, socio-cultural and physical variables of day-to-day living which, at any one point in time, circumscribe its shape, function and future possibilities and is thus deeply political. Secondly, the narrower/specific level (and elemental in the former) of the ‘natural’ and built environment. Although this study’s subject matter will inevitably demand that the spotlight fall on the latter in empirical terms, the former can, of course, not be ignored as the very interventionist nature of land use planning ensures that its context and direction is governed by such issues.

The following sub-sections take Healey and Shaw’s chronologically assigned discursive labels as their descriptive headings. As already stated, the planning system is centrally directed and an appreciation of this direction is thus fundamental to our discussion. To this end, formal government guidance, direction, policy and legislation will be gathered and presented under each heading. This approach will allow us to throw modern understanding, policy and practice into an appropriate level of relational relief. One will not be able to assess today’s response to re-evaluation of environmental resources without an appreciation of the past. It is important to remember that these discourses co-exist, one does not replace the other and there are many, now senior, practitioners with sufficient lengths of service to have been directly and lastingly influenced by their emergence.

2.3.1 Welfarist utilitarianism (1940s on)

The principle agenda of government policy immediately following the end of World War II was centred upon rebuilding the built environment, safeguarding agricultural production and improving the quality of life. It is upon these concerns that the comprehensive framework for a land use planning system for the country was founded and in which issues relating to the evaluation of land use based environmental resources became firmly entrenched. It should be remembered that the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, although clearly radical in its extent and methodology, was not a new political agenda. Since the Housing, Town Planning etc. Act of 1909, specific land use legislation had been enacted relating to planning schemes and development control relating to housing for the purposes of improved public health and living conditions. Effective delivery, however, was cumbersome, slow, optional and

fragmented which, as we will come to see, might metaphorically be described as land use planning's procedural 'four horsemen of the apocalypse'.

The influence of the war certainly created huge synergy and impetus in terms of physical, social and economic rebuilding, set against visions of 'a new societal order'. The 1947 Act was, however, evolutionary as well as revolutionary. The former tied to deficiencies in pre-war arrangements and the latter to the privilege accorded to nationally structured and comprehensive planning as the vehicle for securing lasting and stable prosperity. The expert reports produced during the war (Barlow, 1940 – distribution of industrial population; Uthwatt, 1942 – land values, and; Scott, 1942 – rural issues) permitted the rapid take up of this planning accord, both during and immediately following the end of the war, with the Distribution of Industry Act 1945, The New Towns Act, 1946, National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, and of course the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 [Kenyon & Walton, 1998].

The modern planning system's essential content

Three factors set the new system apart from its contemporaries:

- i.) The right to develop land was in effect nationalised;
- ii.) the 'unearned increment' from the development of land was to be accumulated to the State as opposed to land owner;
- iii.) it created a relatively open arena for the debating of land development issues.

The new planning powers were laid on the shoulders of counties and county boroughs so that the number of LPAs fell from 1441 to 148 [Kenyon & Walton, 1998]. The development plans, and especially the requisite survey work associated with such plans, of this period dealt predominantly with physical matters in a highly classificatory manner – all land both in existing and proposed urban areas was to be assigned a land use allocation within a prescribed range alongside the marking of communication lines and protective designations.

Hall et al. [1993] see the above principles translated from

“the implementation of a national environmental policy dealing with the preservation of fertile agricultural land for essential food production, the protection of upland and wildlife habitats, and the greening of towns and cities”

and to ensure that this policy

“would not be compromised by parochialism and the claims of private property rights” [p.20].

The comprehensive nature of the system meant that it was capable of accommodating both large (e.g. pollution) and small (e.g. the enhancement of streets and parks) scale issues. Such issues however were considered within an economic framework of environmental evaluation and was only really an issue at the margin of economic activity. The environment, in an

epistemological sense, only impacted planning activity through the immediate human senses of noise, dirt, smell etc. and was still often portrayed as essentially deterministic.

Some significant degree of consensus amongst a very diverse alliance of interests immediately following the end of the war permitted planning to be a very positive and publicly orientated activity employing the radical tools of a betterment tax and compulsory purchase orders; the flip-side to this however was that the public were only peripherally engaged with decisions made through an executive partnership of government and expert administrators [Thornley, 1991]. As Reade [1987] states planning along these lines is

“predicated on the assumption that there is some pattern of land use which is socially desirable” [p.3]

but which is different from that which would arise from an individualistic land use activity. Parts of this arrangement, however, did not last long as the economy picked up and development sites failed to come forward in sufficient numbers to match. The backbone of positive planning in the public interest, as a major state-led development effort in urban development and redevelopment, was subsequently hamstrung with the demise of betterment tax under the Conservative administration of the early 1950s (although as subsequent sections will illustrate, efforts to claw back the unearned increment into the public purse have frequently resurfaced and never been far from planning’s political agenda). Despite this loss the following methodological framework was enshrined in the British planning system and has subsequently provided procedural continuity in the evaluation of environmental resources [Davies, 1998, p.136]:

- i.) a comprehensive and universal definition of development, relating to the use and development of land;
- ii.) a duty on local planning authorities to prepare a development plan;
- iii.) a requirement for planning permission from the local planning authority for any development, to be determined having ‘regard to the provisions of the development plan and any other material considerations’;
- iv.) a right of appeal to the Minister by any applicant for planning permission aggrieved by a decision of the local planning authority;
- v.) a power of enforcement if it appears to the local planning authority that any development of land has been carried out without the granting of planning permission.”

The legislation of this late 1940’s to 1950s period reflects three key desires relating to the use and protection of the human environment:

- a.) to ease urban congestion whilst embracing the principles of modern design and accommodating the emancipation of consumer choice/independence;

b.) to locate the natural environment as a lasting backdrop against which resource exploitation, healthy recreation and aesthetic appeal were to be fostered [Healey & Shaw, 1993b; Wright, 1999];

c.) to substantiate a preservationist separation between town and country with the stewardship of the latter principally given over to agricultural practices and priorities with a minimum of control.

a.) Congestion, design and public choice

The New Towns Act of 1946 and Town Development Act of 1952 both attempted to counter existing urban congestion. From the passing of the former until the sudden demise of the programme in the mid 1970s nearly 30 new communities, housing approximately a million people, were built upon principles which, although driven by demographic and regeneration pressures, clearly embraced a modern socio-environmental ethic. The focus of such principles was upon the qualities of human social life within the built environment. In practice these were related in terms of open space and the design of residential areas. Internally these towns were designed to accommodate the motor car whilst embracing quality of life principles. Externally, however, they related no more effectively to their hinterlands and surrounding countryside than any other town. In this context they are open to criticism through their failure to establish a new direction for environmental planning in terms of strategically responding to the negative aspects of spiralling private car use [Blowers, 1993a, Hall & Ward, 1998]. The Buchanan Report, *Traffic in Towns*, of 1963 highlighted the importance of the transport/environment interface, a partial response to which was to include transportation planning as part of the statutory development plans.

b.) Backdrop and amenity

In the immediate post-war period, the site designation approach was adopted as central to the modern age of nature conservation in land use planning. From the key Dower (1945), Huxley (1947) and Hobhouse (1947) reports the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act entered the statute books. The following two entries from the Act summarise the potentially conflictual agenda, with regard to the natural environment, in which the mechanisms of the planning system were required to operate:

“the preservation and enhancement of natural beauty”, and

“encouraging the provision or improvement, for persons resorting to national parks, of facilities for the enjoyment of the thereof and for the enjoyment of the opportunities for open air recreation and the study of nature afforded thereby”
[cited in Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994, p.172].

In terms of specific operation the Act also led to the establishment of the Nature Conservancy (to become the Nature Conservancy Council in 1973 and subsequently split, in a classic quango format, with the English arm being called English Nature). This body had a scientific

orientation to the designation and management of National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which were linked specifically to education and research. It is worth noting that nature conservation in this arrangement was separated from other land use matters relating to amenity, recreation and landscape. It is also

“worth reflecting that the powers of nature conservation at that time were both stronger and met with far less opposition than those for recreation in the countryside” [Bell, 1997, p.492].

The Act additionally gave LAs the same powers to designate and manage local nature reserves – these having local significance and being agreed in consultation with the Nature Conservancy. Consultation with this body was, and still is today, also required on specific land use matters which might pose any potential threat to a SSSI. Such advice is just one material consideration in planning decisions and hence is far from absolute in the face of competing, typically economic, interests.

c.) Town and country

As the private sector became increasingly dominant in the post-war rebuilding programme (the removal of war-time building licenses in 1953/54 initiated the first post-war property boom) so uncontrolled development was seen as a very real threat to local individuality and the distinction between ‘town’ and ‘country’ (re. Nairn’s ‘subtopia’ and the ‘Outrage’ issue of the *Architectural Review* in 1955). A single minded and popular response to this anxiety came in 1955 in the form of planning Circular 42/55. This extended the green belt principle, which had already been approved and implemented in Abercrombie’s 1944 Greater London Plan, to provincial centres in a concerted effort to check urban sprawl, prevent the merging of areas of conurbation and to preserve the special characters of historic centres [Ratcliffe, 1974]. There is additionally an apparent dovetailing between green belt and new town conceptualisations. Within a system built upon discretion in decision-making green belts offered some substantive absolutes and in more recent times have provided a tangible focus for environmental lobbyists [Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994]. Ironically it is the new environmental agenda which stands today as one of the sternest critics of the inflexibility of green belt designations as development, specifically trip-generating development, leap-frogs these ‘no go’ areas and potentially increases private car use.

This 1940s/50s period can therefore be seen as a time when land use strategies approached environmental concerns through the use of specific area designations which, whilst not existing outside of the ‘balancing’ executive framework, were ‘positive’ planning policies (even though limited resources frequently slowed publicly driven development to a shuffle). Value was explicitly attached to specifically demarcated physical areas of the environment for clearly expressed reasons relating to both utility and cultural appreciation, i.e. improving the

quality of social living space and easing congestion, limiting incursions of the urban built environment into the countryside, and protecting proven ecologically important sites from the threat of land use change.

2.3.2 Growth Management (1960s on)

The 1960s saw two major moves within the planning system influence the way the environment, predominantly the urban environment, was evaluated. These concern:

- a.) the arrangements of development plan preparation;
- b.) public involvement in decision-making.

Both instigated important procedural change but only one, the latter, related to an appreciable shift in perspective if not legislative commitment on environmental matters.

a.) Development plans

Some successes of the positive planning aspects of the post-war rebuilding programme were both directly influential and contextual to planning in the 1960s, e.g. accelerating demographic growth, rising prosperity and its corollary of spiralling private car ownership and use. Retrospectively unravelling direct/indirect cause and effect in this sense is not our purpose here, the intention is to consider what these changing circumstances meant to the planning system in terms of how environmental resources were subsequently handled as a response to the real and potential collateral damage of economic growth [Rydin, 1993]. From the procedural planning perspective, such problems manifested themselves in relation to out dated and overly detailed development plans which were readily overtaken by circumstance and thus rendered inappropriate and out of touch with the realities of development on the ground – a situation exacerbated for some authorities through a lack of resources and political conflict at the strategic inter-county level. Central government also played a significant delaying role as the Ministry for Housing and Local Government (MHLG) was unable to keep up with the required pace of plan approval. An essential element of the dislocation between plan and circumstances related to the paucity of public consultation in the cleansweep ‘modern’ methods through which land use development was achieved. A combination of the inflexibility of the 1947 embodiment of development planning and a very real lack of public consultation was undermining public acceptability of planning activity and decision-making. A very significant and tangible element of this was to be found in the trademark physical planning and design of early post-war redevelopment and pressures to facilitate the integration of road transport into everyday life as a crucial motor of economic growth. A realignment in the politics of planning from a deterministically orientated arrangement to one in which the, previously minor, regulatory strand was elevated began to increasingly find

purchase. Effective regulation being perceived as a means of benefiting poorer groups and as an antidote to socially unsympathetic re-/development planning [Vigar *et al.* 2000].

As Healey and Shaw [1993b] report the principle thrust of land use plans did not change during this period with policies and proposals focusing upon development and the built environment. What did change was the need to accommodate growth in a more flexible and publicly responsive manner than had hitherto been deemed necessary or possible. As a first step to achieving this the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) was set up in 1964 to broadly review the planning system and, specifically, the role/preparation of development plans. The output from this shaped the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act, defining the lasting and still existing basic formal arrangements in which environmental resources would be re-/evaluated in land use development planning, i.e. a comprehensive cover of strategic county-level documents from which tactical district-level detailed local plans were informed.

The most important point here is the defining of roles between central and local government with the former typically only being involved in strategic issues, local matters being predominantly left to local authorities [Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994] It should be noted that the 1968 Act envisaged that strategic 'structure' planning and detailed 'local' plans would be prepared by the same local authority, i.e. the 83 county boroughs (representing most major towns in the country) and 58 administrative counties. The local plans were not necessarily area-wide, it was at the LPA's discretion as to whether it produced such general plans or more geographically focused action area plans or subject plans. The key point however, in terms of consistency of evaluation of environmental resources, was that the link between the strategic and the detailed local plans was seamlessly assured as both were prepared by the same authority. With central government only being involved in the approval of the strategic structure plans – as the central plank of the drive to speed up the plan-making process. The 1972 Local Government Act initiated by the Conservatives, however put paid to the natural consistency of this arrangement as it established two tiers of local planning authority – fundamentally counties and districts with the former being responsible for the strategic functions of structure planning and the latter districts for local planning (and most development control matters). With the counties and districts now being independent political entities the link between the local and the strategic was far less assured despite maintaining a theoretical hierarchy between the two planning documents.

The work and influence of the PAG in the restructuring of land use development planning was only a partial, if more lasting, response to the breakdown of the existing machinery [Keeble, 1969]. In the absence of up to date / contemporarily reviewed statutory development plans, or while structure plans were being prepared post-1968, the MHLG encouraged more informal measures such as town centre plans (frequently the focus of the most urgent planning

problems), "village envelope" plans (strengthening resistance to expansion) and integrating land use/transport surveys (following the 1963 Buchanan Report "traffic in Towns"). In terms of environmental valuation these non-statutory documents are inevitably inconsistent, they were (and occasionally still are today in the rare instances where AWLPs have not been adopted) typically very locally focused but the degree of public involvement at this level was at the LPA's discretion [Kenyon & Walton, 1998].

b.) Public involvement

The PAG review was also tasked with ensuring that public participation was an integral part of the planning process. The response was to advocate that publicity and opportunity for representation be woven into the process of plan preparation. Methods, however, were couched in very general terms and of a consultative rather than genuinely participative nature, i.e. adequate publicity and opportunity to make representations, depositing the plan for public inspection prior to both submission and adoption, and illustrating that the requisite steps to assure full consultation had been taken to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State. The Skeffington Report was commissioned by the Government as a corollary to these requirements in an effort to work up methods and approaches to encourage and facilitate public engagement. Recommendations were again somewhat general in nature with the more specific proposals focusing upon encouraging engagement, e.g. through the use of Community Development Officers and Community Fora and assistance with survey work. The definition of methods in terms of style and scope for actively drawing the public into helping formulate policies and proposals at an early stage of plan preparation were conspicuous by their absence. The lack of statutory guidance in this politically problematic field is perhaps quite understandable on two counts: firstly, greater and more foundational public involvement is inevitably a temporally unspecified drag on the progress of plan preparation; secondly, exposure of the decision-making process throughout the stages of plan preparation would probably mean an increased perception of planning blight with regard to many proposals which would never make it into a finally approved plan creating social and political turmoil where otherwise there might be none [Ratcliffe, 1974]. In effect the potentially destabilising element of meaningful public involvement in plan preparation was left to the discretion and experience of LPAs with the statutory consultative requirements being put in place as the minimum level of interaction. Thus the ability of the public to become involved in a comprehensive re-evaluation of environmental resources was subject to baseline improvement in terms of consultation but, with regard to active participation, was curtailed on procedural and socio-political grounds. The growth management of this period in land use terms therefore attempted to counter some of the inflexibility and slow

responsiveness out of the system whilst partially socially revalidating itself by becoming more open to the pressures of public concerns and interest.

Positive or negative planning?

The issue of deciding who should be the financial beneficiary of land development also re-emerged in the 1960s with the return of Labour to government in 1964. This tortuous subject, driven by political ideology, has plagued the modern arrangements of the English land use planning system for as long as the Labour and Conservative parties have ideologically differed as to whether the unearned increment of development value should accrue to the public or private purse. In terms of this research the importance of the issue varies with the conceptualisation of SR. The most direct link is expressed in terms of environmental compensation but the full issue's influence on the building blocks of an approach to planning mean that any conceptual discussion is incomplete without its inclusion. The handling of the 'betterment' of land value as a consequence of the allocation of development rights fundamentally defines the role of the state in land use planning matters. The bone of political contention lay (and will continue to lie despite the present consensus favouring market determination) in choosing whether the public interest is best served by a 'positive' supply-led state-organised mechanism for selecting the most suitable land for a particular purpose or a demand-led market driven mechanism in which the state, through the planning system, plays a 'negative' principally regulatory role. The very specific legislative instruments pertaining to the management of the betterment question, as it vacillated in varying formulas between administrations in the 1960s and 1970s (following the aforementioned abolition of development charges in 1954), need not concern us here. In very general terms, the Conservative Government of 1970-1974 were pressured into introducing measures to respond to the very sharp rises in land prices of the opening years of the decade. In an effort to regulate prices a development gains tax and first letting tax were brought into effect together with a land hoarding charge to be levied on sites where development was not completed within three to four years of permission being granted. However, by the time these changes came into operation the previously booming market had fallen away, indeed they may in fact have contributed to this slump. When Labour was returned to Government in 1974 it attempted to steer land allocations in the favour of local communities through the Community Land Act of 1975 and the Development Land Tax Act of 1976. The schemes were, however, not flexible enough to deal with unfavourable economic conditions and the Community Land Act was repealed by the returning Conservatives in 1980. The betterment issue was carried into the 1980s and beyond under the auspices of 'planning gain' which had found some degree of leverage in the booming early 1970s. The principals of planning gain run parallels with ideas of environmental compensation and have dominated the extant remnants of the

betterment question through to the present day (technically referred to as Section 106, previously Section 52, agreements). The aim is to tie the developers into a contract to supply certain additional facilities on site or, potentially more importantly in our context here, benefits of a social, economic or environmental type which bear little relationship to the actual nature of the proposed development. The lack of formality and equity (through the risk of disincentivising development on less desirable sites) in attaching a locally expedient 'price' on the granting of planning permission are inevitably problematic: reflecting, as they do, a complex entanglement of leverage across the sphere of the social, political, economic and environmental parameters of development [Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994].

The point to be noted, and the one which has permanent implications for environmental valuation, within the English system, is that the 'betterment'/'worsenment', taxation/compensation, and private profit/community benefit all sit at the political apex of land use designation and allocation. The clarity with which these arguments spotlight winners and losers in a discretionary system begs questions of justice, equity and democracy. The issue must consequently persist as an underlying and frequently surfacing theme in any discussion, as ours here, relating to the operation of the English planning system.

2.3.3 Active environmental care and management (1970s on)

The new development plan arrangements, outlined above, emerged from an extended period of economic growth and prosperity. An apparently strong top-down hierarchical approach was envisaged as an appropriate framework for managing a more socially sympathetic and comprehensive positive planning system. Environmental resources were to be evaluated, in the first instance, through nationwide strategic plans which would inform specific proposals whilst respecting and enhancing amenity/aesthetic/ecological designations often based upon evaluations made outside of specific planning legislation (e.g. those introduced from the Civic Amenities Act, 1967, and Countryside Act, 1968, in the shape of Conservation Areas and Country Parks respectively [Greed, 1993]. Establishing strategy with strong links to central government policy would minimise conflict at the sharp end of local plans and development control where hard to criticise rational-objective methods would clarify and validate decision-making. Advances in information technology would further facilitate this approach [Davies, 1998]. The 1970's however rewrote the context upon which this methodology would be tested in two significant senses:

a.) it became a victim of circumstance as the economy of the early 1970s fell into recession instigated by the Middle East oil crisis;

b.) it led to a re-thinking of the system's strategic remit as the local government reform created a problematic two-tier plan-making format in local government across much of the country.

a.) A victim of circumstance

Without the oil crisis of the early 1970's and subsequent recession the potential conflicts which had been increasingly recognised during the previous period of economic growth, might have received a more environmentally sympathetic hearing in a more politically cohesive arena. The restructuring of land use planning set in motion in 1968 and subsequent consolidation and re-enactment (as Part II of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971) was never given the opportunity to be tested in both the national and local context in which it was constructed. A revised and retrograde perspective on the environment embodied as "a mixture of utilitarian/functional concerns and aesthetic consideration" [Healey & Shaw, 1993b, p.26] ensued. The effect of recession additionally dulled the edge of many arguments for reform. For example housing demand from the mid-1960s had brought green belt designations in to question, however, as growth pressure eased, central government support for the concept was reaffirmed.

b.) Narrowing the strategic remit

With these issues in mind, environmental evaluation in land use planning during the 1970s was most notably influenced by the introduction of the structure plan and its initial remit to step beyond physical land use matters and to consider major economic and social forces from a strategic and regional perspective – the latter being spurred by regional economic problems that bore no relation to a more geographically expansive environmental remit. The 1968 Act brought a major step-change in the concept and practice of planning into the 1970s, shifting it

"from an exercise essentially of plan-making and implementation on a prescriptive basis to a wider and much more complex process which was pragmatic and adaptive" [Cherry, 1974, p.178].

This broadening of the planning portfolio, however, appears to have stretched the bounds of *practical* integration too far – the structure plan would be required to run in tandem with economic and social development plans or to assimilate all these issues in a substantive form which, a.) they often did not possess, or, b.) were essentially perceived as mutually exclusive. For example on the pertinent issue of transport policy the effect of traffic on the quality of the local environment, as powerfully highlighted in the Buchanan Report (1963), instigated many land use-transportation studies into the early 1970s. The irreconcilable differences, however, between social, economic and environmental positions on this topic meant that the

"integration of planning and transport policy remained more apparent than real"
[Kenyon & Walton, 1998, p.158].

The perceived solution was to back pedal from trying to produce all-embracing plans, narrowing content down to policies of an explicit land use nature only whilst presenting other variables implicit in decision-making as elements of the supporting reasoned justification [Solesbury cited in Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994]. From 1979 this integration, as far as it did exist, was downgraded even further as 'reasoned justification' ceased to have statutory status.

The 1970s may thus be viewed as a period in which the development planning system was given the opportunity to engage directly with a far broader range of variables relating to land use arrangements and allocations, and so to position its evaluation of environmental resources in a more meaningful and richer context. The strategic view of the structure plan may be perceived as a vehicle through which such evaluation could embrace socio-economic considerations whilst reviving democratic principles with enhanced public involvement in the decision-making process. It is within these ideals that Healy and Shaw's [1993b] label of the decade, as one in which 'active environmental management' emerged as an apparent strand of land use development planning, is grounded. The development plan, practitioners and processes behind it were consequently being asked to enter, participate in and manage a highly conflictual political arena – one in which they were certainly not adequately prepared and also one in which re-regulating and anti-interventionist governments were not prepared to tolerate local government direction and control. By the end of the decade the hollow bones of the 1968 Act remained but the marrow of a more socio-environmentally capable regulative body had not been allowed to mature and promote growth. Healy and Shaw [1993b] place responsibility for the thwarting of this potential squarely on the doorsteps of Whitehall:

“In retrospect, it is a tragedy that the innovatory effort of the 1970s in local environmental management was largely closed off by the hostility of central government” [p.26].

2.3.4 A marketised utilitarianism, combined with conservation of naturally important heritage (1980s on)

As the 1970s began with a broadening of the planning agenda in which environmental resources could be evaluated and ended with the Town and Country Planning (Structure and Local Plan) Amendment Regulation, 1979, diluting the importance of social dimensions (downgrading 'reasoned justification' to a non-statutory status) so something of the reverse occurred in the 1980s. The Conservative government which came to power under Margaret Thatcher in 1979 brought with it a very fixed ideology, the policy translation of which would markedly alter the way in which land use planning was conceived. At the heart of this ideology was a conviction that the country's economic salvation lay (in)famously with 'rolling back the frontiers of the state' to facilitate market-led development and enhance

personal choice. De-regulation was to be a key vehicle in a sustained project to succeed the retrospectively labelled post-war consensus as it apparently faltered and crumbled in the wake of the 1974/75 economic crisis of a fourfold oil price rise, the 'three day week', budget deficits, stagflation, doubling unemployment and real falls in the country's GDP.

As a direct means of state intervention the English land use planning system was inevitably a subject of detailed review during the successive Thatcher governments of the 1980s. It is testimony to the flexibility of the system that, despite the close attentions of new Right thinking, the arrangements for planning control did not fundamentally alter. This pliability may be attributed to the system's discretionary character which renders it a useful conduit for implementing central government policy. The established use of Circulars and, from 1988, Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), Regional Planning Guidance Notes (RPGs) and Mineral Policy Guidance Notes (MPGs) have given successive administrations the facility to define the parameters of land allocation and development – and this very much happened in the 1980s under the re-conceptualisation of the State's role in relation to furthering economic growth and prosperity. Supply-side economics came to the fore and in characteristically narrow terms the planning system was more than encouraged to facilitate supply in land use terms whilst balance and discretion was shaped to support a market-orientated executive arrangement. The title of the 1985 White Paper 'Lifting the Burden' [HMG] expresses the feeling behind the government philosophy and, although it did not find its way onto the Statute Book, it was importantly supportive of policy and legislation of the time. As commentators of the Thatcherite period [Thornley, 1993; Brindley *et al.*, 1996; Tewdr-Jones & Harris, 1998; Hull & Vigar, 1998] persistently point out the principle landmark planning framework in the country suffered much "rhetorical attack" but essentially only "system fine-tuning" [Hull & Vigar, 1998, p.114].

This is not to say that change did not take place. Many significant measures were implemented in efforts to limit bureaucratic constraints to economic progress. From an environmental perspective, these measures can crudely be characterised as strengthening the evaluative divide between town and country. This situation involved the 'boxing up' of environmental evaluation, most significantly via:

- a.) Urban regeneration;
- b.) Countryside protection.

a.) Urban regeneration

Under the remit of regeneration, project based schemes were given significant privilege through the setting up of Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) and Enterprise Zones (EZs) where many normal planning controls were suspended, together with changes to the Use Classes Order. These essentially development control matters were introduced into

legislation by the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 and reflect the underlying intentions of the Government's efforts to reorientate the system in terms of streamlining process and creating a confidence inspiring degree of certainty for developers and the business community. The use of initiatives to accelerate action on the ground was a particularly eye-catching method, especially as they frequently by-passed the executive role of local government. Local planning authorities were to be the enablers in the project with the SoS poised to take corrective action if too many provisos were attached which might undermine the potential of private sector development. With the focus upon facilitating the physical infrastructure for economic development on the ground, the role of the strategic county-level tier of development planning became increasingly uncertain [Hull & Vigar, 1998; Poxon, 2000].

The effect upon environmental evaluation was significantly constraining as procedurally the push for greater fluidity in decision-making, bolstered by a renewed and explicit presumption in favour of development and reduced emphasis upon the extent of public participation, frequently led to the sidelining of questions pertaining to environmental impact /efficiency and the provision of community needs [Hull & Vigar, 1998]. Across the country the strategic element of environmental planning within the land use framework became somewhat confused with central government seeking to strengthen its grip and limit sub-regional autonomy in the administrative tier. Following the 1980 Act local plans were supposed to conform with structure plans (over which the SoS had considerable control), however, the adoption of local plans where a structure plan had yet to be adopted was permissible – coherence between the sub-regional and local was consequently far from assured. Following from the rhetoric demanding that the planning system be speeded up, local plans were less subject to Government influence – except through call-in powers as a last resort. Thornley [1993] points out, however, that the Government could circuitously achieve influence through agencies which shared its outlook and were able to stand as objectors at Local Plan Inquiries. The 1985 Local Government Act also had consequences in muddying local-strategic relations. The principle concern here was with the abolition of the Greater London Council and metropolitan county councils which were to be replaced by unitary councils. This Act forced change with regard to the strategic tier of development planning. Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) were introduced which, in effect, combined structure and local plans in a two-part document for which guidance over the strategic section would be drawn up in consultation with the affected councils but ultimately sanctioned by the SoS (in keeping with the sustained grip of central on local government). Therefore the hand of central government in advancing its economic imperative over other material considerations was wide-ranging, not necessarily overt, and politically destabilising at the local/sub-regional interface.

If these politically expedient 'divide and rule' rearrangements of the development planning framework did not lend themselves to coherence in environmental resource evaluation they certainly did not assist in resolving the increasing levels of conflict between advocates of progress driven by economic imperatives and those concerned with, and feeling, the collateral damage of such an approach on social and environmental capital. There can be little doubt that reform and reorientation of the planning system was most vigorously and authoritatively pursued by Government in the major urban and industrial centres of the country - a resolve strengthened by the push for urban renewal following the inner city riots of 1981 and open hostility towards municipal socialism. In this initiative-driven context, environmental considerations rarely exceeded the parameters of marketised utilitarianism as social and democratic issues dominated the debate over right/wrong and winners/losers [Reade, 1987].

b.) Protecting the countryside

It is outside of this directly influenced urban domain, in the sphere of rural and countryside planning that some form of environmental re-evaluation began to find purchase and in which increasing concern regarding the wider impacts of land use development had more room to manoeuvre and become established. One could argue that, in tipping the balance in decision-making so much in favour of market liberalisation, Thatcherism inadvertently elevated the position of the environment on the political ladder even if the context was often exceptionally local and frequently characterised by NIMBY ('Not In My Back Yard') and BANANA ('Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything') tendencies. The extension of market principles to tangible environmental resources and intangible qualities was both threatening and most importantly increasingly apparent to the electorate, especially those with significant property interests in the countryside, who were also importantly Conservative supporters. Detached trade in rural environmental assets as commodities [Whatmore & Boucher, 1993] was distasteful for most members of this group. The strength of feeling was made clear to the Government in the early 1980 when it released a draft Circular, with support from the house building lobby, aimed at relaxing development constraints in Green Belts and to reduce their geographical extent. The negative response from backbench Tory MPs and conservationists (notably the CPRE) combined with a House of Commons Select Committee inquiry forced a sharp u-turn in government thinking and the approved Circular 14/84 ended up emphasising the importance of the permanence of Green Belts behind a rhetoric relating to safeguarding the countryside and assisting urban regeneration [Marsden *et al.*, 1993; Bishop, 1998].

Some illustration of the language of environmental concern within the planning system in the early 1980s can be found in relation to policy on landscape and wildlife conservation areas. As introduced previously, the use of designations in this context was an established tool of planning control. The lasting favour of this approach is well shown by the fact that the

Conservatives continued to find it an important means for minimising conflict between environmental criteria and housing/industrial development over 35 years later. The general support lent to development interests through explicit statements of a presumption in favour of development and the relaxation of planning controls in the form of changes to the General Development Order (GDO) and a new UCO (re. Circular 22/80 and *Lifting the Burden* [DoE, 1985]) was dropped in conservation areas, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [Thornley,1993]. The preference for the use of such designations is further supported when one notes, as Bishop [1993] does, that between 1981 and 1992 fifteen new categories of protected area were established in the UK – the influence of the EU on this method of evaluation is additionally significant (see below). Bishop [1993] further highlights the suggestion that the planning system at this time was operating along three separate geographically defined tracks: i.) areas of high environmental value (which are not just exempt from the relaxation of controls but actually are extensions to it); ii.) the wider countryside, where more conventional planning responses remained largely intact, i.e. the facilitation of economic development with due regard to countryside conservation, and; iii.) urban areas where planning regulations have been undermined to give market forces the upper hand – most overtly in EZs, Simplified Planning Zones (SPZs) and areas covered by UDCs. This differentiation is useful to us here in appreciating how environmental resources were evaluated. Interestingly, the preference for designations as a control regime presented local authorities with a vehicle for strengthening environmental considerations in policy as well as control terms. By introducing homespun designations into plan documents “the distinction between statutory designations and the wider countryside becomes blurred” [Bishop, 1993, p.199].

European influence

As mentioned above the EU began to play an increasingly important role in the evaluation of environmental resources in national policy-making [Haigh & Lanigan, 1995]. Membership of the EU in this context made its presence directly felt in the sphere of development control on two notable counts. Firstly the Birds and Habitat Directive (1979) introduced the Special Protection Area (SPA) designation which meant that such sites may only be developed where there exists imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Secondly, and of greater significance to the direction of this discussion, is the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive proposed by the EC in 1980, becoming EU law in 1985 (Directive 85/337/EEC) and finally becoming part of UK Regulation in 1988 (with advice in Circular 15/88). The principles of EIA (as previously outlined) are that it should be a systematic and iterative process examining the environmental impacts of development with an emphasis on prevention. [Glasson *et al.*, 1994]. There can be little doubt that the Directive was not

welcomed by the Conservative Government. Beyond the established aversion to additional regulation, especially that which was externally imposed, arguments against formalised EIA are useful pointers to how the environment was evaluated within the planning system at this time. There was real feeling that the system was already fulfilling the function of environmental assessment, albeit at a much later and reactive stage in the development process. The iterative element of assessment was also problematic as it did not readily integrate into a decision-making process which ended with the granting or refusal of planning consent [Weston, 1997]. Haigh and Lanigan [1995] additionally suggest, in more general terms, that there was in the mid-1980s a belief held by both government and much of the public that

“Britain was one of the most ecologically conscious countries in Europe” [p.24] and thus formalised assessment was an unnecessary EC imposition. EIAs were nonetheless introduced and should be seen as an important step in attaching greater value to environmental decision-making within matters of development control for projects likely to have a significant affect on the environment.

The New Right and development plans – ‘can’t live with them, can’t live without them’

Within development planning the swansong of the New Right’s attempts to recast the now established hierarchical elements of structure and local plans came with the 1989 White Paper *The Future of Development Plans* [DoE, 1989] (issued for consultation in 1986). It reflected the Thatcherite approach to fulfilling the neo-liberal ideal by deregulating at the point of implementation whilst strengthening central government control on the general parameters of delivery. Support for change was gained from the influential 1986 Nuffield Report which pointed to: i.) the need for clearer government policy guidance to replace or support Circulars which simply interpreted legislation (such a change would also respond to EC criticism), and; ii.) the need for firmer decision-making guidance from the development plan. The first point was dealt with by the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) in 1988. The response to the second point being initially framed in terms of simplification through abolishing structure plans and replacing them with centrally sanctioned regional guidance (RPG). Rationalisation at the district level was to be achieved by producing Area Wide Local Plans (AWLPs) which would negate reference to previously popular informal non-statutory plans. County influence was to be down-graded to an advisory role in the form of ‘County Statements of Policy’. The effect upon environmental evaluation of these policies was never tested in full as the abolition of structure plans was strongly resisted by the largely Conservative-dominated county councils, the RTPI, planning officers associations and conservationists [Marsden *et al.*, 1993]. The uniting arguments revolved around issues relating to the importance of *process* in plan preparation [Poxon, 2000]. A salient point here,

and one which haunts all attempts to speed up the system, is that the development of land is generally a one way process. Open discussion, with locally knowledgeable strategic direction, is thus essential to ensuring that land use related decisions are as balanced and astute as possible – a time consuming process. The resistance to change within the existing framework came at a time when New Right thinking was under attack. 1989 saw Chris Patten, an acknowledged ‘wet’, appointed as Secretary of State – a move presented as part of the “greening” of the Conservative Government [Marsden *et al.*, 1993; Hall, 1997; Bishop, 1998].

The rise of the politics of the environment – cue ‘sustainable development’

The late 1980s and early 1990s heralded fundamental changes in environmental policy making in the UK as the need to reconceptualise governmental response, rhetorically at least, increasingly became a political necessity. The two key events cited as the overt markers in this transition, i.e. Mrs Thatcher’s speech to the Royal Society in 1988 and the launch of the UK’s first Environmental Strategy *This Common Inheritance* in 1990 [HMG, 1990] – are the products of interlinked pressures from many sides and at many levels. Essential examples would be: i.) the introduction of the notion of sustainable development onto the international political agenda through the WCED’s Brundtland Report *Our Common Future*; ii.) the potential repercussions of the climate change debate; iii.) the increasing influence of the Directorate General for the Environment (DG XI) within the EU on member states in the form of EC Directives; iv.) the need to regulate newly privatised public utilities; v.) the strengthening of environmental awareness within public opinion; vi.) the higher public profile of environmental lobby groups in both decision-making and direct action, and; vii.) the sudden electoral credence gained by the Green Party [Gray, 1995].

In terms of introducing and advancing the notion of sustainable development in land use planning the publication of the Brundtland Report is the seminal event. The issues raised in the report were discussed at the UN General Assembly in 1989 and led to the passage of resolution 44/228 calling for a UN Conference on Environment and Development (the ‘Earth Summit’ of 1992). In the same year the UK Government produced a progress report on implementing sustainable development, *Sustaining Our Common Future* [HMG, 1989]. The ideas from this report were then taken up in the UK’s first comprehensive strategy, The White Paper on the Environment *This Common Inheritance – Britain’s Environmental Strategy* [HMG, 1990].

This Common Inheritance (TCI) is important to us here as the first major government statement announcing SR as an intention. Sectoral policy direction and guidance has rolled out from it and its successors. As Gray [1995] states, commentators tend to interpret this point of departure in one of two ways. Firstly, as the beginning of a progressive sea-change in UK environmental policy –

“on this view the traditional British approach to the environment – variously characterised as incremental, tactical, fragmented, reactive, pragmatic, minimalist, decentralised, voluntaristic, accommodatory, informal, consensual, secretive, elitist and low priority – was replaced by a new approach, variously characterised as comprehensive, strategic, integrated, proactive, principled, interventionist, centralised, legalistic, confrontational, formalised, transparent, democratised and high profile” [p.1].

The alternative interpretation is that the change is simply rhetorical, creating a smoke screen of good intention and low commitment behind which the required environmental re-evaluation is purely illusory. The conclusions of this research should usefully contribute to this debate from a sectoral perspective. Before relating what TCI had to say in relation to land use planning, it is helpful to consider its context in more general terms. Leaving aside the above views, the White Paper served three important purposes:

- i.) it directly addressed the issue and thus seized the political initiative;
- ii.) it laid down a response which attempted to find resonance with both neo-liberal and more traditional strains of Conservative ideology, and;
- iii.) it avoided prescription in the conflictual terrain of integrated economic, social and environmental decision-making.

The general position is expounded in the following extract:

“We have a moral duty to look after our planet and to hand it on in good order to future generations. That is what experts mean when they talk of ‘sustainable development’: not sacrificing tomorrow’s prospects for a largely illusory gain today. *We must put a proper value on the natural world*: it would be odd to cherish a Constable but not the landscape he depicted” [para. 1.14, emphasis added].

From this position, TCI was billed as the first comprehensive survey of all aspects of environmental concern and one in which SR was implicit – assigning ‘proper value on the natural world’. The key to both policy and process thus depended upon what was ‘proper’ value and ‘proper’ valuation respectively. From a New Right perspective the following selected statements offer us a summary insight as to what these terms were perceived amount to:

“...regulation has always been required and is still required, but it has its shortcomings... In the Government’s view, market mechanisms offer the prospect of a more efficient and flexible response to environmental issues both old and new” [paras. 1.27 and 1.29];

“...sustainable development aims to hand on man-made and natural resources so that future generations are no worse off than this one” [HMG, 1990a, p.4];

“Prevention can often be better and cheaper than cure. We must act on facts, and on the best analysis of likely costs and benefits” [HMG, 1990a, p.2].

Advancing sustainable development – the development plan finds new purpose and responsibility

Reference to the land use planning system is quite explicit in TCI and a significant number of policy areas are specified with direct links to re-evaluating and raising the profile of the environment in decision-making:

- i.) reviewing PPGs to take account of the ‘new agenda’;
- ii.) emphasising energy conservation;
- iii.) providing greater flexibility for planning agreements to offer environmental improvements alongside new developments;
- iv.) recycling of land for housebuilding;
- v.) reviewing of the use of cost benefit analysis in transport planning to ‘civilise’ traffic;
- vi.) applying aftercare conditions on mineral workings;
- vii.) introducing a contaminated land register and clean-up standards;
- viii.) discouraging dereliction;
- ix.) bringing vacant public land back into use;
- x.) improving compensation payments where homes were affected by major development.

Absolute measures, however, were to be avoided and if single issues appeared to be blocking development of local strategic importance the SoS would not hesitate to call in plans or allow appeals.

The two key planning Acts of the 1990s make important statements in these areas and have sufficed to drive debate up to and beyond the millennium. In the first instance, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as one of four Acts consolidating planning legislation, directed LPAs, in Section 31 of the Act, to ensure that their development plans had policy statements covering intrinsic and amenity conservation, landscape improvement and traffic management. In the second instance, the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 worked to counter the prevailing uncertainty for development plan preparation. The signals from Government had been contradictory in the light of the previous White Paper and then changed leadership. The response to these problems was a renewed interest in the development plan from several quarters which focused upon a perceived need to inject a degree of certainty into the system. This principle was shared by environmental lobbyists and developers alike, though not in terms of their supporting arguments. There was apparently also an appreciation of the political benefits of shifting the bulk of decision-making and conflict resolution - increasingly polarised between development pressure and environmental concern - into the local arena for resolution.

It was the 1991 Act which amended the law on these issues. It introduced and/or formalised four significant changes to the existing planning framework at the turn of the decade [Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994]:

- i.) by inserting Section 54A into the 1990 Act, the plan was to become the primary consideration in development control – creating what has been termed the plan-led system;
- ii.) comprehensive development plan coverage at the district level was finally embodied in the legislation as the adoption of Area Wide Local Plans (AWLPs) was made mandatory.
- iii.) central approval of structure plans was abolished, although powers of intervention were retained along with the formal debating forum of the Examination in Public (EIP), and;
- iv.) counties were mandatorily required to produce minerals plans and waste plans for the whole of their areas.

It is the combination of the 1990's Act requirement that development plans include policies in respect of the physical environment and the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of land, when taken in conjunction with the privilege lent to the development plan in decision making by Section 54A, that really opens the door to environmental re-evaluation under the auspices of sustainable development - permitting the legislation to be dovetailed with the policy direction outlined in TCI. The rider on this re-orientation, however, comes from the adjunct to the priority of the plan in that development must be in accordance with the plan *unless* 'material considerations' indicate otherwise. Section 70 of the Act requires that in the determination of planning applications regard should be had to all material considerations. A significant degree of discretion at the point of decision delivery is thus maintained as what may or may not be taken into account continues to be an issue of debate. Carnwarth [1991, cited in Weston, 1997, p.15] offers the context for this point as it might relate to environmental re-evaluation – in this case specifically pertaining to EIA:

“The Law is fond of imposing duties on authorities to ‘have regard to’ things or take them into account. They must have regard to the development plan and other material considerations; they must have regard to the ‘desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside’; and they must ‘take into consideration the E(nvironmental) S(statement) and E(nvironmental) I(mpact)’. Such requirements on their own have little practical effect. Legally an authority may conscientiously have ‘regard to’ something, and conscientiously put in into the waste paper bin”.

Despite this lack of absolutes or rigid policy agenda there can be little doubt that, by the beginning of the 1990s the landscape of environmental resource evaluation was changing to encompass a broader, more integrated and potentially radical range of issues as the language and understanding of sustainable development began to proliferate. The Regulations, although couched in conventional terminology, appeared to demand a formal response to this issue

from the LPAs. It was left to the content of the new and revised PPGs to define the parameters of this re-evaluation from a national perspective.

2.4 Introducing sustainable development into land use planning – initial steps (1992 to 1998)

The following text will, principally, detail the revisions to environmental resource evaluation contained in the PPGs from 1992 onwards as the rhetoric and conceptualisations of sustainable development were given something of a privileged position. It will also reference the sectoral coverage of both direct and indirect mechanisms, as introduced previously, with the potential to influence plan preparation under the auspices of the new environmental agenda. The focus will be upon guidance and influences up to and including the research window of this study; i.e. 1997/98. A brief summary of developments after this period will bring the review up to date and to supply a context for future orientated reflection in Part III. During this final period the New Labour Government (which swept to power in 1997) certainly introduced a new tenor to debate as it sought to modernise the planning system and local government as a whole with the introduction of the Best Value regime, new council decision-making structures, and a more integrated approach to planning in general through re-emphasising the region, community based plans and local strategic partnerships.

2.4.1 Guidance from the centre – putting the ‘sustainable’ into land use development planning?

As introduced above, PPGs are the means by which central government steers the planning system to address and deliver its policy commitments in land use terms. They do not, in aggregate, constitute a national plan in themselves but rather more flexibly stand as a set of topic orientated policy statements which may be updated as and when seen fit. They were to offer a more coherent framework for guiding allocation and control rather than the previously *ad hoc* and temporally expedient mechanism of Circulars (which continued to be used for detailing matters of procedure). Inevitably the first crop of PPGs did centre upon contemporary preoccupations and practicalities, but as the 1990s unfolded so did the breadth of guidance to cover twenty-four topic areas from *General Policy and Principles (PPG1)* to *Planning and Noise (PPG24)* – see Table 2.1, below.

What is of specific interest to us here, and subsequently laid out in the following paragraphs, is how these advisory documents put across the new emphasis upon environmental policy in relation to development activity and hence illustrate a change in resource evaluation.

Table 2.1 - National Planning Policy Guidance Notes (correct at end of 1999, N.B. the most recent title is indicated in each case)

<i>No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>First produced</i>	<i>Revisions</i>
PPG 1	General Policy and Principles	1988	1992, 1997
PPG 2	Green Belts	1988	1995
PPG 3	Housing	1988	1992, 1999 (draft)
PPG 4	Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms	1988	1992
PPG 5	Simplified Planning Zones	1988	1992
PPG 6	Town Centres and Retail Development	1988 (as 'Major Retail Development')	1993, 1996
PPG 7	The countryside and the Rural Economy	1988 ('Rural Enterprise and Development')	1992, 1997
PPG 8	Telecommunications	1988	1992
PPG 9	Nature Conservation	1994	
PPG 10	Planning and Waste Management	1999	
PPG 11	Regional Planning Guidance	1999 (draft)	
PPG 12	Development Plans	1988 ('Local Plans') (also: former PPG15 on Regional Strategic Guidance, Structure Plans and the Content of Development Plans); also included guidance on Regional Planning Guidance prior to 1999.	1992, 1999 (draft)
PPG 13	Transport	1988 ('Highway Considerations in Development Control')	1994, 1999 (draft)
PPG 14	Development on Unstable Land	1990	1996 (add. Annex)
PPG 15	Planning and the Historic Environment	1994	
PPG 16	Archaeology and Planning	1990	
PPG 17	Sport and Recreation	1991	
PPG 18	Enforcing Planning Control	1991	
PPG 19	Outdoor Advertisement Control	1992	
PPG 20	Coastal Planning	1992	
PPG 21	Tourism	1992	
PPG 22	Renewable Energy	1993	
PPG 23	Planning and Pollution Control	1994	
PPG24	Planning and Noise	1994	

Source: Vigar *et al.*, 2000, p.18

Planning Policy Guidance 1: General Policy Principles [DoE, 1992a] and *Planning Policy Guidance 12: Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance* [DoE, 1992b] in their revised post-1988 state, supply the first clear articulation of attempts to incorporate SR (the latter strongly reflected the land use planning content of TCI). In the first instance the role of the planning system is unequivocally stated:

“The planning system, and the preparation of development plans in particular, can contribute to the objectives of ensuring that development and growth are sustainable. The sum total of decisions in the planning field, as elsewhere, should not deny future generations the best of today’s environment. This should be expressed through the policies in development planning” [para. 1.8].

The rationale for this new responsibility is supported by the existence of a significant body of pertinent institutional capital in the handling of environmental matters:

“Local planning authorities should take account of the environment in the widest sense in plan preparation. They are familiar with the “traditional” issues of Green Belt, concern for landscape quality and nature conservation, the built heritage and conservation areas. They are familiar too with pollution control planning for healthier cities. The challenge is to ensure that newer environmental concerns, such as global warming and the consumption of non-renewable resources, are also reflected in the analysis of policies that form part of plan preparation” [para. 6.3].

This established body of experience is additionally deemed to be located in a methodological framework capable of reconciling conflict between, on the one hand, economic and social priorities and, on the other, conservation and environmental priorities

“... those impacts on the environment which may be irreversible or very difficult to undo should be treated with particular care in the preparation of plans: future generations may value the lost resource more than the development which replaced it. At the same time, the interests of those future generations require continuing economic growth now based on continuing development. Development plans have an essential role to play in achieving the appropriate balance - in contributing to the Government’s sustainable development policies” [para.6.8]

Lists of potentially differing priorities which are likely to require ‘balancing’ are offered. It should be noted, however, that these are somewhat anodyne and skirt the bigger issues associated with the environmental repercussions of new industrial, housing and road development. Other statements exist in the guidance which initially appear to address the implications of SR but then they apply a context which limits its remit to very reduced sphere of influence, for example:

“The development plan process provides an opportunity to look at the alternative forms development can take and to consider local options for conserving and improving the landscape and encouraging opportunities for recreation” [para. 6.23].

A pertinent criteria ‘checklist’ may be extracted from the text, i.e.:

- use land in urban areas (but avoid cramming);
- develop close to public transport networks;
- encourage development that attracts trips to town centres as nodes for public transport – one journey can serve several purposes;
- new housing should be located so as to minimise car use;
- town centre car parking should be limited so long as this does not export the problem;
- integrated public transport interchanges;
- facilities to increase walking and cycling;
- new settlements may help to focus a dispersed pattern;
- viability of CHP (district heating networks), housing type, orientation and location.

The reader, however, is not offered guidance on conflict resolution for these potentially much more contentious issues.

PPG12 [DoE, 1992b] was not only important with regard to the shaping of policy in development plans, it also formally introduced a mechanism for such activity in the form of the environmental appraisal of development plans. The intention of such appraisals, through identifying all costs and benefits of policies/proposals, is to ensure that the trade-offs between policy options are clearly identified and assessed:

“Most policies and proposals in all types of plan will have environmental implications, which should be appraised as part of the plan preparation process. Such an environmental appraisal is the process of identifying, quantifying, weighing up and reporting on the environmental and other costs and benefits of the measures which are proposed. All the implications of the options should be analysed including financial, social and environmental effects. A systematic appraisal ensures that the objectives of a policy are clearly laid out, and the trade-offs between options identified and assessed” [para. 5.52].

Although not a statutory requirement LPAs were advised to make explicit the outcome of their environmental appraisals in the explanatory memorandum which accompanies plans when they are published in draft for public consultation. In 1993 the Government published a ‘good practice guide’ on the subject [DoE, 1993] in which a matrix-driven methodology was proposed. Development plan policies and proposals were to be considered in terms of the changes they are likely to make to the ‘environmental stock’ of the plan area. It is acknowledged that the task of cataloguing and quantifying all that has environmental value in the plan area is, at least presently, well beyond reach. Some attempt however is required as an initial step in incrementally building a more comprehensive catalogue. In order to begin this task a characterisation framework is presented to facilitate an appropriate categorisation, Table 2.2, below. In terms of sustainable resource management this is probably the most comprehensive statement on SR produced by central government.

An important point is also made in the context of this research in that the two terms sustainable development and environmental appraisal

“are not synonymous, but in development plans the concepts are symbiotic”
[DoE, 1993, p.38]

Table 2.2 - Environmental appraisal of development plans: Environmental Stock Criteria

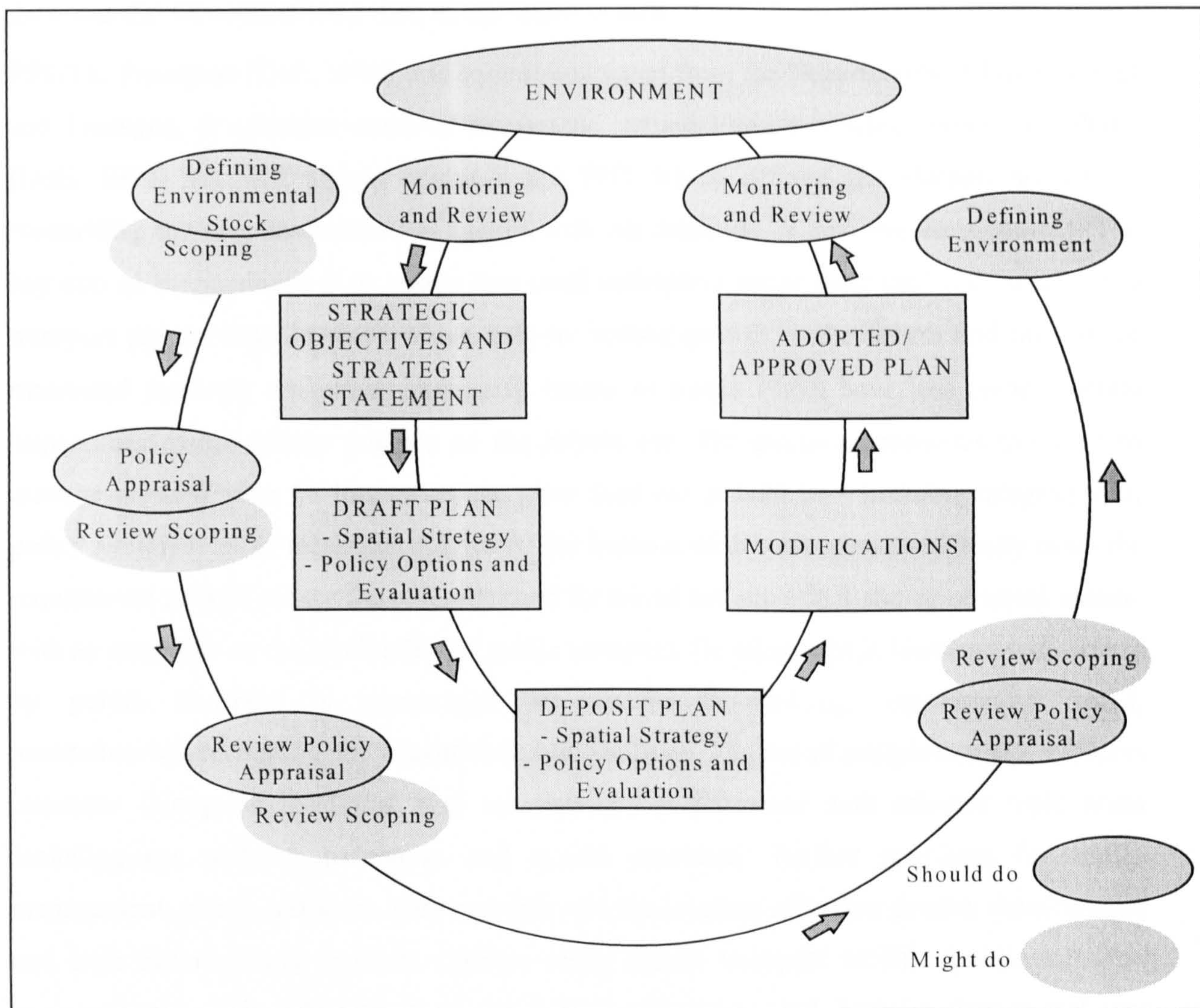
General Criteria	Indicators of positive impact
Global Sustainability <i>- Primarily concerned with atmospheric and climatic stability and with the conservation of biodiversity</i>	
1 Transport energy: efficiency – trips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing trip length • Reducing the number of motorised trips
2 Transport energy: efficiency – modes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing public transport share • Increasing attraction of walking and cycling
3 Built environment energy – efficiency:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing heat loss from buildings • Reducing capital energy requirements • Increasing CHP potential

General Criteria	Indicators of positive impact
4 Renewable energy potential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding wind, water, wave and biomass potential • Increasing direct solar gain
5 Rate of CO ₂ “fixing”:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing tree cover especially broad-leaved woodland
6 Wildlife habitats:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding designated sites (e.g. SSSIs) • Increasing general wildlife potential (e.g. corridors)
Natural Resources	
<i>- husbanding of natural resources concerned with appropriate use and, when necessary, appropriate protection of our resources of air, water, the land and its minerals</i>	
7 Air quality:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing levels of pollutants (CO₂, SO₂, NO_x, O₃, Pb, NH₄, etc.)
8 Water conservation and quality:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining ground water and river levels • Safeguarding water supply purity
9 Land and soil quality:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding soil quality and soil retention • Reducing contamination/dereliction • Safeguarding good quality agricultural land
10 Minerals conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce consumption of fossil fuels and minerals • Increase reuse/recycling of materials
Local environmental quality	
<i>- conservation of local environmental quality concerned with the protection and enhancement (and sometimes retrieval) of local environmental features and system ranging from landscape and open land to cultural heritage</i>	
11 Landscape and open land:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing designated areas (NPs, AONBs, etc.) • Enhancing general landscape quality • Retaining countryside/open land
12 Urban environment “liveability”:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing townscape quality • Increasing safety and sense of security • Improving aural and olfactory environment
13 Cultural heritage:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding listed buildings and Cas • Safeguarding archaeological/geological value
14 Public access open space:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing/maintaining quality and availability in urban and rural areas
15 Building quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining/improving the maintenance and continuous renewal of buildings

[DoE, 1993, p.10]

The emphasis is on integration between the two: setting the right agenda, monitoring progress, and evaluating options systematically [Barton, 1996] - Figure 2.1, below, illustrates the system. This process of policy evaluation was in advance of European statutes on the subject, however a draft Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which, conceptualised as a cascade, is likely to have a more far reaching effect than the current development plan appraisals [Richardson, 1997]. Appraisals of this kind require both external and internal auditing - the former via State of the Environment (SOE) monitoring and the latter via Environmental Management and Audit Schemes (EMAS) which has been adopted from EU use in the commercial sector by some U.K. local authorities [Barton, 1996; D.O.E. 1993b]

Figure 2.1 - The plan making process and environmental appraisal



Source: D.O.E., 1993b, p.6

Between 1992 and 1997 the new environmental agenda under the banner of sustainable development found distinct additional expression in:

- PPG13 (Transport, 1994) and PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Development, 1996) – environmentally efficient settlement patterns;
- PPG7 (The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development, 1997) – economic benefit whilst safeguarding the countryside, non-renewable and natural resources for their own sake;
- PPG9 (Nature Conservation, 1994) – biodiversity.
- Supportive articulation may also be found in:
- PPG22 (Renewable Energy, 1993) – alternatives to fossil fuel based energy supply;
- MPG6 (Guidelines for Aggregate Provision in England and Wales) – sustainable use of finite resources.

With the significance of PPGs in development plan preparations it is of some importance to draw out the SR context from each of the above in turn.

PPG13: *Transport* [DoE, 1994] was a joint production from the Departments of Environment and Transport. It reiterates much of the general sustainability-orientated content of PPG12 [DoE, 1992] but was almost certainly the PPG which offered the clearest advice on reconciling the new environmental agenda with the demands of land use development. The key aim of the guidance is to ensure that local authorities shape their land use policies and transport programmes in ways which help to: reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys; encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact; and hence reduce reliance on the private car. The guidance promotes the need to manage demand, plan for less travel and place land use in context – meaning integration of policy alongside other measures. Advice on the location of development specifically notes the requirement to both reduce the (overall) need for travel and provide a choice of travel means, with an emphasis on the availability of public transport. Development in locations well served by public transport is encouraged in relation to housing, employment, retail, leisure/tourism/recreation and education/public facilities. The use of complementary transport measures (alongside locational land use policies) is promoted with relevant topic areas including car parking, pedestrian and cyclist provision. Further provision for traffic management, public transport, park and ride and the location of higher density development and high trip-attracting facilities close to major public transport facilities/public transport centres (or alongside public transport corridors) is also encouraged. The significance and new direction of these principles is illustrated by the fact that it was deemed necessary to publish in the following year *PPG13: A Guide to Better Practice* [DoE & DoT, 1995]. This text works from these underlying principles to offer methodologies for developing and applying land use and transport policies, the guide is illustrated with case studies highlighting key areas of potential opportunity and constraint. The key concept in moving from principles into practice is the development of accessibility profiles which embrace issues of: settlement size and structure - proximity and threshold distances, centrality, hierarchy and specialisation; interaction between scale, density, land use/mixed use, parking and site layout, and; transport - overall infrastructure provision, networks, access to public transport including ‘corridors’ and ‘nodes’ development. Overall the underlying assumption of both documents is that the planning system can, over time, significantly reduce the need to travel through influencing patterns of physical development.

PPG6: *Town Centres and Retail Development* [DoE, 1996b] quite explicitly endorses the PPG13 approach, essentially reiterating the principles outlined above in terms of objectives. It also formally introduced a blend of hierarchical and sequential methods for site selection as a

means of operationalising a re-evaluation of environmental resources. These approaches are respectively allocated strategic (structure plans and UDP Part1s) and local (area wide local plans) importance. For higher level plans a range and 'hierarchy of centres' should be presented for high trip generating uses where access to public transport stands as the key defining variable. For local plans the 'sequential approach' requires that location choices should prioritise town centre sites and only if these are not available/unsuitable then to move to edge-of-town, then district and local centres and, finally, only to out of town if access is provided by a choice of means of transport.

There is clearly some attempt to manage transport (especially private transport) demand but only in a significantly voluntaristic manner, i.e. people are not made to use the car less but rather are to be given greater incentives to use alternative means of getting about.

PPG9: *Nature Conservation* [DoE, 1994] content of TCI and translating, into the field of land use planning the goals, principles and objectives of Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan [HMG, 1994a] (the natural environment content of these documents being traceable to the 1992 UNCED Convention on Biological Diversity which was signed up to by the UK and the 1992 EC Habitats and Species Directive 92/43/EEC). The conflict of interests between economic development and growth is acknowledged but characteristically downplayed through the win-win lens of quality natural environments benefiting social and economic wellbeing. The responsibility for reconciliation is deemed a local matter and achievable with "careful planning and control" [DoE, 1994a, para.3]. Within the field of biodiversity, SR application principles do appear to have a place and reference can be found to environmental capacity, the precautionary principle, demand management and the 'polluter pays' (elements of environmental compensation).

PPG7: *The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development* [DoE, 1997c] replaced the 1992 version (*The Countryside and Rural Economy* [DoE, 1992c]) which made only cursory reference to sustainable development. The direction within the guidance emanates from the White Paper *Rural England: A Nation Committed to a Living Countryside* [HMG, 1995] the translation of which is embraced in the following six principles which include the pursuit of sustainable development and the use of dialogue to help reconcile competing priorities.

The use of designations remains key to the conservation methodology but reference is also made to other documents/plans which should be taken account of in development plan preparation, i.e. Rural Strategies, Village Appraisals and LA21s. Attention is also drawn to two techniques, advocated by the Countryside Commission, which are additionally likely to have implications for environmental resource re-/evaluation: i.) Countryside Design Summaries – supplementary non-prescriptive documents prepared by LPAs to foster regional

and local design qualities; ii.) Village Design Statements – prepared by local communities to manage long term change, as opposed to stopping it. In both instances the landscape character approach, advocated by both English Nature and the Countryside Commission, can provide a useful descriptive context.

Overall PPG7 is a blend of the old and the new in regard to evaluating the environment from the perspective of land use development. Non-renewable and natural resources should be protected on account of their intrinsic as well as instrumental value, and, agricultural land should be protected as an inter-generational resource.

PPG22: *Renewable Energy* [DoE, 1993a] was released to guide LPAs on the subject of appropriate locations for renewable energy production operations. The issue of generating electricity (and locally useable heat through Combined Heat and Power operations) from sources other than fossil fuels is clearly of significance within the new environmental agenda and acknowledged as such in the guidance.

With the Electricity Act 1989 the government had attempted to encourage renewable energy production with the introduction of the Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation which in effect subsidised generation to make the building of plants a profitable proposition. LPAs consequently found themselves subject to an increased number of applications for viable sites which, by their nature, were likely to have significant effects on local communities (the land to energy output of renewable energy is comparatively high).

Questions were thus posed to LPAs with regard to environmental re-/evaluation when attempting to correlate local socio-environmental impact with the wider issue of reducing CO2 emissions.

In an effort to help resolve some of the arising complexities of these installations reference is made to ensuring that the polluter pays to ameliorate adverse effects but within the use of the best available technique not entailing excessive cost (a variation of BPEO).

MPG6: *Guidelines for Aggregate Provision in England and Wales* [DoE, 1994b] attempted to apply a re-/evaluated perspective on environmental resources to an established activity of economic importance. In an effort to reduce a very high dependence on primary aggregates within the construction industry, targets were set to make more use of substitutes such as secondary and recycled material. The working of extraction sites was also to be more environmentally sympathetic and appropriate restoration was given a high priority.

Further advice and direction

The process of revising PPGs to take account of sustainable development was lent further support in 1994 with the publishing of the first national strategy document on the subject *Sustainable Development: the UK Strategy* [HMG, 1994]. The language parallels that used in

TCI but with 'sustainable development' as the terminological point of reference interpreted to reflect neo-liberal ideals and policy direction.

The text emphasises government commitment to a planned environmental policy guided by the principles of sustainable development. New and revised PPGs may have offered guidance on the translation of policy into the field of land use but the subsequent legislation was introduced outside of the development planning sector, i.e. through the Environment Act 1995.

2.5 Sustainable development and land use planning – the agenda moves on, 1998 to the present day

This final section offers a very brief introduction to formal policy, guidance and direction in the period following the closure of this study's empirical research window. The issues are significant as they shaping planning's current practices, themes, priorities and direction.

When (New) Labour returned to power in 1997, after 18 years in opposition, it brought with it a compromising 'third way' brand of social conservatism constructed from a blend of tough economics, market facilitation, social compassion and customer responsiveness. Government at every level was to be modernised so that it could respond in the public interest to the new complexities of globalisation, the information age, individualisation and growing inequality to name but a few. The key methodology for reforming public service delivery being 'joined-up' government and partnership working.

Even if the New Labour administration, now in its second term, has yet to develop a meaningful environmental discourse [Jacobs, 1999] it would not be fair to say that it has failed to carry forward a notion, rhetorically at least, of sustainable development into its own policy agenda. Important policy documents were produced on modernising local government and planning along with a revised sustainable development strategy and a range of publications which may be related to SR. Early indications of a more holistic approach to environmental matters immediately followed the 1997 election with the creation of a 'super' Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) under the direction of the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott – an integration which had the potential to unite policy in land use planning with environmental protection, transportation and regional development. Whitehall restructuring following the 2001 election has apparently, however, broken these bonds, with the dissolution of the DETR and the creation of two new departments – the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) and the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). This move has triggered concerns over the downgrading of environmental policy. The change is of particular pertinence in the field

of land use planning (under the DTLR) as significant reform of the system appears imminent [ENDS, 2001].

This issue aside, the use of the language of sustainable development across Government legislation, policy, guidance and advice is profligate to the point where comprehensive referencing would simply produce a catalogue of all such publications.

To illustrate how the agenda has moved on, and been both directly and contextually re-shaped under the current administration, an outline of the implications and direction of those documents that have a particular bearing upon SR is presented in Appendix A. Points of particular salience relate to the local government modernisation agenda (examples here would be continuous service improvement through Best Value, community leadership, democratic renewal, public confidence and partnership working) and the following modifications to planning policy guidance:

- PPG12 (Development Plans) - restates the four broad objectives of the present Government's strategy for sustainable development: i.) social progress, which recognises the needs of everyone; ii.) effective protection of the environment; iii.) prudent use of natural resources; and iv.) maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. [DETR, 2000c];
- PPG3 (Housing) – formally replaces the 'predict and provide' methodology for housing allocation with one of 'plan, monitor and manage'. The profile of the reuse of brownfield sites is given priority using urban housing capacity studies and a sequential approach to site selection combined with the phasing of site release. [DETR, 2000d];
- PPG11 (Regional Planning) – strengthens the role and effectiveness of regional planning and introduces sustainable development appraisals [DETR, 2000e];
- PPG13 (Transport) – lends formal substance to the integration of Local Transport Plans and development plans [DETR, 2001].

2.6 Summary

The introduction of the notion of sustainable development into the historical narrative of environmental evaluation in land use planning has clearly had major implications. It has created a step change in the evolution of the language of 'protect and enhance'. From being shunted around in a supporting role to a range of politically important socio-economic agendas it has become the agenda itself. This is not, however, simply 'fifteen minutes of fame' as it has been invested with a strategic integrative role that has written it into the script

of every area of governance - land use planning, through its almost unique public interface, being an especially overt example. Within this sector the implications have become increasingly tangible over the past decade. The changes have been significant but not radical – it has reformed the criteria of decision making but not apparently altered the framework in which decisions are made: the rules of the game are still the same. Such ‘rules’ are defined both procedurally and in the way players comport themselves and interact. What becomes important, in the context of this research, is whether or not these procedures and interactions facilitate or constrain goal scoring as it now being redefined. At this early stage in redefinition there is little empirical work to help us answer this question (something to which it is hoped that this research may make some contribution to countering). A body of largely theoretical work does exist, however, which may be of assistance. It is to the important elements of this, with regard to SR, to which attention is now turned.

Decision making, challenges, constraints and opportunities – a theoretical perspective

Having reviewed the content of central direction regarding environmental evaluation within the English planning system it is now necessary to consider the challenges faced and how they might be implementationally framed; to review some theoretical perspectives on the nature of decision making in relation to this evolving and shifting environmental agenda. These 'understandings' and explanations, be they descriptive, prescriptive, normative or otherwise, can be helpful. Picking up on these can be achieved by looking at the connections between the generic appreciation of sustainable development presented in Chapter 1 and the high level institutional context detailed in Chapter 2. By bringing these two together an insight into the influence of sustainable development in the sphere of LPA decision making in development plan preparation should emerge. It is in establishing these linkages that an exploratory path to the research methodology, findings, analysis and discussion is to be founded. The strands and language of the exploration are introduced in a deliberately open ended manner as it is only through analysis of the primary research findings that they can be respectively woven together and used to interpret what is rendered empirically evident. The following sections, firstly, cast a critical theoretical eye over the evolution of decision making in the planning system; secondly, introduce the key areas of challenge in the shape of engendering implementational capacity and sustainably managing resources (re. Figure 1.4) in the context of 'balanced' decision-making; and, thirdly, to begin to express these challenges as they might be characterised in terms of constraint and opportunity for effectively re-evaluating environmental resources to progress the sustainable development agenda.

3.1 A critical reflection on the changing frames of decision making in the English planning system

There have, over the past thirty to forty years, been numerous examples of planning taking on new goals and causes - in the 1960's it was social planning, the 1970's urban regeneration, the 1980's local economic development and place marketing, and now from the 1990's sustainable development [Myerson & Rydin, 1994]. This history could be interpreted as a search for professional identity:

“perhaps the new environmental agenda is merely another issue that the planning system will take up and discard. How easy will it be to integrate

the new, broader concern with the environment into planning practice?”
[*ibid.*, p.438].

This question of identity is an important, if often skirted, one. The planning profession is supposedly established on its possession of a specialist expertise in determining the appropriate pattern of land use. Reade [1987] however suggests that

“‘planning’ as a body of knowledge seems to offer no theoretically grounded technical criteria on the basis of which this might be done”
[p.29].

Evans [1993], in developing Reade’s argument that planning has achieved its professional status through striking a ‘corporatist bargain’ with the state, claims that

“an understanding of this relationship reveals the constraints which restrict the planning profession’s capacity to respond to the need for land-use planning to be set in a wider context of environmental planning or policy”
[p.11].

Such claims, if substantiated, would give the lie to any aspirations that an effective pursuit of sustainable development within the profession can ‘honestly’ revitalise it, or that it is acceptable to make the requisite sustainable re-evaluation (SR) a priority vehicle for implementation.

Within the planning literature one can readily find analyses of the (in)effectiveness of policies and their resultant measures with regard to the perceived and real needs of the English population. Greed [1993] supplies a simplistic synopsis reflecting several of the widely reported criticisms of planning policies (high rise development, transportation) and methodologies (scientific approaches) highlighting many of the social problems so created or not addressed. The recurring valid point is made, and one which severely compromises the drive for an integrated and more meaningful evaluation of environmental resources, that the planners role is limited in the face of deep seated social and economic forces. As

“an institutional terrain which is deeply implicated in policing the ontological divide between society and nature” [Whatmore & Boucher, 1993, p.176],

it can be argued that planning, in taking on the notion of sustainable development, should endeavour to fully understand the role of these forces in promoting a SR strategy which can renegotiate human-nature relationships. The inertia of conventional social and economic considerations are the fundamental constructs of an inevitably political framework which, though often denied on the grounds of professional neutrality, are omnipresent in decision-making and policy formation.

For the purposes of this introductory discussion we will fundamentally split the post-war period of modern British planning in two, with what is referred to as the 'crisis in planning' [Brindley *et al.*, 1989] of the mid to late 1970's taking the pivotal role. From the critical perspective being adopted in this section such a divisional arrangement can usefully overlay the historical legislative one employed in Chapter 2. As has been related, the 1950's saw a gradual disintegration of the post-war consensus, which emerged as a means of resolving basic economic and social problems. As economic growth and increasing affluence came to dominate, so the "different hopes and aspirations regarding the benefits of the arrangement" [Thornley, 1991, p.14] began to surface. The elitist nature of the 'blueprint' methodology which had characterised planning theory and practice in the late 1940's and early 1950's was correspondingly criticised, and the focus began to shift away from comprehensive designs [Taylor, 1999]. A very significant element of these designs was the New Towns Programme. Though undeservedly [Ward, 1996] criticised today as a poorly executed attempt at social engineering, it incorporated many facets appropriate to the sustainability agenda in terms of transport, mixed use development, and a degree of self-containment. In an ideological sense, the slow down and final extinguishing of the programme (after 32 designations between 1946 and 1970) illustrates the triumph of short term, low risk, single issue political thinking over the long term, innovative, and critically comprehensive which, with a certain retrospective irony, has far stronger ties to the contemporary concept of sustainable development. A strategic procedural approach emerged during the mid to late 1960's - in response to the perceived shortcomings of comprehensive planning - characterised by technocratic rationality and neutrality.

"The reasoning for neutrality is that it is functionally impossible to define a greater public interest, and therefore planners end up using their own values, or their sense of what the public interest should be, as the basis for planning. Planners have no legitimacy to impose their values upon a planning situation; this is a right reserved for politicians and citizens." [Jacobs, 1995, p.93-94]

The changing economic and political climate of the 1970's was thus marked as a period of ideological crisis for planners [Harvey, 1996] which generated the need for reassessment and self-justification.

With regard to environmental strategy, the welfarist-utilitarianism of post-war rebuilding led to growth management concerns expressed in containment and conserving open land in the 1960's. The ideas of stewardship and moral responsibility engendered over this period were then carried on more actively into the 1970's [Healey & Shaw, 1994]. Kidd's [1993] analysis of pre- and post-1968 development plans supports these observations. The former pre-1968 plans responded to the environment in an implicit manner through increased amenity and

aesthetic control while attempting to facilitate traffic growth. Post-1968 saw growing sophistication with the subject, the key policy objectives in structure plans being protection and enhancement but amenity and aesthetics were still the key focus. The centre of concern, in the more specific local plans, was to encourage economic regeneration and growth. Several critiques of the dominant procedural planning theory and its foundation in the supposedly neutral and rational assessment of performance criteria were developed during the 1970's [Rydin, 1993]. Kleven [1996] suggests that the fundamental problem haunting any attempt at neutrality is a consequence

“of a notable gap between norms and practice when the normative ideas of rational planning and decision making are confronted with political reality” [p.131].

Proponents of an alternative model, which appeared under the banner of ‘incrementalism’, argued that the reliance on theoretical norms, which tended to bypass the complexity of reality, could be greatly reduced by limiting the scope and area of planning, making it more specific in content and short-range in its time frame. The use of ‘successive linked comparisons’ would blur and minimise the gap between means and ends, creating what Lindblom [1996] famously called ‘the science of “muddling through”’. The argument however remained in this model that the planner should be a neutral technician. The reasoning and legitimacy for neutrality was not adequately reflected upon to instil confidence, and hence the profession remained subject to similar censure. Despite such censure, O’Riordan [1981] stated that

“the notion of ‘disjointed incrementalism’ still remains the most accurate statement of organisational decision making for students of environmental politics” [p.244].

Although this opinion was put forward from a North American context over twenty years ago, its value in highlighting the remoteness of achieving radical institutional reform, in six fundamental ways, is of some pertinence in reflecting on the opportunities for fulfilling the evaluative demands of the new environmental agenda today:

- “(i) Choices are made at the margin of the *status quo*. Any tendency toward systems transformation is quickly blocked by countervailing pressures toward systems maintenance.
- (ii) Only a limited array of options, none of which moves very far from established procedures, is considered, and only a limited range of consequences evaluated.
- (iii) The evaluative process is further distorted by discrepancies between objectives and agency performance which change the nature of the outcomes considered.
- (iv) The problem itself is transformed in the process to ‘fit’ agency directives; problems are seen as stresses to be overcome rather than goals to be achieved.

(v) Analysis and evaluation occur sequentially, so policy is never what was predetermined but the unanticipated result of repeatedly narrowing choices. Thus decisions are often drifted into rather than preselected, as, slowly but surely, alternative courses of action are foreclosed.

(vi) Policymaking is dispersed throughout political institutions, impeding thoughtful comprehensive reviews of integrated 'megaproblems' ” [O’Riordan, 1981, p.244-245]

“In the face of this unrelenting criticism, planners found it hard to know where to turn for their defence” [Brindley *et al.*, 1989, p.3] and the 1980’s saw a decidedly vulnerable profession laid open to attack on two political fronts, both of which foresaw it fulfilling a much reduced role. The New Right approach considered the bureaucracy of planning as a hindrance to free market wealth generation and the New Left looked to a radical deprofessionalisation with the planner acting as advocate to ensure political pluralism.

Brindley *et al.* [1989] produced a typology of planning styles which reflected the 1980’s response to urban problems in terms of attitudes to market processes [see Table 3.1, below]. This fragmentation into differing styles, it is argued, typifies a transition period in dominant political ideologies as the perspectives of varying sectional interests vie for supremacy.

Table 3.1 - A typology of 1980’s planning styles

Perceived nature of urban problems	<u>Attitude to market processes:</u> Market-critical: redressing imbalances and inequalities created by the market	Market-led: correcting inefficiencies while supporting market processes
Buoyant area: Minor problems and buoyant market	Regulative planning: - Traditional planning ideology - Rational regulation in public interest - Restrictive / constraining private sector	Trend planning: - Reorientates regulation to private sector perspective - Plans reflect market trends - Facilitate development in line with market demand
Marginal area: Pockets of urban problems and potential market interest	Popular planning: - Formal recognition and implementation of plans prepared by local community - Planning from below - Control and design directly related to end users	Leverage planning: - Public finance ‘pump-priming’ - Public / private sector partnership - Subsidies, flexible, entrepreneurial approach to private-sector development - Highly interventionist
Derelict area: Comprehensive urban problems and depressed market	Public investment planning: - Coordination by public-sector plan - Private-sector subordinate - Planners networking to gain resources and implement strategies - Comprehensive goals: housing, employment, social welfare, regional balance, etc.	Private-management planning: - Management of renewal process by private sector - Beyond leverage planning - Uses managerial skills and experience of private-sector - Private management of public policy - Underwritten by public-sector resources

[Source: Brindley *et al.*, 1989, p.9 & text p.13-25]

The neo-liberal market-led approach has dominated the last two decades of the twentieth century and environmental issues have consequently been dealt with in a framework of marketised utilitarianism combined with a conservation of nationally important heritage [Healey & Shaw, 1994]. Kidd [1993] sees this expressed in development plans as environmental concern being of secondary importance to concerns for economic development and growth.

The 1990's however would seem, as Ambrose [1986] optimistically predicted, to have promoted some softening of the tyranny of land development's deregulation as aspects of it are now seen economically counter-productive, socially discordant, and environmentally degrading - despite an apparent consensus across the two main political parties with regard to the importance of facilitating market-led growth and service provision, e.g. private finance initiatives [Lewis, 1997]. From the environmental perspective such a 'softening' can be put down to several pragmatic factors together with the evolving rhetoric of sustainable development and the increasing pressure to fulfil global responsibilities. The crucial question, for planners, posed in this tentatively emerging situation is the extent to which their sphere of influence can be re-drawn to include issues beyond simply those pertaining to the technical and rational facets of preferred land-use patterns. This requires the incorporation of economic and social arguments into their operational discourse so that the true costs and benefits of development can be genuinely assessed. Evans [1995] suggests that the only way planning can address such issues, in a structure in which the pattern of land use is primarily decided by the market, is if "it begins to rediscover politics" [p.142] by actually ascertaining, in Reade's terms, "*who gains, and who loses and by how much*" [1987, p.7, original italics].

This rediscovery will probably also require the construction of a fresh percipience and a suitable set of innovative, perhaps even radical, tools and ideas. At the root of this demand, as Irvin states, is

"the need for reflexivity and the sceptical analysis of knowledge claims"
[1995, p.168]

in order to permit the 'traditional' planning discourse to effectively assimilate SR. Let us now consider the form that these ideas are or might be taking.

3.2 Framing decision making in the era of sustainable development – 'collaborative' tactics

Healey [1996] considers that the negative aspects of deregulation combined with heightened environmental concern, are indeed producing signs of a reformation in planning which itself

can be seen as an extension of the so-called progressive planning paradigm with its questioning of the profession's integrity in terms of interests and power (emanating from Davidoff's 1973 seminal article on advocacy) and its relation to socio-economic forces [Jacobs, 1995]. These factors are generating pressure for the horizontal integration of many previously unconnected stakeholders in the form of 'collaboration' –

“it promises to provide a more sustainable approach to addressing contemporary concerns in a 'stakeholder society' with qualities of place, and to re-connect strategic place-making with conflict management, by recasting the vocabulary and frames of reference of the performance criteria approach” [Healey, 1996, p.1].

The form of this 'collaborative planning' and how it differs from traditional 'performance criteria' modes is well illustrated in Table 3.2, below.

Table 3.2 - Emerging regulatory forms for planning systems compared

	Conflict management (<i>performance criteria</i>)	Place-making (<i>collaborative planning</i>)
Regulatory object	Rights to use and develop land	The way of thinking: policy discourses, frames of reference
Context	Efficient land and property development markets. Conflicts between development and environmental interests	Multiple stakeholders Complex political claims for attention Markets prone to failure
Discourses	Norms, standards and criteria. Political legitimacy and legal interpretation. Public interest vs. private rights.	Qualities of places. Spatial organising ideas. Strategic projects.
Function of plans	Product: store of norms, policy statements, etc. Process: arena for conflict mediation.	Product: store of 'framing' principles about qualities of places; and supporting arguments. Process: collective social construction of strategic organising ideas, images etc.

Source: Healey, 1996, p.1

Whether this approach can actually facilitate the leap from what Dovers [1997] describes as “non-disruptive reform at the margins of resource sectors” [p.303] to a comprehensive SR is debatable. Healey [1996] herself admits that it

“presents a demanding challenge to political communities” [p.19]

and that

“its possibility is encouraged or constrained by the institutional context” [p.22].

There is however a significant window of opportunity if planners can get such techniques to work in tandem with other, previously largely external, plans and processes – perhaps the most pertinent and open examples being LA21 programmes and initiatives [Tuxworth &

Thomas, 1996; Mortimer & Bond, 1997] and, more recently, Community Plans and Local Strategic Partnerships.

This attempt to instigate a radical change in planning practice has been termed the 'argumentative turn' [Fischer & Forester, 1993] in which

“the essence of judgement and decision becomes not the automatic application of rules or algorithms but a process of deliberation which weighs beliefs, principles and actions under conditions of multiple frames for the interpretation and evaluation of the world” [Dryzek, 1993, p.214].

The modern origins of this approach can be found in the Frankfurt School, specifically the writings of Jurgen Habermas who

“has been instrumental in putting the case for the emancipatory value of truth and the ideal of undistorted communication” [Davey, 1995, p.145, Allmendinger, 2002]

- giving us the concept of communicative rationality. As a mode of inquiry, argumentation rejects positivism, critical rationalism and the analycentric mode so that

“we can avoid radically separating epistemological concerns (the claims made “within” the argument) from institutional and performative concerns (how in *deed* the argument is made)” [Fischer and Forester, 1993, p.5, original italics].

This facilitates several methodological lines of response which seem particularly relevant to understanding the constraints and opportunities of integrating the requisite SR into policy-making:

- (i.) an appreciation of how practitioners formulate problems;
- (ii.) a questioning of the nature of an analysis's rhetoric as well as what it claims to do;
- (iii.) an uncovering of the complex agenda-setting power of policy analysis and the study of micro-politics;
- (iv.) a disclosure of the relationship building and ritualised bargaining that analysts must do;
- (v.) a clarification of how shifts in power are reflected in how 'problems' are represented in language, discourse and frames;
- (vi.) an appreciation of the educative functions of policy analysis and planning practice (*ibid.*).

The reflexivity required of the profession if it is to make any ground in these areas is high, needing encouragement from academia and organisational bodies such as the Royal Town Planning Institute, Town and Country Planning Association, the Countryside Agency, the Environment Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Improvement and Development Agency (which subsumed the former Local Government Management Board).

This model of ‘planning as debate’ [Healey, 1989] however, may have the potential to promote the creation of a wider and more innovative range of alternatives, as required by the new environmental agenda, to

“meet the needs of planning as a social and political process where a chosen solution *must be seen* to emerge from the open consideration of competing possibilities” [Bayne, 1995, p.304, original italics].

3.3 Challenges

The introduction of the sustainable development agenda within the English land use planning system presents its practitioners with challenges on three fronts which can be summarised as:

- i.) re-calibrating its fundamental process of balancing material considerations in decision-making;
- ii.) re-assessing material considerations under the remit of sustainable resource management;
- iii.) restructuring its ability re-calibrate and re-assess in term of implementational capacity.

3.3.1 The question of ‘balance’

As directed in PPG12 [DoE, 1992b] local planning authorities are looking to achieve a balance between socio-economic demands and physical limits when constructing their development plans:

“*Structure plans* should provide a statement of the overall strategy for development and the use of land in the county, indicating how the balance between development and conservation has been struck.” [para. 5.9]

This search for an appropriately placed pivot is a key function in the way specific issues are handled (see Figure 3.1, below).

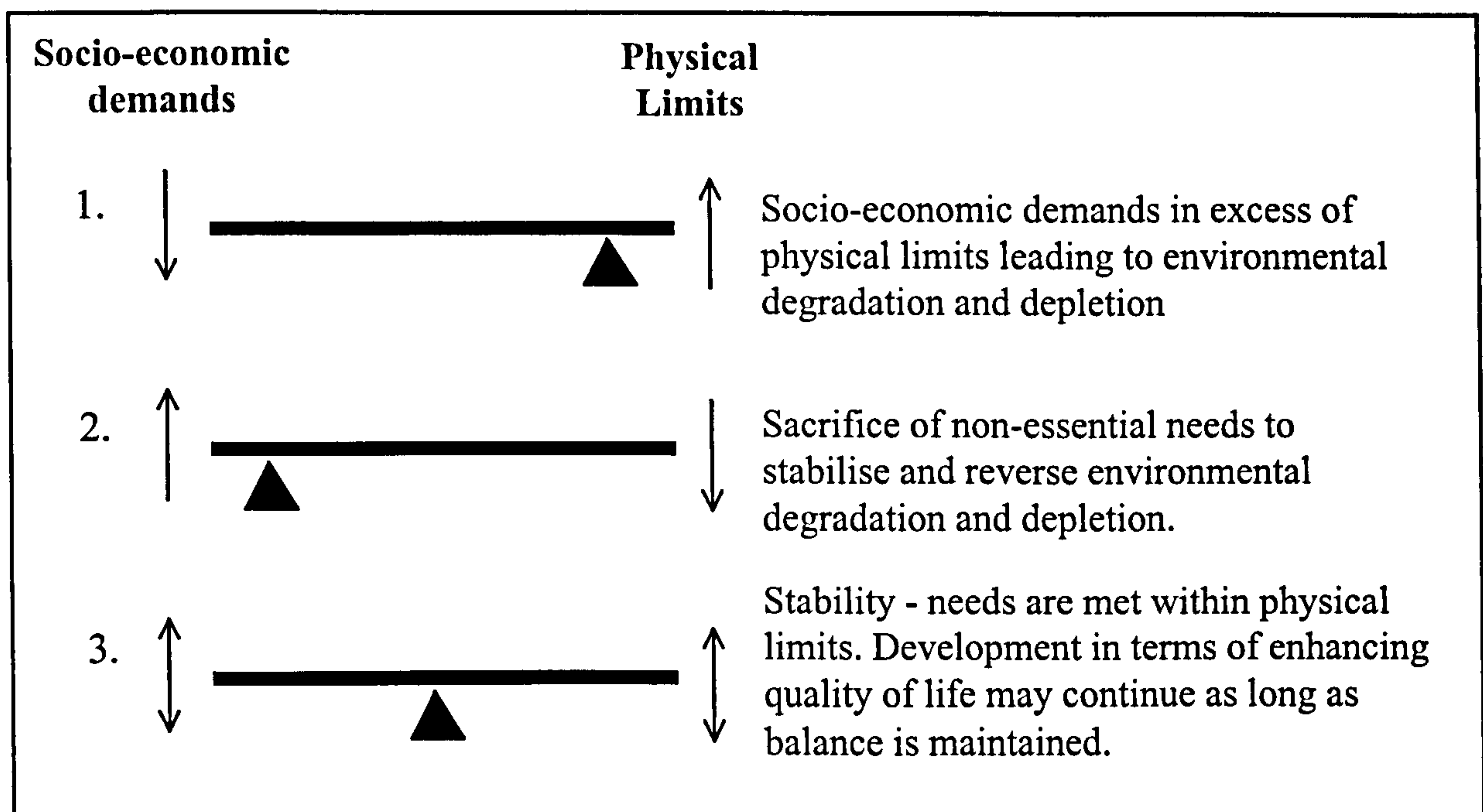
In the context of green thinking, sustainability in its ‘deep’ green context challenges the nature/society dichotomy, demanding a more holistic approach [Marshall, 1994] and including the considerably more radical vocabulary of *limits*, *capacities* and *demand management*. Its ‘light’ green relation, by contrast, as embraced by the central government is far less radical with its implications of *trade-offs* and simply a more equitable *balance* [Healey & Shaw, 1994] whilst maintaining the status quo of power structures and decision-making. This is more in keeping with the current English planning *modus operandi* of balancing competing objectives (with the ‘environment’ being viewed as one factor to balance) with a presumption in favour of development [Bishop, 1996]. Despite the protestations of anti-positivist commentators

“the ‘scientific’ model remains, if only by default, the principal way in which we understand and prescribe the use of knowledge in policy” [Innes, 1990, p.3]

and which will largely in turn prescribe this point of balance.

Rational choice theory still dominates decision-making [Healey & Shaw, 1994] and is defined by seeking a position of knowledge as to possible options within a particular value system which has its own way of dealing with uncertainty. Such frameworks are then used, within their own specific terms of reference, to minimise costs and maximise rewards (‘minimax’ solutions) [Bracken, 1981].

Figure 3.1 - Balancing socio-economic needs with physical limits



What is being argued here is that sustainable development requires both a reassessment of physical limits, in terms of *sustainable resource management*, and the *building of the capacity* within the actors involved to appreciate, support and even instigate such reassessments. Analysis along these lines would consider the rational choice mechanism with regard to the re-evaluative choices made and the decisions taken during the process, as expressed through the voices of the three categories of actors involved, see Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3- Categories of actors involved in the development plan process.

Environmental decision-makers (L.P.A. members, Secretary of State)	Institutionally in a position to decide about the environmental system in question.
Environmental technicians/experts (L.P.A. officers)	Individuals and teams having specialised environmental competencies (scientific-disciplinary or technical preparation) - provide know-how and appropriate proposals.
Users of environment (occupiers or users)	a.) In a physical sense those who live or work in the area, using the environment to fulfil their needs.

	b.) In a normative sense those who own or have rights to use, referents on environmental decisions and analyses / appraisals.
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The normative questions are raised when considering to what extent the process and output address the need for a shift in balance, possibly of paradigmatic proportions [Bishop, 1996], i.e. away from that generated with a fundamentally economic base to a revised rationality enlightened through SR. It is in the debates over the best ways to tackle the issues which construct the sustainable resource management and implementational capacity discourses that the struggle for such a shift takes place. These frame the essential issues surrounding the management of environmental stock and the role of the participative function.

3.3.2 Sustainably managing environmental resources

The issues of sustainable resource management, as demarcating one line of analytic inquiry relating to SR in development plans, concentrate on ensuring that the environmental stock of the local planning area, and its influence on the utilisation of stock beyond its statutory boundaries (i.e. within its ecological footprint), is managed in such a way that it meets present needs without compromising future needs. The principle planning issues, as applied reactively in appraising development policy, in relation to this approach have been effectively tabulated by the D.O.E [1993] – re. Table 2.2. The discourse of sustainable resource management is made complex through difficulties with the concept of environmental stock –

“while scientific knowledge informs the process (i.e. the management), the key decisions are essentially about values” [Barton, 1996, p.132].

Science is often a ‘false friend’ in the arena of responsive and realistic political decision-making –

“major planks of any sustainability strategy depend on judging the balance between what the public want, what they will pay for, and what they will accept for the public good” [Ravetz, 1996, p.153].

This ‘value’, and the parameters which it should reflect to make it part of a sustainable re-evaluation, have already been generically discussed and obliquely covered in practice through reference to the environmental appraisal of development plans. More technical frameworks have, however, also been put forward from a land use planning perspective which: a.) attempt to express it in ‘capital’ terms, and b.) to link it to ideas of capacity [Drummond and Swain, 1996].

In 1997 CAG Consultants and Land Use Consultants published a report to several environment related agencies (The Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, and The Environment Agency) entitled *What Matters and Why. Environmental Capital: A New Approach*. This attempted to provide a baseline methodology for evaluating

environmental assets which tackled the issues of what facets of the environment are important, how much they mattered and how they should be managed. What made their approach new was that it side-stepped the highly subjective problems relating to ‘critical’, ‘constant’ and ‘tradeable’ categorisation. Their report proposed a solution based upon Clayton and Radcliffe’s [1996] systems view of sustainability through which ‘criticality’ could be defined in relation to an entities attributes or ‘environmental function’ in maintaining the whole system. This is clearly tied to ideas of carrying capacity. At the time this reassessment offered a useful perspective but, through its instrumentality, still struggled with value judgements and was only really workable at a small sub-system scale – something which is probably a reflection of the work of its commissioning sponsors. In 2001 the approach was revived by the same consultants and sponsors with a title and terminology reflecting a feel for contemporary politics: *Quality of Life Capital. Managing environmental, social and economic benefits*. Some of the instrumentality has now been toned down so that characterisation is according to the ‘benefits’ or ‘services’ that ‘things or places’ provide for human wellbeing. Evaluation is to cover both expert judgement and community views in answering:

- a.) who the service matter to, why, and at what spatial scale?
- b.) how important are they?
- c.) whether we have enough of them? and
- d.) what (if anything) could make up for any loss or damage to the service?” [CAG & LUC, 2001, p.15]

The issue of assigning a ‘capital’ value is clearly of importance in creating a body of baseline evaluative data. This closely linked to ideas of capacity (a link which the CAG/LUC capital approach illustrates) which have clearly attracted interest from several sources and have, in fact, recently broken into regulation through a requirement for LPAs to carry out Urban Capacity Studies. From a specifically environmental planning perspective, three reports are of are of significance. The first of theses was sponsored by the LGMB in 1995 and the other two published in 1997, one for Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) by Michael Jacobs [1997] and the other for the recently formed DETR by Entec UK Ltd. [1997]. In the CPRE report, Jacobs proposes that environmental capacity is more a metaphor for establishing greater empathy between society and its environment than a method for defining absolute limits to development. It offers a framework to assist decision makers in generating more astute ‘sustainable’ choices with regard to land use policies and proposals. The importance of broad participation in both qualitative and quantitative assessment is highlighted, especially as a means of encouraging demand management and alternative ways

of meeting social needs, both of which must be included in a packaged response to SR. The Entec report offers support for the concept in theory but, to be fully valid, it would require a level of comprehensive assessment which is unattainable in practice. This does not rule out limited studies but the terms of reference must be made clear and the methodology both transparent and rigorous. The general conclusion of both reports is that the concept of environmental capital is both useful and meaningful but its application can only become an acceptable element in decision making when it is set within clearly defined and limited parameters.

The LGMB sponsored document *Sustainable Settlements. A Guide for Planners, Designers and Developers* [Barton *et al.*, 1995] offers specific independent practical guidance for planners and in this sense is somewhat unique. It has a particularly re-evaluative quality with an emphasis on the need for robustness and adaptability in plans. The implication is that plans can, and should, continue to function 'sustainably' regardless of modifications in socio-economic variables, and that they can accommodate the need for future change - reflecting the precautionary principle by keeping options open. The emphasis in tackling the key components of development plans (growth allocation, locational criteria, and specific land uses) to achieve this is placed on the need for "a comprehensive analysis of environmental capacity" [*ibid.* p.70]. This starting point, a framework for which is illustrated in Table 3.4 overleaf, is developed in a practical handbook format which possibly the later DETR *Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice* [DETR, 1998a] drew on for inspiration if not commitment. The presence, status and nature of such assessments are designed to offer an insight into the shape and location of development against an appropriate balancing of physical and socio-economic demand. The considerations raised, when combined with the spatial dynamics surrounding i.) the density of the built environment, ii.) housing location, iii.) employment/facilities location, and iv.) movement, were envisaged as leading to a more contingent understanding of the morphological issues in development planning.

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) also produced a reference publication for practice on the subject of planning and sustainable development [Blowers, 1993b]. This, in the same vein but a very different and more academic format, offers sets of broad issues recommended to be included by LPA's in the process of plan-making. The chapter in this edited book of particular relevance here relates to the translation of goals and rules into the topic areas appropriate for development planning [Breheny & Rookwood, 1993] - such as private and public transport, loss of habitat, developing green spaces, and the influence of

Table 3.4 - The Capacity Assessment Framework (CAF): an illustrative not definitive analysis

NATURAL RESOURCES										LOCAL ENVIRONMENT										
GLOBAL ECOLOGY																				
GLOBAL ATMOSPHERE/CLIMATE																				
ENERGY IN TRANSPORT																				
	Access to facilities	Transport networks	Energy use in buildings and carbon-fixing	Biodiversity	Air quality	Water resources	Land and soil	Minerals and energy resources	Built environment	Open space	Aesthetic and cultural heritage									
Critical Constraints	No facilities accessible or planned	No accessible and frequent public transport services available or planned	Very exposed sites	SSSI's, SPA's, SAG's, RAMSAR site, NNR's, ancient woodland	Area prone to unacceptable levels of air pollution	Areas liable to flood	Unstable land, areas prone to coastal erosion	Scarce/high value reserve	Fully built up areas, well used and maintained	Attractive, well used and accessible public open space (POS)	Listed buildings; rare arch'logical sites; valuable landscapes of great value									
Transferable Constraints			Shelter belts, woodlands, coppice	ESA's, other semi-natural habitats, wildlife corridors		Areas with excessive abstraction rates; high ground-water vulnerability	Allotments, established organic farmland	Other reserves - substitution by conservation		Common land; locally valued or potentially accessible open space										
Negotiable Constraints	Limited facilities accessible but provision could be improved	Currently substandard public transport services capable of improvement	North-facing slopes	Locally valued common habitats, trees and hedgerows	Mitigable levels of pollution	Water supply and drainage at capacity areas of medium groundwater vulnerability	High quality soils, contamin'd land	Potential ambient energy capture	Road / services at capacity	Private open space lacking public access	National Parks; AONB's; conservation areas where 'enhancement' is possible									
Development Opportunity	Many facilities accessible	Satisfactory level of accessible and frequent service	Gentle South-facing slopes; well-sheltered sites; potential tree planting bonus	No threat to assets		Space capacity in supply and drainage	Degraded or derelict land (except if of special wildlife value)		Space capacity in roads / services; infill / renewal potential	Ample open space accessible	Ugly / monotonous urban environment									
Development Priority	Most facilities highly accessible	Good access to high quality local and sub-regional public transport services	Spare capacity on CHP/DH system						Empty urban buildings and brownfield sites											

Definitions: **Critical Constraints:** zones of critical environmental stock or risk which preclude further human development.

Transferable Constraints: zones affected by *constant environmental assets*, with a presumption against development unless there is proven overriding need for the development. Where development does take place, there should be appropriate substitution or replacement of the asset lost. Replacement is only valid if it can be achieved within a reasonable timescale.

Negotiable Constraints: zones affected by environmental problems or thresholds with a presumption against development unless the problems are mitigated or thresholds overcome by extra investments, and the need for the development is overriding.

Development Opportunity: zones that, other things being equal, offer environmental social benefits if developed.

Development Priority: zones that, given a need for development, should be considered first, currently representing wasted assets.

Source: Barton *et al.*, 1995, p.72-73

housing density on quality of life. These offer useful advice from a strategy perspective. A clear rejection is made of “any attempt to prescribe some simple, single over-riding policy” [p.156], such as is expressed in the debate between the high density compact city and proposals for further decentralisation. These are considered unrealistic and beyond effective implementation though useful from a theoretical perspective in illustrating some guiding principles. Adopting the ecologically popular regional approach (along the lines of bio-regionalism and ecological footprints) the interdependent unit to be addressed is termed the ‘Social City Region’. This contains its own ‘multiplicity’ of circumstances through which the key issue areas in which change is needed - natural resources, land use and transport, energy, and pollution and waste - should be addressed. An eleven point checklist is offered for monitoring progress towards future sustainability which stand as a useful point of reference when considering the essential facet of a re-evaluative process (Table 3.5, below). Breheny and Rookwood consider making genuine progress

“means broadening the objective of the existing physical planning system - which has been to control ‘development’ (as statutorily defined) so as to achieve certain aims *within* our built environment - to include the relationship *between* this built environment and the world of natural ecosystems” [1993, p.157, original italics].

Table 3.5 - Checklist for monitoring progress toward future sustainability in the Social City Region.

<p>1. Pollution reduced by: <i>a.) establishing the environmental capacity of the region for emission of pollutants;</i> <i>b.) refusing permission for any development that would result in the total volume of emissions exceeding the regional capacity;</i> <i>c.) setting up inducements and penalties to cut existing emissions.</i></p>
<p>2. Natural resources conserved by: <i>a.) encouraging rehabilitation rather than redevelopment;</i> <i>b.) stimulating regional production of renewables to replace finite non-renewables;</i> <i>c.) adopting conservation measures to save topsoil</i></p>
<p>3. Total volume of waste stream reduced by measures such as: <i>a.) reducing business rates for firms using ‘closed cycle’ processes;</i> <i>b.) introducing graduated charges for waste collection</i></p>
<p>4. Increased recycling of most waste materials including: <i>a.) recovery of scarce inorganic materials for reuse;</i> <i>b.) composting of organic wastes.</i></p>
<p>5. Reduced energy consumption and increased percentage from renewables by: <i>a.) programme for raising energy efficiency of all buildings to at least minimum sustainability standards;</i> <i>b.) increased use of solar gain;</i> <i>c.) greater use of combined heat and power systems;</i> <i>d.) development of wind farms and wave power.</i></p>
<p>6. Major increases in biomass, both urban and rural, by: <i>a.) more community forests and other rural tree planting;</i> <i>b.) protection of existing urban open space and creation of new open space in areas of deficiency;</i> <i>c.) additional urban tree planting and other green vegetation;</i> <i>d.) gardens on flat rooftops;</i> <i>e.) more green areas in new development projects</i></p>
<p>7. Regional water supplies augmented and consumption reduced by: <i>a.) tree planting to maximise rainwater retention in watersheds;</i> <i>b.) metering consumers with graduated charges favouring low consumption;</i> <i>c.) applying ‘closed cycle’ methods to water use;</i> <i>d.) separating ‘grey’ water for filtering and return to groundwater reserves;</i> <i>e.) reducing urban run-off by use of more permeable paving, providing natural channels and lagoons in place of closed drains.</i></p>
<p>8. Urban decentralisation and dispersal reduced by: <i>a.) greening and decongesting inner cities;</i> <i>b.) making inner city housing more attractive by eliminating excessive densities, designing for ‘defensible space’;</i> <i>c.) increasing average densities in city suburbs and small towns;</i></p>

d.) <i>using more concentrated forms for new development.</i>
9. Commuting distances reduced by: a.) <i>more local production to meet local needs;</i> b.) <i>local employment to match local skills;</i> c.) <i>more telecommunication-based home-working, especially in rural areas;</i> d.) <i>more mixed development ;</i> e.) <i>more housing in major employment centres;</i> f.) <i>more complementary development in adjoining small towns to reduce reliance on distant large cities;</i> g.) <i>building balanced new communities.</i>
10. Public transport made more attractive and economic by: a.) <i>concentrating more mixed-use development at public transport nodes;</i> b.) <i>co-ordinating land use and public transport to achieve more balanced commuter flows;</i> c.) <i>creating more dedicated public transport routes;</i> d.) <i>improving frequency and reliability of services;</i> e.) <i>raising densities to complement improved public transport</i>
11. Road traffic reduced by: a.) <i>locating development so as to reduce travel demand;</i> b.) <i>using opportunities to reshape urban areas to reduce private motorised trips;</i> c.) <i>refusing permission for new car-based out-of-town retailing and business parks;</i> d.) <i>pricing road use on congested routes;</i> e.) <i>reducing car parking provision and increasing charges where public transport available;</i> f.) <i>more pedestrian-priority areas.</i>

[Source: Breheny & Rookwood, 1993, p.159-160]

It is now necessary to link these somewhat technical SRM concerns with the behavioural issue of implementational capacity. Berg and Dasmann described the nature of this bond (in their definition of a bioregion) as that which

“refers to a geographical terrain and a terrain of consciousness - to a place and the ideas that have developed about how to live in a place” [quoted in Jacobs, 1995, p.91].

3.3.3 Engendering implementational capacity

The key participative element of the sustainable development agenda points away from a reliance upon expert assessments and detached management. Sustained and universally operationalised SR will hinge upon the capacity of all groups to enter into the re-evaluating process and influence decision making:

“the problem is not one of a particular law or management approach but rather the *attitude* people bring to their relationship with the natural world” [Jacobs, 1995, p.86, original italics].

The ‘positive impact’ suggested within the notion of sustainable development may encourage social responsibility but can certainly not assume it. Such responsibility comes with the capacity to take up the challenges of alternative policies leading to communities that are more self-reliant and equitable [Carew-Reid *et al.*, 1994]:

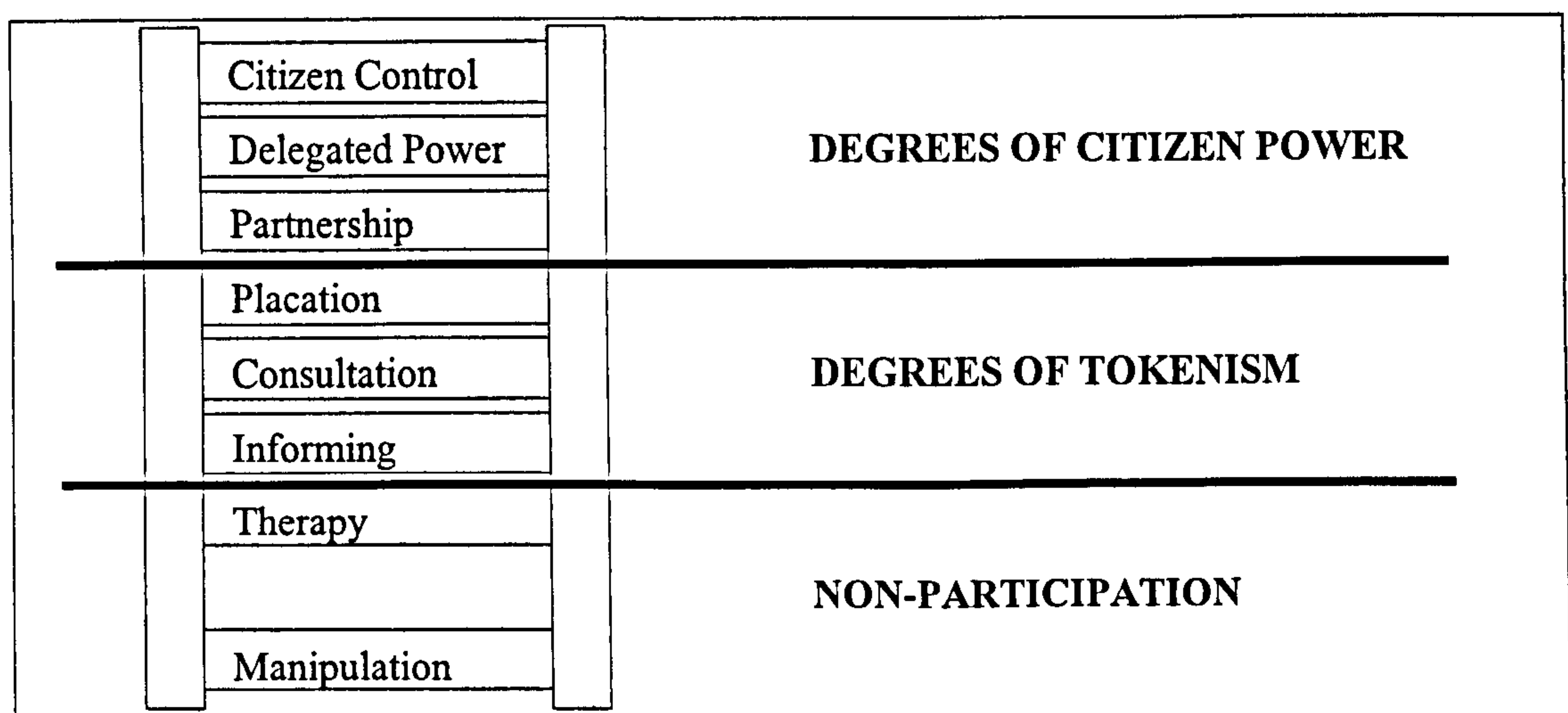
“every proposed action brings with it a set of assumptions - often unwritten - about the capacities of agencies or groups responsible for implementation; a frequent cause of failure in a strategy is that these bodies are not up to the job. Every substantive action called for in a strategy needs to be inextricably linked to supporting capacity-building programmes” [*ibid.* p.128]

A significant expression of such programmes in development planning is to be found in the nature of participative processes during plan production. As we have seen, the 1968 Town

and Country Planning Act made public participation a statutory requirement in the development plan-making process. These requirements however, as they stand, are extremely limited with regard to building the capacity to generate alternatives or to work with policies promoting sustainable development in the manner required to make them genuinely effective. The principle statutory mode of participation is through the submission of written objections during the six week deposit period and subsequent consideration at either a public local inquiry or examination in public for local and structure plans respectively. It is at the local authority's own discretion as to whether the participatory process should be extended beyond this limited and reactive framework. Seeking public views rather than engagement in actual decision-making thus positions the process on rung 4 of Arnstein's ladder, in the zone of tokenism [Murray & Chapman, 1996], see Figure 3.2 below. The degree to which local authorities are prepared or even capable of propelling the participative function of plan-making into the zone of 'citizen power' as prescribed by the Agenda 21 document is debatable. This document makes it very clear that:

“both empowerment and capacity building are central to the environmental policy process. There has to be not only a programme of education and encouragement which will prepare people for informed participation in the decision-making process, but also mechanisms which will enable and assist in building the capacity to actually deliver policy programmes in partnership with other agencies” [Agyeman & Evans, 1994b, p.198]

Figure 3.2 - Arnstein's ladder of participation



[Source: Murray & Chapman, 1996, p.161]

With central government putting local authority spending under almost continuous pressure since the early 1980's [Dowding, 1996] and also pressing to speed up the plan making process [D.O.E., 1997b] it will be an increasing struggle for L.P.A.'s to extend consultation beyond the statutory requirement. As Reeves [1995] points out however, with regard to Sheffield's endeavour to do this for their 1991 pre-deposit UDP, consultation is important "to engage people in discussion about the future of their communities" [p.212]. The ideological

consequences of neo-liberalism, as Marshall [1994] points out, have been to create “a ‘spirit of the age’ in which for planners to think in social terms and of a public sphere has never been harder” [p.27]. Additionally, the statutory requirements clearly favour those who have the capacity to instigate change but who are generally bound to a more compelling and very different set of vested interests which often have little incentive toward SR –

“whilst the procedural safeguards are in principle open to all, it is only the better organised and well-financed who are able to make the most use of them” [Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994, p.258].

The need for integration and mutual understanding amongst the actors in development plan preparation (re. Table 3.3) is a constant theme and one which is central to the implementational capacity discourse. There is little point, as already suggested, in attempting to promote SR if the rationality of the users is not in tune with the underlying aims. Such initiatives, developments or projects must have the enlightened rationality of their sustainable principles carried forward and woven into the fabric of those individuals, communities or organisations which they attempt to serve and facilitate.

“The problems of winning political support for any emerging strategy are manifest. Effective implementation depends on co-operation from many other agencies...It is therefore essential to establish collaborative working groups capable of delivering the support of those agencies” [Barton *et al.*, 1995, p.103].

In terms of planning to promote sustainable development, the transport issues have taken the most prominent and influential position: combining concerns of an ecological nature with those of accessibility under the headings of i.) choice of transport mode, ii.) location of development, iii.) local transport policy, and iv.) regional guidance [LGMB, 1994]. The importance of collaboration is of notable appearance here (e.g. in conjunction with Local Transport Plans (formerly Transport Policies & Programmes) and Package Bids submitted by local authorities to the Department of Transport [Transport 2000 *et al.*, 1996]). There is however, essential integrative potential to be found with many other areas such as with the Department of Health (e.g. providing data and weight to issues of pollution [Young, 1996]), the Environment Agency (e.g. river catchment strategies), or the Department of Trade and Industry (e.g. in developing area wide planning guidelines for renewable energy projects [Harper, 1993]). As Barton *et al.* [1995] also point out, Local Agenda 21 provides an excellent opportunity for achieving this appropriately integrative support and adds extra weight to uniting the LA21 and development plan making processes.

As already introduced, the LA21 process as a wide ranging, non-statutory and bottom-up approach to sustainable development is in a pivotal position with regard to building implementational capacity. The potential, especially for the participative function, in terms of

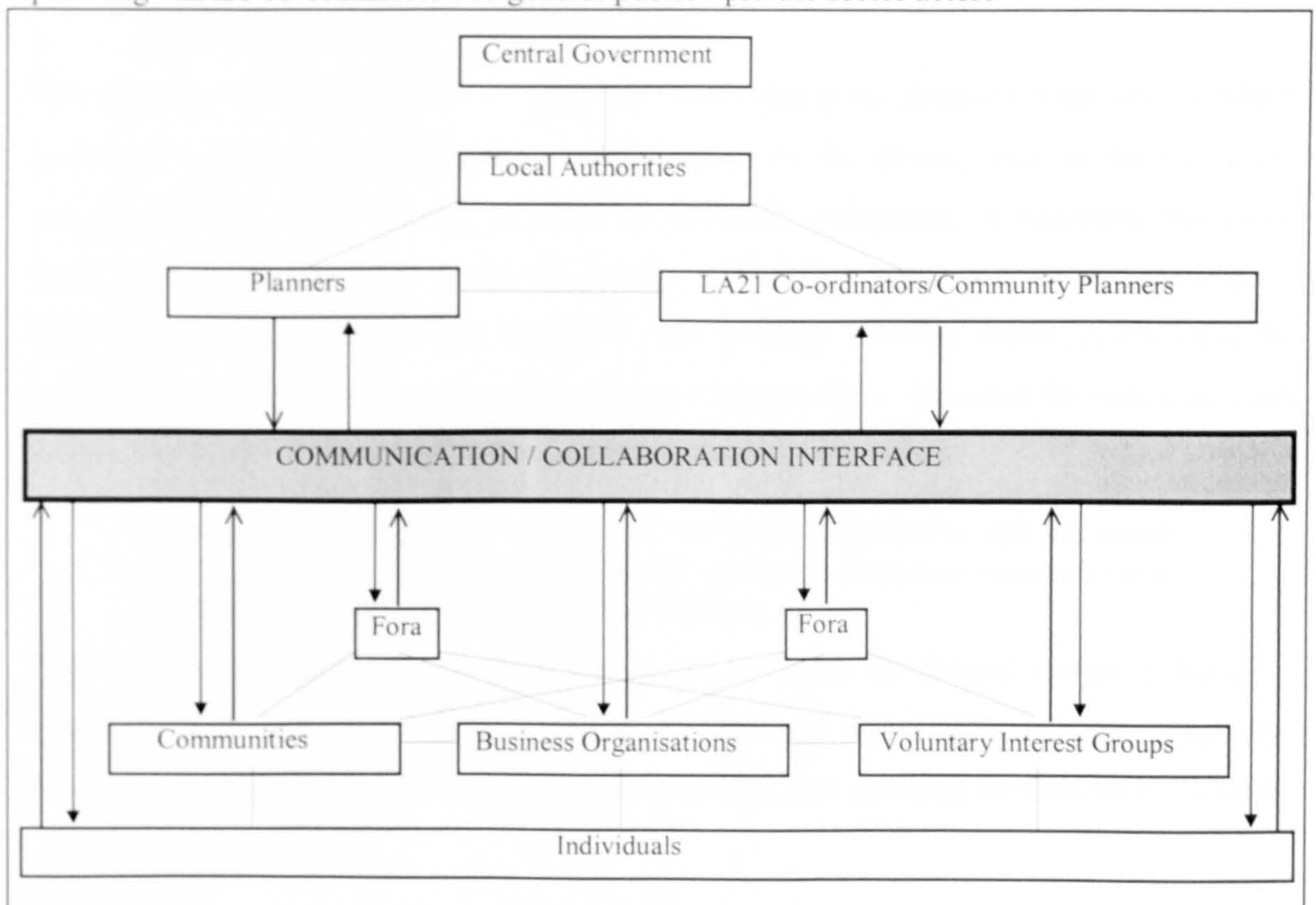
development planning may prove very significant, assuming LPA's can incorporate it into the statutory process and have the resources to effectively facilitate it. Examples of methods which can be introduced by LA21's which have direct relevance to development planning beyond a foundational awareness raising are: 'planning for real' workshops [Gibson, 1981]; detailed responses via LA21 working groups to development plans [Vision 21, 1997]; and village design statements and appraisals [Countryside Commission, 1995; LGMB, 1993].

Planners and LA21 co-ordinators/community planners are the two sets of local authority actors most specifically required to tackle issues of sustainable development as statutory and non-statutory requirements respectively. The nature of the relationships between these two positions has been highlighted in the popular press with LA21 co-ordinators being provocatively seen as taking over the role of town planners [Carty, 1997]. The form that the communication/collaboration interface [See Figure 3.3, below] takes between involved actors is of some significance to us here:

“LA21 offers the opportunity to radically reappraise and redesign local authority participative structures, and to develop fresh and innovative methods of working with people for the community” [Freeman *et al.*, 1996, p.65].

Investigation in this area will be relevant and helpful in two ways. Firstly, from a descriptive perspective in throwing into relief the limitations of a system which was constructed before sustainable development as a concept was born, and also any strengths it may have over the

Figure 3.3 - The communication / collaboration interface between local authority planning / LA21 co-ordinators and general public / private sector actors



indeterminate evolution of LA21 initiatives. Secondly, from a normative perspective in terms of considering how planning should promote sustainable development or in generating alternative scenarios - an example would be the use of LA21-type initiatives such as village design statements and appraisals, taking the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG's), to bolster local plans.

3.4 Constraints and Opportunities

Having outlined the apparent challenges of SR through the nature of decision making in the planning system, the topic issues and capacity which it is potentially considered to be in a position to respond, the time has come to draw these fields together in an effort to explicitly delineate the constraints and opportunities emanating from them. These points, many of which have already been touched upon, can then be drawn on directly to frame an empirical inquiry framework in which to explore the promotional prospects or otherwise of SR within development plans:

“The land use planning system uses regulatory power to contribute to the management of environmental change in localities. It is thus apparently central to the contemporary environmental policy agenda...The role of the development plan...is to provide a framework within which the criteria for making regulatory decisions can be established.” [Healey & Shaw, 1993b, p.1]

As Campbell [1996] points out, on the economic-ecological scale

“the planner has no natural home, but can slide from one end of the spectrum to the other; moreover, the midpoint has no special claim to legitimacy or fairness” [p.297].

The objective essence of SR is to transform anthropocentric progress from one in which economic concerns, founded on mass consumption, are the driving force in the search for enhanced quality of life, to one in which an equitable exploitation of biospheric resources today, will ensure at least an acceptable quality of life for all people without endangering the right of indefinite future generations to the same privilege. In other words, synthesising the traditional developmental components of economic growth (as measured by indicators such as gross national product) with what Hajer defines as

“the physical component of real environmental degradation and the social component of a new perception of the relation between environment and society” [quoted in Healey & Shaw, 1993b, p.5].

Constraint and opportunity are thus locked into a highly conflictual terrain defined by perceived economic imperatives, resource management and implementational capacity. Campbell [1996] usefully illustrates the multiple roles that planning professionals would be

required to simultaneously play in this conflict in an effort to have any chance of successfully grappling with the SR agenda (see Figure 3.4, overleaf). The crucial point is that all three roles

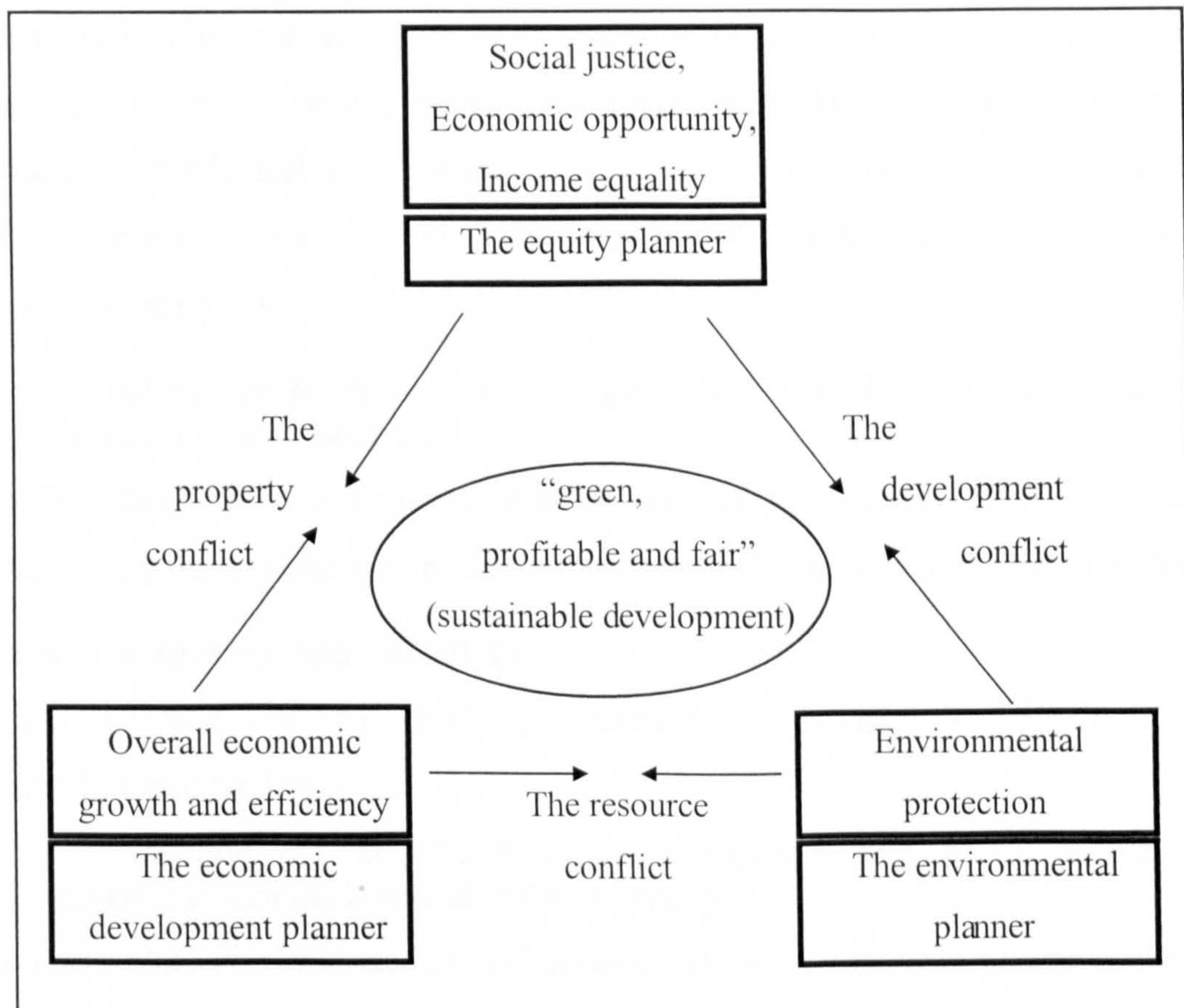
“have an interactive relationship with nature: the differences lie in their conflicting *conceptions* of nature, their conflicting *uses* of nature, and how they incorporate nature into their systems of values (be they community, economic or spiritual values)” [Campbell, 1996, p.300, original italics].

Marshall [1994] claims that:

“Once environmental issues are given more emphasis as considerations in planning, arguments are forced to change, from a free market basis to one with some kind of social (and economic) calculus. This becomes increasingly serious, the more fully the environmental dimension is developed” [p.28].

The idea of ‘forced change’ is dependent upon the degree of ‘emphasis’ which itself turns upon the central proposition of sustainable re-evaluation.

Figure 3.4 - The triangle of conflicting goals for planning, and the three associated conflicts. (Planners define themselves, implicitly, by where they stand on the triangle. The elusive ideal of sustainable development leads one to the centre)



Source: Campbell, 1996, p.298

3.4.1 Constraints

As previously discussed, the modern planning system, as an institutional child of post-war consensus, was subject to the elitism deemed appropriate to meet the needs for a redistribution of wealth in a welfare state politically constructed from a partnership between government and expert administrators. The effect in terms of decision-making has been to install within the planning profession a lasting depoliticising characteristic [Thornley, 1991].

This facet of neutrally orientated technical judgement has survived the Thatcherite era and the risk now is that sustainable development, by becoming incorporated in a field so characterised, will itself become no more than a depoliticised technical issue. This may be more convenient, and arguably a deliberate intention, for a central government which considers its short-term future better served by an environmentally directed response in the shape of 'non-disruptive reform at the margins of resource sectors'. Rydin [1995] adds to this view by suggesting:

“the danger is that many technocrats (including I would argue, planners) see an interest in maintaining the conflict-free vision of the sustainability agenda’ [p.376, original parentheses].

She attempts to illustrate this point with reference to urban form and transport patterns, claiming that there has been a technocratically-oriented clamour to reach consensus on appropriate morphological issues when what is actually required, as a precursor to such moves, is a strong shift to public modes of mass transit. The governmental rationale behind their approach being that

“it has proved politically easier to green land use planning rather than transport policy” [*ibid.* p.373].

The ‘hidden hand’ of this political pressure appears to underlie the majority of other dilemmas facing the profession in its endeavours to effectively implement SR in policy terms.

Problems of integration and inflexibility

According to Healey and Shaw [1993b], sustainable development does not fit in with the British institutional tendency

“to separate out key “sectoral” considerations, and create special procedures alongside or within the system” [p.3].

Development plans are structured around sectors and topics which are poorly integrated and have their agendas

“structured by government policy which itself is highly influenced by the structural driving forces of our times” [Davoudi *et al.*, 1996, p.427].

Owen [1996], in discussing rural settlement, further extends these opinions on planning, in its current institutional form, as being too narrow a field to even approach fully encompassing

the ideals of sustainable development. The traditional sectoral technocratic strategist model too often leads to blinkered decision-making, with environmental attributes tending to be considered independently of other socio-economic concerns, even in the more integrated Unitary Development Plans [Beer, 1993].

“The extent and complexity of sustainability criteria highlight the restricted scope of development plans, with their concentration on land use, as a means to address the full range of issues” [Owen, 1996, p.44].

If the rhetoric of ‘balance’ contained in many PPG’s, with regard to sustainable development, is to be given any real meaning, either the planner’s remit must be widened or strongly integrated into other policy areas. Davidson [1996] adds to this persistent constrictive characteristic, the opinion that statutory development plans are too prescriptive and inflexible in nature. Although this view is based upon experience from the United States, where legal backing is a necessity to offset the powerful forces of the private sector, it has relevance to the British situation (where it is expressed in terms of ameliorating market failure), especially since the advent of Section 54A. This legislation, as discussed previously, reinforced the role of the plan in development control and thus the potential for SR on the frontline of planning activity.

The need for cross-departmental policy integration is additionally apparent through the level of discretion maintained by the inclusion of any other material considerations in evaluation. Though these must be pertinent “to the use and development of land” [D.O.E., 1997a, para.50], the breadth of interpretation can make it difficult to ascertain who actually defines the developmental parameters, and can potentially sideline policies based upon a pertinent, environmentally founded re-evaluation.

The contemporary bureaucratic processes also make plans slow to produce and therefore mean they become readily outdated, consequently making environmental protection and related social and equity issues even more vulnerable to being undermined by outside interests. The institutional weaknesses presented here, in terms of the isolation of planning departments, partially affirm the view that

“the position taken by self-described progressive planners, the position that argues that in order to successfully plan one needs to articulate and engage a set of deeper, more fundamental issues and questions about the root causes of the current situation” [Jacobs, 1995, p.86],

implying a need for a form of critical comprehensive planning [*ibid.*].

Difficulties with neutrality and values

The notion of ‘balance’, which is continually expressed as a prominent characteristic of British planning and one appropriate to evaluating sustainable development issues, further

brings with it (in this context) some very uncomfortable questions for a profession which prides itself on its ability to make rational neutral decisions based on performance criteria. Unfortunately as a mechanism for distributing new development, having 'neutrally' weighed up competing interests, it has conventionally bowed to political pressure in ensuring that short-term economic considerations have taken priority over long-term environmental security [Bishop, 1996; Reynolds & Burton, 1994]. The principles encapsulated in sustainable development

“require an alternative ethical basis and, especially in the postmaterial realm, are inherently bound up with value theory” [Owens, 1994, p.439].

Referring back to an earlier quote from Reade [1987] (made before the demands of sustainable development were explicitly applied to the planning system) such value issues can only be effectively handled if the profession 'begins to discover politics' in terms of ascertaining '*who* gains, and *who* loses and by *how much*', both now and in the future.

The fragmented nature of knowledge, with regard to the state of the environment, is a significant constraint to effective valuation [Barton *et al.*, 1995], together with the multiplicity of perspectives through which to apply it: for example the views of the environment in terms of i.) amenity or recreation (aesthetic utilitarianism and functional resource management); ii.) a backcloth or setting (intrinsic value); iii.) assets which may be priced and traded (marketised utilitarianism, e.g. planning gain [Whatmore & Boucher, 1994]); iv.) image improvement (place marketing); or v.) ecological maintenance [Davoudi *et al.*, 1996]. Each of these approaches has a relevance, however it is the last point - minimising the disruption to ecosystemic integrity - which is foundational to the new environmental agenda with its linked goal of engendering intergenerational equity [Expert Group on the Urban Environment, 1996].

Davoudi *et al.*'s. [1996] study of a relatively recent Structure Plan review (Lancashire County Council - which may be considered as a national leader in sustainability oriented initiatives) found it very hard to track down actual policies and proposals in this area of environmental understanding:

“the policies were considered by the D.O.E. and the district councils either to be 'not strategic' or 'not implementable' by the planning system” [p.430].

Lucas and Chambers [1996] expand on this paucity, or sidelining, of understanding in their qualitative analysis of development plans for the regeneration of the Thames Gateway. They conclude that failure to incorporate policy with appropriate meanings for 'environment' and 'environmental value' in plans will not only produce unsustainable development, but also

“undermine community perceptions of local environmental value” [p.158]. In 1992, Whatmore and Boucher concluded that ecological concerns (the ‘ecology narrative’) are “the most institutionally marginalised environmental narrative in contemporary planning policy”

because of

“its radical implication for the political economy of land development and for the ethos and protocol of planning practice” [p.170].

Whether, or not, this statement is still valid will be a key element of this study’s empirical inquiry and analysis.

Conundrums of conflict resolution and consensus

Such conclusions inevitably bring into question the system’s mediatory role in resolving conflicts of interest with regard to efforts to bring about SR. Within this context, the adversarial and reactive properties of conflict resolution in a system in which firstly,

“local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of encouraging industrial and commercial development if the national economy is to prosper, particularly where technological and other requirements of modern business are changing rapidly” [D.O.E., 1997a, para.46],

and secondly, where many authorities are severely cash-strapped and look to planning obligations and capital receipts to fulfil their aims, will be sorely tested. The social and political tensions created will additionally have divisive qualities, pushing the goal of systemic and equitable environmental valuation further out of reach [Rydin, 1995]. In order to socially entrench the tenets of this goal a highly participative consensus based approach to proactively minimise conflict is required, flowing from the discourse of implementational capacity into that of sustainable resource management [Young, 1995]. In terms of building capacity, a dependence and faith in technical analysis without participation in the decision-making process

“can feel like manipulation even when analysis is rigorous, objective, and intended solely to be informative” [deHaven-Smith & Wodraska, 1996, p.367].

Perhaps inevitably, in any institutional transformation of the magnitude implied by the impact of the new environmental agenda on land use development, ensuing discussion will have divisive qualities. This is a point picked up on in Myerson and Rydin’s lively rhetorical analysis of the subject –

“the new environmental arguments have succeeded where they least wanted to: they have helped create the grounds of a new culture of argument, rather than a new consensus” [Myerson & Rydin, 1996, p.216].

Even where the framework for the construction of an appropriate horizontal policy network has been enabled, and achieved some success (e.g. via the Lancashire Environmental Action Plan),

“given the formally hierarchical relations of the British planning system, the translation of this into the formal policy device of a structure plan has been a difficult task” [Davoudi *et al.*, 1996, p.427].

3.4.2 Opportunities

The question now raised, in consideration of the above constraining and limiting factors, is whether the development planning system can take on board appropriate countering initiatives and innovations; building on any inherent strengths, applicable experience or relevant traditional functions. The very great majority of the commentators, referred to above, in rightly delineating the constraints on the British land use planning system also, either directly or indirectly, express a degree of optimism or potential in its ability to constructively contribute to SR. This consensus of opinion is well expressed by Bishop [1996] in his paper on ‘planning’s green paradigm’ (with its optimistic assessment of the draft and deposit versions of the city-wide Bristol Local Plan):

“The 1990’s have witnessed the entrenchment of environmental concerns in planning policy. Although phrases such as “have regard to” and “overriding public interest” leave considerable scope for interpretation, there is the potential that this new environmental agenda will lead to a fundamental revision of planning concepts and policy processes, rather than just a reinforcement of traditional strategies.” [p.213]

The specific topics and issues which need to be, and can be, addressed by local planning authorities have already been introduced. It is attempting to discern traces or clear signs of practice in these directions which gives this research its optimistic and constructive bent. As Campbell [1996] has suggested, from this more positive perspective,

“sustainability has shifted from being a variable to being the parameter of the debate, almost certain to be integrated into any future scenario of development” [p.301].

The point now is to locate where the seeds and saplings of this integration may be found in development planning.

Government support

The aforesaid opportunities will manifest themselves through the presence of a genuine appreciation of what sustainable development means in the planning process. The potential for change will only be achieved if the implementational capacity is built within the profession to incorporate the new environmental agenda. The baseline transformation comes

from some reorientation in the traditional approach of trading the environment off against other considerations. Central Government has offered up two important instruments for doing this in the form of plan-led development and the environmental appraisal of development plans, together with revised PPG's which enhance the systems ability to: (i.) identify environmental capacities and limits; (ii.) move toward managing demand and limiting supply; (iii.) tentatively implement the precautionary principle; and (iv.) value, in an albeit scientific manner, previously external social and environmental considerations [Bishop, 1996]. All these can be seen as an encouragement to identify environmental objectives at an early stage in plan making.

The power of indicators

The development of suitable indicators of sustainable development is a first immediate step for local authorities in guiding the aforementioned and foundational transformation - an approach which has already been taken up at the national [D.O.E., 1996] and local [Macnaghten, 1996] level. The importance of indicators has previously been discussed at some length, but it is worth reiterating their significance as a basis for policy formation and validation

“as policies and principles on paper provide powerful ammunition in land use conflicts” [Owens, 1994, p.442; Innes, 1990].

The evolution of such tools, from the more superficial state of the environment variety, to the more meaningful sustainability indicators, should have an inherent appeal to the engrained technical dimension of the profession. Such an evolution can go some way to countering the fragmentation of knowledge which currently dogs the implementation of such an overarching concept, and additionally plays a vital role in the crucial community perception of local environmental value. The opportunity for the introduction of a participative function in developing indicators, opens the door to more effective public involvement as a statutory requirement of plan making. The combination of processes of this nature offers up a suitable point of interface with the non-statutory LA21-type initiatives.

The potential of Local Agenda 21

How far local authorities are prepared to go in developing the synergistic potential of conflating the efforts of the LA21 initiative with development planning will, in turn, indicate to some degree the entrenchment of the new environmental agenda (with all its social and economic connotations for an equitably improved quality of life both now and in the future). This offers an arena in which to tackle the institutional weaknesses and political issues which otherwise isolate planning departments in the sustainability debate. The window of opportunity created for advancing sustainable development through hooking into LA21

operations would seem, in theory at least, to have massive strategic potential but is one which to date has seemed to have drawn little more than tacit acknowledgement:

“The Local Agenda 21 process, with its focus on public education and awareness-raising and round table approach, could provide an adequate system for the operationalisation of such a strategy” [Lucas & Chambers, 1996, p.161];

“Action is needed to ensure the more effective use of the principles and mechanisms available for achieving greater awareness and prioritisation of sustainability issues in policy and practice. Of particular importance is...improved forms of public involvement in planning and the potential linkage of spatial planning and Local Agenda 21 processes” [Expert Group on the Urban Environment, 1996, p.9].

Local Agenda 21 projects and initiatives [Dwelly, 1996; Countryside Commission, 1995], with their broad emphasis on change, via action to create and maintain local quality of both life and environment, have re-/evaluative potential in two key areas. Firstly, they can instigate a degree of integration in local authority cross-departmental policy - one in which planners should look to play a central role. Secondly, as an area in which consensus building, despite the inherent problems it throws up in terms of unresolvable conflict, is foundational in the search for win/win outcomes as opposed to the typical win/lose or zero-sum results from the conventional adversarial approach in planning conflict resolution [Carter & Darlow, 1997].

The return of the region?

The above opportunities for sustainable development advancement to be enhanced, by linking with grassroots initiatives, may in the near future be reorganised by governmental restructuring at the regional level. The new Labour Government, with its previously revised ministerial structure of merging the departments of transport and the environment with a regional dimension, would appear to be attempting to devolve power to the English regions - through economic planning councils in the form of Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) [Hetherington, 1997]. Although the emphasis is on co-ordinating building and regeneration by pulling powers from government departments (such as planning, housing, road building, and public transport) into a combined framework, there would appear to be some potential here for a more integrative approach to the demands for making future development sustainable - a point recently lent substance with the introduction of regional planning sustainability appraisals. The role for planning and LPA's within a comprehensive regional framework has, as yet, to be clearly established but the potential for a more systemic methodology in terms of policy integration and co-ordinated activity would seem encouraging.

3.5 Summary

Reflecting on the above consideration of constraints and opportunities, it becomes clear that the emphasis throughout has been on the need to further develop a process of acceptance of the real need for SR. At this still relatively early stage in sustainable development's introduction, for such an all-embracing notion, this deduction is hardly surprising. A firm foundation built on action emanating from the building of implementational capacity is required. Without this, the move to more progressive and substantive outcome oriented action within the field of sustainable resource management will be unlikely to produce the requisite long term results. There is also the very real danger, unless the capacity is built to perpetuate sustainable lifestyle practices and thinking, that due to the perpetual nature of the sustainable development argument, people will lose interest, participative initiatives will run out of momentum, and development plans will prove impotent. Innovation in terms of process oriented policy to entrench environmental empathy and respect would thus seem pressing. This is not to suggest however, that the production of both long and short term outcome specific policies should be ignored. Specific goals are essential and the need for positive responses becomes increasingly urgent –

“the time of the finite earth is beginning” [Lipietz, 1992, p.51].

Research methodology

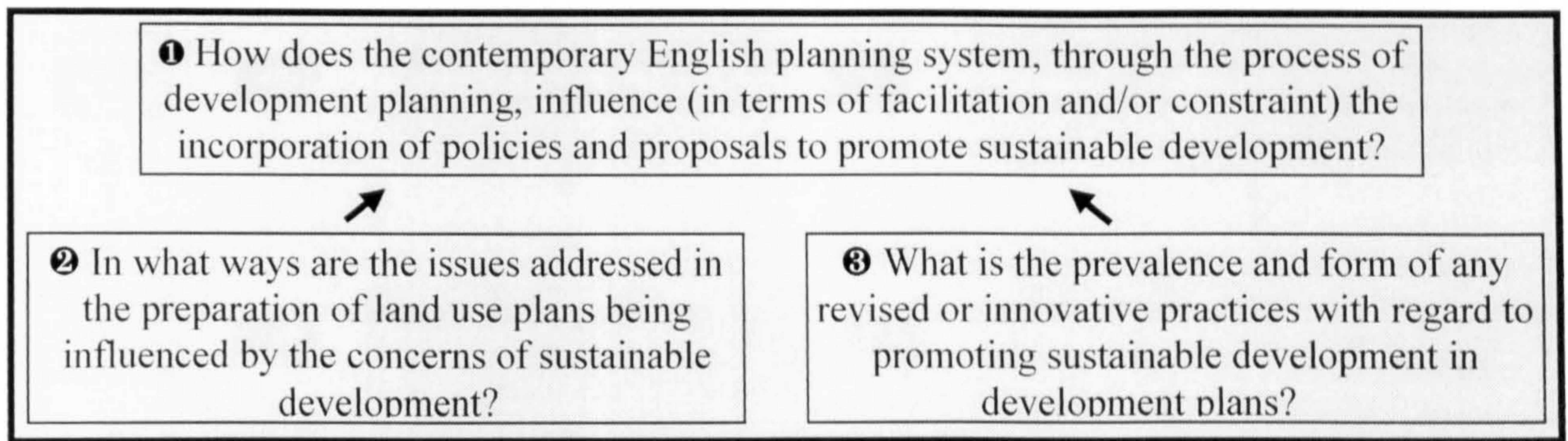
This thesis began with a puzzle – a very significant one: how should contemporary socio-economic development be sustained so that it does not irreversibly compromise essential elements of the natural and built environment (considered as resources) for present and future use? As was discussed in Chapter 1, at the heart of the social reality in which the assertions of sustainable development exist is a premise concerning an appropriate re-evaluation of these ‘essential elements of the natural and built environment’. Integral to breathing life into this statement is the nature of people and their preferences. Preferences which can be re-shaped or re-orientated. This in turn will involve choice and consequently some form of enlightened mediation. From the re-evaluative premise it becomes possible to begin exploring current responses to the over-arching puzzle through the enlivening choices and preferences being made in the cause of facilitating a (more) sustainable trajectory of development. In a non-specific sense this exploration is encapsulated in a twin-tracked inquiry of the type: *in what ways* and *why* are the different aspects of knowledge, understanding and appreciation (relating to a putative re-evaluation of environmental resources) brought into play in mediating attempts to plan for and deliver a ‘sustainable’ future.

4.1 From themes and questions to an investigative framework

Though highly sectoral, the English land use planning system offers us an opportunity to examine the mediatory process in action. The system presents an institutional arena in which to seek an understanding of the inevitable tensions and conflicts which arise when the interests within an established agenda are either re-assessed or challenged.

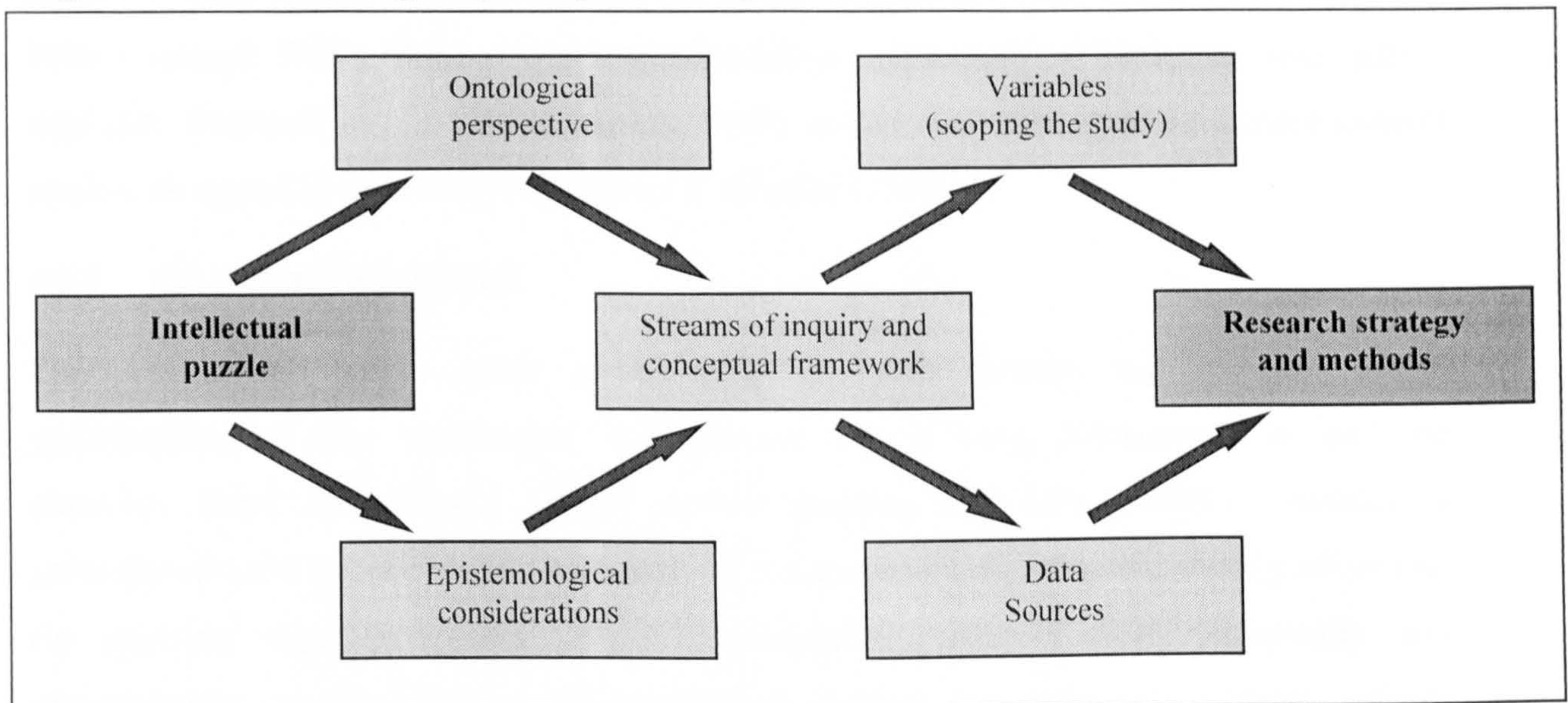
The specific research aim, therefore, is to examine the influence of the institutional dispositions of the English land-use planning system to the general line of questioning raised above. To this end, sectorally specific questions are posed which have a more descriptive and hence empirically appropriate attitude. To link into the structure of the broader normative type questions they too break down into three elements, with the latter two apprising the former (see Figure 4.1, below).

Figure 4.1 - Research questions



This line of questioning is lent its robustness and relevance on three counts: a.) it is ontologically coherent; b.) it responds to the substance of the literature review, and c.) it is empirically meaningful. In terms of primary research it begins the process, summarised in the schematic below (Figure 4.2), which leads to the selection and application of working research methods:

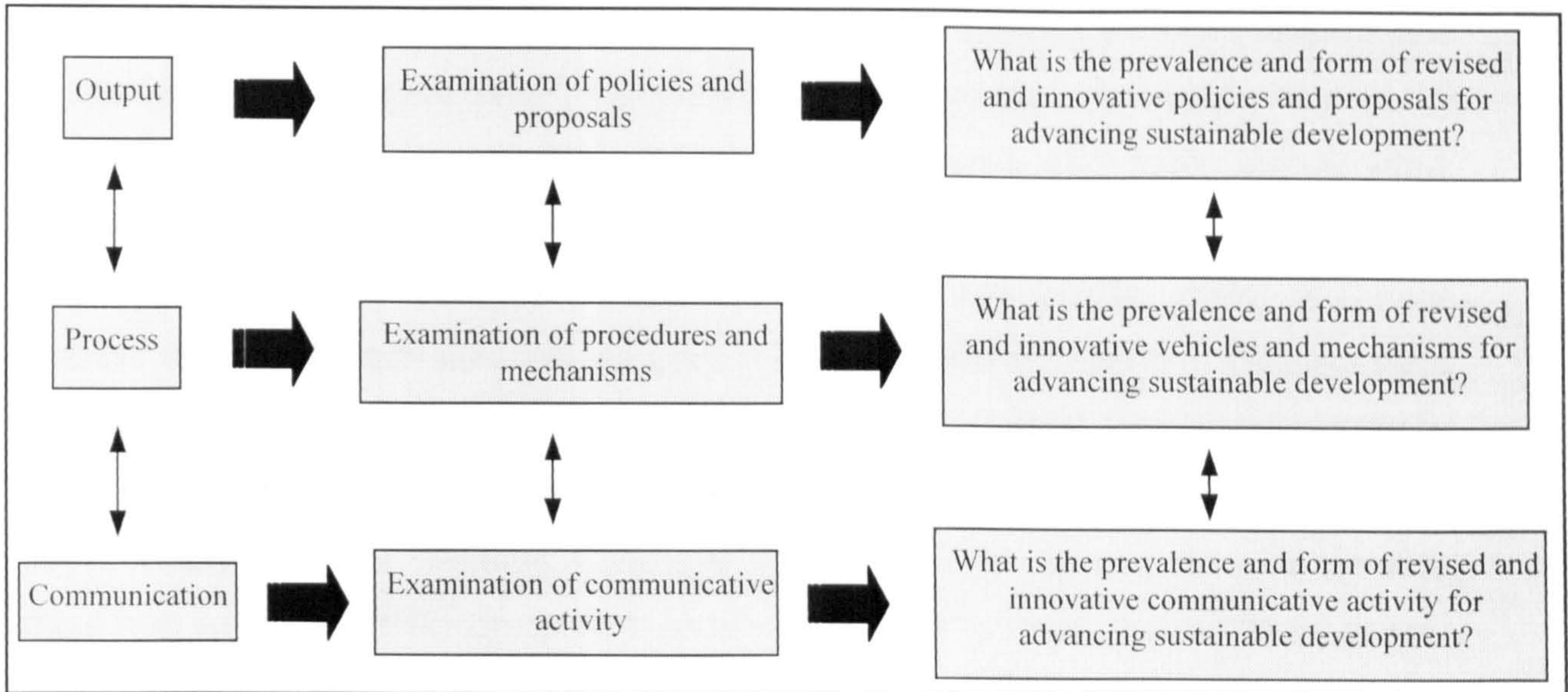
Figure 4.2 - summarising the primary research process



4.1.1 Streams of inquiry and focus

The two supporting questions from Figure 4.1 can be used as the epistemological foundations for empirical inquiry. The line of which, when applied to the formal functionality and preparation of English land use development plans, separates into three streams, relating to: a.) output, b) process and, c.) communication – see Figure 4.3 below. In this diagram the streams read from left to right. They are of course interrelated as the vertical arrows indicate, however, reference to ‘output’, ‘process’ and ‘communication’ is helpful from a research perspective

Figure 4.3 - empirically relevant elements of development plans and their preparation



‘Output’ in terms of the policies and proposals contained in development plans had, through content analysis, been the focus of the majority of research activity in the field at the time the empirical work related here was carried out [Bruff and Wood, 1995; Lucas and Chambers, 1996; Counsell, 1998]. ‘Process’ and ‘communication’ at this time had either not been tackled explicitly [Davoudi *et al.*, 1996; Davoudi, 1997] or had been examined in a more general sense with regard to local authority activity [Cartwright, 1997].

4.1.2 Conceptual framework

The analysis of output alone promotes a somewhat limited and one-dimensional understanding of how ‘sustainable’ re-evaluation (SR) is being incorporated in land use planning. Bruff and Wood’s [1995] content analysis of UDPs usefully identified a promotional void in policies and proposals on issues pertaining to sustainable development. By applying negative control criteria development could be made marginally less unsustainable (in the conventional manner of ‘protect and enhance’) without actively promoting ‘sustainable’ practice. Such positive action requires a firm commitment in terms of not just time and resources but, more importantly, in tackling the tensions between pro- and anti-development interests – Owens’s [1997] ‘giants in the path’.

Temporarily putting this last point aside, the observations regarding policy and proposal content are significant to us here as they help, firstly, to define our area of inquiry with regard to development planning and, secondly, to locate the welter of Government advice which has to date passed as proof of the incorporation of sustainable development. This advice, typically passed through PPGs and best practice publications, comes in the form of locational criteria. These criteria are clearly linked to sustainable development but in a very detached sense. For example, a specific aim is to minimise private car use, and to this end various criteria have

been developed which are applicable to land-use planning, such as reducing car parking allocations in town centres, ensuring development is close to transport corridors, locating new residential areas in close proximity to employment sources; another aim would be to minimise domestic energy use from non-renewable sources, and criteria here might include siting houses so as to maximise solar gain, or encouraging the installation of combined heat and power sources for new residential allocations of a certain size [DETR, 1998a]. It is quite possible to advocate such aims and introduce the land-use related criteria to facilitate them, without the need to raise the SR issue, even in a case where some form of environmental target exists. The point to be made here is that in relation to this policy-making activity it is not necessary to talk of valuation. Criteria of this type exist at the very top of a hierarchy translating sustainable development from its broad assertions to actual changes on the ground. A key question to ask here is whether this activity, at the final level of interface, is simply a pragmatic response in the form of a stand alone (or 'bolt-on') body of advice, or whether it is genuinely emergent from a reassessment of environmental values.

Questioning of this type requires a deeper and more meaningful appreciation of the development plan preparation process. This can only be drawn out from an examination under the surface of the written word in the institutional decision making realm of procedure and communication. The need to respond to procedural and communicative elements is, therefore, considered essential to meet the primary research needs of examining SR as process.

This emphasis on social interaction and motivation has become increasingly apparent in more recent research work.. It can be found surfacing in a body of relevant work published since 1999 [Wood *et al.*, 1999; Selman and Wragg, 1999; While *et al.*, 2000; Bruff and Wood, 2000; Vigar, 2001]. The shortcomings of 'output' studies is thus becoming accepted by the research community in this field - although it is still useful and contributory [Bruff and Wood, 2000].

An institutionalist approach to policy analysis has become dominant, looking

“to identify both general patterns in the form and contents of planning practices and the forces that drive them” [Healey, 1997, p.22]

Analysis along these lines is highly pertinent to the demands of our research questions on two particularly significant counts. Firstly, it:

“provides an empirical way of seeing how the power of external forces is made manifest in specific instances, and the extent to which these influences are accepted, reinterpreted and struggled over. Analytically, such forces can be identified through the rules, resource allocations and frames of reference which participants draw on, remould and invent in the flow of their thinking and acting” [Vigar *et al.*, 2000].

Secondly, much weight is attached to policy discourses as means and techniques for dealing with particular issues which delineate practice [Hajer, 1995; Flyvberg, 1998; Jacobs, 1999]. Within land use planning ‘protect and enhance’ has defined the planning systems response to environmental issues for many years in just such a discursive sense, as discussed in Chapter 2. With the introduction of sustainable development this discourse stands to be markedly modified, the question is: in what ways and to what extent?

The institutionalist approach may now be the norm for examining the penetration of the new environmental agenda into policy but, empirical studies employing such a framework have yet to step out of relatively narrow issue- and area-based boundaries. There has to date been a scarcity of empirically-based investigation exploring the more general linkages between sustainable development and land-use development planning. This is quite possibly a result of the ontological, epistemological and methodological complexities one encounters when attempting to examine such an imprecise and multi-definitional topic as sustainable development at the level of comprehensive land use policy and proposal generation.

The essential characteristics of this study hinge upon the appreciation of the notion of sustainable development as grounded within some enlightened re-evaluation of environmental resources – what we have termed ‘sustainable re-evaluation’. This gives us a process (i.e. SR) to detect as a marker of sustainable development. In keeping with an institutionalist approach what is therefore important is to understand, firstly, the role and content of procedures within development planning that may reflect SR and, secondly, to reveal the nature of the communication between stakeholders, local political communities, and system administrators in relation to SR.

4.1.3 Variables (scoping the study)

Having presented and refined our intellectual puzzle (research questions), clarified our ontological perspective (SR), considered an appropriate epistemology (institutionally derived knowledge), defined apposite streams of inquiry (procedural and communicative) it is now necessary to consider the variables for investigation under the remit of development plan preparation. These variables govern the envisaged scope of the investigation and fall into eight categories, see Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 - Scoping variables

a.) Expressions of interest:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Government • Council members • Council Officers • Neighbouring Council members/officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Voluntary groups • Public
b.) Local context and key issues:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural

• Social	• Political
• Economic	
c.) Organisational resources:	
• Time	• Staffing
• Money	
d.) Informational resources	
• State of the environment reporting	• Indicators
• Capacity studies	
e.) Utilisation of complementary activity:	
• Local Agenda 21	• Partnerships
f.) Extent of procedural activity:	
• Public consultation	• Environmental appraisal
• Public participation	
g.) Principles:	
• Precautionary principle	• Demand management
• Environmental thresholds and limits	• Best practicable environmental option
• Environmental compensation	
h.) Miscellaneous	
• Layout/structure of Plan itself	• Role/value of plan - development control
• Type of plan	

4.1.4 Data sources

The influence of these variables upon SR define the scope of the empirical work. The data sources in which they find substance will essentially either be found in:

- the trail of documentary evidence generated during the stages of plan production, and
- the views, opinions and recollections of actors involved in the process of plan preparation

The content of both sources can be readily related to the procedural focus points of preparation, i.e.:

- i.) production of the initial consultation draft and subsequent consultation;
- ii.) modification to produce the deposit draft and subsequent representations to this;
- iii.) proposed modification, public inquiry/examination, and subsequent modifications to produce final version for adoption.

The following tables list the potential specific data sources firstly for documentary (Table 4.2) and secondly actor (Table 4.3) evidence.

Table 4.2 - Documentary data sources

Documents	Justification - the focus upon sustainable development issues is taken as read.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Briefs • Consultation Drafts • Deposit Drafts • Adopted Plans 	<p>The actual plan documents will show how topic areas have attempted to take account of the sustainable development agenda. Comparisons will reveal changes of approach.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing/previous Plans 	<p>Will show how responses to topics and issues have been put together in the past.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background papers 	These papers should show how topics and issues are framed by LPA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of Public Participation 	Lays out history of formal preparation focusing upon public participation elements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Appraisal 	Indicates how policies have been related to environmental considerations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related Development Plans (SPs, AWLPs) 	Other development plans will either have influence on, or be influenced by the specific plan being researched
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other plans (LEAPs, AQMs, ITPs, etc.) 	Other plans may have potential or real influence on the development plan being researched
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey reports (SOEs, capacity studies, etc.) 	Type and form of environmental information available.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplementary Planning Guidance 	More specific/focused guidance supplementary to the development plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council/Committee meeting agendas/minutes • Working Group meeting agendas/minutes 	Sensitive areas may be highlighted, preferences expressed, and conflict discussed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to Consultation Draft • Responses to Deposit Plan • Responses to further modifications 	Key interests, central issues, preferences, and conflicts will be expressed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed mods. to Consultation Draft • Proposed mods. to Deposit Draft (pre-PLI/EIP) • Inspector's/Panel Report • Proposed mods. post-PLI/EIP 	Justifications for proposed changes following mediatory activity should be expressed as well as the actual changes themselves.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Policy Guidance Notes • Regional Planning Notes • Circulars • Government policy documents • Government Good Practice Guides 	Influential top-down strategy documents offering advice and guidance - expressions of Central Government interest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory group publications • LGMB advice • LA21 • Interest group publications 	Potentially influential strategy documents offering advice and guidance on the same level or bottom-up - expressions of group, organisation or community interest.

Table 4.3 - Actor data sources

Social Actor	Justification - the focus upon sustainable development issues is taken as read.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Policy 	Directly involved in agenda setting, information gathering, drawing up policies and proposals, advising members, and implicit and explicit mediation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Control 	Have to work with policies and proposals at the implementation level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA21 Co-ordinator 	Attempting to link community initiatives and activity with plan preparation and output.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others as appropriate 	Topics and issues having an influence on plan mediation and content.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning (sub)committee • Others as appropriate 	Executive body, central to mediation and the 'mobilisation of bias'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Office Representative 	Influential with regard to strategy and provides a link to Central Government.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members (and officers) from other affected LAs • Other public reps. (e.g. Parish councillors) 	Public representatives with a strong interest where their own activities will be affected by Plan policies and proposals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation/environmental • Community • Developers • Business 	Will present arguments to advance their own interests regarding the content of policies and proposals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants / academic advisers 	Will offer: i.) professional/expert advice and skills with regard to supporting specific interest claims; ii.) survey data information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspector(s) 	Oversees public examination of/inquiry into objections to plan and in a mediatory role offer very influential advice and guidance reflecting Central Government opinion.

4.2 Research strategy

The purposes of this inquiry into the English planning system's response to the incorporation of sustainable development, in terms of facilitation and constraint, are fundamentally exploratory in nature. The agenda is not sufficiently developed or 'bedded in' to permit an effective descriptive enquiry in terms of policy evaluation. The intention, as regards the streams of inquiry introduced above, is to assess SR through reference to what is happening to the procedural and communicative content of development plan preparation. Some elements of explanation will, of course, be presented but these should be considered as new insights as a consequence of the introduction of sustainable development rather than universal explanation. Investigation of the whole agenda is still very much a matter of questions prompting further questions as opposed to answers [Robson, 1993]. In very broad terms the research strategy may be viewed as a blend of quantitative and qualitative techniques. These terms are however somewhat misleading as the essential bias is qualitative, in the sense that the inquiry is concerned with the perception of qualities (i.e. those that are facilitative or otherwise to the incorporation of sustainable development in the planning system) and an appraisal of their value [Scwandt, 1997].

The unit of analysis for the assessment of these procedural and communicative 'qualities' is the land use development plan as produced by LPAs across England. As detailed in Chapter 2, development plans are statutory documents made up of broad strategies regarding the

location of development which are then interpreted as more specific policies and proposals. In England they comprise: *structure plans* produced by county councils; *area wide local plans* in which district and borough councils set out the more detailed development policies and proposals in compliance with the structure plan covering their area; *unitary development plans* produced by unitary authorities which in most cases combine the functions of structure and local plans in a two-part document; and, other plans not specifically covered by this study such as waste and minerals local plans. In 1998 there were to be 318 non-metropolitan councils (34 county, 238 district and 46 unitary) and 69 metropolitan councils (33 London boroughs and 36 metropolitan boroughs) [Game, 1997].

At the time of the study, and still at the time of writing, no comprehensive survey work had been carried out on LPA development plan responses to the sustainable development agenda. It was therefore necessary to carry out this work personally both in terms of producing a national baseline assessment and also to facilitate and frame a more detailed study.

To this end, commitment to a twin phase strategy was made – the first being survey based leading into the second as case study based. Originally the survey was to be a desktop assessment of extant and emerging development plans across the country but, for both practical and methodological reasons as relationally touched upon above, this method was soon replaced by a postal questionnaire. Three methods were therefore employed over an 18 month period (1998-1999) of data gathering. The sections below relate each of these in turn, looking at justification, specific approach, description of the research process and reflection. Although the methods employed are quite individual as tools for the accumulation of empirical information they indicate a progressive refinement in understanding of the research field. Ongoing reflection throughout the whole process was as important to coming to terms with the practical side of incorporating sustainable development as it was to the production of a meaningful body of evidence. The problems encountered and means of resolution adopted are as much about the coherence and validity of empirical research in practice as they are about understanding the practice of land use development planning.

4.2.1 Survey Part One – a foray into content analysis

For the purposes of this research element, content analysis is viewed as a systematic description of documentary material derived from researcher-developed categories [Schwandt, 1997]. This involves four distinct steps: data making (unitization, sampling and recording), data reduction, inference and analysis [Krippendorf, 1980].

The intention at this initial fieldwork stage (January 1998) was principally to characterise emerging and extant development plans as to their position on a theoretically derived continuum of possible responses to SR. This approach differed from that adopted in

contemporary studies referred to previously as it was attempting to characterise by overall 'sustainable' response rather than categorise through reference to specific sustainability issues. A continuum running from the 'weak' (typefied by a principle of 'best practicable means'), through the 'intermediate' (typefied by 'demand management'), to the 'strong' (typefied by 'environmental capacities'). Statements would be extracted from development plans as and when they occurred in relation to each of these 'bands'. The template shown in Table 4.4 was to be used to guide the analysis.

Table 4.4 - Content analysis template.

1. Framing policies / statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1a. Defining sustainable development; • 1b. Scoping land-use issues: delineation of parameters in which sustainable development may be promoted; • 1c. Categorising resources - indeterminate / discretionary environmental valuation; • 1d. Displaying facets of determinate / procedural environmental valuation (expressed in plans via environmental appraisal or otherwise): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identification of values - identification and categorisation of environmental stock - mapping of land use constraints and development potential - application of standards - adoption of targets / setting thresholds - identification of limits / limits of 'acceptable change' - application of indicators - monitoring;
2. 'Weak' policies / statements (ecological modernisation)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2a. Encouraging technological and design solutions to environmental problems / concerns; • 2b. Advocating resource trade-offs; • 2c. Encouraging resource recycling; • 2d. Accommodating development through best practical environmental option (e.g. sequential testing); • 2e. Employing polluter pays principle;
3. Intermediate policies / statements (demand management)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3a. Restricting demand of environmentally degrading development; • 3b. Promoting supply of environmentally beneficial or palliative development;
4. 'Strong' policies / statements (environmental capacity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4a. Expressing limits to development; • 4b. Employing precautionary principle; • 4c. Demonstrating grass-roots consultation / participation exercises, attempts to build consensus, links to LA21s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fora - focus groups - 'planning for real' - parish maps - supplementary planning guidance - indicators;
5. Null policies / statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5a. Failing to reflect the influence of even 'weak' sustainable development in tackling environment related issues.

PPG1 [DoE, 1992a] and PPG12 [DoE, 1992b] made reference to sustainable development a key issue and requirement in development planning from 1992. In order that LPAs should have had some time to assimilate this requirement, the survey population included all plans that had been, or were, at the preliminary draft stage since 1993. ARP Consultants usefully provided a database of development plans which offered a historical categorisation by processing stage [[HTTP://www.apr.co.uk](http://www.apr.co.uk)]. In December 1997 this application generated a plan population of 59; there was, however, no guarantee that this list was fully comprehensive.

For practical reasons during this initial survey stage, use was made of the DETR Library in London as a collective repository of development plans across the country. Visits to the library, however, revealed very limited availability of plan documents for the requisite authorities in the 1993-1998 period. Of the eight that were located all came from the first half of the period, principally 1993. It appeared that documents had either not been despatched, been borrowed or were yet to be released by the LPAs in question. The library also did not have any recent listing of which plans it held, or a status report on plan processing for all authorities nationwide – it was therefore not possible to reconcile the ARP generated list.

As only eight documents could be located it was clear that any attempt to construct a comprehensive national baseline position from this data source was unworkable (obtaining personal copies of all 59 plans or visiting all 59 LPAs was beyond available research resources in terms of time and funds). The exercise was, however, not wholly without value. The few plans available did present an opportunity to test the adopted analytic framework [Table 4.4, above] and the eight plans (four structure plans and four local plans) were closely worked through on this basis. This process revealed some very important points relating to the need to re-orientate the research methodology. Essentially the policies and proposals analysed were picking up and dropping the identified SR application principles as and when they wanted. This meant that it was simply not possible to characterise a plan as adopting a ‘weak’, ‘intermediate’ or ‘strong’ response to SR. The metaphorical ‘ladder’ of re-evaluation was more of a metaphorical ‘merry-go-round’ which LPAs got on or off at will. In more formal terms it became increasingly apparent that this initially conceived ordinal analytic framework would need to become a nominal one for future survey work.

4.2.2 Survey Part Two – creating an extensive body of procedural baseline information

Without practical access to the significant number of plans deemed appropriate as the sample population the only other alternative was to quiz the LPAs themselves. To this end a postal questionnaire was constructed and distributed as the most apposite means of collecting

descriptive and procedural data. Such a survey permits the making of descriptive assertions about LPA's endeavours to draw sustainable development into their plan documents: uncovering the strength and distribution of particular SR traits and attributes [Babbie, 1990].

The structure of the questionnaire was derived from: i.) the earlier content analysis phase of a limited number of development plans; ii.) an appreciation of the formal procedure of plan preparation; and iii.) a review of the contemporary body of literature offering advice and guidance with regard to incorporating sustainable development into plans. This produced a questionnaire formatted into four sections (Table 4.5) and in which respondents were encouraged to specifically reflect upon the influence of the LPA's conceptualisation of sustainable development (a copy of the actual questionnaire used can be found in Appendix B).

Table 4.5 - Questionnaire format and content

Section 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions relating to: • A.) the preparation or use of any new/revised documentary inputs together with any definitions of sustainable development that had been employed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i.) Supportive/supplementary documents produced by the LPA during plan preparation with specific reference to advancing sustainable development. ii.) Non-statutory documentary material produced by the LA or other bodies as inputs to plan preparation. iii.) Adoption or construction of specific definitions of sustainable development. • B.) New or revised practices with particular potential relating to the concerns of sustainable development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i.) Public consultation and participation - a statutory requirement with wider potential. ii.) Partnership building - links with other private/public groups/organisations to facilitate applicable environmental valuation. iii.) Local Agenda 21 - links with these specific mechanisms for promoting sustainable development strategies at the municipal level. iv.) Supplementary planning guidance - as a useful means of integrating socio-environmentally orientated initiatives into development planning. v.) Environmental appraisal - a PPG12 recommended procedure for considering the environmental implications of the plan. vi.) Environmental capital and capacity - attempts to categorise/characterise environmental resources, develop indicators, identify capacities, or set targets.
Section 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions relating to the expression of 'application principles' in the following sections in which plans are typically divided: • a.) overall aims and objectives; b.) the built environment and land-use/transportation; c.) natural resource management; d.) energy use and production; e.) pollution control; f.) waste management; g.) wildlife and countryside. • The application principles (refer to Table 1.3 for details) inquired about being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i.) Precautionary principle ii.) Environmental thresholds/limits iii.) Environmental compensation iv.) Demand management v.) Best practicable environmental option

Section 3

- Questions relating to the prevalence of potential operational/organisational constraining factors with regard to incorporating the concerns of sustainable development into development plans:
- i.) time
ii.) funding
iii.) staffing
iv.) commitment / understanding amongst actor groups
- v.) Guidance / advice
vi.) strength of lobby groups
vii.) development control

Section 4

- Questions relating to variation in the conceptual interpretation of 'sustainable development' and 'development planning' - using a likeart scale to assess the strength of association between the following 9 pairs of adjectives for each entity:
- i.) comprehensive vs. incremental
ii.) radical vs. revisionist
iii.) innovative vs. unimaginative
iv.) holistic vs. sectoral
v.) proactive vs. reactive
- vi.) integrative vs. fragmentary
vii.) strategic vs. opportunistic
viii.) intuitive vs. rational
ix.) idealistic vs. pragmatic

The format of the questions was such that they initially took a 'closed' form (to facilitate coding and speed of completion) and then supplied space for additional comment. The questions were structured so that they would be applicable to all varieties of LPA (i.e county, unitary, district/borough) and minimise type dependent bias. The intention being to produce one single body of data as (based on the sample size and anticipated response rates) a dataset split by type was not expected to be a viable proposition.

Following from the approach adopted in the content analysis an appropriate sample for the questionnaire distribution would be composed of development plans - specifically Structure Plans (SPs), Unitary Development Plans (UDPs), and Area Wide Local Plans (AWLPs) - which had entered their initial draft or draft review stages after February 1992 when PPG12 made sustainable development a key objective.

As indicated above, obtaining a comprehensive list of LPAs using this selection criteria proved difficult. This situation was remedied however with the publishing of Government data on the chronology of adoption or anticipated adoption of plans (on the back of an urgency to achieve 100% plan coverage nationally). From the premise that the average length of time for plan adoption for UDPs and AWLPs (from the beginning of pre-deposit consultation) is approximately 4½ years and that the more current the information the more pertinent the findings, the sample population was made up of LPAs adopting or anticipating adoption of their plans in 1998. The source of this selection information being the DETR (1998b). This generated a population of 106 LPAs: 10 preparing SPs, 22 preparing UDPs, and 74 preparing AWLPs.

A pilot study was carried out and for this a sample of 17 authorities which had adopted plans in the latter half of 1997 was taken (4 SPs, 6 UDPs, and 7 AWLPs). From the 11 received

back (during April 1998) there seemed to be little need to change the fundamental structure of the questionnaire (re. Table 4.5) but it was necessary to reword and 'close down' many of the questions in order to minimise completion times for the respondents, improve overall clarity, and facilitate a more robust coding regime.

The 'live' questionnaires were despatched at the beginning of May 1998 to the managers of the policy sections in the planning departments of the 106 LPAs making up the sample. In an effort to maximise the response rate, the following measures were taken:

- every LPA within the sample population was contacted prior to dispatch so that each questionnaire could be addressed to the most suitable and senior named planner within the appropriate Planning Policy sections/departments;
- a clear and concise covering letter was included laying out what was required, its significance and 'return by' date;
- the survey was legitimised through using the university's crest and through reference to ESRC support;
- the questionnaires themselves were presented and bound in a sharp and professional manner;
- the questions were arranged so that the most straightforward and easily answered were presented first;
- a subsequent report on the findings was offered to all respondents;
- authorities which had not responded within the specified period were sent follow-up 'chasing' letters;
- authorities which still had not responded within two weeks of these follow-up letters were re-issued with the questionnaire and a suitable covering letter (they were also contacted by phone).

Following the initial deadline, of approximately three weeks after despatch, 47 completed items had been received back. Follow-up letters saw this figure rise to 69 by mid-June and the re-issue of the questionnaire was then distributed to those remaining authorities (29) from which no response had been received. By the final deadline (the first week of July) the tally of completed forms had reached 79, giving a response rate of 75% (12 LPAs wrote back to say that they were unable to contribute as a consequence of time / staff pressures, thus only 15 LPAs failed to respond at all).

In an effort to maximise the collection of useful data, from the contacts established via the survey distribution, a copy of the collated results together with a discussion of the findings was dispatched to each LPA that had requested one (61 in total). Included with this document was a very brief and open-ended follow-up questionnaire asking respondents to comment

informally on the findings, conclusions and overall direction of the research. Perhaps unsurprisingly the response rate to this concluding stage to the survey work was low (with only 11 replies). Even though the comments received did not noticeably add to the dataset already accumulated they did serve an encouraging purpose in both supporting the work being carried out and the interest in it.

4.2.3 Case Study – an intensive focus upon the parameters of communicative activity

With regard to taking the empirical work from extensive survey to intensive case study the questionnaire replies served two purposes. Most importantly they increased understanding of the issues involved in LPAs' endeavours to incorporate sustainable development within their statutory land use planning function. Of less evidential importance, they facilitated the selection of an appropriate case study.

The use of an exploratory case study is of particular relevance to this research strategy as the process of knowledge production through this method befits the conceptual institutional approach introduced previously. As a research method it facilitates access to the many facets of institutional arrangements and span of institutional space – statutory requirements, non-statutory guidance, organisational frameworks, operational procedures, norms, beliefs, values, ideas, interests and links with external processes and actors – and their relationship to action, in this case the preparation of a development plan. Empirical inquiry along these lines can be readily related to Yin's [1994] demarcation of a case study, one that:

“- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”
[p.13].

The selection of a case study authority was carried out over two steps. Firstly, following the coding of the questionnaire responses the findings were summarily tabulated in a manner which drew attention to those showing a positive strength of SR expression across the twelve sections of the questionnaire. From this process eight LPAs appeared to set themselves marginally above the rest (Gloucestershire, East Sussex, Dorset, South Tyneside, Poole, Worcester, Ashford, Basingstoke and Deane) and were also prepared to participate in further detailed study. The second step in selection was then to visit and interview each of the planning officers from these eight authorities who had filled in the questionnaire. The principal purposes of these interviews were:

- a.) to extend and corroborate the original responses;
- b.) cement an access point;
- c.) assess the availability of available documentary material
- d.) put together a list of potential interviewees.

Following these interviews it was clear that each LPA could contribute useful data in response to the research questions but that none stood comprehensively above the rest in SR terms. The final judgement came down between Gloucestershire County Council and South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council. Gloucestershire's key strength was in its strongly developed LA21 initiative but even here the impact upon the development planning process was minimal. In the end South Tyneside was chosen for the following reasons:

- i.) as a unitary authority the unitary development plan (UDP) it was preparing was required to directly address both the strategic and local elements of development planning, i.e. spanning facets of structure planning (Part 1 of the UDP) and area wide local planning (Part 2 of the UDP);
- ii.) the plan was still emerging and very much 'alive', thus issues, problems and mediation were actively open to empirical investigation (they were awaiting the Inspector's report and preparing for the post-inquiry modifications phase);
- iii.) the preparation process usefully crossed the 1992 watershed for the explicit introduction of sustainable development into development planning, coming as it did in the period of re-drafting between the consultation and deposit versions. This naturally facilitated comparisons between how the environment was related both before and after sustainable development became a centrally referential issue;
- iv.) the importance of the environment in policies and proposals was already established as a privileged variable prior to 1992;
- v.) the Planning Policy Section had taken some considerable steps to come to terms with and express a notion of sustainable development within the text of the emerging UDP.
- vi.) The preliminary interview suggested that understanding at officer level was in advance of the other LPAs in the selected group.

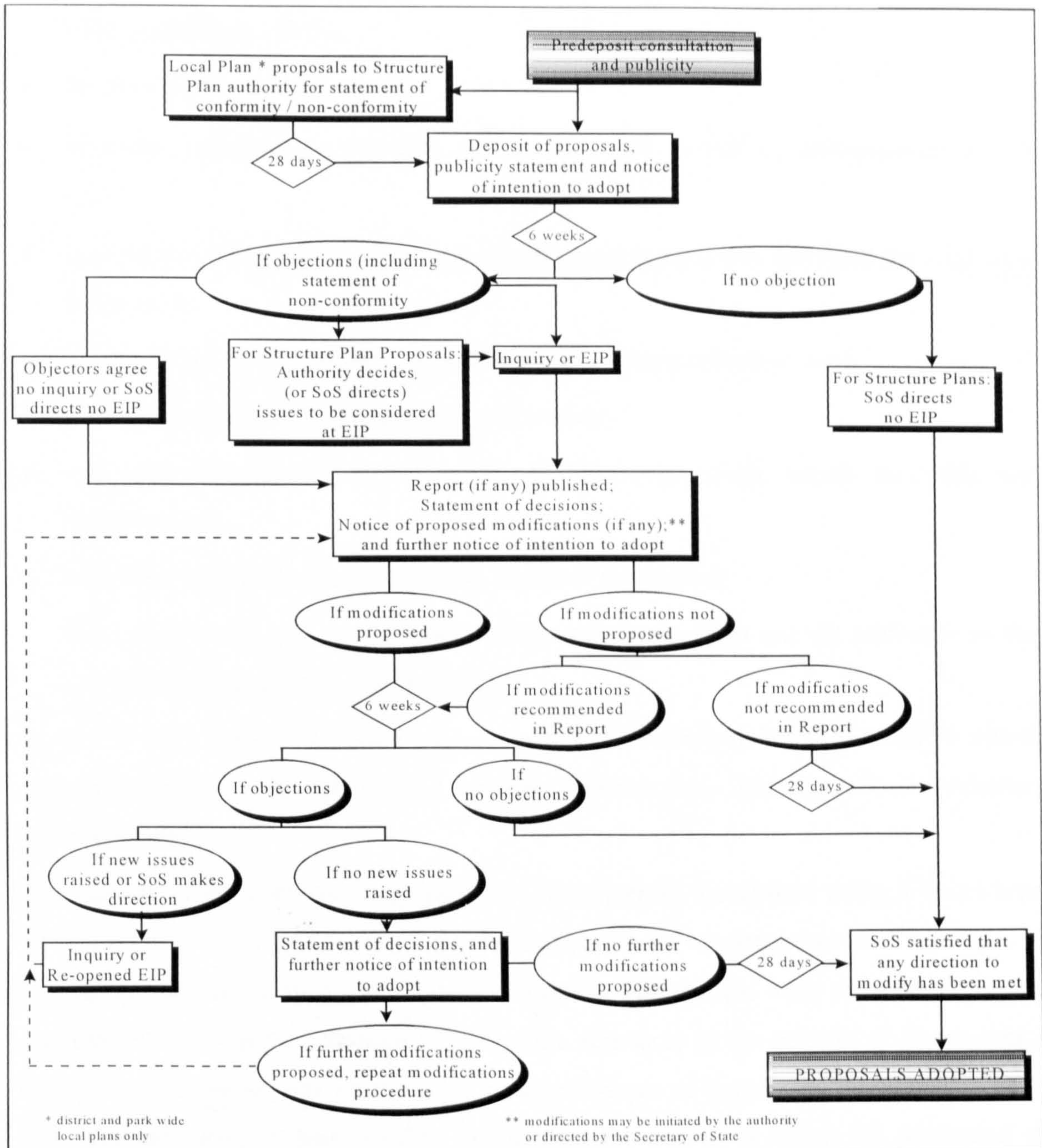
The South Tyneside fieldwork was carried out in two phases. Firstly, ten days were spent at the Council offices in South Shields in an examination of all available documentary sources pertaining to the preparation of the UDP. This considerable body of data (the plan had already been in gestation for over ten years) was organised and collated for analysis using the standard framework for plan preparation as a template (see Figure 4.4, below).

Secondly, interviews were arranged and undertaken with:

- key officers involved in the plan preparation process (at the Council offices);
- key members involved in the plan preparation process (at the Council offices and by telephone);
- the principal policy officer at the Government Offices for the North-East (in Newcastle);
- the Director of Development Plans at the Planning Inspectorate (Bristol)

- those that had made representations at the Draft Deposit stage – business, local voluntary, and environmental interest groups, policy officers from neighbouring authorities (by telephone)

Figure 4.4 - Preparation process for statutory land use development plans



All interviews were taped with the interviewee's consent and agreement that their names would not be revealed. Discussion was led by the interviewer but only in a semi-structured sense. The questions were deliberately open ended but the emphasis across them all was on the existence and nature of factors of facilitation or constraint.

Due to the nature of the subject matter and the differing roles of those involved (essentially: internal to the process (officers and members); or, external (those making representations of support or objection) it was necessary to have two sets of questions:

For those involved in the administration, management and executive arrangements of the UDP's preparation the main areas to be covered were:

- interviewees role and what they saw as the objective of the UDP;
- what informed their decision-making and their relationships with others involved in the UDP preparation process;
- the key controversial issues;
- how they understood sustainable development and viewed its incorporation into the UDP;
- how far they felt that the sustainable development agenda had impacted the UDP and its preparation.

For those making representations the appropriately re-orientated areas were:

- what made them decide to make a representation;
- why they felt the LPA had produced policies/proposals which they felt were inappropriate;
- how they viewed the planning process and their access to it;
- what they understood by the term sustainable development and its relevance to their representation and to land-use planning.

In total 29 interviews were carried out – 13 with MBC officers and members and 16 with the representatives of various interest groups (government, business, local voluntary, environmental).

The content of the recorded interviews was subsequently transcribed using a broad-brush coding regime which picked up on the driving parameter of communicative activity – i.e. that of the various actors aims, what they hoped to achieve and what were the barriers or opportunities to success. Through adopting this approach, in the context of discussions in which the interviewer was sensitised to, and held issues of sustainable development as the key reference point, it was possible to ascertain the degree to which SR permeated the mediatory process.

On this basis each interview was worked through and the content indexed/collated according to:

1. expressed *aims* (interests, 'axes to grind', desired outcomes, perceived benefits);
2. *means* through which aims were to be achieved (including expressions of how the interviewee would like them to be achieved or possibly know they are not going to be achieved);
3. the *influences* at work in shaping aims and their possible implementation.

4.3 Summary

The sheer breadth of the sustainable development agenda renders detailed examination problematic. Without a secure point of departure, research methods are almost bound to produce a fragmented body of evidence which lacks meaningful coherence. The researcher is presented with two choices: either, to work within a criteria-driven framework of assessment, or, to step back and, through considering what sustainable development really amounts to at its root, develop a more open methodology. The methodology detailed above comes down in favour of the latter. By using SR as the window for empirical examination, the methods used should produce datasets relevant to the broad nature of the study, i.e. institutional facilitation and/or constraint as opposed to checking the apparent applicability of specific policies and proposals which can lead the research effort into an unnecessarily confined and reflectively debilitating corner.

The following chapters relate the research findings from the survey and case study work. The concluding chapter (7) of Part II then offers a summary of the evidence from both sources prior to moving into the critical analysis, discussion and conclusion-drawing substance of Part III.

Assessing the baseline – a national survey

The research strategy detailed in the previous chapter generated two principle and substantial datasets, firstly from the extensive postal questionnaire survey and secondly from the intensive case study – these will be presented in this and the next chapter respectively. Two other limited, although usefully supplemental, survey related datasets were also produced: firstly, from the initial, and circumstantially truncated, desk-based content analysis of the small sample of available development plans held in the former DETR library in London; and, secondly from the round of preliminary interviews held with planning officers in the eight authorities selected from the survey as potential case study candidates.

It is not the intention to dwell on these supplemental findings as they are only really valid in methodological terms. Despite this, the data collected should be acknowledged as it has inevitably shaped the research design and direction.

The findings from the postal survey are detailed below in collated sectional format. This reflects the arrangement adopted in the questionnaire itself where the sections predominantly pertained to specific procedural elements of SR i.e.:

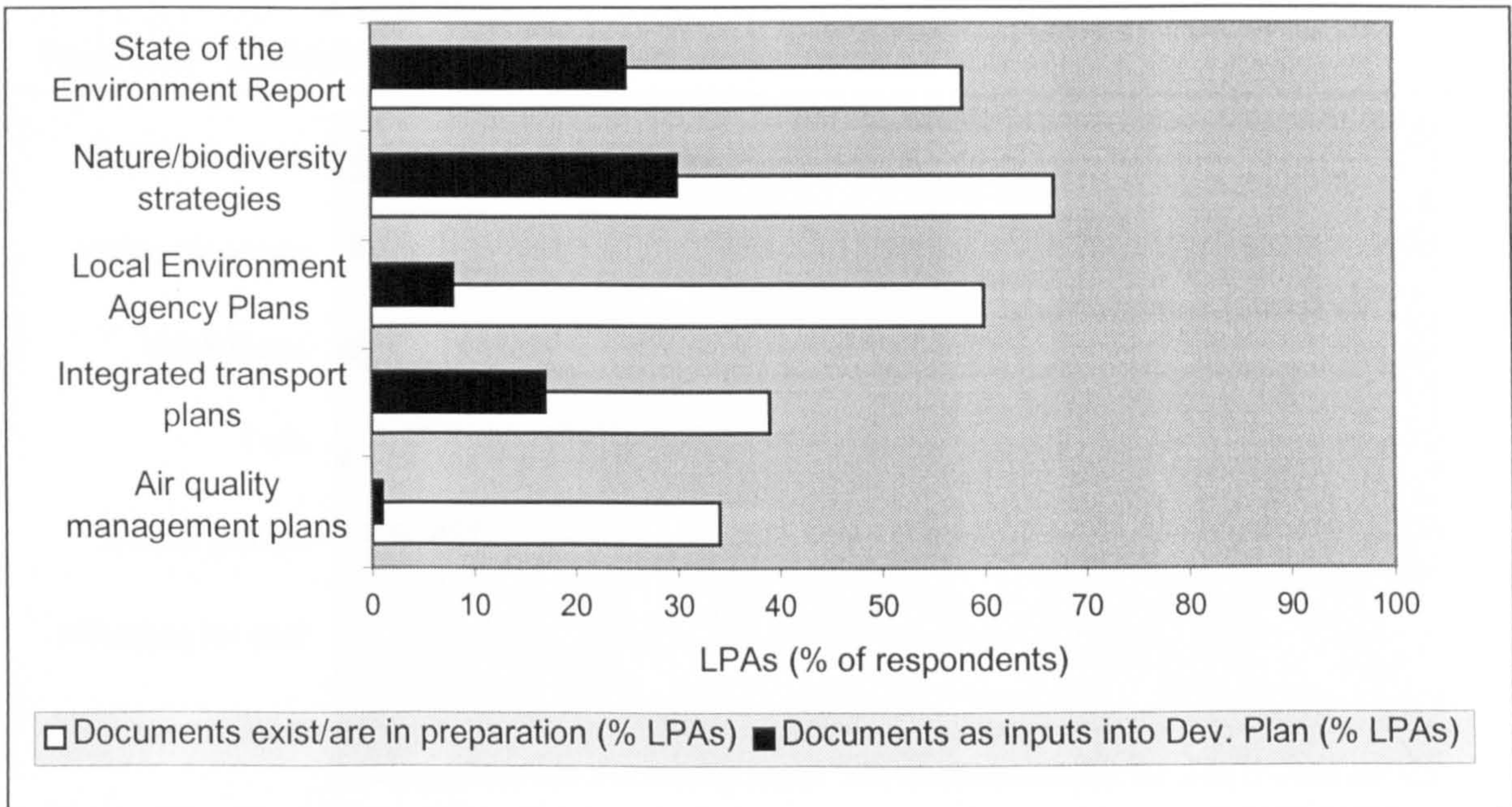
- the prevalence and use of SR related documents and how sustainable development is defined within the context of development planning;
- the level and penetration of participation/consultation in the plan making process;
- the status of LA21 within local authorities and its links to emerging plans;
- the approach to, and extent of, the environmental appraisal process and other steps towards a sustainable re-evaluation of environmental resources;
- the prevalence and use of ‘application principles’ to manage environmental resources;
- the factors which are perceived as constraining upon SR;
- how LPAs might characterise sustainable development vis-à-vis development planning (non-procedural perception)

The intention is to highlight the prominent points from which discussion will be prompted and conclusions may be drawn. For reference purposes a complete listing of the results may be found in Appendix C.

5.1 Documents and definitions

The production of supportive/supplementary texts within each Local Authority to specifically handle the sustainable development agenda was very limited in the format of background papers (30%), discussion documents (13%) or vision statements (5%). The use of other non-statutory textual inputs was also limited (see Figure 5.1). The more established inputs of State of the Environment reports (58%) and nature/biodiversity strategies (67%) were most strongly represented but their use in the development plan-making process was quite limited, reaching the 25% and 30% levels respectively. Local Environment Agency Plans were in existence for 60% of the authorities (presumably as integrated versions of plans produced by the bodies the Environment Agency replaced) but the linkage into the plan process, as with the other more recently introduced varieties of Air Quality Management and Integrated Transport Plans, was recorded at a particularly low level (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 - Existence of non-statutory inputs and their use in development plan preparation



With regard to the issue of actually defining sustainable development, 55% of all the respondents claimed to be using some explicit statement. However, 39% had merely adopted the Brundtland definition and only 16% were prepared to adapt the ubiquitous Brundtland definition or construct their own, from alternative sources or otherwise, in a way which related the concept more explicitly to land-use planning. Almost inevitably those that did attempt this were still very unspecific in terms of application - leaving plenty of room for discussion and discretion. The comments of respondents on the issue suggested that specific definition was largely deemed unnecessary or unhelpful:

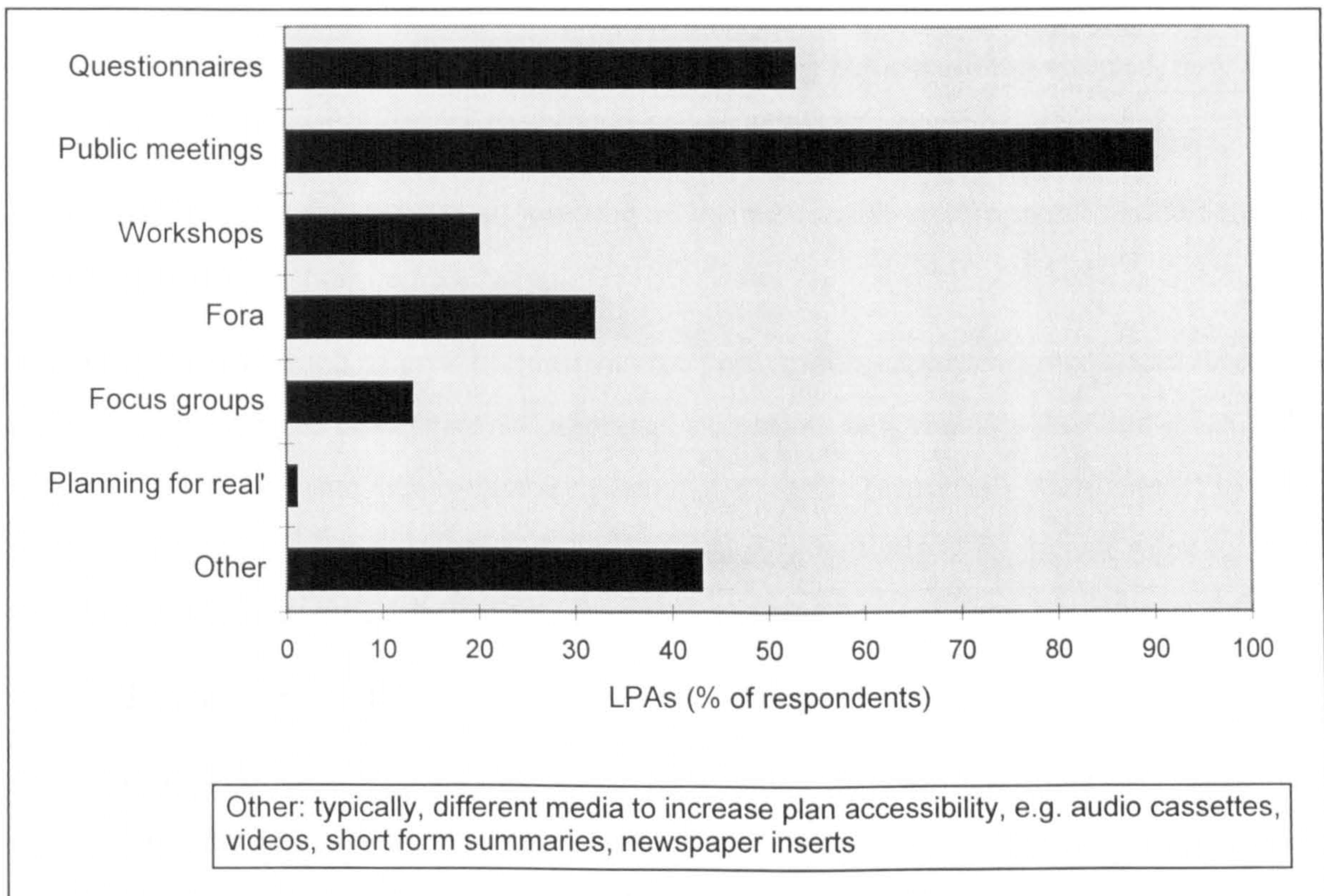
- "Sustainable development is a similar rationale to that which we've always used."
- "Just a new term for what we've been doing for many years."

- “Some people seem to be waiting for *sustainable development* to pass - seems a bit dated now, new buzz word is *best value*.”
- “We believe direct references to *sustainable* in policy is not appropriate since it is not clear enough for Local Plan policy. The need is for the sum of policies to move in a sustainable direction.”

5.2 Public participation and consultation

The minimum statutory requirement for public involvement in development plan preparation is currently highly tokenist in nature, and it comes as little surprise that almost all LPAs questioned felt that they had exceeded this minimum requirement. However, the methods used to achieve this, in the form of questionnaires, public meetings and exhibitions, have rather passive characteristics. The more progressive techniques are generally poorly represented (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 - Methods used for consultation / participation



This situation is not aided by a reported lack of public interest in the plan at the pre-deposit stages when the very large majority of this participative/consultative activity takes place:

- “It’s very difficult to get people involved in participation exercises.”
- “You are just drawing in the same old crowd year after year.”

To date, it does not seem that the introduction of sustainable development has currently generated significant change in this area - only 27% of authorities claimed to have re-evaluated their procedures in the light of sustainable development. The reasons for this, where given, fall into two camps, firstly a lack of resources and, secondly, the consideration that current procedures are adequate for their purpose within the contemporary planning framework. On a more positive note, with regard to the introduction of more progressive measures, the implication of the participative function within sustainable development was seen by many as coming too late for significant procedural change to be enacted. In these instances the message is that the question of modifying procedure will be taken up in subsequent reviews when such issues will be given more explicit treatment.

Responses from named consultees on the subject of sustainable development were commented on as either largely anodyne in the case of environmentally oriented organisations or cynical in the case of development interests, for example:

- "Environmental bodies were very helpful in clarifying views and bouncing issues or questions off."
- "House-builders and developers mention it as an issue but are not too worried, they're more worried about profits and obtaining pieces of land."
- "I would suggest that they're all jumping on the sustainable development bandwagon and using it to argue their own purpose."

There is some evidence of new frameworks for participation appearing via Local Agenda 21 (LA21) initiatives and environmental appraisal exercises - key vehicles here being LA21 fora, partnership building and supplementary planning guidance (especially with respect to village design statements and parish appraisals), all of which potentially offer greater roles for named consultees, other interested parties and the public at large.

5.3 Local Agenda 21

As introduced above, LA21 activity within local authority areas has some real potential for interaction with development planning. 73% of all LPAs questioned had, or were producing, an LA21 strategy document, and a similar proportion (69%) had created specific LA21 officer/co-ordinator positions (see Figure 5.3).

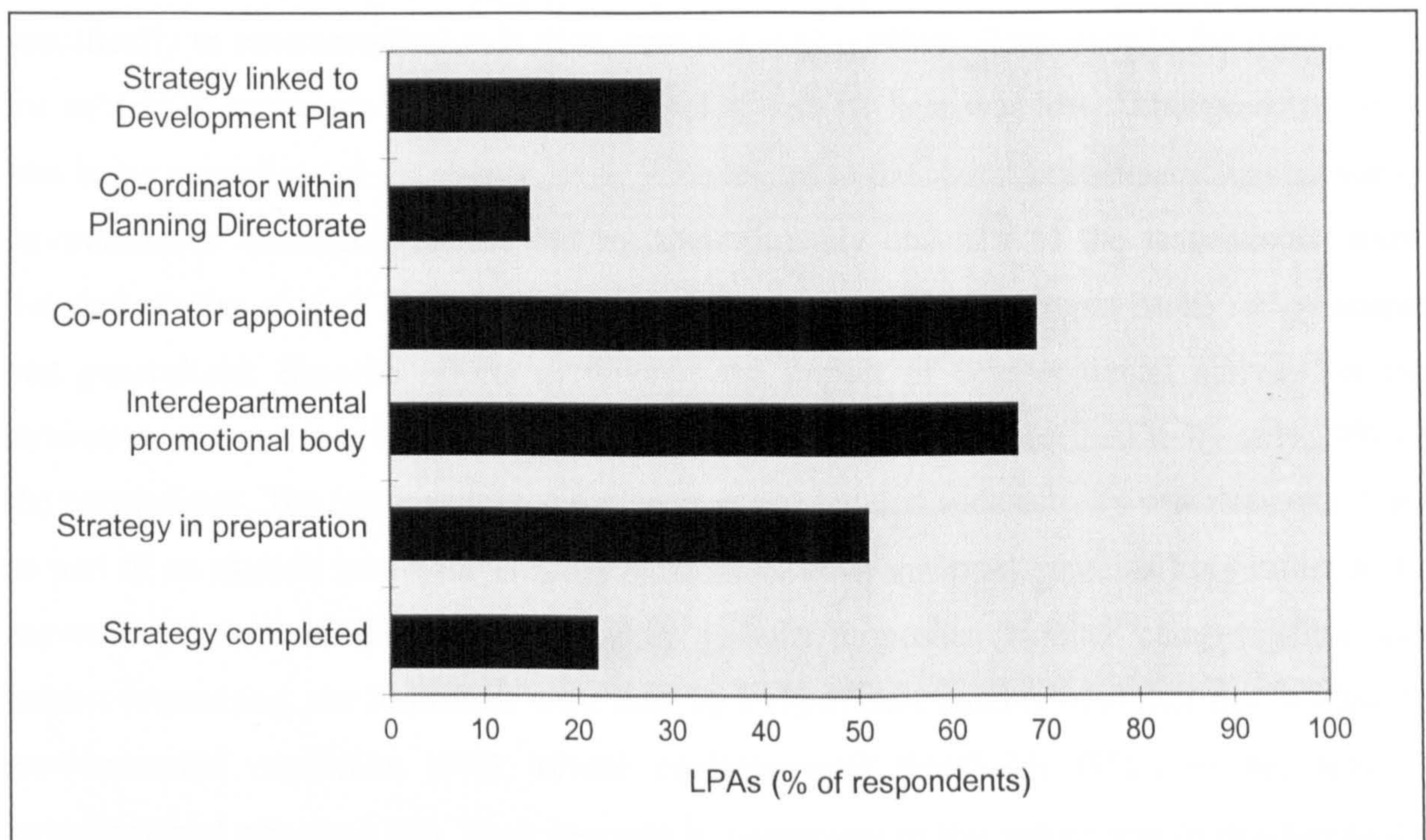
Although such activity has little, if no, statutory weight, its potential to influence local land-use issues would seem significant. A situation enhanced by the fact that 67% of authorities have interdepartmental bodies promoting LA21/sustainable development. Many respondents commented that they foresaw the potential for LA21 inputs into future reviews; to date

however, this potential has yet to be realised, with only 29% of LPAs claiming the presence of identifiable linkages with development plan preparation.

Some interesting and possibly worrying comments were also put forward with regard to the future of this relationship:

- “The Plan has effectively blazed a trail for certain aspects of LA21.”
- “The LA21 independent public organisation has had numerous impacts as a consultee and as a producer of technical and practically based information on the facilitation of sustainable development. Unfortunately this is found to be neither politically acceptable nor approved of by the DETR - despite PPG7’s recommendation to heed the LA21 process. Unless LA21 is conformist in terms of PPGs it is disallowed.”
- “An LA21 action plan is rarely a matter of development planning - if anything the influence so far has been the other way round - the Development Plan has influenced the LA21 documents. Most environmental initiatives relevant to statutory land-use planning are already in the Development Plan via modification through PPG advice, objection and modifications at inquiry etc..”
- LA21 has been slow getting together (staff problems and timing) - I think it’s going to be twin-tracked with *best value*”

Figure 5.3 - LA21 activity and links to land-use development planning



5.4 Environmental appraisal and valuation

75% of all LPAs questioned had carried out some form of environmental appraisal of their plan policies/proposals. However, by using the DoE (1993) 'good practice' guide as a yardstick, significant variations in the degree of application were revealed - with approximately 50% of the authorities only partially following the advised methodology. The principal reason put forward for this was, as with participation strategies, a lack of resources (time, funds and staff). Other comments however were more critical of the process itself and the existing framework in which it was required to operate:

- "Preparing an appraisal in line with the guidance is very demanding of staff time. Few objectors commented on it (not even the DoE!). It is doubtful if it was worth the effort involved" (from an LPA which felt they had comprehensively followed the DoE guidance).
- "The guidance is adequate but the role of SEA (Strategic Environmental Appraisal) should not be overestimated."
- "All policies are scoped via PPG advice and tested at inquiry for compliance by pressure groups and statutory consultees!!" (from an LPA which had not published an appraisal).
- "There had been decisions taken at Structure Plan level which committed the Local Plan to certain actions/policies regardless of the outcome of the environmental appraisal".

Considering the above criticisms and restraints it is perhaps unsurprising that replies relating specifically to environmental valuation were not very positive. Responses to the question on the subject of indicators showed that the level of activity here was low, although some work was being carried out at the county level. With regard to the characterisation/categorisation of environmental resources (carried out by approximately one half of the respondents) most detailed studies centred on nature conservation with any other attempts being rather coarse and generalised. Specific efforts to forecast the impact of developmental activity on the environmental resource base (whether categorised or not) were subscribed to by only 29% of the respondents. The comments on the subject suggested that such activity was not carried out as part of an explicit area-wide strategy (outside of environmental appraisal) but rather as an inevitable consideration when drawing up policies/proposals. Neither categorisation, nor impact forecasting, nor indicators were used by a significant number of authorities to identify environmental capacities (9%), reveal environmental thresholds (9%), or set specific environmental targets (11%). Their key role in assessment of this nature was in environmental appraisals, and then for only half of those LPAs attempting some form of valuation study.

5.5 Expressions of approaches/principles for handling the issue of environmental valuation

The intention of this section of the questionnaire was to assess the level and areas of expression of various approaches/principles which relate to the handling of environmental valuation within the process of development plan preparation. This reflects the study's assertion that conceptualisations of sustainable development may be characterised through how valuation issues are tackled. The use of particular approaches and principles in particular areas offering a framework in which the influence of sustainable development in development planning may be appreciated. Figure 5.5, overleaf, collectively illustrates the findings of this section, firstly through the strength of expression across the plans as a whole (Figure 5.4a) and then as a breakdown of expression with regard to specific topic areas (Figure 5.4b).

Use of the 'precautionary principle'

51% of all authorities questioned claimed some expression of a precautionary approach, with the lowest profile being for topics where most advice and criteria-driven guidance on promoting sustainable development has so far been received, i.e. built environment and land-use/transportation.

Figure 5.4a - Expression of application principles

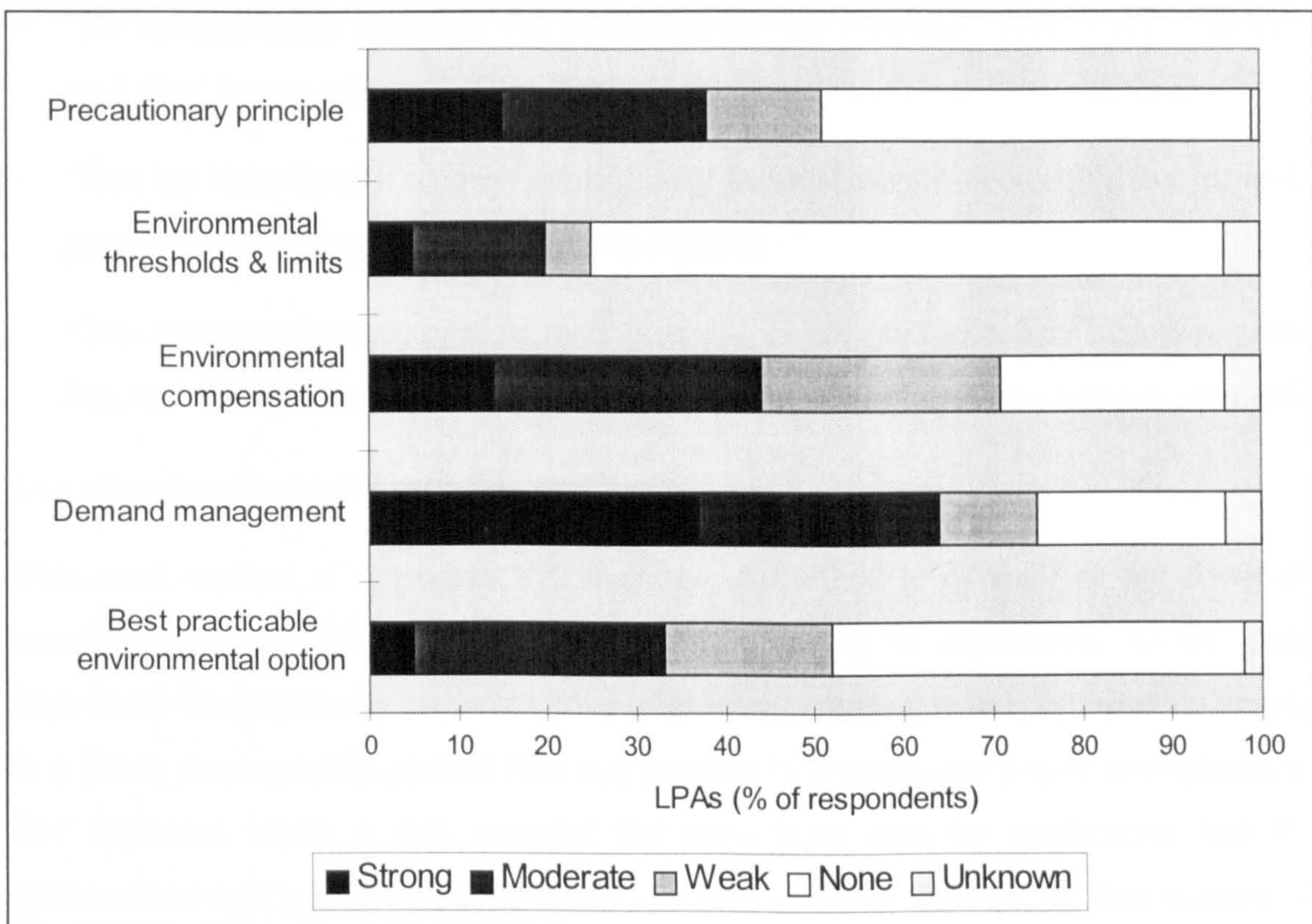
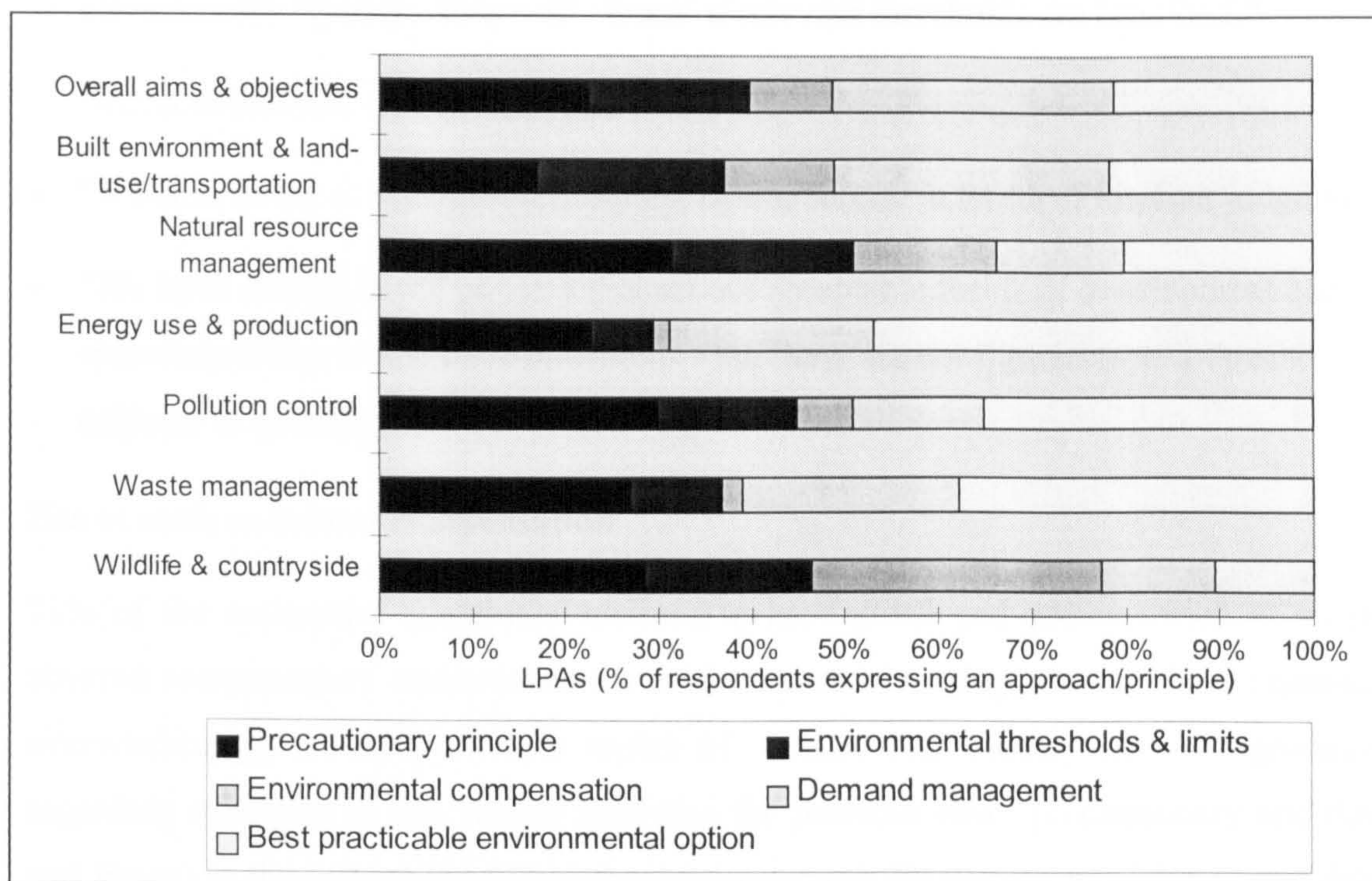


Figure 5.4b - Use of application principles by topic area



The comments made additionally highlighted the practical problems of operationalisation and why its potential as a fall-back position is unlikely to be fully realised at present:

- “The precautionary principle was included in the main strategic policy in the consultation draft plan, but was deleted in the light of comments that it was unworkable in practice.”
- “This has to be limited to areas permitted by national advice - you could not for instance get away with it at appeal/inquiry for most issues.”
- “This approach is contrary to national planning policy guidance. The LPA is required to demonstrate what harm a development may cause if it is to refuse planning permission.”

Use of environmental thresholds and limits

This most explicit of responses was the least subscribed to of the five put forward in the questionnaire, with almost 75% of authorities showing no expression. As an approach it introduces the potentially awkward issue of absolute environmental restraints on development in a much more specific context than that implied by precautionary-type arrangements. In the few instances where it was included the main topic area for application was the built environment and land-use/transportation - an area in which appropriate data is most likely to be available and one in which debates over constraints on development (e.g. greenbelt, greenfield/brownfield, town cramming etc.) are most likely to show resonance. The following comments illustrate some of these difficulties:

- “This is mainly the job of our statutory advisors in MAFF, English Nature and at the Environment Agency - they will ‘shout’ if relevant thresholds are breached.”
- “Many objections - await Inspector’s report!”
- “Weak in terms of specified thresholds, strong/central in terms of implicit judgement.”
- “We have criteria based policies that set out acceptable forms of development and site specific policies which have thresholds - but these are not figurative as a threshold is difficult to quantify.”

Use of environmental compensation

71% of the authorities questioned claimed to have developed policy which to some extent covered compensatory mechanisms for environmental loss/degradation. Such expression was overwhelmingly directed towards topics of wildlife and countryside. A significant issue regarding strategies of this variety (and also the previous two - precautionary and thresholds and limits) is the influence of Government Inspectors. Directions to rephrase and delete will have potentially major impacts on an authority’s originally desired level of expression.

Use of demand management

Demand management approaches were clearly the most strongly expressed response to the sustainable development agenda. The acceptability of such strategies being manifest in overall aims and objectives and with particular weight given to issues of the built environment and land-use/transportation. The comments made underlie the centrality of this approach:

- “Demand management is critical to our entire approach and provision made for future development.”
- “Planning as a form of demand management naturally regulates development activity - now under the banner of sustainability.”
- “This is what planning is for!”
- “If you change what you do enough you can do what you want, this is the idea we need to try and get across”

Use of best practicable environmental option

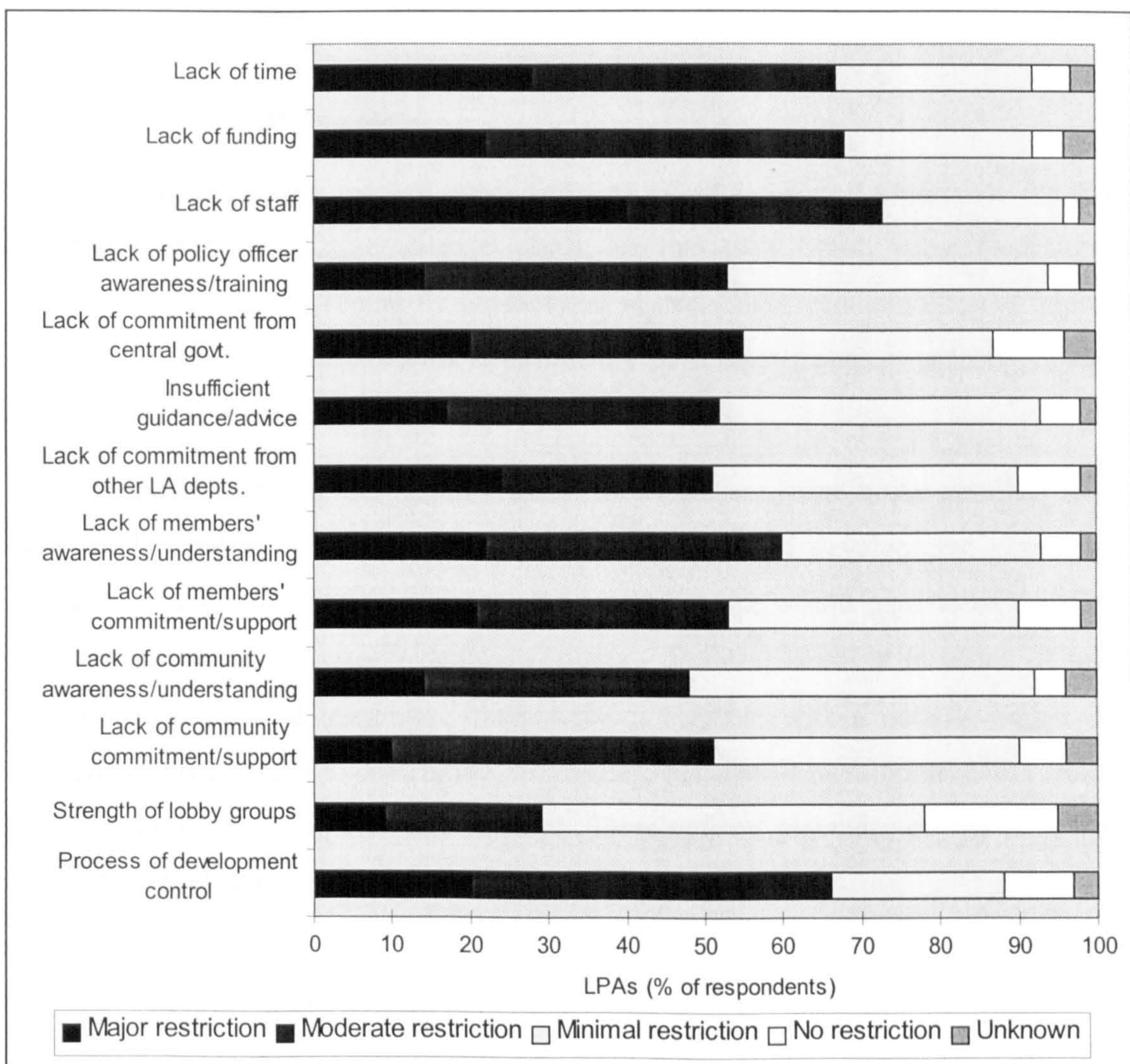
52% of the respondents saw fit to express BPEO in policy and proposals, yet only 5% saw this expression as being ‘strong’. The key characteristic of this approach is that development need will be catered for so long as the ‘least unsustainable’ means of achievement are employed and can consequently be considered as a ‘catch-all’ response. The principle topic

areas to which such policy/proposal types were applied being energy-use and production, waste management and pollution control.

5.6 Constraining factors

As a group, the majority of respondents felt at least a minimal level of restriction from all the possible factors listed for consideration (see Figure 5.5), and some authorities added additional points. Overwhelmingly however, the issue of available resources was highlighted time and again as the major area of constraint. 73% saw this as a major or moderate influence in terms of staffing, 67% in terms of time, and 68% in terms of funding, with many authorities emphasising all three.

Figure 5.5 - Factors restraining the incorporation of sustainable development



The other two factors to which attention should be drawn are: firstly, the effect of development control with 68% of LPAs marking it as a major or moderate restriction; and, secondly well over half pointed to the lack of members' understanding / awareness and commitment:

- “The legal requirements and realities (e.g. burden of proof) at inquiries etc. is a different world!”
- “Section 54A is getting in the way and sustainable development initiatives need a little time - time D[velopment] C[ontrol] doesn’t enjoy.”
- “Members often support in principal but in practice short-termism prevails in decision-making.”

Notable ‘other’ comments offered in this section regarding issues of constraint in development plan preparation included:

- “The variations with which people define sustainable development and the ease with which patently unsustainable planning masquerades as being sustainable.”
- “Planners dismissing sustainable development as a fad/bandwagon.”

5.7 Adjectival associations

Questions of this nature, where respondents are asked to show a preference for the use of particular descriptive adjectives over others, are inevitably highly subjective/interpretative. This point may help to account for the fact that several LPAs were unwilling or unprepared to offer responses. The results should consequently be reflected upon in a tentative manner, at best offering no more than a loose opinion poll.

With this point in mind, the results suggest that there are some broad parallels of meaning between the notions of both sustainable development and development planning. In the comparative framework of the question, the key difference would seem to be that sustainable development has more clearly defined features - showing strongly in terms of innovative, holistic, proactive and integrative characteristics together with a notably higher degree of radicalism. With regard to descriptive differences, sustainable development was characterised as more ‘idealistic’, ‘holistic’ and ‘radical’. Development planning, on the other hand, was seen respectively as more ‘pragmatic’, ‘sectoral’ and ‘revisionist’.

Digging into the detail - South Tyneside MBC case study

Having assembled and presented a pertinent body of national baseline information, with regard to the procedural elements and implications of a sustainable re-evaluation (SR) in English development planning, it is now necessary to examine the communicative context of development plan preparation of which they are a part. It is through the channels of communication which exist within this process that SR is mediated. Within the arrangements of development planning, as they presently exist in England, this is an unpredictable and convoluted affair. The 'devil is in the detail' and it is only through a concerted effort to explore this detail that the complex array of interrelated forces either constraining or facilitating SR can be drawn out into the open. This exhaustive exercise requires the researcher to immerse him or herself in the superficially ordered institutional realm of plan preparation – a requirement that can be empirically met through the use of a case study.

The list of sources accessed and drawn upon during the study is extensive. To minimise the compositional fragmentation this can produce, the reader will find that interview and documentary evidence is loosely arranged under topic or group headings and referenced through a coding system which minimises interruption to the text's flow whilst facilitating anonymity. In adopting this approach it is hoped that the narrative can be read through relatively contiguously. A detailed listing of all data sources and the applied coding is, of course, available and can be found in Appendix D.

The forces in play as a development plan emerges will be both spatially and temporally unique to that plan. The South Tyneside case is certainly no exception. The following sections relate the tortuous emergence of the South Tyneside UDP. The narrative tackles the research's central theme, i.e. the penetration of SR into policy and decision making, through extensive reference to local documentary evidence and the words of a cross-section of prominent players. The intention is not to generalise from this single case (an inherently flawed exercise) but rather to draw attention to the nature of mediatory activity as the plan progressively emerges and the position/role of the sustainable development discourse within it. To produce a meaningful text from this perspective there are many variables which must be accounted for, not least of which is the local area's socio-economic background and it is with this that South Tyneside's 'story' opens.

6.1 South Tyneside – a profile

6.1.1 Deindustrialisation and Deprivation

As much as any part of England, Tyneside is carrying with it the legacy of an extensive industrially based local economy, one founded upon coal reserves and port facilities. The NE region as a whole has had to come to terms with a progressively merciless decline within the heavy industry and manufacturing sectors, however, within the area currently defined as the Metropolitan Borough of South Tyneside (ST) the situation has for various reasons been most acute.

The Borough came into existence as a unitary authority in 1986 with the breaking up of the Metropolitan County of Tyne and Wear. It is, relatively, very small in area (approx. 6500 ha) and highly urbanised (approx. 4000 ha) with the latter centred upon sea-facing South Shields and stretching inland along the River Tyne through Jarrow and Hebburn. The southern half of the Borough is frequently referred to as the 'urban fringe' and comprises an area of Green Belt and the smaller settlements of East and West Boldon, Cleadon and Whitburn. The existing urban area is therefore highly constrained by the River Tyne, the North Sea and the Green Belt.

It is within these physical constraints that the Unitary Authority has continued to struggle to facilitate a restructuring of the areas economy which has been so ravaged by the forces of de-industrialisation and the pernicious anti-union attacks of Conservative administrations during the 1980's. The older established industries such as coal mining, shipbuilding/repair and heavy engineering have all seen massive decline and persistent job losses to the point where they have now largely disappeared. The recessions of the 1980's and early 1990's saw the loss of 9000 jobs (C3), almost entirely within the primary and manufacturing sectors and against a slight national gain. The most recent and probably last major loss being the closure of Westoe colliery in 1993 which laid off 1200 employees (C9).

The volume of job losses is reflected in the highest unemployment rate for any district outside of the inner-London Boroughs. In February 1996 9194 residents were registered as unemployed in the Borough at a rate of 15.4% (22.5% amongst the male population and 7.3% amongst the female); this was almost twice the national rate and one of the highest for any travel to work area in Britain (C3). Recently the situation has marginally improved with the rate standing at 12.9% in January 1999, however, this is against an average for the Northern Region of 7.4% and a national average of 4.8% (C9). The gravity of the situation is further expressed in the statistics that: unemployment is not confined to specific pockets but is spread widely across the wards; youth unemployment (18-24 year olds) runs at 25% of the

total; and, 40% of those unemployed had been so for over a year (C3). The resident labour force, estimated at 67,000 in June 1997, are also influenced by job losses in the sub-region, with only 38,700 out of a potential internal working population being employed internally within the Borough itself. Headline examples of this influence being the closure of the Siemens factory and also the Swan Hunter ship builders with a loss of 2500 jobs of which 25% were internal to the Borough (C7). De-industrialisation has further meant that the Borough's economy is no longer dependent on large employers (the two biggest presently being the Council and the Health Authority), of approximately 3090 businesses in the Borough 90% employ less than 25 personnel.

The high level of unemployment has had wide scale implications for the Borough and a low-wage economy has evolved with the average spending on retail being almost 20% lower than the UK average. This situation has suppressed the demand for goods and services and in turn lowered the expectations of job seekers and young people. The DoE's (1994) Index of Local Conditions placed ST as the 22nd worst out of 366 LA's in England based upon such indicators as car ownership, income support recipients, and children in low impact households; in 1987, even though the parameters were somewhat different, it was placed 48th indicating a further relative deterioration in socio-economic well-being. Similarly a lifestyle survey of 5000 residents in 1992 found a striking relationship between low-income and above average levels of ill-health - almost one third of the men and one quarter of the women had a long term illness or disability which, in over half of each group, restricted their daily activities. The report of the survey concluded that the Borough "is one of the most deprived areas of Britain with a high incidence of health problems reflecting the wider material inequalities in society" (C3). This message has been reinforced by the Area Health Authority's 1992 report and an earlier independent study of long term unemployed families on benefit in Tyne and Wear which reported the lifestyles of those involved as ones "of constant restriction in almost every aspect of people's activities" and highlighted the almost insuperable inertia of an unbidden benefit dependency trap (C1). The response to these cumulative negative circumstances has for many residents been the decision to leave the Borough. Out-migration especially amongst the young and skilled has further exacerbated the difficulties of facilitating economic restructuring. Between 1981 and 1991 the population of the Borough fell by 5% (9000 people), more recently a large increase in house-building has assuaged the loss but development land constraints are unlikely to maintain the trend (the completion of new dwellings has more than halved from 385 completions in 1992 to only 166 in 1996 (C5)). With the younger and better skilled being those leaving the Borough the percentage of elderly and very elderly in the resident population has risen markedly (C1).

This situation just adds to the pressure on state and council benefits and services - 40% of the population are wholly or partly dependent on welfare of some kind (C5). Despite these problems which have generated a benefit dependency culture, low aspirations and sub-regional competitive disadvantage, social cohesion is quoted as a key strength within the Borough: "The picture is clear, that South Tyneside is an area with extremely high levels of unemployment and deprivation. Despite the way this blights so many lives of residents in the Borough, it is nevertheless, a proud population with a strong community spirit" (C3, p.46).

6.1.2 Regeneration

The Borough, therefore, has many deep-seated socio-economic problems emanating from the effects of deindustrialisation upon the local area and region as a whole. This has hit South Tyneside's local economy and employment base especially hard. Reversing this decline under the banner of regeneration has thus become an overriding political priority as the links between high levels of unemployment and the key welfare issues of poverty, poor health, crime and education indisputably drive the attitudes and shape of forward planning and day-to-day decision-making. Thinking in both these cases has placed the Metropolitan Borough Council's (MBC's) economic development and regeneration strategies centre stage with regard to policy-making and action on the ground. The key focus has been, and continues to be the attraction of inward investment. In 1994 the South Tyneside Enterprise Partnership (STEP) was established to draw together and co-ordinate regeneration activity, this is a private sector-led partnership involving representatives of the MBC, Tyneside TEC and the community/voluntary sector. The principle strategic aim of the partnership is: "To enhance the competitiveness of the South Tyneside economy and encourage job creation" (C3, p.3). The direction of activity is clearly spelt out in the name of the group tasked with co-ordinating the 'voice' of the Borough's voluntary and community groups - The South Tyneside Resource for Initiating Development of the Economy (STRIDE). As a model for rebuilding and restructuring the local economy a partnership approach is undisputed: "Partnership has proved to be the key to the Borough's success and will continue to be so in future regeneration programmes" (C12, p.2). Results however continue to be disappointing, a situation which is rationalised in terms of the physical constraints to economic growth, typically: a.) the size of the Borough; b.) the density of the built up area; c.) the limited number and size of opportunity development sites, and; d.) the extent of the Green Belt. The issue of aggregate land supply has consequently led to attention being focused upon the environmental quality and infrastructural benefits of the land made available for development.

6.2 Stage 1 – Shaping the Plan

6.2.1 Initial Drafting

It is against this context that the South Tyneside UDP has been drafted. The history of this drafting began in a preparatory form with South Tyneside's designation as a unitary authority in 1986 when the Conservative Government abolished the Metropolitan County Council of Tyne and Wear and replaced it with five Metropolitan Borough Councils (Gateshead, Newcastle, Sunderland, North Tyneside, and South Tyneside). South Tyneside thus became the smallest of five unitary authorities tasked with producing two-part UDPs for their own local areas. A direct consequence of this is that the Borough found itself, at the strategic level, in competition with the other four authorities.

Within the Council, planning matters are dealt with by members of the Town Development Committee (TDC) and its Sub-Committee (TDSC). Essentially the latter deal with development control matters. In theory UDP issues and content were to be put before the main Committee but as the Sub-committee met twice as often, and comprised the same Chair and most of the same councillors, it was expedient on occasion (with the Chair's agreement) during the preparation process to put policy and proposal matters before the Sub-committee instead. Departmentally, planning functions are served by officers within the Client Division of Development Services – specifically the Policy and Regeneration Group (PRG). In April 1988, having considered a report on the new unitary development planning system, the Council authorised appropriate preparatory work to commence on drafting the UDP. Some activity in this area was already being undertaken in the guise of input into the Draft Advice on Strategic Guidance for Tyne and Wear. Once this guidance was finalised, in the form of the 1989 RPG1, the LPAs concerned were able to request the Secretary of State issue a commencement order (issued in May 1989) to mark the start of the formal plan-making process.

6.2.2 Objectives and key issue

During the initial pre-formal period the TDC and TDSC met to consider a range of statistical and general background papers which the Chief Planner put before them and from which they agreed a number of objectives which the UDP should seek to pursue. Following the publication of RPG1 these objectives were incorporated within a key formative document entitled *South Tyneside – Beyond 2000: A Strategy for the Future* (Dec. 1990), see Table 6.1 below. This strategy document attempted to unify the previous background work and local objectives with the regional guidance which had (largely through the setting of housing requirements) set the UDP to cover the period up to 2001.

Table 6.1 - Key UDP objectives (Source: B12, para.1.2)

1. "Jobs": To promote the creation of new jobs in the Borough, and to retain existing jobs.
2. "Housing": To make South Tyneside a good place to live.
3. "Environment": To safeguard and improve the environment.
4. "Transport": To ensure adequate accessibility for pedestrians, public and private transport users.
5. "Shopping": To provide a full range of shopping, bearing in mind the inter-relationship with provision in other districts.
6. "Resources": To make the most effective possible use of the limited public money available in pursuit of these objectives, and to encourage investment by all private and public agencies.

The formative influence of *Beyond 2000* is significant with regard to the strategic content of the draft UDP. It was constructed before the notion of sustainable development had been incorporated into planning guidance from central government and as such has an important comparative role. The document in effect sets the tenor for the UDP by discursively drawing together a list of unexceptional but demanding plan objectives which the TDC had agreed in June 1987 with proposed RPG objectives under the headings of urban regeneration, retailing, transportation and environment – all coalescing around the primary aim of revitalising the region's economy. The issues raised by the guidance are succinctly drawn out in Table 6.2 illustrating the complexity of the required policy-making activity to tackle the fall-out from several decades of industrial decline and structural unemployment.

Table 6.2 - Regional Guidance issues to be tackled by UDPs (source: B12, paras. as indicated, original emphasis)

- "There are significant differences between perceived need [for housing] (based on the necessity to provide appropriate standards of accommodation) and demand which is essentially driven by the house building industry" (para.2.1.2).
- "In many senses, decisions relating to the preparation of industrial land and premises can be defined as "acts of faith". What can be demonstrated, however, is that sites attracting interest are generally well-located and well-presented" (para.2.1.3).
- "The supply of so-called greenfield sites will be exhausted at current rates of consumption well within the plan period thus restricting house builders' choice and placing pressure on Green Belt boundaries. Conversely it could be argued that rigid adherence to Green Belt boundaries would meet part of the Belt's current statutory purpose, i.e. to facilitate inner area regeneration" (para.2.1.6(ii)).
- "Perception of demand, i.e. the house builders' view of what 'the market' requires, is of significance to LPAs in a number of respects. A healthy demand for housing has the following positive effects on the UDP: it increases the extent to which the strategy can influence the scope and scale of regeneration through house-building; it helps the house-

building industry maintain a satisfactory rate in recycling previously outworn or derelict urban land; it supports the economic development strategy through the provision of competitively well located and appointed executive housing; and increases the extent to which genuine need for particular types and tenures of housing is met sensitively and realistically. On the other hand, excessive demand for new housing can: increase pressures on established formal and informal urban green spaces; threaten the quality of the built and natural environment; and over-strain the adequacy of infrastructure generally, and transport networks in particular” (para.2.1.7).

- “The case for major retail development in South Tyneside (particularly outside established centre) could not be sustained currently in terms of growth in retail expenditure, itself determined largely by the size of the local population and disposable income levels available to that population” (para.2.2.4).

- “Environmental concerns are central to a future UDP strategy in so far as South Tyneside is concerned ... care of these areas and features attracting inward investment and tourism is essential if they are not to be destroyed by virtue of their own success, particularly where balances of nature are concerned ... this should be environmental improvement and protection for its own sake as well as to produce more attractive investment packages” (para.2.4.1).

- “Strict protection of the Green Belt would assist regeneration of the outworn inner urban areas and would provide a major contribution to an environment-led strategy, based in the quality and not the quantity of development, on enhancing the setting of sites with economic development (and therefore job creation) potential and in increasing the attraction of the Borough as an area in which to live and work” (para.2.4.7) ... however... “it could be anticipated that pressures are likely to build for less stringency in the application of the Green Belt protection policies. Nevertheless, the key features of Green Belt policy are likely to continue to be set nationally” (para.2.4.8).

The issues raised attempt to draw the complex problems underlying the regeneration agenda – unemployment, limited private sector skills and initiatives, depopulation and image – into the field of strategic land-use planning. Extending national and regional policy into a local context in which priority treatment is surmised to rest with countering the lack of employment opportunities and raising the quality of the Borough’s environment. It is appreciated that there can be no single strategic principle, an effective UDP must conflate elements of environment-led, market-led and transportation-led options. A portfolio of nine strategic choices are laid out which set the parameters in which an apposite approach to land-use planning in the Borough is to be considered (see Table 6.3 left-hand column). A recommended strategy is then presented relating to each of the 9 specified areas of choice, reflecting the aforementioned priority issues of employment and environment, as that which should be pursued in the preparation of the UDP (See Table 6.3 right-hand column).

Table 6.3 - Topics of strategic choice and preferred UDP expression (source: drawn from B12, Section3)

Strategic choice topics	Preferred strategy to be expressed in UDP
1. Basic approach:	The UDP will provide a filter of environmental policies through which all subsequent policies must pass in order to ensure that, insofar as it is able to control or influence the quality of the environment locally, the Borough Council will seek to protect and enhance it.
2. Attitudes to growth:	The UDP will make provision to accommodate growth within the Borough, consistent with the Borough Council's primary environmental concerns.
3. The distribution of growth between inner and outer areas:	The UDP wherever possible will direct growth to the Borough's inner urban areas; it will contain policies to continue the regeneration of those areas.
4. The balance between homes and jobs:	The UDP will determine the balance of growth between economic and housing development in order to provide for levels of activity consistent with the objectives of the South Tyneside Economic Development Strategy and to provide dwellings in numbers consistent with those given in RPG.
5. The scale and quality of retail services:	UDP policies for the appropriate future scale and provision of retailing facilities in the Borough will take account of: the limited growth in both the local population and in likely future expenditure levels; limited increases in floorspace anticipated beyond current planned provision; maintenance of the vitality and viability of existing centres will be encouraged.
6. Establishing priorities in transportation:	The UDP's transportation policies will be based on the premises that: the Borough Council will expect the dependence of Borough residents on public transport facilities to remain high; development opportunities will be focused on areas where highway capacities are adequate to accommodate traffic generated by the development envisaged; and, consistent with the Council's primary concern, the environmental impact of existing routes and proposed transportation schemes should be reduced wherever possible.
7. The vital role of open space:	The UDP will contain policies to protect and increase the provision of open space, particularly in the urban area where its contributions to the quality of the environment and facilities for recreation and leisure are vital.
8. Provision for the needs of the community:	The UDP will include appropriate provisions for social and community uses (consistent with the scale of development envisaged) made in appropriate locations in the Borough.
9. Priorities in resource	The UDP's policies and proposals should be drafted to

allocation:	confirm the Council's prevailing resource priorities. Valuable initiatives which do not attract private sector interest; projects in areas where deprivation is concentrated and private sector schemes deriving community benefit will be supported.
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6.3 Views on the UDP and the process of preparation

The previous section has delineated the output from the preliminary stages of the UDP's preparation – in effect outlining what the LPA consider to be an appropriate framework in which to develop the plan. The apparent key influences are the contextual needs, demands and pressures which affect the well-being of the Borough's population as appreciated by the elected members and body of professional advisers and administrators in the shape of local government officers. This position however is itself framed by how those officially designated to draw up the plan understand it in terms of product and process. A situation which in turn will be reflected in how it is put across to those both influenced by, and with an interest in, its content and, consequently, have a bearing on how these 'external' actors view the Plan in terms of content and process. These views and relationships are expressed in the following sections - they offer an essential context against which the incorporation of issues such as sustainable development will be projected.

6.3.1 The 'internal' view – Members

Geo-politically the Borough is divided into 20 electoral wards, each of which contributes 3 duly elected councillors to the MBC, giving a total membership of sixty. The strength of the Labour Group within the Council can be considered unassailable, typically running in excess of 90% - to quote one interviewee:

“Up here they would vote for a donkey if it had a red rosette on”. (A19)

This domination has meant that the views of non-Labour councillors carry little weight as an effective political opposition. A situation exacerbated by splits in the anti-Labour vote – most especially between the Conservatives and the Progressives (local independent 'conservatives'). Unity within the Labour Group however is far from assured with many complex and historically derived divisions, for example long-standing conflicts of interest in South Shields versus Jarrow and Hebburn. Trying to ensure that an appropriate degree of unity is projected from the various committees would appear to be a vital role of their chairpersons – when asked if other members should, or could, be approached for interview regarding the UDP, the TDC/TDSC Chairman simply replied:

“Just me...they (the rest of the Council outside of the TDC) take the whole UDP as read”. (A5)

Within this case study access to Labour members was consequently restricted through referral solely to the chairman of the committees responsible for considering plan policies and proposals. These being the TDC and TDSC which deal with all land-use planning matters as one set of 12 functional committees clustered around the central Policy and Resources Committee which itself is immediately responsible to the full Council in its role of co-ordinating the development of policy and allocation and control of finance, manpower and resources.

Within the membership, the UDP would seem to be perceived simply as a required regulatory document which lays out policies and proposals

“for the betterment of the community of the Borough as a whole, both in the near future and in the distant future and that is all, top and bottom.”
(A5)

The process is one of “discussion, deliberation and decision” (A5) in which members fulfil their responsibility to the electorate by mediating at the junction between central/regional policy and local needs and concerns. South Tyneside councillors see their role as protecting the electorate from themselves and central government in a blend of independence and patriarchy:

“Without being nasty to the outside public they tend to see things from their own little perspective and what they want, and quite candidly you can’t do things like that. The officers come along and tell us the why’s and whatfor’s legally and we go back to the people and say you can’t do that and remember that if there is any dispute members will make a decision – the people accept it, maybe not gracefully, but they accept it. There has been little dispute.” (A5)

There is a clear suggestion from the officers that the membership (and senior officers) view the Plan with a degree of disinterest unless it raises contentious political issues despite attempts to forge strong working relationships:

”Broadly most members don’t have a desire to be closely involved in the UDP, although there will be particular issues they feel strongly about, so the efforts we made early on to establish a day-to-day relationship tended to die out – they were happy for us to draw up the detailed documentation as an officer-led exercise and only come in at key stages – it’s largely an in-house professional exercise”(A6);

“The members certainly are not interested in technical and legal process”
(A1);

“They don’t think there is much kudos in the UDP and see it as a necessary evil – I think historically the members haven’t liked to be tied down by things like a development plan” (A11);

“Our councillors might have read the front cover if you’re lucky – to them it’s not part of democracy, they represent the people and they make the decisions, so tomorrow if there was a major proposal that was totally contrary to the UDP and they were in favour they would approve it and equally if you had a major proposal that was in accord with that and they didn’t like it they would refuse it” (A8).

In this sense the development plan is a politically dangerous positional statement in terms of both success in local elections and the less overt politics of candidate selections by ward parties (de-selection was a fate suffered by the previous TDC Chair and ultimately by his successor at the end of the UDP preparation process):

“At the end of the day it is a popularity poll for members because they’ve got their seats to lose even in a strong Labour area such as this ... they won’t do things if they see there is public opposition, they’re past masters at deferring things as a way of doing nothing. If something is perceived to be good they won’t vote it down but they won’t vote it through either” (A9).

The Council’s confidence in its ability to produce a Plan which will robustly serve the needs of the Borough’s population both now and in the future is expressed in the TDSC chairman’s comment that:

“After all the years we’ve discussed and deliberated over the UDP I don’t think there’ll be any changes. I know you (addressing the senior officer present) have Reviews but I can’t see there being any major differences” (A5).

As illustrated below, the Council’s confidence in its ability to get the Plan ‘right’ is not necessarily shared by those external agents who have been involved in the UDP preparation process. In addition, the influence of central government in setting the policy agenda for LPAs does not appear to be fully appreciated. The significance of this point has recently been brought into stark relief as the Review of the UDP, following its adoption in 2000, is to take the form of a full replacement as a consequence of revisions to PPG3.

6.3.2 The ‘internal’ view – Officers

The Council’s administrative functions are managed and executed through 6 departments overseen by the Head of Paid Services. Land use planning is administered via the Development Services department. The current internal structure reflects a re-organisation which occurred between the publication of the Consultation Draft and the Deposit Draft of the UDP - principally as a response to the demands of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT). It attempted to consolidate engineering and architecture with planning in the one department, sub-divided into a Consultancy division covering those services most likely to go out to CCT and a Client division covering land use planning, traffic, street lighting and

highway maintenance. The post of Chief Planner was lost, a decision which ironically has fractured land use planning, with Development Control and Policy being brought into competition with each other – as one officer put it:

“With no overall Chief Planner there is no one giving overall direction to planning per se and that is exacerbated by the fact policy issues are the responsibility of one Group Manager and development control implementation issues are the responsibility of another Group Manager. They’re in competition with each other, they have no interest whatsoever in making the linkages between these disciplines and in practice, quite frankly, they don’t” (A8).

The groups in question here are respectively Policy and Regeneration (specifically responsible for drawing up the UDP) and Local Development, sub-divided into East and West Area Teams geographically covering the two halves of the Borough (responsible for handling and advising on development control (DC) decisions). Thus it is the officers within Policy and Regeneration who, through their administrative and management role, are directly responsible for the shape and content of the Plan. They are of course subject to a blend of censure from the membership and external interests but to a large degree, in accordance with their professional standing, may be considered as the ‘authors’ of the UDP. Consequently how the officers in this team perceive the role of the UDP will have a significant bearing upon the preparation process and the handling of issues such as sustainable development. At the administrative level, responsibility rests with the Team’s Leader overseen by the Group Manager – the input from the latter was surprisingly minimal, with senior officer reference/approval being frequently sought directly from the Chief Planner at the beginning of the process and subsequently from the Senior Assistant Director (Client). The small size of the Authority as a whole engenders a notable degree of autonomy within the team.

The process of UDP preparation within this administrative nexus operates at two distinct levels, firstly in terms of actual land use planning and secondly in terms of technical and legal processes. The latter is imbued through statutory requirements,

“a somewhat mechanical process of ticking boxes as you go through the stages” (A1).

The rigidity of this framework lends the process structure but at the same time can engender a degree of bureaucratic inertia:

“There are stages when you don’t lose sight of the ball so much as what the plan is supposed to do doesn’t stay the most important thing, it’s getting the damn thing done that becomes the most important thing” (A1).

Internally the UDP preparation team divides the workload by topic amongst the officers based upon individual strengths and experience. The designated officers deal with each topic by first preparing an outline report followed by draft chapters, then formal chapters and finally standing as expert witnesses at the PLI. This was not a concrete structure however, and there were, according to circumstances, frequent changes to the lead officer for specific topic areas. The Area Teams effectively generated the majority of proposals as opposed to policies; this was not a simple sequential response to policy direction but rather as an iterative process, often driven by the Policy Regeneration Team, through which the two elements could be brought into mutual alignment. The intention being to provide a “timely and relative policy framework” (A3) in which future decision making could operate. The initiative however remained with the Policy Team and, despite the organisational intention, it was suggested that the Area Teams did not attach significant weight to policy issues until the PLI when it became appreciated that such policy played an essential ‘umbrella’ role in helping to defend specific proposals. In keeping with the planning system’s official brief this initiative is limited to land use issues, in this sense a great deal of regeneration work is not perceived as having a great bearing on land use as it is socially or economically based. The linkage is

“on a fits where it touches basis or there out of invention to get money”
(A1).

The contingency of ensuring that strategies interlock or at least do not conflict is however well appreciated. Within it’s sectoral constraints the UDP’s

“primary purpose is to crystallise the planning policies of the Local Authority and the local community, to give them force and expression, to exert greater leverage on the development industry” (A6).

The officers’ role is

“to be aware that there is not a wholly right answer, it’s not a question of being right or wrong, there are just different balances of advantage and who’s to say who’s right or wrong ... Our job is to draw out the arguments in such a way so that it enables people to come to a decision”
(A6).

It is within this administrative/managerial aspect of the UDP that the officers are most comfortable as it most directly addresses, within the contemporary context of plan preparation, their professional competence. As a meaningful and effective document however, this confidence is much less assured:

“A development plan is a repository of pious hope” (A1);

“I suppose we all see the UDP as a useful tool in just simply identifying the framework for the future development of the Borough – whether we achieve this is another matter” (A3).

This concern was succinctly expressed by one officer when questioned as to which issues within the scope of the Plan had been most controversial:

“In terms of the UDP preparation or in terms of real live issues on the streets of the Borough” (A3).

A further point of explanation is the suggestion that to produce a very direct, locally potent land use vision for the Borough is to court politically unacceptable controversy. A far safer approach is for the LPA to fall back on its statutory role of producing the document (A8). A situation supported by the view that

“the UDP is quite good at repeating a lot of the stuff you might find in a PPG or a Circular – it doesn’t really get down a lot to saying about the development of South Shields” (A8).

6.3.3 The ‘external’ view: The Government Regional Office and the Planning Inspectorate

The Government Office for the North-east (GONE) is the administrative channel through which Central Government is regionally represented. With regard to the UDP this representation operates on two fronts to ensure: that the LPA produces the Plan as quickly and efficiently as possible, and; that policies and proposals are in line with Central Government (embodied by the SoS) policy and guidance. On these grounds the GONE will advise, object and possibly direct plan process and content as deemed necessary – they were the second most numerically significant objector, with over 60 objections to the Deposit Draft. At the base level of the role and value of development plans, UDPs come in for harsh criticism. The problem lies in the lack of a political tier to administer the strategic elements of Part 1s of UDPs which subsequently negates much of what can be achieved from a balanced regional perspective in Part 2s:

“All that you are going to do is either to get the lowest common denominator or that which everybody will say is going to do them good” (A4).

Part 1s are consequently seen as inconsequential, platitudinous statements and a restatement of PPG12. This lack of essential strategic vision skews the content of UDPs across the region:

“if it’s something every district can have, or it’s on a micro-scale, then that’s fine, but for big investment unless everybody gets a fair share those that don’t won’t play ball – it’s very parochial. Without regional government people will never take off their district hat” (A4).

Within this study the view from the Planning Inspectorate is supplied in a general sense from a senior representative, as access to specific Inspectors (or EIP panels) was not available. No particular view of development plans is held outside of that expressed in the PPGs. The Inspector's (or Panel's) relationship to specific plans has an element of ambiguity to it, as although they do not represent Central Government views (covered by the regional government offices) they "sit in the shoes of the Secretary of State" (A12) and must appreciate pertinent policy on any issue and have regard to it. In essence development plans are perceived as aggregate statements of policies and proposals constructed by LPAs to which (in the case of PLIs) outstanding objections must be heard and responded to under the principle of "fairness, openness and impartiality" (A12).

6.3.4 The 'external' view: Development Interests

Those with private interests in developing land look at the development planning system critically as users of that system. The UDP is thus perceived principally as a vehicle for promoting interests. Involvement in plan preparation is a focused and serious affair which attempts to negate the influence of development-threatening regulation. The overall view of the Plan and its preparation is of something of a battleground as developers attempt to realise the maximum potential of their assets against a rigid and confrontational process of "decide, publish and defend" (A20) on the part of the LPA. Progress in this context is clouded by member-officer relations and compromised by local politics:

"We've had incidents where relatively minor matters have been agreed on site and then a couple of weeks later you'll get a letter back saying 'no' for reasons that do not make a lot of sense" (A22).

This situation leads to plans which are not held in very high regard:

"The one thing we all need is what Local Plans were designed for which is to give us certainty, but they're not" (A19).

The vagaries of local politics produce plan policies and proposals which are not satisfactorily debated – a state of affairs often exacerbated by the rush to publish. Allocations thus have a tendency to be ill-conceived leading to problematic planning applications with subsequently drawn out build programs:

"We've got our own labour force so the company has to program a year in advance, all the lads are ready to go and we get a refusal and it puts us back 8 months – I don't think LAs see that, they don't see how much it hurts to make a silly decision ... My honest opinion is that planning is in disrepute, it's in a mess" (A19).

6.3.5 The 'external' view: individual, community and environmental group interests

Within this group views as to the role of the UDP in terms of product and process are much less clearly expressed. It was simply viewed as a statutory requirement upon the MBC which could threaten, or offer opportunities for advancing, organisational, community or individual aspirations and interests. The defining feature at this level is that the division between threat and opportunity would appear to be a function of both the degree of access which parties have to the LPA and how directly or personally the influence of policies/proposals will be felt. A less confrontational outlook is expressed where channels of access already exist or are clearly established and where the interest is more general in nature. In these instances the UDP is looked upon in much more positive manner. Correspondingly a negative response is elicited where interests are very specifically affected, typically through allocation proposals, and access is limited to that contained in the statutory process of Plan preparation.

6.4 The Consultation Draft

The emerging UDP replaced a plethora of existing documents, specifically: the Tyne and Wear Structure Plan (1981) in its application to South Tyneside; elements of four legally extant county level development plans from the late 1950s to mid-1960s; eight Local Plans covering various areas of the Borough adopted in the 1980s, and; other plans not formally adopted but approved as a basis for development control. The initial draft UDP thus had a point of departure founded upon the content of these existing plans, the strategic 'vision' constructed in *Beyond 2000* with its acknowledgement of national and regional guidance, together with a 'sideways look' at what other LPAs were doing. The document was approved for 'consultation' by the Council in December 1991 with the consultation period starting mid-June 1992 and considering comments received until the end of September 1992.

As a UDP the draft adheres to the statutory requirement of separating the document into two parts: Part One containing general policies to be applied by the LPA over the period to 2001; Part Two develops these aims and objectives so into more detailed site-specific proposals. As introduced previously, the Plan is not shaped by area but rather by the following topics which sub-divide the policies contained in Part One and the chapters contained in Part Two: The Environment, Urban Regeneration, Economic Development, Housing, Social and Community Provision, Sport, Recreation and Leisure, Transport, and Retailing (and Development Control Policies).

As previously stated, it is not the purpose of this case study narrative to exhaustively reiterate and breakdown the textual content of the Plan policies and proposals in what would probably amount to an arbitrary and spurious search for policy/proposal responses to the sustainability

agenda. Key issues of local policy, allocation and development control will of course be raised but in a purely illustrative manner.

The intention is to consider the processes which shape and respond to the text, which in effect define the plan-making process and thus facilitate and/or constrain attempts to re-evaluate environmental resources. As a senior officer put it:

“In the process of enabling development where possible, and at the other end denying it in some locations, it’s the ‘because’ that becomes important – the rationale” (A1).

The principle direction of the topical policies contained in Part 1 of the Consultation Draft is typically unexceptional being fundamentally a fine-grained exposition of the preferred strategy, outlined in Table 6.3, broken down into a policy oriented format. Critically one could say that the bland nature of this section is inevitable as it is unlikely that strategic choices would be framed in such a way as to render problematic the construction of site specific proposals. The bare thrust of the proposals is shown by geographical split in Table 6.4 below. The reason that there are three geographical areas, as opposed to two reflecting the East and West Area Teams, is a historical consequence of the fact that there were three teams at the early drafting stages. The move to a two team development control structure came in the light of budget cuts and the administrative coverage of the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation.

Table 6.4 - Development proposal aims by area

Geographical area	Aims of proposals
South Shields	To protect and enhance the area’s best features and improve the environment elsewhere.
Jarrow & Hebburn	To protect and develop the important assets of Jarrow and Hebburn, reclaim derelict industrial areas and refurbish existing infrastructure.
The Urban Fringe	To find a balance between protecting open land from intensive urban development and increasing job opportunities.

On the basis of the context for development planning in South Tyneside, and the directions deemed commensurate with this, various land use allocations and promotional/controlling policies were subsequently built up to produce Part 2 of the UDP.

6.4.1 Environmental content and evaluation

Even though the draft of the Plan was published prior to the introduction of the notion of sustainable development into planning policy guidance, it is apparent that environmental

considerations lie at the UDP's strategic heart: "the environment, it's current quality and the need for its improvement and protection are considered first in the Plan. Policies and proposals relating to the environment form a framework in which subsequent sections of the document are set" (D13, para.1.2.1). This approach, however, is not founded upon ecological considerations or reflections pertaining to an intrinsic environmental concern. It is a 'green' of the palest hue based upon an expedient re-evaluation of development priorities in the light of the previously noted physical constraints to growth in the Borough – its small size, the density of development of the built up area, the limited number and size of opportunity development sites, and the extent of the Green Belt. It is rooted in the creative struggle to tackle the 'jobs gap' which has historically haunted the Borough and region. The underlying language is that of economic development spoken through the compound lens of environmental protection and enhancement and urban regeneration. The Plan's narrative hinges upon this perspective for coping with the Borough's perceived and real problems of image, the scale of restructuring to remodel its economic base, the shortage of private sector entrepreneurial skills, and depopulation.

Despite the fact that integrating the language of sustainable development had yet to become a key promotional objective of development plans the LPAs thinking would, either through timely expedience, prescience or anticipation, appear to have taken significant pre-emptive strides in this direction. In drawing up the consultation draft the approach was operationalised by means of applying what was termed a 'green filter'. This proactive response mechanism was initially put forward by members in the light of moves at the time to set up both the Great North Forest (C2) and the South Tyneside Groundwork Trust. The primacy lent to environmental concerns was put across by writing a chapter dedicated purely to 'The Environment' and placing it at the beginning of the document:

"we felt it was very important to set the tone of the Plan by bringing environmental concern in first. We were trying to show credentials and sensitivity as the 'filter' through which your decisions involving suggested strategy and sets of proposals are embraced" (A1).

The later intervention of the Chief Executive (outlined below) prior to publication of the Consultation Draft is a clear response to the perceived conflicts of this pro-environment position. The term 'green filter' clearly has methodological implications, but throughout the UDP topic review process it remained crucially undefined as either an entity or process. All of the Chief Planner's reports to the TDC, including the reviewing current environment policies, contain very conventional limited reference to environmental concern, making no reference to the meaning, use or value of a 'green filter'. The opportunity to link policies and subsequent proposals through some form of standardised 'filtering' method is not taken and

the specific approach to environmental issues remains fragmented and topic focused with policy being considered under the conventional areas of: i.) statement of intent; ii.) the urban environment; iii.) derelict land; iv.) recreation and sport; v.) nature conservation, landscape and agriculture; vi.) pollution hazards; vii.) Green Belt; viii.) minerals, and; ix.) waste disposal (D11a). It was the 'statement of intent' in an early version of the Consultation Draft which attempted to bring some degree of unity to environmental concern, reading as it did: "Protection and enhancement of the environment is of paramount importance" (B1).

Notwithstanding the above observation and lack of procedural substance, this 'filtering' activity again partially anticipated Government advice as an unsystematic version of the soon to be formalised environmental appraisal of development plans:

"I know this is very subjective but the environment was very much in our minds when we wrote the Plan and we were satisfied that we tried to test these things against our concern for the environment (A9).

The means of evaluation were kept within the bounds of conventional planning practice:

"We didn't have a clue that they would come up with a set of criteria against which you test the Plan, we had our own which were basically: does the plan follow PPG? Does development relate well? Are there mixed use principles coming through in terms of locating where you identify sites, relating development well in relation to the urban support services *et cetera* when needed?" (A1).

As a method this procedure was entirely officer-led from within the Policy and Regeneration Team:

"we tried to make the presumption in favour of development environmentally-led ... that the environment should take priority within a criteria based policy approach. You say, on the one hand there is this which is very pro-development, and this which is very pro-environment, if there is any doubt which has priority we can say we are on the side of the environment" (A9).

The use of explicit principles such as the precautionary approach, limits and thresholds, demand management, etc. to drive and support policy had as yet not openly entered the plan's narrative.

It should be noted, however, that one month prior to publication of the Consultation Draft (November 1991), chief officers within the authority balked at an explicitly environmentally-driven UDP containing such absolute principles:

"Whilst not wishing to change the main thrust of the UDP process, I (the Chief Executive) object to the primacy of environmental concerns and the consequential delegation of urban/economic regeneration issues" ...
"I consider that economic regeneration in an area with the highest TTWA rate of unemployment must take its place **alongside** environmental

policies” (original emphasis) ... “Across the whole document there seems to be a concern to formulate a policy on everything related to the environment. I would suggest that each individual policy should be evaluated by considering:

- do we need it?
- is the UDP the most appropriate way to achieve it? And
- can we afford it?” (D12, p1-2)

6.5 The consultation process

The Chief Planner requested (February 1989) that the TDSC consider the steps to be taken regarding public consultation and proffered a recommended approach which was subsequently accepted. It was pointed out that a commencement order would be issued imminently and that although the commencement would be publicised and public views welcomed:

“the Council concentrates its efforts on public consultation during the period when the Draft UDP has been completed, the emphasis being that the public has genuine opportunities to influence the content of the Plan” (D23, p.1).

The approach advocated, and subsequently taken up, involved exhibitions and public meetings, synchronised with press coverage and leaflet distribution, to convey the contents of the Plan as a whole and to focus upon local issues.

During the 14 week consultation period the approach taken was thus conventionally reactive, attempting to elicit comment upon a plan which already had a very distinct format and functionality. Within the limitations of this method however, the coverage was comprehensive: The Plan was exhibited at twenty-five venues across the Borough and made available in language translations for minority groups with appropriate media coverage; thirteen statutory consultees were sent copies (four adjacent District Councils and two County Councils, the Urban Development Corporation, the Secretary of State, the National Rivers Association, Countryside Commission, English Nature, and English Heritage); complimentary copies were sent to members of the business community and 115 other organisations were contacted.

1385 responses were received and reported to the MBC in March 1993. 88% of these (with 536 as signatures on a petition) were negative responses – in effect objections – to one site specific allocation. This was the proposed removal of 58 hectares of land from the Green Belt in order to provide a strategic economic development site at South Hedworth adjacent to the existing Boldon Business Park. This was the only allocation proposed outside of the built-up

area and had been selected as having the greatest potential to provide a high quality location for industry. The need for such a site had been identified within the South Tyneside Economic Development Strategy (1990-1995), and been supported by all the main economic development agencies active in the Borough, as necessary to attract inward investment. This type of issue has been a concern across the region with LAs competing to bridge their own local 'jobs gap' by attempting to ensure that they have a readily available and attractive land supply. Due to the local constraint on land supply in South Tyneside suitable allocations for such purposes are inevitably problematic. There are no obvious choices, a situation which has subsequently dogged and delayed the Plan's preparation and come to dominate discussion at every stage even though in terms of the Plan itself it is a relatively minor element (A1). The strength of response from the local residents rocked the membership on to the back foot and much of the following 18 months was spent in a cycle of delay as alternatives were considered.

With the exception of the Economic Development chapter comments were more balanced with favourable replies outstripping potential objections. In many cases however,

"comments were interpreted as 'neutral', in the sense that they conveyed no clear opposition or support for a policy or proposal. In total these exceeded the number of clearly positive responses" (D23, p.3).

There were two other issues raised in the consultation process which were deemed to require Council direction. Both referred to the proposed safeguarding of land for transport routes. Even though the responses were not as strident or voluminous as those for the South Hedworth proposal they were mixed and, considering the relationship to environmental and economic development concerns, an appropriate resolution was important in terms of the Plan's general strategic objectives.

6.5.1 Views on consultation

How a local planning authority organises consultation within the preparation process of their development plans is very much their own choice within the basic statutory guidelines. The primary objective is to elicit comment on appropriate content and responses to proposed content. The officers see it as a time for community involvement:

"When you get to deposit the whole process becomes so much more formal and set in concrete – you're objecting or you're supporting" (A1).

Unfortunately however, the strategy for consultation outlined above largely failed to engage with the public in the manner envisaged. In this instance it is perhaps better thought of as taking the form of a preliminary deposit draft rather than a genuinely open and formative process. Publishing for consultation did little to motivate community engagement:

“I think if you asked most planners involved in processes elsewhere they would probably say the same – no matter what you do there is something not very interesting, not very attractive, about a plan in the ether when you see it, it’s not particularly tangible. Unless you are directly interested at the time in an issue affecting your neighbourhood I think, sadly, most of the time it is of little interest” (A1).

This point would seem to have been well demonstrated with regard to the imbalance in response to the South Hedworth proposal, where the nature of the responses is framed in the following two comments, the first from a council officer and the second from a protest group representative:

“The residents of the South Hedworth area felt they had been the butt of every sort of council joke in terms of sort of shoving development at them” (A1);

“We got together and tried to get other groups together but they were all very parochial – if it’s not in their area they just weren’t interested” (A23).

Within the Borough ‘consultation’ appears to only have genuine meaning in relation to groups and organisations which have either established channels of access or a statutory role to play in Council activity. These groups have very fixed agendas and consequently review plans with specific, and to the experienced officer largely predictable, objectives and interests in mind. For example English Nature would locate their analysis firmly within their remit of nature conservation. An additional characteristic of these interested parties is that they are generally familiar, if not expert, in handling development plan issues, as an over-stretched member of an independent environment group put it:

“With the best will in the world the local man on the street is blown out of the water before he even starts because they aren’t in a position to understand them without someone sitting down with them and explaining what they are for etc..”(A17).

This combination of understanding and a focus on pushing specific but less personal interests facilitates a more appropriate level of dialogue and compromise. The formality with which issues are pointed out and discussed increases as the plan preparation process moves forward, the greatest room for manoeuvre being at the early stages. Genuine consultation is limited to those with experience, time and resources to operate in this more fluid period. The principle players at the earliest stage – pre-publication of the consultation draft - are the official figures of the Government Office, “commenting on anything and everything informally” (A4), and the unofficial members of the development sector. The latter take an opportunist and long term view of the development planning process as they seek to maximise development interests wherever and whenever they occur:

“we’re very friendly and approachable – arm around people, ‘how you doing’- we’re very knowledgeable, but we sit there in subservience when we go to local authorities. We say we’ll see what we can do, yeah we’ll address that issue, we’ll do this, and you’re their friend all the time and all you’re doing is psychological, you’re dripping it in there” (A19).

The persistence of developers and landowners in furthering their commercial interests through the plan process beyond the formal points of access is an additional characteristic of these actors as illustrated in a report from the Director of Development Services (July 1993): “A number of business concerns have been monitoring the UDP progress and I regularly receive requests for information on the likely timetable for adoption or the latest committee resolution on particular aspects of the Plan” (D16).

Other specialist organisations with established links to the LPA also appreciate the benefit of early liaisons:

“The consultation stage of a development plan is fine, but as soon as you get into the formal stage of publishing drafts it becomes polarised into a support and object system” (A18).

This early polarisation, as a consequence of making available what is in effect a complete plan, is viewed by the more experienced as antagonistic to genuine consultation. The method amounts to little more than an initial round of making formal representations to the deposit draft and does not prove its worth through demonstrable improvements to the quality of the product:

“there is an important democratic element in wanting to appear open and fair but there must be a large area of discretion as to how much you consult, especially if people have got themselves into a fixed state of mind” (A20).

6.6 Stage 2 – Modifying the Plan

The consultation stage of the UDP preparation was thus a reactive process. A plan was produced by the officers of the Policy Team, with support from the membership, founded upon a strategy that conflated employment generation with a concern to ‘protect and enhance’ environmental quality. Views on this strategy and implementation were sought, a process which saw responses polarise around one particular issue – the release of Green Belt land for economic development. This issue was one of two which generated significant reassessment during the second landmark phase in the plan’s development – modifications both before and after the publication of the Deposit Draft leading up to the Public Local Inquiry. The other key area of alteration was the need to specifically recognise and incorporate the notion of sustainable development in shaping the plan’s content . What this

amounted to is clearly of special interest to us here and will be dealt with in detail in the following section (6.6.1). The handling of the dominant issue of the proposed deletion of land from the Green Belt for economic development purposes will be reviewed in Section 6.9 in the light of the new ‘sustainability’ oriented context.

6.6.1 Introducing sustainable development

The official requirement [DoE, 1992b] to somehow apply the notion of sustainable development to land use planning arrived at a relatively opportune time for the MBC. The point of entry being the period of redrafting between the consultation and deposit versions. As stated, the former would seem to have partially foreseen Government guidance, and with environmental considerations apparently already placed at the heart of the Plan’s objectives, one could reasonably expect the move to promote sustainable development to be taken on with some confidence and possibly enthusiasm. Having said this, resource pressed LPAs will inevitably be concerned at the introduction of anything which implies an extended remit and approach to decision making, as sustainable development surely does.

The response within the Development Services Department was to assign the responsibility for tackling the incorporation of the sustainability agenda into the Plan to one officer within the Policy Section:

“I’m supposed to be the expert. When we did the consultation draft I wouldn’t have known what sustainable development was – it took me a long time to realise that the ‘21’ in Agenda 21 was for the 21st century, not ‘where’s agenda 1 to 20?’. For some reason I got co-opted onto the County Planning Officers Sustainable Development Working Group to represent the Metropolitan Planning Officers ... we were asked to provide somebody and nobody else volunteered and I got into it and I think the Authority did very well as I was on a fast-track learning curve dealing with a lot of people who were at the cutting edge of thinking from Hertfordshire and Lancashire” (A9).

A great deal thus rested with the ability and enthusiasm of this one officer. As suggested, it transpired that his appetite for the subject matter far exceeded mere acknowledgement:

“Without blowing my own trumpet we could have got away with a lot less” (A9).

A colleague described this personal motivation as

“a fervour for it which is almost evangelistic” (A1).

The first substantive step was the writing and dissemination of an internal report in October 1993. The aim was to examine how the ‘concept’ of sustainable development might be incorporated into the Deposit version of the UDP. The principle audience being the senior management within Development Services and from whom approval and backing would be

required. It was additionally hoped that the report might lead the Area Teams to reassess Part II of UDP in these terms. The report took a very direct technical-managerial stance with the emphasis upon presenting sustainable development as a process of pragmatic balancing against a recognition of thresholds and capacities beyond which irreversible environmental damage was likely to occur. In the light of this methodology the bare bones of some basic methods are introduced: "In practice we are, in the first instance, planning to reduce unsustainable development, this crucially entails establishing current environmental conditions by means of a 'state of the environment audit'. This will establish a baseline against which progress, or the lack of it, can be measured, targets set and environmental limits calculated" (D19, p.4). Presenting the issue in these terms can additionally be seen as administratively pragmatic to avoid management rejection and to facilitate progress in an atmosphere of continuing staffing cutbacks. The report clearly attempts to ground the notion of sustainable development in a language and approach which can be related to conventional land use planning activity while underplaying the complexity, contentiousness and potential costs attached to carrying out environmental audits and applying their results. To this end a State of the Environment Audit is strongly advocated but, due to resource constraints, it should be used to inform the UDP Review and not the current preparation process. In operational terms the emphasis employed at this point lies in defining and embedding 'environmental targets' which are achievable within the limited time frame of the Plan (i.e. by 2001). The focus throughout is almost solely upon the 'environment', although the scope of this entity is typically left undefined, with the last line of the report pressing for early progress so that a fully revised draft of the Environment chapter may be produced. The aforementioned linking 'targets' are not specified but a list of suggested topics is proposed. It should be noted that, even though the term 'target' is preferred, there is a blurring between this and the term 'indicator' with the latter in fact appearing more definitionally appropriate. A critical reading also throws up an area of potential problem as the espoused underlying approach is that of the 'precautionary principle'. This concept appears to be employed as a catch-all for protecting environmental resources in the face of limited indicative data: "It may be necessary to assume that an activity might be damaging to the environment unless it can be proved otherwise. In such cases this would lead to the refusal of planning permission" (D19, p.3).

The need to acknowledge the language of sustainable development which this introductory report raises would appear to have been accepted at the executive level. However, reports to committee and council between the official reporting of the consultation responses (March 1993) and the release of the Members' Draft copy of the UDP in December 1994 were

dominated by the Green Belt land deletion issue. It is not until this latter date that specific attention is drawn to the influence of sustainable development on the Plan's content. Four somewhat disjointed sentences are contained in this report which are presumably meant to enlighten members as to what the notion means in theory and practice: "it is development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs ... the only long term, sustainable solution is to reduce the need to travel by integrating land use and transport policy ... The Environment Chapter (6) of the document provides a 'green filter' through which all other policies and proposals in the Plan must pass. Only a small extension to the Green Belt is considered, however, given the pressures on the existing urban area and the need to provide for sites for economic development purposes" (D21, p.2). The job of appropriately incorporating sustainable development (i.e. to satisfy the SoS) is one which the membership either do not feel the need, or are disinclined to engage. It is left to the officers, and significantly one officer in the Policy Section with increasingly significant support from the Team Leader to fulfil this role through whichever means chosen or available.

6.7 Views on Sustainable Development

The following sub-sectional format mirrors that used in Section 6.3, above, with the quoted entries being similarly extracted from the interview transcripts. This arrangement facilitates comparison between perceived views on the role and relationship of each entity.

6.7.1 The 'internal' view – Members

As previously stated interview access to the Labour dominated MBC was very restricted with constant referral back to the Chairperson of the TDC. If one assumes, as one is requested to, that the views of this individual are representative of the Council as a whole it is readily apparent that very little attention has been paid to what an incorporation of sustainable development into the UDP might amount to:

"My understanding of sustainable development is the two words 'sustainable' and 'development'. You have to get sustainable development which means you get the best for the public at large, i.e. regards Green Belt and jobs without negating for the future - things can change in the future so you're not making it a hard and fast line. What you're looking for is to keep things going in an ongoing programme" (A5).

Such a definition appears to be wholly intuitive and, even though it is claimed to emanate from officer advice, shows little appreciation of the extensive description contained in the emerging Plan:

“My understanding of sustainable development has come from the officers, but it’s always been something the Council’s done. To keep things going, employment that is sustainability, trying to keep employment. I don’t think it’s anything new. I do think it’s made members focus on certain points more than it did” (A5).

What these points are is left largely unanswered but the implication is that they are those raised by officers as a consequence of changes to PPG. Members have either decided or have been assured that advancing sustainable development will not require any fundamental change to their decision-making activities, any suggestion of conflict is brushed aside:

“I would think that members are aware of sort of sus...sus...sustainable without being aware of it, they’re going the way they want to go and the way they are going is the way the UDP is going” (A5).

Not only has process remained unchanged but the content of the Plan, apparently, is similarly unaffected barring a slight terminological modification:

“We would have ended up with much the same Plan without the advent of sustainability, I mean that’s a new word that the members have learnt, they’re tickled pink” ... “We’ve just rounded the corners, dotted the i’s and crossed the t’s, that’s all we’ve done” (A5).

The only other source of comment on the subject came from an ex-Liberal Democrat councillor: the views put forward here support the above in suggesting that the membership did not involve themselves in discussions or deliberations over the implications of sustainable development for the UDP.

6.7.2 The ‘internal’ view ~ Officers

It is clear from the previous section that the views of officers (specifically those within the Policy Section) with regard to the incorporation of sustainable development in the emerging UDP are the principle internal motivational force. Central government policy and advice has required them to develop an understanding which relates to application in both the context and process of plan preparation. An understanding which, through the nature of the process, will inevitably induce reflection upon its limitations. Due to their pre-eminent position in handling this matter the following section is sub-divided so as to better illustrate the issues of understanding, policy application, procedure and limitation. In an effort to highlight points of internal conflict, and/or support, the complementary views of officers concerned with the subsequent use of policy in development control are also included.

Understanding

Within Policy, sustainable development is perceived as an extension to conventional practice:

“development which in simple terms can provide benefits in the long term for current residents and future residents and in doing that can minimise activities which are harmful to the environment ... an understanding of which goes back to my training as a planner” (A2).

The objectives remain the same but the horizons of consideration have been expanded, by definition, towards an unattainable ideal of sustainability:

“(it) is that which comes closest to sustainability taking regard of every practical consideration that you can” (A1).

In an effort to substantiate these ‘practical considerations’ an idea of environmental limits is acknowledged but in a fluid and circumspect manner:

“It’s a case of planning on the basis that there are limits to what the environment can absorb even if we don’t know what they are, and trying to define them as well - certain environmental limits beyond which we cannot go. I don’t think that they are necessarily fixed in the sense that obviously it depends on what sort of development you are proposing” (A9).

Understanding along these lines is seen as a way of re-balancing the way amenity is dealt with in the Borough to include wider environmental considerations together with the established economic and social perspectives. This idea of ‘re-balancing’ points up the first of three key characteristics of understanding which come through repeatedly in discussion:

- The nature of ‘re-balancing’ decision-making is very much subject to local dynamics;
- Sustainable development, as a means of moving towards a vision of sustainability, offers no clear cut solutions;
- The variability of local context and vision frustrates specific conceptual definitions. Understanding is a blurred, nebulous construct articulated as a broader awareness of the need to raise the profile of environmental issues whilst integrating them with social and economic considerations.

Amongst those officers concerned with development control, an appreciation of what sustainable development might mean is a low priority concern:

“Sustainability is not something we discuss. I’ve got some general ideas of what sustainability is but not a real grasp...it just makes you more aware of certain things” (A7).

Through the lack of discussion this awareness has arisen because

“PPGs mention it and from the planning press, I don’t think Policy educated us in any way” (A8).

Expression at this level of understanding is rife with contradiction , it is simultaneously seen as something which shapes a philosophy for policy and as a source of fragmented criteria:

“I think you take bits, you don’t generate a theory to run through the Plan, it may not be intellectually satisfying but I think that’s how we do it” (A7).

As with Policy, however, the feeling is that it exists as an extension to conventional thinking:

“It’s protecting the best things of what you’ve got and you don’t make decisions now which you might regret later. I think it is no more than a heightened awareness of what we did before” (A7).

“From a DC point of view, sustainable development is probably something inane like doing the right thing in the right place at the right time in the right way. By that, doing what we have always done” (A8).

Policy application

With understanding set at such an insubstantial and sporadic level, talk of how appreciation might be translated into application is largely one-dimensional with criteria-driven central government guidance and advice playing the definitive role. The focus is upon recycling land, minimising private car use with its corollary of incentivising public transport and, protecting the Green Belt. Little in the way of depth is added to this level of application. Any awareness of sustainable development, as a principled response to the need to re-/evaluate environmental resources, finds little penetration beyond the intuitive:

“The most important thing is that you’re acting in a more sustainable concept or thought process” (A1).

This apparent thematic vacuum is however not wholly sealed. Frequent references made to the paucity of ‘state of the environment’ or capacity-oriented technical data which are deemed necessary to support strategies built around thresholds, limits, compensation and demand management. Efforts are, and will be, made to gather such data through environmental auditing and the measurement of various topic specific targets written into the emerging Plan. In the meantime the precautionary principle is raised as the only available means of reacting to a notion of sustainable development from an all-embracing perspective. Introduction of this principle is considered appropriate on three fronts:

- It is perceived as a means of unifying complex and often non-commensurable issues in the name of promoting sustainable development;
- It can be readily related to the context of land use planning in South Tyneside, and;

- It can be invoked in the absence of capacity study data as a holding mechanism and to permit work on the Plan to move forward.

Despite these facilitative circumstances however, a precautionary approach is not applied comprehensively. It is only on Green Belt issues that it can be seen as given significant ascendancy:

“It’s one of the few things where we’re allowed to have a presumption against development, where we’d have to prove exceptional circumstances in order to move the boundary - or somebody else has to” (A9).

From the development control perspective, application of sustainable development at any level has yet to make serious in-roads with regard to modifying decision-making processes and outcomes:

“We look at things very much on a site by site basis and a traditional DC approach: going to environmental health and engineering colleagues to see if they foresee a problem, checking distances between buildings, height of dwellings etc.” (A3).

Reference to sustainability is very much at the periphery of thinking and does not appear to extend beyond the rubric of amenity:

“We haven’t got a sustainability checklist we use for planning applications, there are lots of little issues which are sustainability related which I guess we try to get implemented, e.g. cycleways link up, promoting public transport, etc.” (A7).

Awareness is applied spasmodically, if at all, on a case by case basis as development control policies do not make any specific reference to sustainable development:

“Probably the biggest improvement we could have to help us advance sustainable development would be to have sustainable development policies first of all put into the DC policies, they’re not in there at the moment, it’s all about distances between windows and car parking spaces...having some idea of what sustainability is in these terms would be a big start” (A8).

There clearly exists a tension between Policy & Regeneration and the Local Development Area Teams which has hindered useful dialogue regarding the incorporation of a ‘sustainable’ approach across development services.

Procedure

As well as an influence on policy content itself, sustainable development seeks to find purchase within the procedural framework of plan preparation. This involves the largely voluntary amplification of strands tied into the areas of public/private involvement and the

environmental appraisal of policies/proposals. In the light of the current state of sustainable development considerations, such involvement is viewed as a priority issue:

“I don’t think this (the incorporation of sustainable development) is a process which we should become too obsessed with in purity terms - it’s too imprecise, but like all planning issues the rationale for decision-making must be open and involve as many people who want to get involved” (A1).

Views of the participative function of development planning, however, centre upon the difficulties of effectively drawing in a comprehensive array of interests into less formal consultation at an early stage in the Plan’s preparation. Attempts to open the process, in a democratic sense, to promote the deliberation of broad issues such as sustainable development were a source of considerable disappointment to the officers involved. The experience is that public involvement is only stirred once policies and proposals have achieved a more concrete form at the adversarial stage of formal representations to the Deposit Draft. At this later point attention is focused upon very specific locational concerns and the opportunity to set these within a wider frame at the Borough, let alone regional, national or global, scales is lost. Commercially interested parties, on the other hand, often seek access at the earlier stages but their rational, essentially based upon economic expediency, has little interest in a wider debate - especially one perceived as potentially damaging to their instrumental objectives. There is also a clear suggestion that the way in which the public and Council members themselves perceive their roles exacerbates this situation. A fundamental belief appears to exist that the latter’s election represents the essential exercising of democracy and that from this point they are entrusted with all decision-making for the benefit of the electorate they have been chosen to represent.

Local Agenda 21 has as yet to find its feet in South Tyneside, with apparently little enthusiasm within the Authority:

“I just had a very fruitless meeting about LA21 last week, with everybody saying ‘is there nobody we can copy?’, and I’m saying ‘to an extent but at the end of the day no, it’s not the point of it, we are our area’” (A9).

Parallels, however, have been drawn between LA21 and ‘Best Value’: it is envisaged that they will be ‘twin-tracked’. Best Value is seen as an initiative which can generate genuine leverage within the Authority to raise the profile of public participation and this can be related to the communicative side of sustainable development:

“Members haven’t really come to terms with sustainable development but Best Value could change things - it’s the whole idea of ‘what are we giving them?’” (A1);

“Best Value will change things - we will have to demonstrate we are not producing plans we think the public need so much as asking the public what they think they need. We’ve been doing it already but the process will need to become more overt” (A1).

With regard to a concept of ‘partnership’, the introduction of sustainable development has had little promotional effect. The single factor which encourages the MBC to bring diverse interest groups together would appear to be economic in the search for funding - typically in putting together bids to access the Single Regeneration Budget:

“When the members see that they are getting money to do things, that they wouldn’t otherwise, they accept all sorts of things which they might otherwise be reluctant to accept and I think that’s opened the door for the sort of ideas in Best Value and LA21” (A9).

The requirement to appraise the content of the UDP on environmental grounds is the second procedural strand with a sustainable development bearing. This is taken up by the Policy team but in a somewhat insular manner. It is viewed as an extension of the approach taken to covering environmental considerations within the Consultation Draft (prepared before the publication of the 1992 PPG12). As discussed previously, this took the form of a ‘green filter’ which aimed to raise the priority of local environmental and amenity issues, with the requisite ‘appraisal’ simply being a more comprehensive and systematic version. As a means of promoting sustainable development however, it is not looked upon especially favourably:

“I’m not particularly enamoured with the process which the DETR has been pushing - the box-ticking. You can pick your way through it and justify anything if you’re not careful. I think it is very much in the eye of the beholder, it depends what criteria you set and what balancing act, and very often the advice is quite lame on this. We have asked questions about the eye of the beholder in undertaking a sustainability testing process and the advice tends to be: if you get one person, or a limited number of persons, to do it the value system is at least consistent. It doesn’t make it right, just consistent” (A1).

As both these issues - of public involvement and appraisal - are under the sole jurisdiction of Policy, development control officers have had no real input and thus were not in a position to comment. It is important to note that owing to pressure of other work there was a gradual disengagement of Area Team (development control) staff as the plan preparation progressed – this included absence from the environmental appraisal process.

Limitations

If officers struggle to produce positive views as to what sustainable development is and might amount to, then the accounts are somewhat different when it comes to reflecting upon the factors which limit the notion’s expression. From this negative perspective the weight of PPG advice in driving interpretation is most tellingly felt:

“Without the support of PPGs, which are always the central point of reference, you have to ask yourself on the sustainable development issues: what can we usefully say?” (A10).

This central government guidance is seen as producing decidedly indeterminate change on two counts. Firstly, it does not necessarily necessitate a change to UDP content, barring the use of cosmetic language:

“All you can say is that it’s a UDP which as far as is humanly possible takes account of sustainability issues even if you may end up with the same answers” (A6).

Secondly, and more importantly, sustainable development issues are either: i.) subject to a highly polarised win-lose discourse:

“Sustainable development could become a casualty of the poles of the argument that are brought to bear” (A1).

Or, ii.) are picked up and dropped whenever necessary to make or support a discourse from both pro- and anti-development standpoints:

“You could have two different arguments both apparently legitimately claiming to promote sustainable development” (A6).

Or, iii.) are generally accepted but not strongly enough to advance resolution in a particular direction:

“We weren’t really being accused of not being sustainable. Basically the arguments were: this land should be left as it is or developed in a different way. People seemed to accept how we had addressed sustainable development so the arguments were on a different level” (A2).

Efforts to respond to these difficulties by offering i.) a broader interpretation of fragmented PPG criteria or, ii.) attempting to draw them together into a more comprehensive framework or, iii.) anticipating further central government guidance are all hampered by development interests. Such interests are likely to view any such approach as potentially restrictive and thus will fight the adoption of a precedence moving in this direction:

“It is not easy when you have the development lobby asking: where did you get this from? To some extent you’ve got to try and second guess what they’re going to say” (A19).

Building policy around some form of consistently applied principle in a system founded upon discretion is perceived largely as futile. It is not just developers and landowners who may find their interests compromised, the MBC itself is aware of the potential pitfalls that inflexible principles are likely to instil. For example the precautionary principle may be interpreted as commensurate with green belt protection but

“it could come back and bite us on the behind” (A9).

Further discussion suggests that, even if a full range of pertinent data on environmental indicators, capacities and thresholds were available, the consistent application of sustainability-derived principles as the central plank of policy is an untenable ideal in the light of commercial and political machinations:

“In the end it comes down to resourcing, and at the end of the day developers have only got so much money, only got so much time, and in the context of an area like this where you’re still trying to regenerate, still trying to attract employment, you know quite often the developer holds the cards as regards delivery or not, and sometimes the bottom line is not something as acceptable as you would like but at least there are jobs being delivered and that still is the key here” ... “Sustainable development is much more likely to be skewed by the political process - by what an even-handed person would call pragmatism. We live in a real world and there are all kinds of pressures and some emerge on top, sometimes unfairly” (A1).

The shape of such pressures is described as being highly focused in time and space. The way in which the development plan preparation process handles these pressures means that they readily puncture attempts to devise optimal policy from a principled position on sustainable development. The forces of political and commercial experience can readily brush aside officers best endeavours to elevate environmental considerations within a coherent sustainable framework:

“They (the members) weren’t saying ‘you got it wrong in number or indeed in absolute policy terms’, what they were saying was that ‘we accept there is a need to address an unemployment problem, just find another location to address it please’” (A1).

“The difficulty is that many in the development industry are still in the dark on sustainable development with a resistance probably born of narrower commercial decisions. An officer might be arguing the case for a 2 inch widening of a door to make it wheelchair accessible and the guy would be saying ‘look mate, I’ve got this priced down to the number of screws in the letterbox, I’m not going to start this now’. If that lobby wins or it prevails then we’re wasting our time” (A1).

At the Borough level therefore, officers perceive the primary limitation to advancing a unified and integrated response to the sustainable development agenda as a function of this very aim:

- The membership have a problem with anything that might constrain their political discretion, an issue which relates to policy in general:

“Members tend not to see things in policy terms to a great extent, not just that they don’t seem to take on sustainability policy, just that they don’t tend to see things in policy terms” (A6).

- Development interests will oppose anything with the potential to curtail their room for manoeuvre in negotiations to maximise commercial gain.
- Public interest within the Plan preparation process is polarised upon very local environmental and amenity issues.

A final area of limitation, and one cited by all officers, is of an organisational type. It is generally appreciated, to the point of resignation, that departmental resources in terms of time, manpower and money compromise, curtail or at best slow down the work required to support the adoption of a consistently positive stance to the demands of sustainable development. This is particularly the case when it comes to data gathering (e.g. SoE reporting and capacity studies) and promoting public consultation (including LA21 work).

Within the remit of this section, the views from the Area Teams responsible for development control have a harder and more explicit edge. They almost entirely derive from economic and political factors relating to imperatives of investment attraction and job creation in the Borough:

“At the moment it is fine politically to talk about sustainability and to encompass those sorts of aims in your policy documents, but you try telling developer ‘X’ that he can’t have ‘x’ number of car parking spaces attached to his development, he’s actually got to have less, and you’ve got a problem. And you again speak to a developer who wants to put some houses on a site and say ‘well, I’m sorry, we’ve really got to get away from suburbia, we’ve really got to look to more mixed use, different house styles, different designs and moving towards sustainability’. You try doing that now and you’ve got problems. So that’s what we’re finding and we would not be alone in that. You know the fact of the matter is that sustainability makes good reading but when, at this point in time, you actually try to raise these issues with real live development it’s sometimes very difficult” (A3).

Constraints of this type are particularly acute for marginal sites where introducing sustainable development-led criteria are perceived as likely to reduce profits to the point where returns are sufficiently unsatisfactory that developers feel they would be unable to deliver. The risk of losing investment on these grounds is very real. The issue is not that the key players fail to understand what sustainable development implies, but rather that there is no room for such considerations within a conventional regeneration agenda in which environmental concerns are but one material element in deliberations:

“My own perception is that everyone, public and private sector, is well aware of sustainability issues. You talk to developers about it and they know, but it’s lip service, it’s not delivering it” (A3).

“Sustainable development demands a significant mindset and we’ve come a long way but there’s a long way to go before we can say that we

can deliver things in the way that we'd like to deliver them with the private sector, with the people out there who do influence development in the built environment" (A3).

6.7.3 The 'external' view – The Government Regional Office and the Planning Inspectorate

As representatives of the Secretary of State, those responsible for overseeing development plan preparation within the Government Office for the North East (GONE) are principally bound in their input by the content of Central Government policy - most specifically in the form of PPG. This is the primary criteria of four upon which development plans are judged:

- “1. Are proposals in line with government guidance, as far as it goes?
2. Is what they're proposing going to cause more problems than it solves?
3. Is it a proper professional point of view or have party politics got in the way?
4. Are they a competent authority” (A4).

Views with regard to the incorporation of sustainable development are consequently a reflection of these lines of inquiry coupled with the objective of getting plans produced as quickly as possible. Sustainable development is appreciated in the long term as “the only game in town” which can give development plans any future as presently conceived. At this point in time however, with total plan coverage as the priority aim for Regional Offices, sustainable development issues are tied to the limited advice of active PPGs:

“Now we can think in terms of public transport and parking, location of industry close to work, sequential tests, etc. but occasionally we have to come back and say wait a minute, PPG13 is three years old now, it hasn't been renewed and when you actually go through it, although there are some of the right words there, it is very much a preliminary draft, it's not very robust. You have a mental image that it has become more robust but we've got to base ourselves on what government policy is” (A4).

This situation implies that so long as plans acknowledge the new agenda then that is probably sufficient at present. Comprehensively coming to grips with the demands of sustainable development is inappropriate within the increasingly compressed time-frames for achieving adoption:

“Ministers are tremendous people for setting new objectives without changing the old objectives and if one of the objectives is that you get plans produced quickly you don't go back examining foundations over again” (A4).

The overall result of this approach is that a superficial treatment of sustainable development is acceptable at this point in time:

“To say whether or not it is sustainable ... well we have added a sustainable icing at a later stage” (A4).

The principle means by which LPAs can be seen as having lent sufficient consideration to sustainable development is the environmental appraisal:

“We got them to bolt on an Environmental Appraisal at the end - a matrix. It was hoop jumping, you do something and we’ll be happy. Not too sophisticated, no consultants, PLI will do most of the job for you. All environmental appraisal does is be more systematic and possibly offer you some answers” (A4).

The Planning Inspectorate also have Government advice as their point of departure with regard to sustainable development. They are also, however, open to any evidence put forward by the LPA and objectors. Under these conditions understanding is left fluid and very much subject to the issues and representations put before them. There is no principled position from which evidence is considered, and recommendations made, as the organisation’s credibility is founded on the Franks’ dictum of ‘fairness, openness and impartiality’. The concept of sustainability is thus taken as one issue of many which can contribute to an argument:

“They [Inspectors] are expected to know what PPGs say ... but when they learn on the job they will find that sustainability is part of the argument and they have to take that in to support their case, so that’s how they learn about sustainability” (A12).

Views on sustainable development are thus built up on an issue-by-issue basis as the cases of the interested parties are presented. Elements are introduced in a highly pragmatic manner, being used as and when necessary to advance a particular position:

“The sustainability argument is part of a wide package of objections. It’s another string to the bow and also to the LPA by saying that they believe such-and-such a pattern of development to be sustainable. Obviously it is a grey area and a difficult one for everybody - the LPA, objectors and the Inspector” (A12).

6.7.4 The ‘external’ view – development interests

Views on sustainable development amongst those actors with an interest in promoting particular development interests appear to vary in relation to the level of interaction with the development planning process, i.e. the greater the involvement, the greater the recognition lent to the notion’s implications. This variation is unified however by a general suspicion of its negative potential with regard to maximising development returns. This wariness is frequently expressed in cynical terms:

“We use sustainability arguments but it doesn’t get us anywhere. It’s like there’s lies, damn lies and sustainability. When you look at a piece of

land you wish to promote through the Plan, well, you know what they're looking for, you know what the criteria are, you know whether it is an acceptable site and then I think to get it through the Plan I'm going to have to tag on the latest buzz words" (A19).

Where the notion is related to in a more positive manner one finds an interpretation which attempts to keep the agenda as open as possible:

"Sustainable development is to do with getting the balance right between development and environmental interests in the broadest sense (A20_a).

There is a fear that sustainable development, as a universally accepted objective, could be dominated by environmental concerns and measures over the social and economic. Recourse to environmental appraisals and environmental capacity studies are thus seen as partial responses to incorporation, the results from which must be set against the demands of socio-economic needs and pressures. It is also considered necessary to recalibrate environmental data against the prevailing inconsistencies of local politics:

"Where the market is very strong in very many instances there are strongly entrenched environmental interests which tend to almost dictate to the local authority. So you have this miasma of environmental capacity put up where the local authority simply says we've reached our environmental capacity and we don't want any more development or words to that effect" (A20).

6.7.5 The 'external' view – individual, community and environmental group interests

This group of actors have very little to say on the subject of sustainable development. In discussion it was not raised independently by any of the interviewees and, when prompted, its entry into the nomenclature of debate and argument would be described at best as superficial. It would seem to exist very much as an abstract notion with little concrete connection to the issues of concern beyond the commonsensical. All the interviewees were seeking to protect physical attributes or locations in the Borough from what they deemed to be inappropriate development. Thus, when specifically questioned they felt their arguments inevitably related to some ideas of what is and is not 'sustainable':

"I see sustainable development in terms of using what we've got in a better way as we're already over-developed" (A23);

"For us it is keeping what you've got, that's a value judgement isn't it? - that you keep what you think is valuable and try and enhance the rest" (A17).

From such perspectives, without a clearly expressed and substantively cultivated understanding, everyone is capable of describing their position as sustainably oriented or, at least, not unsustainable:

“What they think is sustainable and what I think’s sustainable is an entirely different thing” (A23);

“I found the concept of sustainable development rather hollow, it obviously depends how you define it. But I think development, how it is usually defined, is inherently unsustainable” (A26).

In most cases, therefore, understanding is not extended into a consideration of application. The exceptions to this come from actors with established and semi-formal links to the LPA and thus a link into the statutory planning hierarchy which sustainable development coyly inhabits. Here there is talk of compensation, precaution and capacity but not beyond the bounds of the physical natural environment. This extension of understanding into application, however, is limited to the strategic policy level as opposed to specific locational issues and is thus less confrontational.

6.8 Incorporation of sustainable development into the Deposit Draft

As previously stated, the incorporation is retrospective but the suggestion is, because the environment was already placed at the heart of the Consultation Draft, that in fact substantively there was very little to change. Notwithstanding this supposition, the technical aspects are conventionally introduced in terms of criteria and subsequently applied to the two major land use determinants in South Tyneside: firstly, how many houses? (leading into other land take issues – schools, shopping etc. – as the urbanisation factor); secondly, how many hectares to jobs? (really hectares of industrial land) (A1). When related to actually controlling physical development the sustainability criteria typical of PPGs are framed by: a.) the physical communication (how the spaces between settlements are overcome); b.) the scale of development (different scales require different solutions), and; c.) the juxtaposition of different uses (joining up the thinking in the nature of land uses per se and how they cluster together). In a practical and informal sense these are the three factors which officers have born in mind when drawing up policies and proposals.

In South Tyneside it has, to date, not been hard to take account of these standards as the Borough is so densely developed. Officers state: a.) that there are no problems getting builders to tackle brownfield sites; b.) over the past ten years 57% of all development has been on brownfield land (the figure for housing is 62%, however this will change on Review as availability of such land is presently very low due to more limited release of industrial premises and that there is now no real housing ‘fitness’ problem; c.) the political will exists to retain economic development land for jobs rather than releasing it for housing.

Formally and theoretically however, the Deposit Draft's response to and presentation of sustainable development attempts to reflect Central Government guidance and advice. This is fundamentally achieved in two ways. Firstly through a relatively detailed exposition of what sustainable development is and the principles which should underwrite it in a significant section of Part One and the opening Environment chapter of Part Two of the Plan outlining the strategy behind it. Secondly, by means of the process of environmental appraisal of policies and proposals written up in a supplementary report and published alongside the Deposit Draft. The former is one of the most specific and concerted attempts to express the meaning and implications of sustainable development which this researcher has uncovered in any development plan reviewed and consequently merits special attention. As a requirement of a UDP, the Deposit Draft is structured as a two part document: Part One comprises the strategy behind the Plan and 'general policies' relating to land use, Part Two contains 'detailed proposals' for the use and development of land together with reasoned justifications. The first chapter however, stands outside the basic structure serving an introductory and scene-setting role. From the initial paragraph of this opening chapter the reader is introduced to the chosen translation of sustainable development: "The Plan aims to balance claims for new land uses against the necessity of securing development which can be sustained within the environmental capacity of the Borough" (B2, para.1.1.1). Environmental capacity is defined as "the level at which unacceptable or irreversible damage is likely to occur" (B2, p.316). It very soon becomes apparent that this methodological approach is adopted as a response to the problems of land supply and regeneration in the Borough. The idea of 'capacity' is to be used indicatively to justify decisions on proposals aimed at job creation and the attraction of investment in the light of environmental and physical constraints (as outlined previously). This is however embodied within far more conventional planning parlance, the MBC has "sought to establish the likely future demand for land and to provide for this within the environmental and physical constraints identified" (B2, para.1.4.1). "Protecting and improving the Borough's environment is an essential part of securing the economic and urban regeneration of South Tyneside" (B2, para.1.4.5). 'Targets' are employed to link this established language of concern for the environment with the more demanding implications of incorporating environmental capacity. These are defined as forward looking (having a time horizon where appropriate of 2001) with the primary aim of assisting the LPA "to trace progress in implementing its strategy for sustainable development" (B2, para.2.2.4). This distinction between between targets and indicators is blurred, with the terms being used interchangeably. The inspiration for this response is quoted as emanating from the LGMB's *A Framework for Local Sustainability*: "We have to ratchet our environmental performance steadily upwards by means of progressive target

setting. Even where we do not yet know the ‘absolute’ targets that sustainability will require, we can and should set ‘instrumental’ targets to influence behaviour in the right direction”.

Part 1 of the statutory content goes on to expand on this introductory sketch. As a preamble to the general Borough-wide policies the strategy behind the Plan is expressed as a direct attempt to ensure that the local regulation of land-use is carried out in as ‘sustainable’ a way as possible: “Virtually all of the land use and development policies and proposals in this Plan have been formulated with regard to that end” (B2, para.4.3.1). There would appear to be three components to this formulation:

- i.) the use of targets (working within the concept of environmental capacity) to set direction, instigate appropriate additional work, and assess progress;
- ii.) the adoption of three key principles to guide decision-making, and;
- iii.) the development, in a procedural sense, of new approaches in policy making.

61 specific targets are included within Part Two of the Deposit Draft. The difficulty in unifying this type of approach, both methodologically and operationally, is reflected in the complex array of categories by which they are generically described – see Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5 - Generic groups of ‘sustainability targets’ set in the UDP (source: B2, p.270)

<p>1. Research Targets a) Commencement Targets: a commitment to commence a study or process; and b) Survey Targets: agreement to undertake or complete a research project.</p>
<p>2. Adequacy Targets a) Assessment Targets: reviewing the adequacy of existing information systems or facilities; and b) Monitoring Systems: a commitment to establish or enhance environmental monitoring procedures.</p>
<p>3. Indicators a) Classification Targets: to categorise environmental assets; b) Checklist Targets: against which performance can be measured; and c) Index Targets: to specify a range of key sustainability indicators.</p>
<p>4. Quantitative Targets Those which provide for measured progress against real environmental change by including finite quantities</p>
<p>5. Guidance Targets Education and broad guidance targets which produce information and advice on sustainable development.</p>
<p>6. Experimental Targets a) Feasibility Studies: assessing the potential of various measures prior to implementation; and b) Trial Projects: introduced to experiment or demonstrate projects, to assess or prove their wider applicability.</p>

As a means of substantiating a land use strategy founded upon a ‘sustainable’ agenda this approach can be viewed as a conventional methodology of managing through measurement.

In an effort to elevate these targets into a more progressive framework and legitimise them as a demonstrable reflection of moves to advance sustainable development they are underwritten by three ‘sustainable development principles’, see Table 6.6 below.

Table 6.6 - Key sustainable development principles employed within the UDP (source: B2, p.23)

<p>i) The Precautionary Principle will require the Local Authority to consider the consequences of mistaken optimism about environmental threats, whereby underestimating final impacts will produce greater harm. Where there is uncertainty about the environmental consequences of action it will be cautious. The plan embraces this principle most evidently in resolving the competing claims for development against the local authority’s unwillingness to reduce the area of Green Belt within South Tyneside.</p>
<p>ii) Demand Management will cause the Council to reconsider previously held assumptions which dictate the pace of development of land. Living within our environmental limits will inevitably result in not attempting to meet those demands which cannot be met. The principle will be used increasingly as the Borough’s environmental capacity to accommodate more development is approached towards the end of the plan period.</p>
<p>iii) The “Polluter Pays” Principle will require those damaging the environment to pay, in order to encourage them to seek more sustainable options. This principle applies in respect of land use and development considerations only insofar as this plan is concerned. The wider environmental controls which this principle embraces will continue to operate outside the planning system.</p>

At this point the text moves rapidly to a section poignantly entitled *General Principles: A Strategy for Sustainable Development* which aims to incorporate the above into “an earnest attempt to address sustainable development issues locally” (B2, para.4.3.10). These general principles are listed in Table 6.7 below.

Table 6.7 - Specific land use sustainability principles embraced by the UDP (source: B2, p.24-25)

<p>i) All Policies and Proposals in this plan will remain consistent with the Council’s wider concerns to secure and maintain a sustainable environment.</p>
<p>ii) Regeneration of the Urban Area will continue to be effected and encouraged where the environment is respected.</p>
<p>iii) Within the constraints of the Borough’s environmental capacity, priority will be given to the allocation and recycling of land for economic development.</p>
<p>iv) In pursuit of (ii) above Housing land will be allocated and recycled on the basis of genuine need and the application of demand management principles.</p>
<p>v) Adequate facilities for sport, recreation and leisure will be retained, and wherever possible enhanced. High priority will continue to be given to the protection of urban greenspace.</p>
<p>vi) Social and community provision will continue to be important.</p>
<p>vii) Public transport is seen as a major component in the Council’s sustainable development</p>

strategy.
viii) Investment in shopping will be encouraged in existing Centres.
ix) Resources available for public expenditure will be low. Spending will be prioritised.

At this early stage in the Plan's text the transition from three general principles associated with a notion of sustainable development (Table 6.6) and the above (Table 6.7) sectorally specific principles appears to already be somewhat tenuous and indirect. The specific principles can readily be identified as retrospectively derived from Central Government criteria-orientated guidance rather than creatively emanating from the application of precautionary, demand-managerial or compensatory concepts.

With regard to describing the process of plan preparation the text again attempts to blend in elements of the new environmental agenda by introducing an acknowledgement of the need for a more open and integrated approach to land use planning with an appreciation of the system's established mode of operation. A strategy which "will require the local authority to develop new approaches in policy making, involving partnership with all groups in society. The changes wrought in this version of the Plan in response to public concerns should form a basis for future positive dialogue with those most concerned to take part in the planning process. Policy integration, across the spectrum of local authority services, will also be necessary if maximum benefit is to be derived ...Sustainability also requires acceptance of perceived disadvantage in pursuit of longer term, wider interests. The planning system is seen as generally open, accountable and democratic. It is also seen as producing "winners" and "losers" and the onus will be on the Local Planning Authority to explain its actions and decisions as clearly and effectively as possible" (B2, paras.4.3.6 and 4.3.7). Within the Policy and Regeneration Team it had been hoped that this wider discursive engagement would be facilitated through the LA21 Strategy preparation process. In the event, however, LA21 in South Tyneside was stalled at this time (and at the time of writing has still as yet to be genuinely embraced).

The remainder of this section will focus upon the language of sustainable development employed within the UDP, including the nature of the putative 'targets' and also the related area of the environmental appraisal of the Plan. This analysis will then pave the way to an examination of the less tangible component of modifications to approaches to policy making with reference to interview data on the specifically contentious issue of allocating sites for local economic development.

6.8.1 Expressions of sustainable development within the text of the UDP.

The formal structure of the two part text of the UDP means that, to carry any weight, the previously discussed principles, aims and objectives must be integrated as expediently as possible into local land use matters presented as a sub-divided array of policies and proposals. These are conventionally grouped as chapters under the topic headings of: Environment; Natural Resources; Urban Regeneration; Economic Development; Housing; Sport, Recreation and Leisure; Social and Community Facilities; Transportation, and; Shopping. This typical development plan format inevitably breaks up the continuity of response expressed in the preceding introductory chapters. Arrangements of this type frustrate expression, and consequently analysis, of a notion as over-arching as sustainable development. The listing of policies and proposals under topic headings makes establishing the link with principled responses to a 'sustainable' agenda, over the more limited one of 'protecting and enhancing' the environment, a potentially arbitrary process for both practitioners and researchers alike.

The South Tyneside planners have attempted to partially overcome this difficulty, firstly, by opening Part 2 of the Plan with the Environment and Natural Resources chapters and, secondly, by including all the general Part 1 policies within the Part 2 specific policies and proposals so as to clarify their relationship. Part 1 is thus redundant other than as a source of strategic reference and to fulfil the statutory format requirements of a UDP. Placing the Environment chapter at the beginning of Part 2 (and thus at the beginning of the essential content of the document) is intended to indicate the topic's priority within the LPA's approach to land use planning. The aforementioned clarification between general and specific statements is achieved by means of justificatory paragraphs. In the Environment chapter this significantly includes a reiteration and expansion of the centrality of the notion of sustainable development. The hierarchy of principles laid out in the introductory section (re. Table 6.6 and 6.7 above) are restated and as such sustainable development is clearly grounded within issues pertaining to the physical environment. Within this sphere of policy a chord of absolutism is struck for each of the general principles espoused, especially when read in conjunction with the following: "In determining planning applications, environmental considerations will be paramount. The Local Planning Authority does not see any conflicts whatsoever between the various elements of the Plan. For the avoidance of doubt, however, it wishes to make it absolutely clear that if others perceive such a "conflict" to exist they should give precedence to sustainable development and the environment" (B2, para. 6.12b(ii)). This statement would seem to amount to a presumption in favour of sustainable development, a presumption governed by an appreciation of the Borough's environmental capacity. This

'capacity' is to find substance through auditing the natural and built environment of any given area to establish 'critical natural capital' and 'constant natural assets'. The former "represents those features of our native surroundings which cannot be readily replaced. They should therefore be protected at all costs and enhanced if possible. Essentially they are the environmental "crown jewels"". The latter, by contrast, "represent minimum levels below which a natural man made resource should not be allowed to fall. Essentially they represent the absolute **minimum requirements** for each resource in order to ensure the health of our surroundings" (B2, para.6.2.3, original emphasis). As already stated, the work required to produce such categorisations has yet to be completed – principally as it requires significant time, staff and financial resourcing - and is put forward as the Plan's first 'target' (Target ST6.1): "In progressing its work on a State of the Environment Audit the Borough Council will:- a.) Define the critical natural capital and constant natural assets of South Tyneside by 2001; and b.) Complete and publish a State of the Environment Report by 2006". This situation clearly robs the emerging UDP of much of its substance with regard to actualising its central objective of ensuring that decision-making is located within unambiguous environmentally sustainable parameters. Decision-making founded upon environmental capacity is in effect deferred to, at the very earliest, the Review of the UDP – such decisions are supported by central government guidance which exhorts LPAs not to delay plans while new information is collected. The ability to shape policy by applying principles of precaution or demand management is severely compromised. The latter is rendered almost completely impotent as, without reference to a previously accepted set of 'limits', it will prove impossible to state that the demand is exceeding the supply which they delineate. Decisions which make reference to such a principle thus remain in the field of subjective assumption. All that presently remains is a fallback to err on the side of precaution: "Where doubt exists about the exact definition of these limits we may need to adopt the **Precautionary Principle**" (B2, para.6.2.2b, original emphasis). The use of the word 'may' here is significant and the only two specific references to where it 'may' be used reflect the narrowness of its potential application. Firstly, in the Strategy chapter to prevent reduction of the Green Belt in the Borough (re. Table 6.6) and is thus supportive of Central Government policy. Secondly, in quoting paragraph 1.18 of *This Common Inheritance* [HMG, 1990] the local administration again avoids conflict with Central Government advice: "The Government will be prepared to take precautionary action to limit the use of potentially dangerous materials or the spread of potentially dangerous pollutants, even where scientific knowledge is not conclusive" (B2, para.6.2.4).

Overall, therefore, even though an interpretation of sustainable development is given high profile in terms of the UDP's objectives, and is relatively clearly justified, it is hard to see how the extensive reasoning employed can find effective purchase in shaping policies and proposals beyond the rhetorical. This critical reading is evidenced as policies and proposals of the Environment and subsequent chapters are rolled out. By deferring to future work and Central Government advice the bearing of 'sustainable development principles' is diminished. The conventional language of 'protect and enhance' together with PPG derived criteria to minimise private car use, recycle brownfield land, etc. predominate. There is frequent reference to policy being in accordance with the principles of sustainable development but, as we have seen, such statements are, by the text's indirection admission, inevitably insubstantial.

The in-built hiatus between the strategy of incorporating sustainable development and actual policies/proposals is illustrated in what are listed as the key 'sustainability indicators' in South Tyneside for both the Environment and Natural Resources chapters (no such indicators are offered in subsequent chapters), see Table 6.8 below.

Table 6.8 - Key sustainability indicators for the Environment and Natural Resources chapters (source: B2, para.6.4.2 and para.7.4.2)

Key Environment sustainability indicators
a) The extent of the built up area, and the outcome of measures to limit its extent;
b) Improvements to buildings, and the areas between them, to make the built environment more accessible for people with disabilities, and others;
c) Protection and enhancement of historical buildings, Conservation Areas and archaeological resources;
d) Reclamation and re-use of derelict and vacant land;
e) Reduction of pollution levels;
f) Protection of water resources and the undeveloped coast;
g) Progress in implementing the Tyne and Wear Nature Conservation Strategy;
h) Increasing tree cover, particularly in the Great North Forest; and
i) Protection of the Green Belt.
Key Natural Resources indicators
a) Trends in the consumption and use of mineral and energy resources and the production of waste;
b) Progress in the re-use and recycling of mineral and waste and the implementation of energy conservation;
c) The potential scope for the utilisation of renewable energy and the recovery of energy from waste;
d) provision of sites for the recycling of waste and aggregate minerals

- e) Success in avoiding the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral and energy resources;
- f) Progress in reclaiming and restoring former mineral sites to beneficial after-uses; and
- g) The protection and enhancement of the Borough's significant environmental assets.

Policies ENV1 and ENV3, entitled *Toward a Sustainable Environment* and *Reducing Unsustainability* respectively, ultimately reflect the discontinuity between the putative sustainable principles and the formal content of direction, incentive and control regarding land-use in the Borough:

“ENV1 All development proposals must respect the long term welfare of the environment by being consistent with the need to:

- A) Reduce reliance on the use of the motor car;
- B) Minimise the use of land, energy and other resources;
- C) Take all necessary precautions to avoid the risk of environmental damage; and
- D) Protect and, wherever possible, enhance any existing areas of trees or woodland.”

“ENV3 In accordance with the principles of sustainable development the Local Planning Authority will direct new development to locations which:

- A) Make the most efficient use of existing settlement patterns;
- B) Retain or enhance beneficial mixed use activity;
- C) Reduce the need to travel and traffic congestion; and
- D) Maximise the potential for renewable energy.”

This is not to say that the Plan is failing to promote sustainable development but rather to point up an illustration of the system's reactionary character, resisting attempts to locate the 'protect and enhance' convention within a framework which formalises environmental re-evaluation and thus limits discretion in decision-making. What remains is a very broad array of policies and proposals which relate to a notion of sustainable development in land use planning without being constrained by a potentially intransigent principled position. The real substance for dealing with issues of the differentiated built and natural environments is found, in the first instance, in general policy statements which attempt to minimise environmental impact (i.e. policies ENV1 and ENV3 above) and, in the second instance, to upgrade them through specific topic driven proposals giving priority to: town and district centres, transport corridors, Conservation Areas, scheduled Ancient Monuments, the riverside area, the coastal zone, residential areas, commercial and industrial improvement areas, the Linked Open Space System and the Great North Forest.

The text of the emerging UDP undeniably raises the priority of environmental considerations but in a markedly latent manner. The connection to economic and social factors is made in policy ENV4 but without a sense of holistic conviction:

“ENV4 In proposing measures or determining planning applications to improve the quality of the built up area, the Local Planning Authority will give priority to:

- A) Areas most in need of regeneration;
- B) Places most widely used by or prominent to, South Tyneside residents”

The analysis presented here suggests that, despite putting forward a clearly demarcated framework based upon a concept of environmental capacity, the concerns of sustainable development remain within a fluid, issue-by-issue decision-making arrangement. This underlying response leaves the future with regard to implementation much more open to social, economic and, ultimately, political expediency. By limiting sustainable development to an implicit, rather than explicit, expression its influence rests upon its ability to modify the understanding, views and opinions of the actors involved in resisting or promoting land use change in South Tyneside.

The above analysis is lent support by comments from those officers responsible for relating policy to development control issues. Criticism from this source centres upon the view that the UDP does little to cogently direct development in terms of sustainable patterns of development:

“It isn’t a guiding document, it doesn’t really identify redevelopment areas - there might be the odd one in there, but it’s not a guiding book. It says we will do sustainability: we will put new retail stores in the town centres and we will protect the town centres, but it then doesn’t go on to identify places where that might go on. So that process goes on outside of this document which I felt is certainly a problem” (A8).

Without explicit directions the discourse of sustainable development presented in the Plan remains open and subject to deflecting forces:

“If you take sustainability in the context of South Tyneside you could argue that a foodstore on the edge of the Green Belt, near the built up area on a main access road, in some senses could be more sustainable than putting it in the town centre because, while you have the metro and the buses and low car ownership, the cars from the outlying parts of the Borough, if they’re coming in for a weekly shop, let you question whether it is sustainable. And some of the developers started to get hooked into that argument that sustainable development is not necessarily putting things in town centre. But again this sort of document

didn't address that. There are some definitions in here, and 'this is what we'll do' but where is the direction for the Borough" (A8).

The view is that sustainable development is used to support locational policy in a *post hoc* sense rather than guiding it from the outset. The implication is that without genuine formative direction the process of deciding types and locations of development remains somewhat intuitive and, unless sustainable development lies at the heart of this intuition, it becomes a peripheral consideration on the ground:

"Here it's still the approach, even from the Policy team that 'that site in the Green Belt feels quite good, that we could go for that' and that another site isn't because it's on a village envelope. I don't hear on a day-to-day basis, when people are discussing sites, any real reference to sustainability. So much goes on gut feeling. Well fine, but where are we in terms of bus facilities etc., where's the sewage going - probably in the sea" ... "going down the sustainability route in DC it becomes hit-and-miss, it depends on the officer, it depends on whether you remember to do something about it, there are so many things on a complex application to think about that sustainability probably isn't a great issue" (A8).

A partial explanation for this lack of explicit policy guidance is put down to internal politics:

"It may be that while in theory that the Area Team would welcome it, there may be the perception that it would be treading on our toes - it can be a dangerous thing putting forward proposals as you're putting your head above the parapet and you're there to be shot down" (A8).

The upshot of this situation is put across in a somewhat disconcerting manner:

"It's basically left to the Area Team and we go to Policy and say is this Brief all right, and they say it's crap but it's in accordance with the UDP so you're all right - you can argue almost anything from the UDP because it's so general" (A8).

There are two elements of the Plan which have the potential to mitigate this critical reading. The first is installed within the text in the form of the 'sustainability targets' and the second runs parallel to the preparation process in the form of the environmental appraisal of policies and proposals. Both have latent capability to support a strategy based upon environmental capacity and the use of 'limits' driven principles. Essentially they present opportunities to inject substance into a revised approach to environmental re-/evaluation.

The justification for employing 'sustainability target' within the UDP 'again comes from the former LGMB: "You can only manage what you can measure. If sustainable development is a coherent policy objective, it must be possible to measure whether we are moving towards it" (quoted from LGMB, 1993, *A Framework for Local Sustainability*). The categories for these targets have already been presented in Table 6.5. With the preparation of a State of the Environment Report to assess the Borough's environmental capacity set as the first target all

subsequent targets are relieved of the need to justify themselves within the bounds of this concept. Their purpose is to measure the Plan's progress against its topic related objectives and as such are highly policy/proposal specific. Again, as in the main body of the regulatory text, the link to precautionary, demand management or compensatory principles can only be found through implication by reading them in tandem with the introductory strategy for sustainable development. In this context the link *may* be established and labelling them as 'sustainability targets' is thus not entirely spurious. There is however no explicit integration. They can be seen as potential aids to future policy-making on an issue-by-issue basis. Since they are not transparently derived from the three espoused sustainable development principles their value in promoting a principle-driven sustainable pattern of land use is undermined.

The Central Government guidance which advocated the use of environmental appraisal in the preparation of development plans was issued in February 1992, after approval by Council of the Consultation Draft of the UDP. The Deposit Draft, however, was subject to this guidance and thus an 'appraisal' process was entered into with an appropriate document being subsequently made available.

This appraisal process was carried out by the Policy Section officer who had taken on the responsibility of managing the UDP's sustainable development agenda. The methodology presented in the DoE's good practice guide (1993) was adopted and it was decided that this should be applied retrospectively to the Consultation Draft as well as the current Deposit version – an approach which clearly stood to serve an expedient comparative purpose. For both drafts an assessment was made of each of the Part 1 policies including the impact of any subsequent Part 2 proposals falling under each numbered policy. The DoE guidance advised impact measurement in a matrix format against 15 indicators of environmental stock - under the headings of Global Sustainability (6 factors), Natural Resources (4 factors) and Local Environmental Quality (5 factors). Thus a daunting number of individual assessments were required to fill 1395 matrix cells for the Consultation Draft and 1785 for the Deposit Draft. The results were presented in a very broad brush format as aggregate figures for the whole of each draft with detail extending no further than a breakdown by chapter topics. The levels of impact for the policies/proposals were differentiated in line with DoE guidance as follows: negative – depletion or degradation of environmental stock indicator; potentially negative; neutral; positive – enhancement or protection of environmental stock indicator; potentially positive, and; uncertain.

The validity of the entire appraisal hinged upon the ability, experience, access to relevant information and objectivity of the one officer carrying it out. By aggregating the results it is

not possible to specifically call this objectivity into question and it exists as an unwritten assumption apparently founded upon a notion of professional integrity. Putting this concern aside, the value of the document as a means of promoting discussion and aiding decision-making on the 'sustainability' content of policies and proposals is severely undermined by this presentational format. The specific policies/proposals deemed to have positive, negative or indifferent impacts upon the environmental stock indicators are not highlighted. The reader is left with a list of sterile results of which the following excerpt relating to the consultation appraisal is typical (B3, p.5):

“a) 61% of all the impacts are non-existent or not significant enough to register on the matrix;

b) a further 7% of the impacts were not capable of being adequately predicted;

c) 22½% of all the impacts were positive, with a further 4% potentially positive; and

d) only 4½ % of all impacts were environmentally negative, with a further 1% potentially negative.

...

a) the proportion of positive impacts was significantly higher for indicators of local environmental quality (35%) than for either natural resources (19) or global sustainability (14½%);

b) the percentage of all other types of impact on local environmental quality indicators is correspondingly lower. This is most marked for impacts which are non-existent or not significant (51%), and;

c) adverse impacts were similar for all 3 types of indicator, being only marginally higher for global sustainability and natural resource factors (5%) than for more local ones (3%).”

Data of this type is of little consequence or import when trying to grasp where the Plan's strengths and weaknesses lie in taking account of the complex local and global environmental agendas raised by the stock indicators.

The generality and sterility of the results do not facilitate their relation to the Plan's principles of sustainable development or contingent conception of environmental capacity. The appraisal thus exists as a standalone exercise with very limited implications for raising issues of more than superficial environmental re-/evaluation in subsequent communicative activity over policy/proposal content. The document's primary purposes are thus:

- To fulfil the requirements of Government advice by formally indicating that the environmental effects of policies and proposals have been considered;
- To hopefully illustrate that such effects are proportionately more positive than negative;

- To show that modifications to the emerging UDP have rendered it more environmentally sympathetic: "...we may conclude that the overall impact of the deposit draft Policies on the environment will be both more positive and less negative than that of the consultation draft" (B3, p.29).

One might mistakenly deduce from the above commentary that the environmental appraisal was 'rigged' by the LPA to produce the results they required. None of the interview or documentary evidence would substantiate such a claim. The generic methodology of the DOE promoted appraisal exercise does however require the inclusion of non-partisan views and interests which would open the process up to a more diverse range of critical voices. Internal self-assessment is deemed sufficient here despite the fact that such an approach would be unacceptable in most other publicly accountable policy areas.

6.9 The dominant issue of economic development land allocation

The need to incorporate some expression of sustainable development into the Deposit Draft of the UDP should be viewed as largely external to the responses from the consultation process, as it emanated from changes in Central Government policy and guidance. As raised previously (Section 6.5), it was the issue of 'strategic' economic development site allocation which disproportionately proved to be the most contentious element in the Consultation Draft and thus demanded the most attention from the LPA in terms of consideration for modification.

Deliberations over this issue may be divided into two phases: firstly, the two year period from the formal reporting on the Consultation Response (March 1993) until Council approval of the Deposit Draft (April 1995), and; secondly, the two and a half year period from November 1995, when representations to the Deposit Draft were reported, until the publication of post-PLI modifications in May 1998. The following sections outline the tortuous passage of this issue within the Plan preparation process.

In reflecting upon the twists and reversals in decision-making it is tempting to discount sustainable development as a steering influence. To counter this temptation, and to acknowledge that sustainable development may never exist as a foundational device for dictating a template of uniform practice, two points should be borne in mind:

- geographical and historical factors severely curtail choices over significant 'new' sites for economic development;

- the length of time it takes to put together a development plan frequently means that decisions are overtaken by changing circumstances.

It should also be remembered that the implications of a sustainability directed agenda were still being absorbed and disseminated at both the national and local levels. The very fact however that the two principle streams of modification - i.e. the introduction of sustainable development and the ongoing deliberations over sites for economic development - ran in parallel suggests it should be possible to detect the degree to which the former has instigated a redescription in the factors influencing the latter.

6.9.1 The Debate

In the turmoil of decisions and counter-decisions over economic development site allocation and selection, which beggared the UDP's evolution of fortitude, some measure of constancy can be found at the strategic level. This strategy is embodied in the perennial General Principle of Policy ED1:

“The Local Planning Authority will provide and encourage, in appropriate locations:

A) Established business, in order to create conditions conducive to sustainable and acceptable expansion; and

B) New businesses, in order to attract inward investment, protect the environment, improve employment prospects and, where necessary, foster the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and delivery of services” (B2, p.133)

This position was supported, with almost matching constance, by a principle that:

“Within the constraints of the Borough's environmental capacity, priority will be given to the allocation and recycling of land for economic development.” (B2, p.24)

The only change here in the final text of the Plan is that the concept of capacity is no longer qualified by the term 'environmental'. It is developing this strategy into site specific allocations outside of the established commercial and industrial areas that problems have arisen. The horns of the dilemma being, on the one hand, the need to boost job creation expressed principally in terms of competition for inward investment, and, on the other hand, to protect and enhance the Borough's very limited supply of greenspace. The former is supported by the South Tyneside Regeneration Strategy, Economic Development Plan and development interests, and the latter by immediately local populations, environmental interests, and statutory Green Belt designations. The strategy of the UDP implies that these two principle interests are not to be envisaged as mutually exclusive. Indeed, theoretically, there exists a significant area of overlap between the simplistically considered economic and

environmental positions, with the potential to engender a significant arena for productive discourse. An arena highly conducive to exploring the incorporation of sustainable development into policy in terms of redescribing the relationship between economic growth, social implications and environmental concern. The following two sub-sections review this issue in some detail: firstly, describing the content in a chronological event-based context, and; secondly, in the context of its relationship to promoting sustainable development.

6.9.2 Planning sites for Economic Development in the preparation of the UDP - a history

Job creation and retention are uppermost in the minds of most local authority members - in South Tyneside the link with electoral success has become a truism. The issue drives policy-making across the MBC's committees and departments, and land use planning is no exception. The UDP is clearly a powerful promotional tool and thus, on this issue at least, is a magnet for political attention. Within the context of South Tyneside the pressure to improve inward investment opportunities implicit within this discourse raises a fundamental question: is there a need to allocate land for large scale economic development(s)? The pressure to bridge the 'jobs gap' as the route to resolving the Borough's social ills in combination with a paucity of significant sites (over 10ha) or suitable existing premises to meet the needs of many inward investors has seen the question answered, in principle, in the affirmative. In practice the onus for subsequently deciding where such a site, or sites, should be located falls upon the shoulders of those responsible for drawing up the emerging UDP.

Prior to work commencing on the UDP, the only sizeable site of industrial land outside of the 'Inner Area' was Boldon Business Park at 29.6ha. As previously introduced, the Consultation Draft of the UDP proposed a new allocation, and deletion from the Green Belt, of 58ha adjacent to this site at South Hedworth. This was the only allocation outside of the built up area and was considered to have the greatest potential to provide a high quality location for industry. The site was selected to build upon the success of the existing Business Park and is bounded to the south and east by two major trunk roads. The requirement for such a location was supported in the South Tyneside Economic Development Strategy 1990-1995 which identified the need for such a site to attract inward investment. The perception within the LPA at the time was that this Green Belt site would appeal to both members and the public - building on the Business Park's previous success. The consultation period ran from June to September 1992 and was reported to the TDC at the end of March 1993. As already stated, 86% of the responses were critical or negative regarding the South Hedworth proposal and at this meeting members were asked to support the Plan's approach to the provision of this economic development site and Green Belt deletion. In response, following the committees

considerations, the Borough Council met in early April and resolved that the proposal be withdrawn, pending a full investigation of alternative sites. The two key criteria for such alternatives were: i.) the site be between 30 and 60 ha, and; ii.) locationally it should be conveniently accessible to both the strategic route network and local facilities, and be an existing or potentially existing “quality” environment. The results of this ‘search’ were presented in July 1993 and stated that there were no suitable sites of the required scale available within the Green Belt on the grounds of not compromising landscape value and settlement separation. The only alternative of broadly similar size and characteristics (although the transport infrastructure and linkages were not as developed) was the site of the recently demolished Monkton Coke Works and adjacent land. The Consultation Draft had already indicated a support for proposals at this site for residential and business uses in a predominantly woodland setting. To fulfil the size criteria, however, virtually all of the site’s 39ha would have to be made available for economic development. Having consulted further on the subject, a September TDC meeting resolved that: the Monkton site and a small extension (from the Consultation Draft) be included in the Deposit version as a strategic economic development site within a woodland setting, and; the South Hedworth site be retained in the Green Belt. As this position was being confirmed, however, it was made apparent that the future of the Borough’s last working coal mine (Westoe Colliery) was about to be curtailed, releasing a coastal site in close proximity to South Shields with considerable redevelopment potential. By the middle of November 1993 opinions on appropriate proposals had changed again: South Hedworth was to remain in the Green Belt; the Monkton site and extension were to be designate Green Belt, and; the Westoe Colliery site was to be developed wholly or partially for industrial use. By the time draft copies of the Deposit version were finally released to members in December 1994, after over eighteen months of deliberation centred largely on this one issue, the total allocation for economic development had fallen from 200ha to 166 ha with no sites falling into the size category (30-40ha) previously deemed as strategically necessary (only 8ha were made available a Westoe Colliery).

The reason for this shift in position with regard to the ex-Monkton Coke Works (i.e from its allocation as a substantial economic development site to an antithetical land use extending the Green Belt) was very similar to that which saw the reversal of the South Hedworth proposal put forward in the Consultation Draft: the influence of public pressure. In both cases established pressure groups were able to put forward strong arguments, gather very significant anti-development public support and, consequently, pose a very real electoral threat to the ruling Labour Group. This group was hypersensitive at the time to any NIMBY lobbying – especially from the articulate residents of the Fellgate Estate, given the imminent

Fellgate and Hedworth ward bye-election and that this was the home territory (together with Monkton) of the ruling 'clique' within the Labour Group. In the light of this situation it was clear to those with an insight into local politics why the Westoe Colliery site in South Shields had been put forward as the 'strategic' location. It would thus be fair to say that the reasons for the shifting line held on appropriate economic development proposals (if not policy) was as much political as it was both circumstantial and a democratic response to public dissatisfaction. Following publication of, and representations to, the Deposit Draft (June 1995) the issue became even more overtly political with the Pre-Inquiry Statement of Proposed Changes (published June 1996) reintroducing the South Hedworth (44.6ha) and former Monkton Coke Works (17.6ha including land to the south) sites pushing the total economic development allocation up to 228ha. The causes of this counter-reversal reflected a strengthening of resolve amongst the South Tyneside membership with regard to attracting inward investment as a major regenerative instrument for the Borough. Possible impetus behind this position came from the Deputy Leader of the Council as he was standing for parliament in the constituency of Jarrow and Hebburn and, needed at this point, to be seen to be encouraging job creation. The original position put forward in the Consultation Draft (deriving from the South Tyneside Economic Development Strategy) being thus returned with interest. The perception amongst departmental officers and their senior managers was that, if the Deposit Draft was not changed, the Borough would have a reputation as being unfriendly to both business and investment. This also links in to a very significant third round of bidding for SRB funding aimed at South Shields town centre (some £20 million) and the prestige attached to association with such activity. With these two points in mind the various regeneration agencies (such as South Tyneside TEC, the Development Corporation, and English Partnerships) had thus been encouraged to write in objection to the Deposit Draft. In addition to this unusual step, the South Tyneside Labour Party objected as well which, in this Borough, fundamentally amounted to the Council objecting to its own plan.

6.9.3 Sustainable development and economic development land allocations

To reiterate the point made above: throughout all of these deliberations and changes in heart one constant remained in the shape of *policy* regarding economic development. The content of specific proposals may have vacillated wildly but under a policy regime which appears to stretch flexibility to an almost absurd degree. This point is illustrated in the conclusions to the Economic Development Topic Paper (used to support the MBC position at the PLI) which states that:

“The UDP’s policies and proposals will provide new employment opportunities, seek to improve the area’s working environment, and promote

the revitalisation of the urban area. Attention has been given to identifying attractive sites for economic development for all purposes, and to encourage development on location which minimise journey length and numbers and can be served by more energy efficient modes of transport” (B5, p.31-32)

The discourse of sustainable development has clearly made an impression on policy but as a controlling influence it has played a secondary and, through some conceptions, an ironically supportive role to the more conventional arguments centred upon investment and job creation. Theoretically this is not unacceptable as the demands of economic growth and environmental concern are framed dialectically within the predominant conception of ecological modernisation. In practice, however, one finds political pressure shaping issues of environmental re-evaluation to shore up whichever scenario of economic development land allocation is deemed most appropriate by the ruling party in terms of circumstance and electoral security. The debacle over land allocation in the important, although ultimately parodied Deposit Draft phase of modification saw genuine attempts to entrench the precepts of sustainable development into strategic thinking become ones in which the language of sustainable development was employed defensively and elastically to meet politically fickle perceptions regarding the spatial functions of regeneration, job creation and economic growth. The final pre-Inquiry phase of modification only went on to support this conclusion as officers scrambled to maintain the UDP's coherence, against a background of local political incoherence, in the run up to the external scrutiny and public exposure of the Public Local Inquiry (PLI). The perceived flexibility of the language of sustainable development over more explicit references to 'the environment' is illustrated in the following quote from a policy officer – from a professional perspective the intention is the same but political malleability in future decision making is enhanced:

“We tried to make presumption in favour of development environmentally-led. If you look closely at the changes you'll see how 'the environment' gets crossed out and 'sustainable development' written in” (A9).

6.10 Stage 3 - Defending the Plan

From a procedural perspective the period up to and including the depositing of the pre-Inquiry proposed changes (17th June 1996) offered the MBC a final opportunity to negotiate with objectors in an attempt to find compromise on issues of difference. Resolution of differences at this stage would reduce both confrontation and resources during the Inquiry. In an effort to maximise this opportunity the LPA floated the idea with the GONE of an extended deposit period beyond the requisite six weeks. Disappointingly for the MBC's Policy Section this suggestion was flatly turned down by the Government Office who

ironically and frustratingly, considering their facilitative role, submitted the second largest number of objections (68) after the House Builders Federation. Almost half of the 222 responses interpreted as objections related to the proposed changes affecting the Green Belt in some way. In terms of influence on this issue, a composite objection from the GONE was especially significant in reminding the MBC of the PPG2 statement that "once the general extent of the Green Belt has been established, it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances" (D28). Such circumstances would thus have to be illustrated for a deletion at South Hedworth and extension north-west of the A197 at Hebburn.

The final statement from the MBC, and the one with which they opened the PLI, clearly endeavours to gloss over the rifts and fractured logic of the decision-making process previously outlined:

"The South Tyneside UDP is the product of considerable labour on the part of the Council and its officers over a number of years. The responses of statutory consultees, other bodies and members of the public generally have contributed much to its preparation. As a result the Council considers that the South Tyneside UDP is clear, succinct and easily understood. It makes realistic provision for development to be accommodated in a way which is environmentally acceptable and it will provide: guidance; incentive, and; control. Furthermore the Borough Council invites you to reject objections to Part I or II policies unless you are satisfied that either the policy is fundamentally flawed or proposed policy is better than that which is within the plan, reading the plan as a whole or entire entity. Furthermore, supporters of the Deposit draft plan and proposed changes have no real opportunity to be heard. The claims of individual or corporate objectors with legitimate interests to protect of their own should not be given ascendancy or allowed to drive the plan and its priorities against the innumerable but unheard supporters of the South Tyneside Unitary Development Plan and the Council" (Mr. Tobias Davey QC on behalf of the South Tyneside MBC).

The PLI into objections against the South Tyneside UDP ran for a 12 week period from December 1996 to February 1997 and in many ways can be seen as the final consultative climax of the UDP preparation. The inquiry process walks a fine line between administrative and judicial practice, but despite having many of the former's characteristics it is generally accepted as the most significant formal element in the decision-making arrangements in leading to the adoption of a local or unitary development plan. The principal format of such inquiries is that an inspector plays a passive assimilative and facilitative role in arbitrating between objectors, the LPA and other interested parties. Ultimately it becomes an issue of whose interest will be served over another's with the inspector relying upon demonstrable 'openness, fairness and impartiality' to lend weight to his or her recommendations [Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994].

6.10.1 Perceptions and involvement

Amongst the broad spectrum of those interviewed there was general satisfaction with both the opportunity presented by the Inquiry and also in the way it was conducted. To many of those unfamiliar with the adversarial courtroom type process (typically small group representatives or general public individuals), however, the experience was a daunting one in terms of personal representation, even though the Inspector did his best to make them feel at ease:

“I was reasonably happy with the Plan process and especially happy with the Inquiry and how it was carried out. But I wasn't happy with the process in democratic terms. I'm like many other objectors – the fact that we, as mild-mannered, innocent, naïve members of the public, should be confronted with a QC, which I regard as a vicious means, is not satisfactory, and his approach is simply to manoeuvre you into a position where he can pull the carpet from under you. The legal tactics of trying to disprove and thus discredit the opposition is not appropriate to the planning process. QCs just try to win the Council's point even if the Council go back and change their minds later” (A26).

The step-change in the pace of the LPAs modification and consultation on policies/proposals from the end of the deposit period up to the start of the PLI left some smaller group representatives uncertain of their position and thus less confident in presenting their case to the Inspector (in the LPA's defence it should be remembered that they had endeavoured to extend the consultation period on the pre-Inquiry proposed changes but that this had been rejected by the GONE):

“After that (lodging objections to the Deposit Draft) it becomes horrendous as you have your PLI and changes documents. So you're trying to make your case/clarify your objection for PLI at the same time the change document is coming out, in which case you might withdraw them or have another objection. It is very confusing to know what you are actually commenting on at that particular time. And then the PLI comes in once you know whether you have any outstanding objections and this is where the system falls apart as it overloads the objector. The whole system is quite bureaucratic and hence a bit of a nightmare” (A17).

“When you write into the Council with specific ideas or questions, hoping to resolve things pre-Inquiry, sometimes I've got no reply for five, six, seven weeks which leaves me only a few days to reply. They have got lots of people paid to do the job whereas it's just me to do my research and typing which means that sometimes you can't get the thing lodged in time and they'll not give you a concession – but that's not really the Planning (department), it's the Council – there's nothing you can do about that, they've got you over a barrel” (A25).

To the professional objector the PLI is viewed not simply as an opportunity to ensure specific economic interests are forcefully presented and pursued but also as a means of testing the rigour and validity of guiding policies, i.e. in helping to map out paths of least resistance for

future negotiations and applications. Knowledge of the event's procedures leads the experienced objector to appreciate the value of pre-Inquiry discussion:

"It's a very brave LA officer who turns round and says 'we got it wrong' mid-Inquiry, so it's vital we have dialogue outside of the formal plan process if we are to develop the capacity to influence their thinking" (A20).

As far as members were concerned the PLI was not a high profile event and consequently direct involvement was minimal. This point is substantiated by the fact that, unlike many authorities, no member panel sat during the Inquiry and also by the following senior officer quote:

"We didn't have any particular political presence there, they (the members) were happy for us to lead – it's largely an in-house professional exercise" (A6). This ambivalence towards the process also extends to senior officers, as the previous quote implies and the following, from a policy team member, supports:

"It was our perception that when you got to the PLI that senior officers would be fighting over who did it but here it seemed to be completely the opposite. They preferred to be one step removed from it, which is not typical in Tyne and Wear where senior people wanted to be seen to be getting involved" (A11).

6.10.2 The issues

As stated above, the issues dealt with at a PLI revolve around objections submitted to the LPA, from any interested party, with regard to a local or unitary development plan's content. The intention in this section is to review the principle issues raised at the PLI, including of course the much troubled subject of economic development land allocation, as they broadly pertain to environmental re-/evaluation. What is not attempted, and what has been deliberately avoided in the case presentation to date, is a categorisation of each objection and/or counter-objection in terms of their position on a practically spurious scale of stronger/weaker sustainable development.

Over the twelve weeks of the Inquiry (which included a three week Christmas/New Year recess) the time was split as follows: the bulk of the period was spent discussing the Green Belt, economic development and housing policies (approximately one whole week each); as a cross-cutting policy area the 'environment' warranted three days, and; those areas receiving fewest objections (although this should not be seen as a reflection of ease of resolution) warranting 1-2 days attention (i.e. transportation, sport, recreation and leisure, natural resources, and shopping). In addition to these sessions thirteen whole days were spent by the Inspector on unaccompanied site visits.

During the course of the Inquiry three 'round table' sessions were arranged. The purpose of these was to facilitate discussion of broader issues which touched upon all aspects of the Plan – Green Belt, land constraints, housing land availability and accessible and affordable housing. Each session was chaired by the Inspector and participants were required to appear personally without advocate representation.

Surprisingly the MBC did not keep a minuted record of the PLI proceedings. This is certainly not essential as reference to written representations and the formal Inspector's Report (which was not officially published until May 1998) are sufficient to navigate the way to adoption, but the lack of a written record and summary for members and senior officers alike is perhaps a further indication of the lack of interest in a proactive reading/assessment of events. As a consequence, for the purposes of this research, it is these formal documents together with interview data, written objections, round table discussion papers and a series of six Topic Papers from which the Inquiry is reviewed in terms of environmental re-/evaluation. The Topic Papers were produced by the LPA in an effort to consolidate their position and reduce Inquiry presentation time. They spanned each of the areas to be covered in some 'defensive' detail from the perspectives of: strategic international, national and local contexts; policy amplification/explanation and, provision of updated information and justification. Within the semi-structured interviews, respondents had very little to say about how the interests they were pursuing or defending were assessed during the Inquiry. The suggestion being that the PLI was an administrative final presentation process rather than a more dynamic discursive enterprise seeking compromise and agreement – cases are simply made, clarified and justified in the presence of the Inspector in his passive role as facilitator, assimilator and arbitrator. It seems that, by the time representations are considered at Inquiry, positions have hardened to the point where only the Inspector can deliver the required measure of resolution and possibly closure.

The Inspector identified three key issues within the UDP which are both interconnected and cross-cutting with regard to their influence on almost every other aspect of the Plan, namely:

1. The duration of the Plan;
2. The Green Belt, and;
3. Housing land allocation.

The following sub-sections consider each of these issues in turn: the content of each section will focus upon indications of a re-/evaluation of environmental resources in line with the research framework's appreciation of sustainable development. Following this critical resume, attention will be focused upon the objectors'/Inspector's interpretation and re-

interpretation of the Environment chapter in Part II of the emerging UDP. Here the LPA attempted to position and anchor its re-/evaluation of environmental resources in relation to the 'planning' of land-use in South Tyneside – the changes advised and subsequently incorporated into the adopted UDP are, whilst apparently undramatic, quite telling in the context of this study. In addition to the three interrelated issues cited above, there was a fourth which tested the Inspector and is of some significant relevance to our analysis. This centred upon the question of extending mineral extraction at Marsden Quarry (on the seaward side of the Borough between the settlements of Marsden and Whitburn) and will be covered in the fifth and final sub-section of this PLI issues review.

6.10.3 The duration of the Plan

The duration of the UDP is of particular concern to those with an ongoing interest in either land use development or protection within South Tyneside. The time taken to prepare development plans has always been an issue of potential, and increasingly real, concern where a duration period is clearly stated (in this case up to 2001) but no binding timetable applied to the explicitly mapped out preparation process. South Tyneside exemplifies the nature of this problem as, by the time the UDP was finally adopted in October 1999, it had in effect only two years coverage left to run. A situation which crucially undermines any idea of 'planning'. To those with development interests/concerns beyond this time horizon the implications in terms of uncertainty are clear. The rider to this is that it was envisaged by the LPA that Part I strategic policies would endure into and beyond subsequent reviews. Unfortunately, however, as has been illustrated in the case of economic development allocations, Part I policies seem to exert little controlling influence over the more detailed Part II policies and proposals – thus their constancy will be of little comfort to actors trying to lend substance to their own business, living and operational plans around the UDP's content. A further complication exists here for South Tyneside (highlighted by the Inspector) as the distinction between Part I and Part II policies is blurred by repetition and subsequent difficulty in distinguishing

“between what are truly strategic policies and what are more detailed policies” ... “In that the wording of the two parts of this Plan are to a significant degree identical it does not seem to me to be practicable to review Part II without a review of Part I (B12, p.15).

Notwithstanding this, which is unlikely to influence the language of sustainable development employed within Part I, the need for almost immediate review may deprive proposals of the required long term opportunity to modify developmental practice on the ground, especially in terms of infrastructure provision to service development in a more sustainable manner. The nine objectors to the Plan on this issue (of which six are housing developers/builders) were

wanting to see either an extension to the UDP duration or that land for development be identified beyond the existing Plan period. The Inspector, however, was not minded to support these objections on two counts, both of which went on to be material in the makeup of many other strategically oriented recommendations. Firstly, an extension to the Plan's working timescale and/or land allocations would delay further the adoption of the UDP and, secondly, the review and merging of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) was expected to be completed before 2001 and this would almost certainly instigate a substantial review of the UDP in its own right. The key theme here is essentially administrative and appears to colour the Inspector's view with regard to all representations heard, i.e. objections which, if supported, would appear to require extensive modifications to the Plan were to be sidelined with a recommendation that they be dealt with in the relatively imminent review process:

“I have doubts as to whether the benefits which would arise would compensate for the expense and delay which this (in this case clarifying the relationship between Part I and Part II policies, but an opinion echoed throughout the Inspector's Report) would incur, particularly having regard to the firm intention of the Council to review the Plan at an early date. The most important thing is to get a Plan quickly adopted” (B12, p.15)

The agenda on issues which are not immediately contentious is therefore clearly one of deferment. The essential cross-cutting issues of sustainable development are unlikely to fall into this category and one is left looking for acknowledgement in this area rather than critical analysis with modification in mind:

“...it seems to me that the proper way forward is to consider each objection site on its merits, within the limited life of this plan” (B12, p.21).

This point of departure with regard to what could be expected from the PLI is frustrating for all parties seeking a confirmation of position and/or resolution of differences in the longer term directional issues underlying the strategic thrust of the UDP and how effectively they have been translated into more detailed policies and proposals. Examples of such strategic issues include: the use of the precautionary principle, demand management, the 'polluter pays' principle and the salience of adopted and putative indicators/targets, as laid out in Part I of the Deposit Draft. The opportunity for a genuinely rigorous and in-depth examination of the deposit UDP, emanating from objections to it, thus became a casualty of the time taken to reach this stage.

6.10.4 The Green Belt

A full spectrum of views regarding the Green Belt and land constraint issues was heard during the PLI, i.e.:

- concern over the fragile nature of the Green Belt and the proposed deletion for industrial purposes;
- there are exceptional circumstances which warrant deletions from the Green Belt.
- that it is necessary to prove exceptional circumstances for additions as well as deletions to the Green Belt;
- Green Belt deletions for industry should be matched by provision for appropriate accompanying housing development;
- the Plan does not follow national guidance with regard to the provision of land for reasonable development needs;
- the proposed protection of the Green Belt is contrary to Government guidance in that there was no provision for safeguarded land and that the boundary has been drawn too tightly;
- belief that it is necessary to have regard to emerging development plans in neighbouring LPAs;

All these objections were raised during the round table debate on Green Belt matters and can be seen as the general embodiment of the more focused concerns over the allocation of a significant site for economic development/inward investment. In consideration of the pressure for such an allocation the Inspector's view that "it would be prudent to await the reviewed RPG before making any changes to the Green Belt" (B12, p.20) can be seen as driving his conclusions over the two key sites put forward (the former Monkton Cokeworks and land at South Hedworth). With the Monkton site never having been within the Green Belt, his recommendation, following the initial 'safe' view on leaving the existing Green Belt undisturbed, is perhaps something of a *fait accompli*. Within the context of this Plan therefore he is able to achieve a degree of short term closure on the issue by supporting an environmentally sympathetic allocation for economic development on the former Cokeworks site and rejecting the South Hedworth proposal which would have required a deletion of land from the Green Belt. Certainly for many interested parties this was not an ideal resolution and in many ways it can be seen as little more than a stay of execution for maintaining the South Hedworth site within the Green Belt. Part of the responsibility for the indeterminacy of this decision is clearly shouldered by the MBC as the South Hedworth site only came forward formally in the June 1996 Proposed Changes to the Plan from which the implication is that the Council "may not have had time to examine fully and reflect upon all aspects of the proposals" (B12, p.181). The postponement of this opportunity for in-depth examination of

the future security of the Green Belt and an up to date clarification of 'exceptional circumstances' at the local level is almost certainly the greatest failure of the PLI for all interested parties.

Putting this disappointment aside, what is of specific interest to us here is how the Inspector has included environmental re-/evaluation in presenting this decision. The plain fact is that, over the seven pages in which he presents his reasoning for supporting the allocation of the former Monkton Cokeworks and rejecting that South Hedworth as substantial sites for economic development, there is precious little recognition of environmental re-/evaluation beyond the norm or enhanced visual appearance and social amenity. No reference is made to any of the principles of sustainable development put forward in Part I of the Deposit Draft or which might arise from 'state of the environment' reporting, ideas of environmental capacity, critical environmental capital or minimising private car use. The only linkages to a new environmental agenda are left to the reader to work up in terms of implication and indirect suggestion, these being:

- i.) the need to decontaminate the Cokeworks site;
- ii.) the creation of a multi-purpose landscape framework on this site through adopting the principles of the Great North Forest toward the setting up of 'community' woodland;
- iii.) an acknowledgement that "the development of the site as now proposed would result in an isolated area of industrial development surrounded on all sides, in the long term, by agricultural land or public open space. Clearly such an arrangement is not ideal" (B12, p.166);
- iv.) implicit use of the precautionary principle in rejecting Green Belt deletion on two counts: firstly, through repeated reference to the advice contained PPG2 – the agenda of which is arguably not attuned to the discourse of sustainable development; and secondly, that the Council could not demonstrate that a potential inward investor was actively seeking a site such as South Hedworth.

Thus, in what is the most widely contentious issue of the Deposit UDP, and one in which 'planning' might find real meaning, the opportunity to use arguments for 'sustainable development to drive decision-making is fundamentally not embraced.

6.10.5 Housing land allocation

Throughout the 1990s the allocation of land for housing became an increasingly contentious issue in the preparation of land use development plans with the anticipated demand for new housing being predicted and set at a level likely to induce high profile social and

environmental change nation-wide. The implications for the agenda of sustainable development are therefore correspondingly significant. The strength of economic interests, principally from the house building lobby, inevitably drives the debate. In the context of the preparation of this UDP for South Tyneside, the profile was not as high as in many other local area plans on two counts. Firstly, in terms of bridging the 'jobs gap', the allocation of sites for economic development was seen and accepted as being of primary and precursive concern. Secondly, within the timespan covered by this UDP the regionally set target of providing 5,000 dwellings from the beginning of 1988 to the end of 2001 was apparently fully satisfied within its policies and proposals. There was inevitably some room for manoeuvre from the housing lobby in terms of furthering their immediate economic interests – specifically regarding the development potential of allocated sites, safeguarded land, and uncertainty over the continued availability of housing land supply. All of these discursive elements relate either directly or indirectly to the cross-cutting issue of the extent, role and primacy of the Green Belt in development planning matters. Strategically, the Deposit Draft of the UDP attempted to introduce a notion of environmental re-/evaluation through the concept of environmental capacity:

“The Borough Council is concerned that, given current land supply constraints in South Tyneside, future development does not impact adversely upon the quality of life of existing and future Borough residents. It is particularly concerned to prevent any development which, if it were to proceed, would exceed the environmental capacity of any part of South Tyneside, or the Borough as a whole (where environmental capacity is defined as: “the level at which unacceptable or irreversible damage is likely to occur” (B2, p.316). The Local Planning Authority will, henceforth, only encourage housing development based on sound principles of sustainability” (B2, p.149).

“It will also ensure that, whenever possible, construction is undertaken with regard to energy conservation and the use of sustainable materials. Moreover it will adopt planting schemes which maximise CO₂ absorption” ... “Coincidentally, it will attract investment in regeneration, within the constraints of a diminishing supply of land for housebuilding, by maximising the development potential of individual sites to meet local housing needs” (B12, p.151).

This was to supply the framework in which to hang, and lend substance to, specific criteria-driven policies and proposals – essentially relating to minimising private car use and maximising energy efficiency:

“General Principles – Housing

H1 - The Local Planning Authority will:

- a.) in existing residential areas, provide for, and encourage the enhancement of the external environment, investment in the maintenance and

improvement of dwellings, energy efficiency and higher standards of amenity for the Borough residents; and

b.) within the constraints of housing land supply and environmental capacity, undertake and enable new development in order to attract investment in regeneration and improve choice in response to changing and/or unmet housing needs” (B2, p.151).

“Development Control - Housing

H2 - Planning applications for residential development will not be granted unless:

a.) the environmental impact of proposed development is acceptable in respect of residential amenity and in relation to policies for the environment contained in this plan; ...

d.) the proposed development is conveniently located in relation to existing social and community facilities, local shops and other services and does not necessitate trips by private vehicles to reach such facilities;

e.) the development would not exceed the capacity of the existing infrastructure and public transport network, or include measures to overcome problems identified by the local planning authority in that regard, particularly where opportunities exist to reduce the need to travel by private car;...

h.) measures to reduce energy consumption are incorporated; ...

j.) recycled or renewable construction materials are utilised where practicable” (B2, p151-152)

“Land available for housebuilding

H4 - In all cases (for the construction of 5000 new dwellings between 1988 and 2001) the local planning authority will expect development to incorporate energy efficient forms of construction and exploit the potential of renewable energy sources” (B12, p.154).

“Windfall sites and planning obligations

H5 - Applications for the development of sites for housing, not identified in this plan, will not receive planning permission unless developers demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that:

a.) the scope to reduce the number and length of trips by private vehicles is maximised” (B12, p.156).

“Housing land – continuity and demand management

H6 - If demand for housing land exceeds planned provision, the local authority will not accept shortage or lack of supply as a justification for residential development in environmentally unacceptable locations” (B12, p.158).

With one exception, the above policies framed the LPA’s implicit approach to environmental re-/evaluation as it went into the PLI. The exception was with regard to policy H6 for which a proposed change was put forward to shore up its defences in terms of ‘demand management’. This was achieved by deferring to Central Government’s ‘predict and provide’ direction, i.e.

deleting the phrase “to ensure a continuous supply for house building throughout the Plan period” and replacing it with “to meet the Secretary of State’s strategic guidance figures for South Tyneside over the period 1988-2001”. Critical reflection here lends one to doubt the salience of using the term ‘demand management’ as rigid adherence to meeting a centrally derived fixed figure appears to undermine the idea of managing demand. Notwithstanding this change and criticism, the policies put forward in the Deposit Draft do appear to incorporate several key material elements of a new environmental agenda in relatively concrete terms with clear implications for development control. The underlying essence of this approach (as put forward in the PLI supporting topic paper on housing) is:

“the recycling of urban land and limited infilling without undermining the amount and function of urban greenspace. This approach has an impact in sustainable development terms, as it directs housing development to areas which are well served by public transport” (B9, p.5).

As suggested above, the Council’s position on this topic at the PLI was a relatively strong one as it had fulfilled its RPG recommended commitment. Although some significant objections were raised as to the economic viability of some sites put forward, the Inspector appears to have been satisfied with the LPA’s calculations. All parties involved were united in their concern over the paucity of other brownfield building land that was likely to be available post-2001. It was, however, necessary to again hold substantial consideration of this issue in abeyance until the release of the awaited RPG for the North-East.

The house-building lobby made significant representations at the PLI but it is clear that they felt there was likely to be little room for manoeuvre with regard to furthering their interests in terms of allocation against the relatively secure LPA position. A position which, as well as fulfilling the extant RPG ‘numbers’ requirement, rested relatively comfortably upon: the imminent arrival of the new merged RPG for the North-East, covering the period up to 2016; pressure to adopt the UDP as soon as possible, and the promised almost immediate move by the LPA into a Plan Review. In these circumstances, and interestingly from the point of view of this study, one finds the spotlight turned upon specific policies relating to development control. By the time of the PLI, almost all sustained objections in this area came from the house-building lobby. The importance of the LPA’s readily overlooked pre-Inquiry proposed changes to the UDP is highlighted in the Inspector’s conclusions and advice, as the majority of his recommendations are in support of these changes. The modifications have a subtle but quite significant affect on the ‘mood’ of the policies with regard to environmental re-/evaluation. The Inspector’s Report (B12, p104-115) suggests/advises the following changes for policies H1, H2, H4 and H5:

H1 – the term “environmental capacity” be replaced with “the defined Green Belt boundary”;

H2 – the phrase “will not be granted unless” be replaced with “will be granted where”

- in criterion D: “does not necessitate trips by private vehicles” be replaced with “such as not to place undue reliance upon the use of the private car”

- in criterion H: “measures to reduce energy consumption are incorporated” be replaced with “the proposed development incorporates energy efficient forms of construction, exploits the potential of renewable energy sources, and minimises energy and water use where practicable”

- in criterion J: “recycled or renewable construction materials are utilised where practicable” be replaced with “... utilised where consideration of their lifetime costs makes their use practicable”.

H4 - the expectation that development both incorporates energy efficient forms of construction and exploits the potential of renewable energy sources is deleted and replaced in the supporting text with: “(A)s with all forms of development, new housing development will be expected to have regard to the principles of sustainable development.”

H5 - the requirement to demonstrate that the scope to reduce private car use has been fully maximised be replaced by: “(P)roposals for the development of sites for housing which are not identified in this Plan will be granted planning permission, having regard to the following considerations:” ... “e.) opportunities to reduce the number and length of trips by private vehicle are maximised.”

Each of the above modifications – all of which now take their place in the adopted Plan – appear to maintain the direction of the original text but are rephrased in ways which lend development interests significant room for manoeuvre. The intention being to ensure that environmental re-/evaluation within the UDP does not stifle development which might be essential within the priority regeneration agenda. It should be remembered that in the majority of instances the Inspector was supporting a modification already proposed by the LPA. It would seem that Policy officers were responding: i.) reactively to the overt ascendancy of development-led regeneration; ii.) proactively to the anticipated recommendations from the Inspector, and; iii.) endeavouring to pre-empt/moderate the arguments of development interests ahead of the Inquiry. The resultant substantive weakening of environment-led policies is commensurate with the more pro-development line emerging from the membership in the drawing up of the pre-Inquiry modifications to the Deposit Draft.

6.10.6 The Environment Chapter

In the handling of each of the above issues reference is made to the need to adhere “to policies for the environment contained in the Plan”. It is therefore important to review the

effect of the PLI upon these policies as contained in the first Part II chapter of the Plan - *Environment*. The key Deposit Draft environmental policies have already been introduced and critically reviewed in Section 6.8 above. It was suggested then from a more purist perspective that, although they directly related to a notion of sustainable development, they avoided direct relation to a potentially inflexible principled position. Such attempts by the LPA to build in discretion, whilst implying a presumption in favour of sustainable development, came under significant fire from pro-development interests at the PLI. The underlying objection being that the degree of discretion sought came down strongly on the side of the Council in the decision-making process. The most detailed and weighty objection from this perspective came from the experienced representative of the house builders lobby. The language employed was tightly focused with a three-pronged methodology highlighting i.) internal inter-policy/supporting text inconsistency; ii.) policies which are inappropriate to the perceived need of development planning, and; iii.) departure from central government guidance. At the Inspector's behest an alternative to the heavily criticised ENV1 policy is presented:

“Development will be encouraged which regenerates the urban areas in the Borough through the provision of new employment, housing and recreational opportunities, while protecting the best of the Borough's built and natural environments within the urban areas and retaining the integrity of the surrounding Green Belt. The long term objectives of the Plan are to secure an improved balance between employment and housing within the Borough, to secure significant improvement in the urban environment, and thereby to secure and maintain a stable resident population. In the period up to 2001 priority will be generally given to the needs of employment over the needs of housing, recreation and other uses in the provision of land for development. In the period beyond 2001 the balance between the promotion of change through development and the protection and enhancement of the existing environment will be determined in the light of the regional interest established in regional planning guidance. All development will be required to be sustainable in terms of having an acceptable long term impact on the environment as a whole” (A20_a, p.3-4).

The objectors underlying rhetoric is one that seeks to counter what is perceived as over-prescription couched within a very general, and hence overly-broad policy framework. The concerns put across in these terms are explicitly supported by the Inspector:

Re. Policy ENV1: “I have considerable sympathy with the views of the objectors. The policy appears to be a development control policy, setting 4 tests with which all proposals must be consistent.” ... “To require all development to be consistent with each of these broad aims could be interpreted as being unduly harsh and I agree with objectors that this could be used to refuse permission for a considerable proportion of proposals. It is over prescriptive.” ... “My modification to the wording does not mean that the Policy will be ineffective. In applying the Policy, some

development proposals which are contrary to these principles but otherwise satisfactory may be rejected, based on the weighing up of the benefits and disbenefits. I consider this is an essential element of the application of the concept of sustainable development, which is Government Policy, and therefore included correctly in the Plan” (B12, p.34).

Re. Policy ENV2 (in which it is stated that the quality of the physical environment will be treated as a matter of *primary* concern): “With regard to the word “primary” this is qualified in that it is included in the expression “as a matter of primary concern” – not “...the matter...”. This implies that there are other matters of primary concern. However the word is not used extensively in the Plan and this could lead the reader, on a strict interpretation of the word “primary”, to the conclusion that all development, whether for housing, recreation, commercial or employment purposes, is of lesser concern. Taken to the extreme this could imply that the Council would prefer to see people homeless or out of work rather than that housing or economic development should harm the environment. I am sure that this is not what is intended – it is a matter of balance. Some compromise is inevitable, and the inclusion of policies which promote development in the Plan and the allocation of land for housing and economic development temper this interpretation. Also policy ENV2 is a cautionary Policy of general application and one which reflects the latest Government guidance. Nevertheless, I consider the use of the word “primary” to be inappropriate and that it should be replaced by “significant”” (B12, p.36-37, original emphasis).

In terms of a re-/evaluation of environmental resources the following changes (as now found in the adopted UDP) to policy text are especially noteworthy (B13):

- ENV1: “All development proposals must respect the long term welfare of the environment by being consistent with the need to: ...”

,being changed to:

“All development proposals should respect the long term welfare of the environment by having regard to the need to: ...”

- ENV2: “The quality of the physical environment will be treated by the Local Planning Authority as a matter of primary concern”

,being changed to:

“The quality of the physical environment will be treated by the local planning authority as a matter of significant concern.”

- ENV11: The LPA will: “Give priority to the treatment of vacant or underused sites which are integral to the Borough Council’s strategy for sustainable development”

,being changed to:

“Grant planning permission for, and give priority to, its own schemes in respect of schemes for: i.) transport corridor improvement; ii.) habitat creation; iii.) the Great North Forest; or iv.) increasing open space provision.”

- ENV 19/1: “The Local Planning Authority will refuse planning permission for any development which would directly or indirectly damage, or threaten the future of any designated or proposed site of Special Scientific Interest”

,amended by sub-division into ENV19/1 for European sites and ENV 19/2 for SSSIs with the following additions:

ENV 19/1 - “Exceptionally, planning permission will be granted when: ...
b.) the developer can demonstrate that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development and no alternative solution is available”;

ENV 19/2 - “... b.) no alternative site is available and the benefits of the proposed development would, in the opinion of the LPA, clearly outweigh:
i.) the intrinsic national importance of the designation; and ii.) the national value of the network of such sites.”

- ENV 19/2 and ENV 19/3 on Local Nature Reserves, SNCIs (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance) and RIGs (Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites) then becomes ENV19/3 on ‘other protected sites’ and includes the following rider:

“... no alternative site is reasonably available and the benefits of the proposed development would, in the opinion of the LPA, outweigh the regional or local value of the network of such sites.”

- ENV25: In justifying the protection and enhancement of the Green Belt the following justification was deleted:

“f.) assist in the long term strategy to create a sustainable pattern of development for the Borough” residents.”

Changes of the above variety (i.e. moderating what are perceived as overly prescriptive environmental protection policies) are also to be found in the UDP’s Natural Resource Chapter:

NR6 - “the Mineral Planning Authority will grant planning permission for mineral workings only when it is satisfied that: ...”, becomes, “... will have regard to the following considerations: ...”

NR7 - “... will be protected;” becomes “... will not be unacceptably damaged”.

It is within the field of land use planning in the management of natural resources that the final PLI issue to be covered in this critical review is found. By comparison with the other issues considered above this one is narrow relating, as it does, to a very specific extension in mineral extraction rights at Marsden Quarry on the sea-facing side of the Borough. The protagonists are comparatively few but, as an issue with some history and a direct bearing on environmental re-/evaluation, it is of some significance to the purposes of this research.

6.10.7 Marsden Quarry

As a unitary authority, South Tyneside MBC is also the Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) within the Borough's boundaries – a role taken on after the dissolution of the Metropolitan County Council of Tyne and Wear in 1986. It is not only responsible for local area issues but also, as part of the Northern Region Aggregates Working Party (NRAWP), it was also involved in discussions over regional aggregates apportionment and supply as advised by central government through regional Minerals Planning Guidance (MPG). When the Metropolitan County was abolished it was well into the process of producing the Tyne and Wear Minerals Local Plan (TWMLP). To maintain continuity the process was completed, with the DoE as executor, and the plan was approved and adopted in 1989.

The history of applications to extend Marsden Quarry is a long one, dating back almost thirty years, a point which illustrates the long term perspective taken by professional private interests in land use development. Even though the quarry, as an established and active source of magnesian limestone, is only today reaching exhaustion the issue of possible extensions was formally addressed at a planning inquiry in 1972 and also during the TWMLP Inquiry in 1987. In both cases the appeal for a larger extension to the west of the site was dismissed by the inspectors for a number of reasons: the proximity of substantial permitted reserves in Durham; efforts to promote the market for local tourism, and; conventional environmental arguments relating to dust, traffic and efforts by the Council and other bodies to improve the appearance and attractiveness of the South Tyneside coastline.

In the period since these decisions were made other factors may be seen, and were presented by the MBC in the emerging UDP, as reinforcing arguments against extension, these include the influence of the National Trust, the Great North Forest and a SSSI close to the proposed extension. On the back of all these considerations the Deposit Draft contained a very clear proposal regarding the MBC's position on quarrying extension at Marsden.:

“NR6/4 The Local Planning Authority will vigorously resist any proposals to extend mineral workings at, or in the vicinity of, Marsden Quarry” (B2, p.112).

In terms of the UDP as a whole NR6/4 is exceptional in that, firstly, it does not permit any room for manoeuvre on the issue and, secondly, it is based almost solely upon environmental considerations. The way that the Inspector dealt with the inevitable objection from the quarry operating company therefore stands as a highly pertinent example of how the contemporary development planning process responds both to the proposed negation of discretion and a re-/evaluation of resources in the light of a conception of sustainable development. In summary, through a complex and not especially transparent passage of reasoning, the Inspector

succeeds in blurring the issue and taking the initiative away from the UDP. Whilst acknowledging and accepting the earlier (DoE approved) TWMLP's presumption against magnesian limestone extraction in the County in the face of overriding environmental constraints he seems to balk at the use of the term "vigorously resist". Perhaps ironically he turns to specific elements of the sustainable development agenda in recommending the deletion of the proposal:

"An important and separate aspect, however, is that both the NRAWP report and the Tyne and Wear Minerals Plan were produced before the issue of sustainable development came into formal Government advice and I consider this to be a particularly important issue in this regard and one which I must address" (B12, p.192).

It should be noted that, with reference to the Inspector's Report on the Plan as a whole, the privilege given to this perspective in decision-making is virtually unique. The principle line taken in relation to sustainable development concerns the implications of increased traffic movements should production move to alternative limestone sources in County Durham. Presently the bulk of the material produced at Marsden is coincidentally consumed within a ten mile radius of the quarry. This issue was one of the two major planks upon which the quarry operators' objections were founded and was labelled the 'proximity principle':

"We supported our argument with the proximity principle, to say that it was not sustainable to bring magnesian limestone an additional thirty miles into the construction market in South Tyneside when it could be supplied from an environmentally acceptable site locally" (A22).

In considering the above and other factors relating to more conventional environmental concerns (noise, dust, visual impact etc.), together with a coincidental re-opening of the previously settled issue of sub-regional apportionment courtesy of the emerging County Durham MLP, the Inspector seems to promulgate an air of uncertainty where previously there was little. Both the MBC and the quarry operator representatives informally picked up on this, with the latter stating:

"At the moment (post-PLI proposed modifications) the UDP is neutral, but to be quite honest he (the Inspector) had more than enough information to make the decision. I wonder whether he thought that by putting in a policy for extension he would produce a policy which South Tyneside would find unpalatable and they would eject that and we would end up in High Court and things would have rumbled on. So he simplified things to ensure adoption" (A22).

The MPA felt obliged to delete policy NR6/4 and consequently accept a planning application for extension on the strength of supply (NR5) and criteria driven mineral working (NR7) policies. It did however reject the Inspector's opinion that linking the apportionment for the Tyne and Wear MBCs with that for Durham County Council was not a material consideration

in determining new planning applications (policy NR5). Both South Tyneside MBC and Durham CC appeared to be able to prove that the Inspector's reading of the issue was in error. The MBC sought clarification from the Planning Inspectorate on this issue and the view of the first Inspector (who had since left the service) was subsequently supported by his replacement. The Council were sufficiently convinced of their case to sustain their rejection of the recommendation, although ultimately in order to get the Plan adopted the apportionment link with Durham County was dropped. In the event the Marsden operator did make an application for extension. This was refused by the MPA but, having recently sold the operating rights, the operator did not appeal as that would have only helped the new buyer who would then effectively have been in competition with their other quarries in the region. One is therefore left to reflect that the main issue propelling the objection appears to have been maintaining market share rather than securing sufficient supplies on grounds of environmentally sustainable commercial activity. Facets of the sustainable development agenda were simply used as when appropriate to help sway the Inspector at the PLI. Leaving aside the developers economically driven expedience in this area, a more perplexing contradiction is thrown up internally between those responsible for administering and shaping land use arrangements in the Borough, i.e. between the MPA and the Inspector. The point was made above that the latter saw a re-/evaluation of environmental matters under the heading 'sustainable development' as a key issue in moving away from a categorical proposal to resist any extension to Marsden Quarry, whereas the former did the opposite. The MBC reported that the subsequent planning application put forward by the operators in February 1999 was refused in April 2000 as the "principle issues of concern weighing against a granting of permission, related to the broader concerns surrounding sustainable development" (B16, p.16) together with more conventional environmental material matters.

6.11 The final steps to adoption

The Inspector's report brought to a temporary conclusion much of the debate surrounding the content of the South Tyneside UDP. Following a clarification of certain issues with the Planning Inspectorate (June 1998) all of the Inspector's recommendations were accepted, with the exception of that relating to minerals policy and sub-regional apportionment (policy NR5, as discussed above). On the advice of the Director of Development Services to the TDC in September 1998 the Council issued a list of Proposed Modifications open to public objection and representation for a period of six weeks (as required by the Development Plan Regulations). The use of the joint minerals reserve figure between Durham and the former Tyne and Wear County administration proved a sticking point but the link was eventually

dropped in policy NR5 and the UDP finally adopted by Council in October 1999, some eleven years after work first began on its drafting.

Findings Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to extract a readily accessible summary of the survey and case study findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6. The intention, in the first instance, is to present this body of procedural and communicative evidence, relating to the incorporation of sustainable development into land use development planning, in a relatively neutral manner. Elements of procedure and communication will be brought together in a bulleted order and under headings with which the reader should now be familiar, i.e.:

1. The meaning of 'sustainable development' in development planning
2. Application principles
3. Participation/consultation and LA21
4. The evaluation of environmental resources
5. Mediation
6. Administration

The issues and implications arising can then be drawn out for each of these sections and summarised ready to inform the critical and reflective discussion to be presented in Part III.

7.1 The meaning of 'sustainable development' in development planning

Evidence

- Sustainable development, where defined, is presented as a clear derivative, if not copy, of the Brundtland expression (i.e. along the lines of meeting needs today without compromising the future).
 - Defining sustainable development is not of paramount importance to the practitioner.
 - The term sustainable development is not widely appreciated by actors outside of planning policy sections.
- Understanding is rarely presented in a normative manner – the assertion stands without generalised attachments suggesting that we should, ought or must plan in certain ways.
 - The actual use of the term 'sustainable development' in policy is exceptional.

- Its global connotations and lack of clarity make direct reference inappropriate in local policy.
 - The notion extends beyond the remit of land-use planning.
- The rationale of land use planning is commensurate if not mirrored in that of sustainable development.
 - The terminology is not important and will probably fade as, in principle, planning already fulfils its remit as far as it is able.

Issues and implications

Development plan preparation can take place without the need to elaborate on the meaning of sustainable development. Normative expressions are avoided as they would set conflictual standards against which policies and proposals could be challenged. Without such expressions, however, other internal and external actors have little useful substance from which to hang their input into the process. Hence the term has no secure position from which to shape decision making.

7.2 Application principles

Evidence

- Application principles do find expression within the development planning process.
 - Such expressions are sporadic and even though they may be given significant strategic status struggle to find consistent purchase through to local proposals.
 - Principles are often applied retrospectively when an LPA changes its position on a specific issue – often in a bid to make development less unsustainable, or at least appear to be.
 - The substantive evidence to allow LPAs to positively apply a principle is often absent, only partially developed, or outside of what is deemed material to decision making in the land use planning sector.
- In a system in which material considerations are evidence based the precautionary principle is unlikely to find significant purchase in decision-making.
- The application of environmental thresholds and limits tends to be figurative rather than substantive. The absolute nature of this approach means that it is rarely confronted and assimilated.

- Development is only specifically constrained in terms of environmental limits in areas previously designated as either Green Belt or exceptionally high natural environmental significance. Such designations however are not a product of SR in the development planning process.
- Environmental compensation is limited in its application to development which permanently degrades or destroys areas of acknowledged significance as natural habitats or green space.
 - Compensatory policies and proposals are often applied retrospectively as a placatory response to significant public objection.
 - The principle of demand management appears to resonate most strongly with planning for development in a 'sustainable' manner. There is however little evidence that this is founded upon a sustainable re-evaluation of environmental resources (in a global or local context).
 - Promoting development locations and uses which minimise private car use is the most overt and universal application of demand management (applying as it does to residential, business and industrial developments). It is, however, a general and largely unquantified aspiration rather than a numerically driven objective or policy imperative.
 - A best practicable environmental option approach to development planning receives little attention as decisions are rarely made purely on environmental grounds.

Issues and implications

The use of application principles, as a means of operationalising sustainable development without the need for defining normative statements, finds some purchase in development planning as they can be tuned to specific areas of work. There is, however, a lack of consistency which can be seen as a product of the criteria driven approach to assessing land use options put across in PPGs. Some criteria can be related to some principles in certain circumstances - their relative qualities being suited to discretion and 'balancing' in decision making. Thus legislation and Central Government guidance can be fulfilled without the need for Local Government to grapple with more developed principled positions. The downside to this pragmatism is that "if it's not there [in Government guidance] we don't do it but that's not to say it's not a sustainable option".

From a control perspective, if approaches founded on precaution or limits were given an overriding privilege they would be perceived as over-restrictive to market demands and

economic growth. A criteria-based approach to sustainable development will influence developmental decision-making but not control it or destabilise other agendas considered circumstantially more significant. The emphasis is clearly upon making development less unsustainable.

7.3 Participation/Consultation and LA21

Evidence

- Participation exercises do not directly aim to raise environmental awareness and the issues of sustainable development.
 - Statutory consultation is of a reactive rather than proactive nature and often simply a requisite administrative exercise.
 - It is very difficult to get a broad cross-section of the public involved.
 - Land use development plans are not of particular interest or apparent significance to the majority of the public unless they have a specific stake in the development or protection of piece of land/property.
 - Development plan documents are not presented in a manner which facilitates comprehensive reading – cross referencing is frequently complex and tiresome.
 - Participation in the planning process is only really meaningful through the making of formal representations to consultation, deposit or modification plan drafts.
 - Representations and objections are highly polarised around single issues/interests.
 - Public involvement in the planning process is overly bureaucratic. Experience and knowledge of the system combined with appropriate time and resources are frequently pre-requisites to any chance of success.
- Local authorities have committed significant resources to LA21 and as a consequence there is real potential to raise a genuine awareness of sustainable development and engender SR.
 - There is a danger, for many authorities, that the preparation of LA21 strategies and initiatives has become an administratively necessary task – something which must be done rather than committed to and creatively acted upon.
 - The non-statutory status of LA21 strategies means that local authority commitment is not assured and will be sporadic and limited.

- The potential for LA21 to influence development plan preparation and encourage public participation would appear to be largely unrealised.

Issues and implications

Despite significant efforts from many LPAs to generate public/stakeholder interest and input during the early stages of shaping issues and policy/proposal formulation, results are generally disappointing. The ability of the emerging plan to at least engender an awareness of SR is thus minimal. With single controversial issues, relating to very specific development allocation proposals, as the essential drivers of public involvement the cross-sectional parameters of sustainable development are peripheralised.

From the perspective of participative democracy efforts to raise broad sustainability questions are further compromised by the system's bureaucratic arrangements which empower those with the resources, knowledge and experience to access and use the system to further their established interests.

This reactive nature of the statutory consultation elements of the plan preparation process reinforces a fragmentary response to sustainable development. As conceptualisations are represented by criteria frequently listed in separate chapters of the plan document, which should be read in tandem with segregated policy issues, their significance is readily forgotten or not picked up on.

Despite some limited political rhetoric and the exhortations of various commentators, LA21 appears to have made little impact on development planning. This may be down to a lack of creativity or resources on the behalf of local authorities or possibly a lack of enthusiasm as any new socio-environmentally oriented awareness born out of LA21 is likely to engender potentially powerful new arguments for development restraint.

7.4 The evaluation of environmental resources

Evidence

- The comprehensive assessment of environmental resources across local areas, usually under the heading of 'state of the environment' (SoE) reporting, is familiar to LPAs but is not an established mechanism in plan preparation. It is a very resource intensive exercise.
 - Baseline assessment and monitoring is a necessary element in meaningful indicator selection, target setting, and in using approaches based upon environmental capital and/or capacity.

- Environmental capital and capacity are potentially very useful planning tools.
- State of the environment type reporting is best co-ordinated and partially resourced at county level with a parallel commitment to the production of cross-county standardised indicators.
- The introduction of the environmental appraisal of development plans has raised the profile of comprehensive assessment and evaluation.
 - Environmental appraisal is a highly subjective process - it can be too readily adjusted to get the 'right' answers.
 - Appraisals tend to very 'internal' exercises – often carried out by those responsible for writing the policies and proposals being appraised. Because environmental protection is an inherent characteristic of planning the EA is unlikely to generate unexpected results.
 - Appraisal documents lack political potency and leverage - an appraisal is not an impact assessment.
 - Judging policies against objectives during plan preparation tends to be a self-justifying process. Retrospective EAs, if carried out comprehensively may, on the other hand, raise conflicts which are politically awkward.
 - When an appraisal goes beyond environmental considerations it loses its weight as a material consideration in its own right.
 - Despite considerable effort, in terms of time and resources, to carry out appraisals there is often very little interest in the completed document.
 - The value of retrospective appraisals (e.g. at post-deposit modifications) is appreciated as the reality of the development interests come through late in the process. The potential to delay adoption, however, is likely to preclude such exercises.
 - The appraisal itself gives limited scope for criticism, it simply allows potential conflicts to be identified which may then need further exploration in the light of mitigating factors.
 - Public participation is not a component of Environmental Appraisal.
 - If environmental appraisal was made part of a public consultation/participation programme a significant arena for raising public awareness would be created.

Issues and implications

Local environmental assessments (e.g. SoE reports) and the more formalised environmental appraisal of development plans are procedures which are both implicit and explicit to SR. If taken together they have significant potential to reinforce and justify each other, however, this has yet to happen. LPAs are aware of the benefits of SoE type reports to the rigour of plan preparation but the resource commitment is significant not just to the assessment but also to the necessary subsequent monitoring (especially important where indicators and targets have been set).

The role of environmental appraisals in engendering SR in development plan preparation is, despite its apparent positive intentions, compromised by the factors listed above. Despite, and quite probably because of, these shortcomings it is peripheralised in decision-making processes. Appraisal results are rarely precursors to further study where environmentally-founded conflicts are identified, or, do designed to carry the evidential weight necessary to effectively stand as material considerations.

7.5 Mediation

Evidence

- Without PPG and RPG support, disputed policies are unlikely to survive mediation in tact.
 - Sustainability orientated policies/proposals which have more of an ethical than evidential rationale will be problematic in a system which requires the construction of robust, materially acceptable, defensive arguments
 - Within the current system, arguments for sustainable development are readily manipulated to support development interests - by putting different weights on different criteria.
 - Sustainable development arguments are subject to the vagaries of political pressure and expedience.
 - 'Sustainable' policies are easily undermined by competition between authorities for inward investment or by being forced into compromising partnerships through a lack of resources.
- As the plan preparation process progresses the strategic ideals proposed in earlier stages become lost in single issue adversarial argument.

- The 'hard choices' introduced by sustainable development fall foul of political pressure from interest groups, the public and subsequently Members - "the real world is very different from that which idealistically those advocating sustainable development want to achieve".
- Criteria based arguments are too narrow/simplistic to promote the multi-perspective discussions required to tackle the sustainable development agenda.
- The policy sections of planning departments and some advisory/environmental groups are the only ones genuinely trying to advance the ideology of sustainable development.
 - The incorporation of sustainable development is greatly assisted by the presence of a 'champion' for the cause at Director/Executive level.
 - A pragmatic approach to the demands of sustainable development is the only way to achieve things.

Issues and implications

Without an anchored and principled position from which to make a stand, the arguments are too easily distorted or suppressed by political pressures and interests which run counter to the demands of sustainable development.

Central Government guidance plays such a key role in framing LPA responses to sustainable development that they are not required, or perhaps even able, to develop policy founded upon a more systemic approach.

Following PPG/RPG produces criteria-driven policy which fragments response. Sustainable development is broken down into an uneven array of material considerations which are then more acceptable to the discretionary and balancing format of conventional mediation in the planning system.

Sustainable development does not correlate with how the majority of the population want to or are encouraged to lead their lives - any environmental awareness is heavily tempered by self-interest to protect economic and consumptive needs/aspirations. The value of long-term action, which may be unassailably argued for from a principled position, is discounted for the sake of short-term individual gain. LPAs are thus fighting an uphill struggle (in terms of internal and external support/commitment) if they take on the challenge of sustainable development in its genuinely holistic sense. A more palatable and *pragmatic* response is to go straight from the acceptance of the categorical duty to a fragmented criteria-driven mode of implementation which is in line with Government guidance but will at best engender very gradual and incremental change.

7.6 Administration

Evidence

- LPAs struggle to step beyond the minimum statutory requirements of plan preparation because of resource constraints – time, money, staff etc..
- Pressure to reduce the time it takes to produce development plans narrows attention to the resolution of those specific conflicts which stand to delay adoption.
- The almost universal separation of planning control and policy sections is unhelpful in developing policies/proposals which are likely to be meaningful in determining planning applications and responding to appeals.

Issues and implications

Efforts will be made to minimise conflict even if this means the most ‘sustainable’ option is not taken.

Meaningful moves towards an inclusive assessment of all available options with regard to a sustainable re-evaluation of environmental resources (including global and local implications) is beyond the ability of an administrative process essentially concerned with the locally appropriate allocation and control of development rights.

Critical analysis and reflection

The impression progressively built up over Chapters 5 and 6, and summarised in Chapter 7, is that the discourse of sustainable development is well established in the strategic content of development planning. It is, however, singularly failing to make a meaningful impact at points of contentious delivery – i.e. policies and proposals which are likely to have significant implications on stakeholders' interests and perceived wellbeing. The potential for tangible change, implicit within SR, is either deflected or 'boxed-out' to such a degree that its influence in generating the necessary reorientation of policies/proposals is crucially undermined. The language is active but the space in which it is allowed to make a difference is both narrow and ring-fenced by existing interests, agendas and procedures. SR, for a number of reasons, is apparently not gaining or given access to contentious issues, the areas where it might really make a difference on the ground – at least not until after such issues have achieved some degree of resolution. The following sections discursively detail these reasons and reflect on how they can best be understood in relation to the research's two key supportive questions:

- What is the prevalence and form of any revised or innovative practices with regard to promoting sustainable development in development plans?
- In what ways are the issues addressed in the preparation of land use plans being influenced by the concerns of sustainable development?

8.1 'Boxing-out' SR in the procedural elements of development planning

The weight of the research findings clearly suggest that, from a procedural perspective, SR is peripheralised through confinement. This 'boxing-out' is detectable in: the detail of central Government advice and guidance (re. Chapter 2); the undeveloped state of pertinent local administrative activity (re. Chapter 5); and, the lack of impact in contentious decision-making (re. Chapter 6). The following sub-sections examine this 'exclusion through confinement' of SR in the now familiar elements of development plan preparation, i.e.: foundational understanding of sustainable development; knowledge and principles of application; and, delivery mechanisms.

8.1.1 Understanding 'sustainable development' - a contestable and shifting foundation

The technical-rational model which dominates the professional front of LPA activity requires that objectives and priorities, in order to be material to decision making, are clearly defined and expressed. By adopting the Brundtland definition, or some close derivative, LPAs have found that they are landed with a point of reference which, although morally unassailable, is, for positive and practicable purposes, lacking useful substance. As illustrated in Chapter 2, the UK Government has, for all intents and purposes, adopted 'ecological modernisation' as its conception of the Brundtland notion with its systematised priorities of economic growth, technological advance and efficiency-based resource management. The political comfort associated with this interpretation merely engenders reformist hope rather than practical understanding for a specific administrative sector such as land use planning.

The local practitioner looking for meaningful terms of reference is, either, left to construct and relate a broad multi-sectoral understanding which is likely to step outside of the bounds of material planning considerations, or, to work within a negative and reactive framework as to what may be perceived as unsustainable. In this light the comment from one authority that it was inappropriate to refer to 'sustainable' in policy statements would seem quite valid. What becomes important is to establish SR within the parameters of land use planning rather than laying claim to some sectorally inappropriate notion of 'sustainable development planning'. The problem, however, remains that if the link between the commissioning agenda (i.e. sustainable development) and SR activity is not substantively validated through regulation and/or formal guidance it is open to being undermined by more established/accepted agendas or ways of working.

With regard to the South Tyneside UDP, the repository of understanding for policy-making was essentially confined to the Policy Section and one individual in particular. The involvement of development control officers as the supposed administrative users of the plan in a plan-led system was striking in its absence. An active debate within the LPA amongst and between officers and members was never engaged upon. This situation, however, was as much a product of the well rehearsed problems of clarifying sustainable development as a substantive policy/proposal objective, as it was a reflection of the development plan preparation process itself. At the political level in South Tyneside the bulk of the content of the emerging UDP was of little interest to members, being viewed as an essentially administrative officer level task. The involvement of the elected representatives of the Borough was tied to the need to resolve specific issues thrown up by negative public responses at the consultation and deposit phases. Whether the problematic policies/proposals were founded upon a notion of sustainable development or not was of little importance in seeking resolution. Decision making was circumscribed by political expedience and

entrenched worries over unemployment and regeneration. The Policy Section's attempts to encapsulate these concerns within a developing SR framework were batted down as of secondary importance at chief officer level. At best one can say that the planners were left to interpret evolving outfall from an established agenda through a sustainability lens.

There is certainly an indictment of the planning process here: only contentious and political issues are deemed of genuine relevance and interest amongst lead members and executive officers. Such issues are taken within what might be termed their 'native' context as opposed to that constructed through and presented by the plan itself. Criticism of this nature is particularly directed at the strategic level and most notably within the unitary planning context (Part 1 of UDPs). The tendency is towards the anodyne and introspective, an inclination which stands to absorb support for a 'sustainable' approach without leading to any particular impact on the harder edge of proposals and their interface with implementation and development control at the locally specific level (Part 2 of UDPs).

Neither officers of the Regional Government Offices or Planning Inspectors have any specific interest in facilitating LPAs in their interpretation and incorporation of sustainable development. The former are essentially concerned with ensuring that the plan's direction and content are located within the boundaries set by the Secretary of State's guidance and advice. In practice this amounts to some acknowledgement of the new environmental agenda in supporting text. With the emphasis upon speeding up the preparation process the Government Offices' critical attention is essentially directed at the content of policies and proposals, not upon developing and linking them to an explanatory text which may or may not be advancing a SR approach.

The Planning Inspectorate are also under no particular pressure to put across a working understanding of sustainable development as, in the case of PLIs, they are only required to stand in judgement on objections to the plan's content and, although neutral, are required (as others) to work within parameters derived from and set by central government.

Within the administration of the system we therefore see productive SR engagement starkly limited to what is necessary to get the job done with a minimum of delay, i.e. constructing a plan circumscribed by the parameters laid down in PPGs.

External parties with interests to protect or advance may, in theory, have greater freedom to develop SR and bring this to bear in support of their causes. This freedom however is bound by two important factors. The first relates to the pre-eminence of the Brundtland definition and the win-win assumptions behind it. This means that protagonists in dispute over development rights can find (on either side of the 'equation') some room to express their desires or concerns under the banner of sustainable development. This position stultifies united dialogue to clarify understanding and bring it out into the open for closer scrutiny. The

adversarial nature of the system means that if they were to 'collaborate' there would be significant potential for them to undermine their own positions in an ecologically debilitating version of the 'prisoner's dilemma' (i.e. both parties could conceivably come out with their long term interests enhanced but, without an unshakeable belief in bilateral commitment and trust, the risks are too great and short term individual benefit drives the rational for action).

The second limitation is imposed by the planning system itself as arguments developed outside of the sphere defined as material to land-use policy and decision making are sidelined. The parameters of discussion are essentially laid down in central government guidance which are then used by the LPA and policed/upheld by both Regional Government Offices and the representatives of the Planning Inspectorate. An additional tangential issue here is that for many external parties, who become drawn into the plan preparation process, this is the first time they have had to come to terms with a notion of sustainable development and thus received wisdom on the subject is internally generated and recirculated by the planning system itself which again is likely to limit discussion to that presented in draft plans and directly associated planning references.

8.1.2 Knowledge and application principles

If, as the above suggests, aligning a practical delivery-oriented definition of sustainable development with the arrangements of the English planning system is an unworkable and possibly futile proposition then one looks to putative principles through which the requisite SR can be applied. As detailed in Chapter 1 such methodological considerations are bound up with the issue of 'sustainable knowledge'. A frequently stated restraint on the ability and/or opportunity to work up more meaningful and objective based definitions of sustainable development is the lack or fragmented nature of such appropriate knowledge [Barton *et al.*, 1995].

At the time the survey work was carried out there was very little SR input, whether theoretical (principles and concepts) or practical (policies and proposals), from external or internal sources relating to a local authority's sphere of responsibility. What was fed in was purely informational – an uneven array of baseline state of the environment type data which could sporadically inform elements of SR but could not lead it. The key issue here is one of potential integration and how best it should be fostered especially in relation to State of the Environment (SoE) reports, Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs), Air Quality Management Plans and Local Transport Plans (LTPs). In the South Tyneside case a great deal of input came from existing or emerging internal, principally regeneration focused, strategy documents. These were rhetorically positive with regard to SR but the emphasis was upon a quality environment in terms of attracting investment rather than under the explicit auspices

of sustainable development. Advocates of the ecological modernisation thesis would point to the expedience of this relationship, however, without substantive content it is a normatively hollow one.

The detailed information required in terms of categorisation, impact forecasting and indicators was either absent or narrowly focused within niche and expert interest groups (typically nature conservation). Many LPAs were also hoping to develop some form of comprehensive SoE audit - in South Tyneside many proposed sustainability targets and indicators were to be founded on the output from such an exercise. The political will, priority and resources for such an extensive project were, however, yet to be committed.

It could be argued that the present epistemological vacuum is both reflected in, and the rationale behind, the current subscription to various principles for handling SR. Information and data regarding environmental resources is of greater immediate importance to the viability of some such decision/policy making frameworks over others. Even if such data is made available, however, the framing of the executive structure is not a neutral process and the institutional arrangements, formal administrative organisation and web of interest group relations will all, to lesser or greater degrees, influence how baseline 'sustainable knowledge' is subsequently shaped, used and interpreted. In the light of these two comments, the current weight and mix of what have been defined as 'application principles' can be seen as a window to appreciating the incorporation of 'principled' strains of SR within the development planning system.

From an academic perspective it is tempting to apply some theoretical order to principles, knowledge and application along the lines of: i.) detect principle 'A', ii.) uncover the information being used to define its parameters, and iii.) critically examine it in operation. Both the survey and case study findings suggest that such a linear 'un-picking' of the process fails as an approach to explanation. The links between knowledge, its organisation and application are both conflated and complex. Analysis can usefully be founded on an awareness of the principles relating to an operationalisation of SR but must not be driven by it. To reiterate one officer's view:

"I think you take bits, you don't generate a theory to run through the Plan, it may not be intellectually satisfying but I think that's how we do it."

There are simply too many 'real world' forces at play - institutional, circumstantial, pragmatic, historical, external or otherwise - for simplistic theorising to stand any chance of explanatory success, no matter how much it bullies the evidence presented. Each force seeks to apply its own order, the researchers job is to reveal them, their interactions and united direction. The handling of the issue of strategic economic development site allocation in the

emerging South Tyneside UDP usefully exemplifies this point and will be referenced below following a more general critical overview of the status of application principles.

Of the five principles put forward, demand management was identified as the one to which LPAs could most readily subscribe in their approach to advancing sustainable development. The strategy of attempting to manage existing and forecasted demand for development rights in a manner sympathetic to the tenets of environmental protection, equity, futurity and participation can be made, rhetorically at least, to resonate strongly with the ideals and extant operational framework of the English planning system. To many, the system and its practitioners exist as a stewardship regulatory mechanism to protect the local built and natural environment from demand for unwanted development [e.g. Winter, 1994]. What the survey highlights, however, as missing is the essential re-evaluative mechanisms and knowledge to establish what unwanted development means in the local-global sustainability context. To manage demand in relation to this new environmental agenda there is an essential requirement to substantively understand the criteria and content of demand from that which is genuinely sustainable to that which is demonstrably unsustainable. The precautionary principle can be seen as a more radical catch-all variant of the demand management approach. It requires one to be explicit about uncertainty over SR and to respond to this with a cautionary deference to demands which might lead to unsustainable outcomes.

For each of the other putative principles the requirement for concrete data is considerably more specific and less open to the influence of interest related expedience. In the case of policy guided by environmental thresholds and limits the requirement is self-evident. Within the adversarial arena of plan examination and inquiry, where cases for contentious policies and proposals are built around quantitatively defensible proofs, any lack or inconsistency of such data will, regardless of the best intentions, tend to preclude the use of capacities, thresholds and targets as the drivers of policy formulation. From the compensatory perspective, for the off-setting 'compensation' to have more than acknowledgement value (that some environmental resource has been lost or compromised) a precise appreciation of the loss, somehow encapsulating equity and futurity, must be inclusively established. Finally falling back on what might be described as the least unsustainable option (the 'best practicable environmental option'), decision makers are required to draw a non-arbitrary 'practicability line'. If this is to favour interests beyond that of the producer, and exist within a 'sustainable' framework of production, then meaningful data regarding environmental re-evaluation is a necessary pre-condition.

As introduced above, the central point of contention in South Tyneside's draft UDP (strategic economic development site allocation) stands as an excellent example of how a simplistic adoption of what one might call 'principle analysis' is inadequate as an explanatory tool.

Throughout the tortured evolution of the issue one can detect fragments and veneers of each re-/evaluative application principle put forward. Through persisting with this line of analysis it becomes increasingly apparent that it is the components of these principles as they already existed within the planning system (i.e. pre-sustainable development) which underlie, in a ‘critical’ sense, references deemed as pertaining to SR. This point can be illustrated through reference to the rationales adopted for retaining or deleting areas of Green Belt at various points in the UDP’s drafting. The LPA’s vacillation on the subject shows that a ‘sustainable’ outlook can and was applied to very different policy stances and that these can be related to each of the application principles identified in Chapter 1. Depending on whether areas of Green Belt were proposed for deletion, retention or extension, Table 8.1 shows: i.) how one might superficially infer the presence and use of the rationale behind an SR application principle in the LPA’s to-and-fro decision-making (middle column); and, ii.) how extant planning or local politically driven rationales (right-hand column) can readily co-exist with them and potentially shelter under a veil of decisions made with regard to progressing the sustainable development of the Borough.

Table 8.1 - Appraising application principles in decision-making processes, an illustrative example.

Application principle	Potential ‘sustainable’ rationales for decision-making	Conventional/actual rationales for decision-making
Precautionary principle	Green Belt deletion resisted due to uncertainty over long-term socio-environmental impact.	Green Belt deletion resisted due to uncertainty over electoral repercussions following strong local community objection.
Environmental thresholds and limits	Green Belt designation, by its very nature, demarcates a geographical threshold/limit to physical developmental activity – preserving character, greenspace and heterogeneity.	Green Belt designations are historically successful survivors from a previous and lasting popular agenda to set limits upon urban encroachment and coalescence.
Environmental compensation	Specific Green Belt deletions are acceptable so long as they are matched/balanced by extensions elsewhere – the level of protected environmental capital remaining constant.	In order to facilitate a case for justifying a Green Belt deletion against the principle direction of PPG advice, it is expedient to offset any deletion with an extension elsewhere.
Demand Management	<p>i.) A carefully selected and screened Green Belt deletion can reduce demand for activities which are environmentally damaging (typically transport related).</p> <p>ii.) Strict adherence to Green Belt designations pushes development to locate in established urban areas (esp. brownfield locations).</p>	<p>i.) Green Belt / greenfield locations with good communication infrastructures are more attractive to development / investment interests.</p> <p>ii.) Strict adherence to Green Belt designations is a politically important means of managing demand to protect property values.</p>

Best practicable environmental option	Choices over site selection are so limited, and the need sufficiently great, that one can only ensure that the best practicable environmental option is taken within the bounds of prevailing circumstance.	The need for a strategic economic development site emanates from a powerfully entrenched agenda within which sustainable development criteria are only deemed practicable on a 'fit where they touch' basis.
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It is apparent from this example that demand management is an especially flexible 'principle'. It can apparently be used to support either Green Belt retention or deletion – a flexibility which responds positively to the planning system's discretionary nature. The whole issue raised here of the potentially superficial influence of SR, within the institutional arrangements of the planning system, is a significant one. It has important analytical repercussions. These will subsequently be picked up on and used to shape consideration of the communicative findings.

8.1.3 Mechanisms of sustainable re-evaluation

A re-evaluation, or evaluation where previously there was none, of environmental resources in 'sustainable' terms is an active process requiring broad actor participation and public involvement – within the planning system the minimum statutory requirement for such involvement is a passive consultation. It appears that LPAs are not inclined or particularly encouraged to exceed this minimum level. Mechanisms and openings do exist, potentially or otherwise, but these require both commitment and resources from the LPA in an already administratively demanding preparation process. Specifically drawing attention to the need and repercussions of a re-/evaluation could only, especially in the first instance, extend and complicate this process. The, largely unspoken, concern is that potentially tensions would be raised, discussions prolonged, representations multiplied, modifications complicated, and public inquiries / examinations extended. The arguments made are also bound to run counter to many apparently desirable/needed development proposals. There really is little incentive, without some 'championing' force, to produce proactive participative processes which will, at least in the short term, generate additional workloads, raise new or latent tensions and increase costs.

Integration with LA21 initiatives and strategies has genuine potential to take on this workload in terms of promulgating involvement. Such an approach, however, certainly does not negate the chance of increased tension and confrontation especially between pro- and anti-development stakeholders. It is, where efforts are made at integration, both politically and bureaucratically advantageous to ensure that the development leads LA21 initiatives. The implication is that where they are led by local authorities they will be built within a framework, and in support of, local authority plans both in existence and in the making. LA21

endeavours therefore become a subsumed extension of consultation to these plans as opposed to active stakeholder participation in SR. The LA21 process may thus be a kaleidoscope of different views on what is, or is not, important to improving the long term sustenance of the local environment in a global context. The (hidden) hand that turns the lens, however, is in the majority of instances that of established local interests and agendas. The patterns so produced are thus unlikely to suggest an enlightened/reconceived arrangement through which the environment is to be viewed in policy- and decision-making.

Within the parameters of this study the environmental appraisal of development plan policies and proposals stands as the most overt and sectorally specific mechanism for framing and formally relating SR. The potential of such appraisals is however struggling to be realised. Some of the immediate and more long term (in developing and supplying useful referential data) reasons for this are administrative in relation to allocating skills, time and funds. Other less resource-based and less tractable reasons may be considered a result of the appraisal process being carried out internally within development plan preparation and as such taking place within its established parameters. Within this arrangement of self-regulation it would seem unlikely that the environmental appraisal would generate, or possibly be allowed to generate, output of a sufficiently contradictory nature that it would not already be covered, and handled, by central government direction or existing processes of LPA deliberation, representation, inquiry/examination and modification. In practice, as opposed to 'best practice', it is a backwards look at policies/proposals which have already been drafted. As such, it does not take the form of a fundamental appraisal of local environmental resources in relation to their protection, long term integrity, equitable access and cross-community involvement as its point of departure.

8.2 Mediating local land use options through SR – we're not there yet

The research methodology presented in Chapter 4 placed the emphasis for the empirical work upon examining the incorporation of SR in the interlinked procedural and communicative elements of plan preparation. With regard to the latter it was envisaged that the case study would explore the role SR was playing in the mediation of claims and representations over land use development. The preceding procedurally focused discussion has, however, pointed out that this mediatory function of the communicative element is in advance of the current state of incorporation of sustainable development in the SR context. There is insufficient substantive evidence that SR has penetrated policy making to the extent that it is a genuine force in mediating claims over development rights:

some of the language is present;

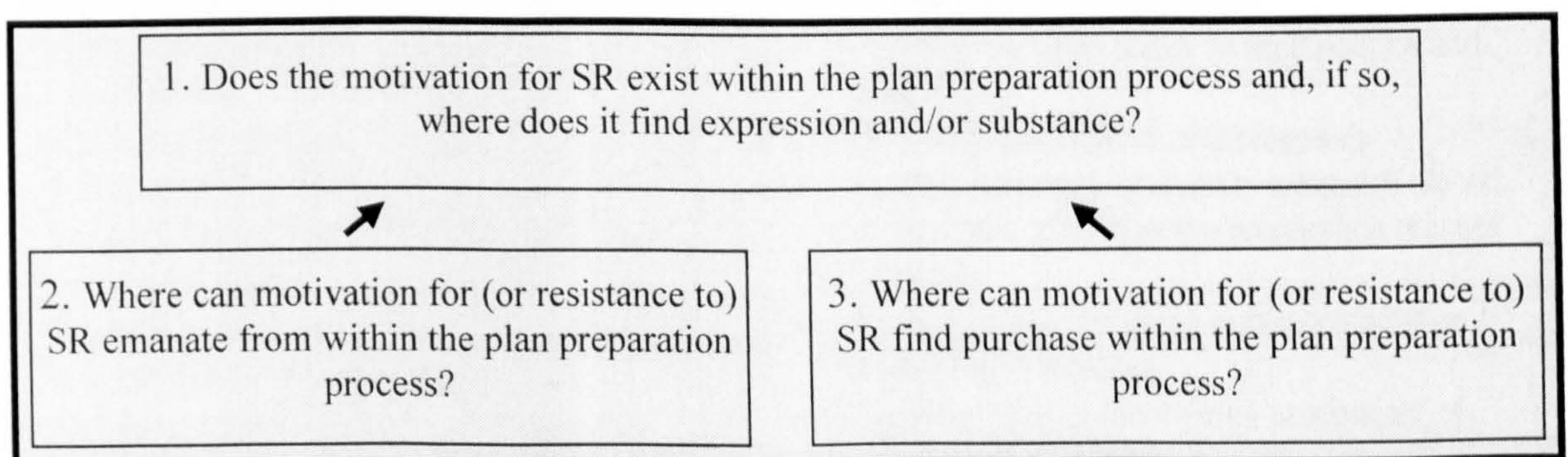
certain criteria are in place;

a limited amount of pertinent information is available and emerging;
 some existing elements of the planning system relating to designations and ‘protect and enhance’ stewardship are supportive;
 certain bounded channels of access in terms of participation and partnership are open.
 Overall, the critical spark required to fire up these components into a functioning SR entity, capable of powering the planning system’s characteristic mediatory role in the direction of sustainable development, is lacking. The ‘spark’ is *motivation* and thus to assess the system’s ability, or inability, to facilitate sustainable development at *this* juncture one must take a step back in communicative analysis to locate where the motivation (or its converse, resistance) lies and what form it takes.

SR driven mediatory activity in this area has not become systematised in terms of norms and beliefs. The procedural analysis highlights this lack of institutional establishment. Issues of capacity, ‘will’ and motivation therefore become the appropriate empirical markers for identifying and signposting the extent and potential of the incorporation of a notion of sustainable development into the system. From this position it is useful, for the purposes of the discussion in this section, to rephrase the research’s key questions, not in a manner which invalidates them or the adopted methodology, as these remains quite acceptable, but in a way which responds to this empirically founded appreciation – Figure 8.1, below, does exactly this.

The focus remains upon the identification and examination of principles/informing concepts, implementation and the links between them (thus sustaining the line of inquiry). Analysis, however, will be directed towards locating where the motivation or resistance to SR comes from in development plan preparation and where it can find useful expression. Intuitively it would seem that the greatest potential for advancing SR will come where motivations are shared amongst different stakeholders and are able to find telling access to the planning process.

Figure 8.1 - Empirically derived re-interpretation of the key research questions in their communicative context



To instil some order to the analysis, and in acknowledgement of the shape of the evidence collected, the state of motivation or resistance will be presented using the stakeholder groupings gainfully employed in the case study write-up, i.e.:

- i.) 'Internal' – a.) officers; b.) members
- ii.) 'External' – a.) Government Regional Office and the Planning Inspectorate; b.) development interests; c.) individual, community and environmental group interests

8.2.1 In search of motivation

The motivational aspects of Central Government, as those responsible for controlling and shaping the content of the system, have previously been presented in Chapter 2 through the historical development of national policy statements and guidance. The following critical analysis may be considered as an important empirical test of the motivational influence of centrally derived SR upon 'internal' and 'external' local actors.

The first steps in analysis are to:

- a.) identify possible areas and sources in the plan preparation process from which expressions of motivation or resistance to SR are likely to emanate, and;
- b.) identify within the plan preparation process where such expressions might find purchase.

Table 8.2, below, has been constructed from the empirical and documentary evidence to summarise these two elements. The research evidence, can then be used to examine the extent of the existence of such motivational/resisting factors and their room for manoeuvre (as functions of communicative activity) within the institutional arrangements of the system.

Table 8.2 - The motivation for (or resistance to) environmental re-/evaluation in the plan preparation process

Where can motivation for (or resistance to) SR emanate from within the plan preparation process?	Where can motivation for (or resistance to) SR find expression within the plan preparation process?
Internal (Officers)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Government land use policy and advice (esp. RPG and PPGs) • Central Government general and other sectoral policy and statements • Existing local land use planning documents • Existing and developing policy and planning documents from other areas of LA work • Membership direction • Consultation • Formal representation • Administrative pressure • Local planning experience in relation to local needs and issues • Professional training • Professional experience • Personal perspective, views, opinions and inclination • Personal awareness of environmental agenda • Development control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising issues to be covered over the plan period and beyond • Selecting, generating, or commissioning new, data sources • Drawing up draft policies and proposals, either as new entities or adaptations of previous ones • Formatting the plan document • Handling representations on draft policies and proposals • Modifying draft policies and proposals • Advising members and senior executive officers on available options as the preparation process advances • Devising and undertaking public consultation / participation exercises • Appraising the environmental 'credentials' of policies and proposals • Presenting proofs at the Public Local Inquiry • Defending policy and proposal content

Internal (Members)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice, reporting and issue-raising from officers • Perception of local needs and issues • Political ideology • Political pressure – ability to exercise power • Electorate (excl. plan consultation/representations) • Personal perspective, views, opinions and inclination • Personal awareness of environmental agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining essential policy commitments and direction • Directing officers on the content, handling and reassessment of issues as and when deemed necessary • Politically defending policy and proposal content • Active involvement in plan consultation / participation exercises
External (Government Regional Office [GO] and the Planning Inspectorate [PI])	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Government land use policy and advice (esp. RPG and PPGs) • Awareness of regional /national planning context • Professional training • Professional experience • Personal perspective, views, opinions and inclination • Personal awareness of environmental agenda • Administrative pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informally discussing plan content with LPA (GO) • Advising LPA on what is likely to prove acceptable/unacceptable to SoS (GO) • Making representations (GO) • Informally meeting with any interested party to discuss Central Government policy direction and developments (GO) • Scheduling and chairing discussions at PLI (PI) • Balancing and assessing arguments (PI) • Drawing up recommendations for inclusion in PLI report (PI)
External (development interests)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Government land use policy and advice (esp. RPG and PPGs) • Expedience in maximising profit and asset potential • Placation of local resistance to development • Long term view of asset management and acquisition • Inward investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively taking part in public consultation / participation exercise • Informally discussing the viability of development proposals with the LPA • Making representations • Appearing at PLI
External (individual, community and environmental group interests)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats to environmental resources and amenity • Provision for future generations • Personal awareness of environmental agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively taking part in public consultation / participation exercise • Informally discussing the viability of development proposals with the LPA • Making representations • Appearing at PLI

There is perhaps, from an academic outlook, a desire to separate factors of motivation from factors of resistance and to subsequently draw conclusions from the balancing of two sides of an overall directional ‘equation’. An analytical separation of this type would again, however, be ‘bullying’ the data into an academically enforced framework where in fact motivation is likely to be a function of resistance and vice-versa. ‘Black’ and ‘white’, ‘either ... or’ categorisation also tends towards a denial of the all important issue of apparent neutrality and non-decision making.

It must of course be remembered throughout that the socio-economic, environmental and political contexts of each LPA across the country varies and thus so does the composite shape of the motivational 'spark'. The South Tyneside narrative and the limited comments from the survey LPAs will be unique to their own particular contexts. This individuality will, however, be framed within an array of generic factors relating to the broader operation of the planning system and it is upon these that attention must be focused.

8.2.2 'Internal' motivation/resistance to SR

i.) Officers

The essential role of LPA officers is to administer the centrally defined policy direction of the planning system whilst advising and responding to the requests and demands of the Council membership as the democratic representatives of the local area's population. Their executive role is significant but ultimately subservient to that held by the elected membership.

In this essentially administrative role, officers are bound through their formal training, professional standing and local government statutory obligations to frame their decision making and considered opinions within the parameters set by national legislation, regulation, circulars and guidance notes. References to sustainable development within these instruments is thus, in a formal sense, the most direct motivational component relating to a re-evaluation of environmental resources. Both the survey and case study findings, however, illustrate that this impetus from the centre is framed in such a way that the more officers think about the incorporation of sustainable development – what it means both strategically and in delivery - the harder it becomes to move forward. The gap between notional expression (essentially the Brundtland definition) and what can 'usefully be said', in substantive policy/proposal terms, is palpable. The means of SR are crucially both fragmented by issue and criteria driven. SR through a comprehensive strategic response covering broad swathes of policy is not dismissed but, at the same time, is not encouraged. The use of criteria allows the 'sustainable' notion, as it pertains to land use planning, to be broken down into fragments which are more amenable as material considerations than some overarching principle which would almost certainly introduce internal conflict and contradiction.

The case study findings illustrate the effects of this disaggregated motivation upon local land use development planning. In South Tyneside environmental considerations were lent a high policy profile from the outset (prior to the introduction of the sustainable development). This stance was a product of the regeneration agenda which has dominated political deliberation since the 1980s in an effort to rebuild the local economy, bridge the 'jobs gap', stem out-migration and minimise deprivation. Improving the quality of the Borough's environment was perceived as integral to the success of this project to the extent that it was described as being

of 'paramount importance'. A 'green filter' was to be applied to policy at all levels to ensure that the existing environment was not compromised and preferably improved. This approach can be seen as an elevated version of the established 'protect and enhance' which still characterises much of the planning system's response to environmental issues. Even though this privileged status was reined in by the senior executive prior to the publication of the consultation draft (on the grounds that the bias being presented was too great) one might reasonably look to this commitment as a firm foundation for SR. In the event, however, the strategic use of sustainable development as an over-arching reference and driver for policy/proposal formulation only really found purchase in the content of supportive text as opposed to formal policies and proposals. This was notably the case with regard to emerging proposals for strategic economic development sites. The Policy Section was left to apply the language of sustainable development to allocation decisions once the political 'music' had stopped. One can, therefore, detect a vacuum between conception and policy which, rather than being filled by working principles (developed from a comprehensively apposite SR) is occupied in this instance by the vagaries and vacillations of local politics.

New causes which re-interpret established perspectives, ways of working and generating profitable output require 'champions' to convince and cajole the majority of the benefits of modifying their activity. South Tyneside had such a champion within their Planning Policy section, this individual with support from his immediate manager was almost solely responsible for incorporating the language and direction of sustainable development into the emerging UDP. The depth of understanding and appreciation is well illustrated in Part 1 of the UDP, especially with regard to the supporting text. The conception presented is essentially a blend of environmental capacity and ecological modernisation: an approach which can be rationalised, respectively, on the grounds of the physical constraints to economic growth within the Borough (its size, density of built up area, limited number and size of development sites, and extent of the Green Belt) and the conceptual context of PPGs (positive-sum development founded upon technical advances and demand management). Unfortunately the enthusiasm and cogency of this response to SR at departmental officer level was not matched at the senior executive level. Without a champion to carry this understanding and meaning into the political realm it becomes a 'casualty of the poles of arguments bought to bear' in an overtly adversarial arena. Unless the principled SR line can be held, which was not the case in South Tyneside, it is all too easy for different arguments to legitimate themselves, superficially at least, though claiming to promote 'sustainable development'. The need for such an internal force is underlined by the paucity of external pressure or representation from actors with environmental credentials.

Because of the relationship between central and local government (i.e. the required adherence to central legislation, policy and guidance) overt resistance to an incorporation of sustainable development amongst the LPA administrators is unfeasible. Certain elements, however, within the officer domain are quite capable of undermining SR activity. One can divide these restraints between those that relate to administration and those that relate to organisation

From an administrative perspective, the ability to re-/evaluate environmental resources as an integral element of policy and proposal generation is apparently hamstrung by a lack of resources within Planning departments. This tangible capacity issue relates to the availability of time, money and resources as an interlinked entity. Most LPAs cite this as a key element in preventing them from prioritising what they see as important work in assessing the weight to be applied to the environment as a material consideration on policies and proposals. Without this information a technical-rational approach, typically framed within ideas of environmental capital, is perceived as strategically stalled with a fallback to case by case 'protect and enhance' assessment as the only available course of action. The deliberation and debating mechanisms, through which conflict is resolved within the plan preparation process, is driven at the professional level by the need to substantively rationalise decisions. As the process moves on through consultation, deposit and modifications to finally reach public inquiry/examination so this need becomes increasingly significant. The 'proofs' presented in front of planning inspectors are public indications of professional competence and as such if not backed up by objectivity and 'fact' are liable to be undermined – especially for those contentious issues in which legally trained representatives, trained in the demolition of opponents arguments, are employed by parties with the finance to do so. The nature of this adversarial approach to mediation finds LPA officers reluctant to fight their case without 'hard' evidence to support it. Whether the envisaged resource constrained SR work would actually make a difference is a moot point without the setting of clear and agreed guidelines concerning what is 'sustainably' important and what is not.

The other key administrative issue which can either truncate or negate SR activity relates to both the bureaucratic and convoluted nature of the plan preparation process itself. In the first instance there is a minimal degree of accountability or quality control in the carrying out of fixed components such as public consultation and environmental appraisal. In these cases there is a requirement to publish the details of such sub-processes but, so long as the regulations or guidance are fulfilled, their effectiveness in terms of coverage and generating useful input is unlikely to be questioned. The degree to which LPAs commit to such processes is a matter of local discretion which may be linked to internal enthusiasm, political expedience, resources (as outlined above) or pressure to move the plan preparation on as quickly as possible. For any of these reasons a desire to 'tick the box' can override more

committed/exhaustive ideals. The point raised about the time taken to draw up/review a development plan has received particular attention from central government with plans often going into almost immediate review following final adoption (as was the case in South Tyneside) – this presents the very real problem of plans being significantly out of date or losing strategic coherence by the time they are adopted. As a consequence LPAs have in recent years been under some pressure to progress their development plans as quickly as possible which in turn has meant that there is limited room to adopt/trial novel discretionary, non-statutory or experimental practices, instigate lengthy research or develop new partnerships if not entirely necessary to the production of a plan within the bounds of regulation.

Outside of the LPA Policy realm the convoluted nature of the plan preparation process when combined with non-specific guidance may generate disillusionment with the efficacy of the emerging plan as a genuine point of privileged reference in development control (DC). Without presenting some concrete means through which planning applications can be re-/assessed in a sustainable light moves towards SR will find little purchase in DC practice. In the South Tyneside case this point was thrown into greater relief by an organisational structure which had created an operational rift between the Policy and DC sections. The upshot being that the two really did not engage in the level of debate required to affect the implementation of a coherent ‘sustainable’ lead at the essential point of delivery in decision-making. In such situations PPG criteria thus become the principal material considerations in framing advice to committee regarding planning applications – a ‘business as usual’ scenario.

A final point to make here is that an apparent failure to take on SR may not be as much a question of resistance or lack of motivation as one of limited awareness or crude adherence to the criteria driven elements of PPGs. To carry out an environmental appraisal does not necessarily require one to recognise and apply sustainability parameters – reference to the single dimension of ‘protect and enhance’ is sufficient (sustainability appraisals for local plans may become a reality but as yet such approaches remain within the strategic planning sphere). Consultation can be acceptably carried out in a highly tokenist and non-participatory manner. If the new environmental agenda does not cognitively impact development planning officers (internally, externally or personally) then failure to instil SR becomes not so much a question of direct or circumstantial resistance but rather one of ignorance and uninformed acknowledgement.

ii.) Members

Within LPAs the members, be they in committees or full council, are the essential executive body. The issue of delegated powers is not formally an issue in development plan preparation,

although, the officers responsible for writing the document are highly influential as decisions are of course constantly made throughout the drafting process. Majority views will guide, direct and instruct Policy officers so that the plan reflects the requisite corporate strategy and/or electoral necessity.

As with each of the stakeholder groups discussed here: motivation begins with understanding. The principal and most consistent line of understanding for councillors within land use planning will almost inevitably come from those officers involved in development plan preparation. Once explained in context it seems highly likely that it would receive widespread cross-party support in concept if not in detail. Some, if not all councillors, should have come across the term 'sustainable development' in one form or another through the preparation of area-wide LA21 plans/strategies.

As with the development control officers above, unless this understanding breaks through to have some real bearing on how to shape decision-making on the ground motivation will be limited to the strategic and rhetorical. Five key issues tend to predominate membership deliberations over appropriate courses of substantive action: i.) political ideology; ii.) statutory obligation; iii.) electoral pressure; iv.) cost, and v.) access to funding/investment. Unfortunately for each of these the motivation for SR is typically either neutral or negative. If taken as an integrated long term whole, policies and proposals built from an apposite SR are likely to be positive and, for want of a better word, 'sustainable'. The findings indicate, however, that to elected representatives the rationale for decision-making within the context of land use development planning is built around a future orientated rationale in which the key issues are economic growth/regeneration, short term gains, and electoral expedience. Sustainable development has just introduced a new terminology for justifying an established and agreed policy direction. The Chair of the committee handling the UDP was frankly unmotivated by the whole agenda, the need for SR is apparently superfluous if understood at all - to requote:

“We would have ended up with much the same Plan without the advent of sustainability, I mean that's a new word that the members have learnt, they're tickled pink” ... “We've just rounded the corners, dotted the i's and crossed the t's, that's all we've done”

8.2.3 'External' motivation/resistance to SR

i.) Government Regional Offices and the Planning Inspectorate

Both representatives of the Government Regional Offices and the Planning Inspectorate are professionally bound by the state of central government guidance and direction at the times

they comment on or make recommendations about a development plan respectively. Their motivations with regard to facilitating SR within policies and proposals is thus essentially limited to that put forward in PPGs. Their comments and input to the South Tyneside UDP on the subject are perhaps the most apposite reflection of what this guidance amounted to in practice at the time the plan was at the crucial deposit/PLI/modifications stage of its preparation. All that appeared to be required was an acknowledgement of the sustainable development agenda through appropriate and timely reference to the associated terminology. Proof of SR and accountability in this respect were simply not deemed a requirement to validate the UDP's content. The important issue was that policies and proposals had taken into account PPG criteria on development matters as and when they arose – to reiterate the words of a regional office representative, plans are judged according to:

- “ 1. Are proposals in line with government guidance, as far as it goes?
2. Is what they're proposing going to cause more problems than it solves?
3. Is it a proper professional point of view or have party politics got in the way?
4. Are they a competent authority?”

Both parties in their professional standing are required to be neutral and apolitical and if either had any particular leanings towards advancing SR this was suffocated under a PPG/RPG referential blanket. At the time the empirical work was carried out a more motivating agenda was to get plans adopted as quickly as possible. This was quite explicit for the Government Regional Office and apparently implicit within the recommendations of the PLI inspector(s) for the South Tyneside UDP. If officers within the LPA were looking to either party to help them carry their strategic response to SR laid out in Part 1 of the UDP into the specific policies and proposals of Part 2 they were simply going to be disappointed. This situation was certainly not helped by the very low esteem in which the Government Office for the North East (GONE) held Part 1 UDP's for the unitary authorities of the ex-metropolitan county.

ii.) Development interests

Those actors within the development plan preparation process with interests specifically tied to securing development rights or favourable allocations are simply bound to advancing these interests. Of all the groups here, their motivations are perhaps the most straightforward to understand and predict – they will do what ever is necessary to secure the most profitable outcome. Their approach to doing this is however, as with all players, crucially shaped by the system in which they are required to operate. They know that in order to succeed they must understand the system and play within its rules but unlike members of all the previous groups

they can focus all their attention and relatively considerable resources upon individual gain without pressures relating to public interest or administrative procedure. Having said this, however, they are certainly in no position to ignore these issues if they are to maximise their opportunities for success.

The case study findings illustrate that developers and land owners have a mix of both clear cut motivation and resistance to the sustainable development agenda dependant upon the nature of their interests. They are highly sensitive to the content of RPG and PPG and endeavour to illustrate at all times that their proposals and representations adhere to current content. Reference to sustainable development is only made when it is likely to facilitate arguments in favour of development on a particular site or secure more beneficial allocations across the local area. Even when applied, however, it is as a rhetorical 'lever' and does not seem to imply any attempt to meaningfully re-evaluate proposals in a 'sustainable' light – the words of one experienced developmental voice are particularly telling and bear re-quoting:

“We use sustainability arguments but it doesn't get us anywhere. It's like there's lies, damn lies and sustainability. When you look at a piece of land you wish to promote through the Plan, you know what they're (the LPA) looking for, you know what the criteria are, you know whether it is an acceptable site and then I think to get it through the Plan I'm going to have to tag on the latest buzz words”

The key motivation in relation to SR is to ensure that, if it is drawn into arguments by any opposing group, the specific aspects which might constrain a development opportunity are deflected either by being re-expressed in a more favourable light or discredited (often using paid professional representation).

iii.) Individual, community and environmental group interests

The very large majority of actors within this group only become involved in plan preparation through objecting to a specific draft policy or proposal which is perceived as adversely affecting the interests they hold or represent. The group can be crudely divided in two according to convention and access. Firstly, there are those who are members of established environment related organisations and agencies such as the Environment Agency, English Nature, English Heritage, the Countryside Agency and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Such bodies as these are formally involved in the plan preparation as named consultees from the outset and are experienced in the ways of development planning. They can be expected to have developed understandings of sustainable development but their motivation in terms of SR is essentially limited to their areas of expertise and operation. Each has an agenda defined by quite specific terms of reference which are narrowed again in

relation to land use planning matters. In their formal consultative roles they are regularly required to respond to the content of emerging development plans and thus often have dedicated or partially dedicated staff familiar with reviewing plans. These staff have often developed systematised means of pulling out and analysing those areas of specific relevance to the interests they represent and advise on. The upshot of such approaches is that the representations made are very clearly compartmentalised and often, to experienced LPA officers, predictable. As a result of their familiar professional working practices and established access channels into the planning process from an early stage, the very great majority of their representations can be readily handled and 'negotiated away' in advance of PLIs/EIPs. As a group, they also differ from the majority of other external players in that their representations are as likely to be of support as they are of opposition and can therefore stand as rare allies to LPAs at PLIs/EIPs where an environmental perspective (albeit often with a very conventional physical aspect) is given privilege in draft policies and proposals.

Within the second group, comprising community, local environment and individual interests, motivation to become involved in the planning process is a far more personal affair than for those above. Motivation with regard to SR, however, is fractured and piecemeal. This is principally a composite consequence of one dimensional single issue responses and the lack of a meaningful understanding of sustainable development. For the majority of community and individual actors in South Tyneside, the UDP was the first time they had come into direct contact with the notion and their understanding was thus internalised within the parameters of the system itself. The fact that virtually none of the objectors here raised the issue of sustainable development, either positively or negatively, within their representations is indicative of the system's failure to put across useful meaning in a practical context. The best one can say with regard to this disparate sub-group is that SR is a latent motive force presently subjugated by a system and associated interests with respectively little opportunity or incentive to promote integrated environmental awareness, openness and accessibility.

8.3 Reflection

In reflecting on the procedurally and communicatively focused findings outlined above, the first matter to acknowledge is the nascency of the issue in practice. Efforts to incorporate sustainable development into development plans and their preparation is still very much in its infancy - a point highlighted by many respondents/interviewees. At the time of the fieldwork, over six years had passed since PPG12 first introduced specific reference to the issue but, when related to the schedules of development plan preparation, six years is a relatively short period. This means that much of what had been disseminated in terms of guidance, good

practice and appropriate innovation had yet to be fully assimilated, trialled in practical application, and established as references and subjects for deliberation. As a consequence time, in a chronological sense, must be held as a major contributory factor in limiting a fuller expression of the sustainable development agenda and mechanisms and deliberations which might facilitate SR. This point is underscored by the numerous comments suggesting that future plan reviews would be taking a more considered and comprehensive stance to operationalising sustainable development in the light of recent guidance, advice and more responsive inputs. In terms of policy analysis, the unfolding of the topic at the time of the empirical work, can be considered as still very much at the level of 'issue definition', a stage characterised through

“processes by which an issue, having been recognised as such and placed on the public policy agenda, is perceived by various interested parties (*LPAs in this instance*); further explored, articulated and possibly quantified; and in some but not all cases, given an authoritative or at least provisionally acceptable definition in terms of its likely causes, components and consequences” [Hogwood & Gunn, 1984, p.108].

It is the *articulation* in terms of environmental value which has been of particular interest to us here.

When one asks, in the light of the questionnaire and case study findings: 'what has been the influence of the concerns of sustainable development upon development plan preparation?', the answer has to be: 'very limited'. Several positive tools were, and are, in existence however, and it seems that a number of authorities were hoping, or were trying, to develop them (e.g. in relation to public participation, links to LA21 initiatives, and environmental appraisal) - although operational and organisational issues were seen as significant constraints. As an integrated whole such activities offer the planning system significant potential for intelligence gathering in the epistemological sense of generating 'sustainable knowledge'.

Even if developed however, the application of such knowledge comes up against methodological hurdles. These will be highly dependent upon how sustainable development has been conceptualised. The definitions used by LPAs are of little help here as they principally reiterate the unsubstantive Brundtland assertions, with policies still hypnotically promoting the desire to 'conserve and enhance the natural and built environment'. Other actors tend not to question such definitions and thus become subject to the same level of uncertainty as imprecise parameters. The evidence from the specifically focused line of questioning into expressions of particular approaches/principles to the handling of this essential issue is more enlightening however. Even though the results were highly fractured, it is quite clear that expressions of environmental thresholds and limits were specifically

avoided. Demand management (in the central area of the built environment and land-use/transportation) and environmental compensation (predominantly for wildlife and countryside issues) come through as the prescriptive policy frameworks through which environmental re-/evaluation together with a practically constrained acknowledgement of a precautionary approach are expressed. The language of demand management usefully encapsulates much of the contemporary political 'spin' with regard to environmental concern - "getting more from less for longer" [DETR,1998c]. One can loosely argue that this rhetoric finds some practical expression in the working strategy of 'plan, monitor and manage' which has apparently usurped the previously entrenched approach of 'predict and provide'. The concurrently promoted method, in land-use policy making, of sequential testing is not, however, specifically aligned to either one of these methodologies over the other. The lack of a clear line at the time on such issues, let alone one which might be described as an authentic position, put officers in an unenviable position. It is a position open to the vagaries of local politics and the aggravations of land ownership and in which the substance of sustainable development, based upon revised or renewed environmental valuation, readily become little more than a hastily applied gloss:

- "To facilitate development, a greenfield site or an AONB may have to be developed in exceptional circumstances, it is difficult to know what to do in this respect."
- "Members say 'yes we back sustainable development but we want our by-pass scheme'."
- "It really just comes down to a policy decision as to what you're going to accept."
- "We [the officers] don't believe in this [deposit] draft, it's the worst of all possible worlds."
- "The ownership of sites can put political pressure on planning departments - we don't want to get the blame for putting developers off."

In the light of such comments it is perhaps hard to attach the word 'principle' - as a fundamental basis for reasoning - to methodologies for handling SR. It would seem more apposite to suppose that their use is contingent upon political expedience. The terminology may be usefully detected if one sets out to look for it but as principles they presently fail as permanent points of referential departure in policy making.

This important point has been well illustrated in South Tyneside's strategic economic development site debacle (re. Table 8.1). Here it is clear that their 'principled' language has permeated the policy landscape; their role, however, in mediatory activity appears to be both subservient and highly plastic. The communicative case study evidence suggests that they are shaped and squeezed by a rigidly entrenched agenda built around: political expedience;

institutional inertia (resisting change and the possibility of professional uncertainty); insular procedures; vested property/development interests; and, economic imperatives. From the research perspective, what becomes important at this stage in the incorporation of such SR application principles is the state of the motivation behind their application as opposed to the application itself. If the motivation does not exist, or cannot be built, to establish them as foundational to policy and decision making, then any attempt to analyse their mediatory role will become little more than an exercise akin to appreciating 'the emperor's new clothes'.

In summary, therefore, the findings across both the procedural and communicative streams of investigation do not appear to report any genuinely identifiable 'sea change' in practice with specific regard to SR. Some capacity would seem to exist to construct a valid body of 'sustainable knowledge' - however, whether this potential is actually to be realised is yet to be truly seen. A pertinent question to ask here is whether a system of regulation based upon discretion could ever tolerate the restrictions which such principles and supporting data might impose. An additional implication is that, the more supportive data becomes decisive, the harder it becomes to argue against invoking the precautionary principle, or a framework of thresholds and limits, in the appropriate circumstances. Thus the issue of what does, or does not, motivate sustainable knowledge to be generated, used and expressed in decision-making can presently be seen as driving the whole SR project. There is little overt resistance to SR within the communicative activity of development planning – in fact this comes through as a defining characteristic. It is perhaps therefore surprising that it has to date made such little impact upon plan preparation.

The suggestion is that the system, with regard to SR, is stalled in an epistemological 'first gear' and has thus remained relatively unmoved by the new environmental agenda to which it has been committed. One can best express this not in terms of mediatory failure, as we have yet to reach this communicative stage, but rather in terms of the *motivation* to think and react differently to the management of environmental resources under the auspices of their protection, equitable access, long-term availability and multi-stakeholder involvement. This is frequently referred to as 'political will' [Richardson, 1997]. The term is possibly misleading as the 'will' to promote SR practice is certainly not limited to overtly political actors (i.e. elected representatives) and permeates activity throughout the whole plan preparation process. It is thus better to consider it both in positive and negative terms as, respectively, the motivation or resistance to embrace SR. There are several reasons for this perceived inertia evidenced by the research, e.g. the influence of central government, the procedures for representation, administrative pressures and the ability of the better resourced interests to put their points across with greater efficacy.

What now becomes important is to bring the above discussion, and the points raised, directly to bear upon the drawing up of a refined and empirically informed response to the research's central issues of facilitation and constraint.

* "The emperor walked beneath the beautiful canopy in the procession, and all the people in the street and in their windows said, "Goodness, the emperor's new clothes are incomparable! What a beautiful train on his jacket. What a perfect fit!" No one wanted it to be noticed that he could see nothing, for then it would be said that he was unfit for his position or that he was stupid. None of the emperor's clothes had ever before received such praise. "But he doesn't have anything on!" said a small child. "Good Lord, let us hear the voice of an innocent child!" said the father, and whispered to another what the child had said. "A small child said that he doesn't have anything on!" Finally everyone was saying, "He doesn't have anything on!" The emperor shuddered, for he knew that they were right, but he thought, "The procession must go on!" He carried himself even more proudly, and the chamberlains walked along behind carrying the train that wasn't there." [Hans Christian Andersen, *Keiserens nye klæder* (1837)].

Conclusions

The previous chapter took the collective research findings and offered a critical analysis which responded to the principal research question's two supportive lines of inquiry. In approaching a considered response to:

'how does the contemporary English planning system, through the process of development planning, influence (in terms of facilitation and constraint) the incorporation of policies and proposals to support sustainable development?'

the findings indicated that the influence was predominantly constraining in both procedural and communicative terms. Revised or innovative practices were 'bolted on' to development plan preparation but not in a manner which facilitated integration into the mediation of claims over land use development rights. This 'boxing-out' of potentially facilitating practice was further augmented, and permitted to carry on essentially unchallenged, by a lack of motivation to re-evaluate environmental resources with reference to the key tenets of sustainable development (environmental protection, long term visions, equitable access and inclusive decision-making).

The most optimistic reading of the findings suggests that the influence of development planning in supporting sustainable development is as yet unrealised and that given time substantive progress will be made.

The following sections seek, firstly, to add further clarity to these responses and raise possible explanations. In an effort to counter the inevitably negative disposition of these opening conclusions they will be followed by a consideration of the most appropriate positive, though predominantly theoretical, directions through which a sustainable re-evaluation of environmental resources (SR) might be achieved within development planning. These will reference the elements of both sustainable resource management (SRM) and implementational capacity (IC) presented in Part I.

For such approaches to succeed, changes to the way in which land use development is planned for are essential. The concluding section therefore casts a normative eye to the future which, in the light of recent government proposals [DTLR, 2001] for the wholesale revamping of formal development planning arrangements, is lent a timely pertinence and gravity.

9.1 The problems of 'sustainable re-evaluation' – why development planning is still in the starting blocks

At this point it is important to redraw the reader's attention to a foundational issue defining the shape and aspect of this thesis. The focus throughout has been upon detecting institutional change in procedural and communicative practices brought about by the introduction of the notion of sustainable development into the arrangements of English development planning. An inquiry in which the key variable, from the outset, has been stated as the re-evaluation of environmental resources. The adoption of this approach was the result of both early preliminary investigation and a dissatisfaction with the findings of contemporary studies and commentaries [Bruff and Wood, 1995; Bruff and Wood, 2000; Cartwright, 1997; Counsell, 1998]. These appeared preoccupied with whether advice, guidance, policies, proposals *et al.* could be considered 'sustainable'. Such endeavours raised intractable questions of definition [Blowers, 1997] relating to the weak/strong, deep/shallow, light green/dark green, etc. character of sustainable development. The orientating assumption behind the detailed research presented here is that only time can answer such questions through constantly re-evaluating local and global environmental resources against their need for present and future protection, equitable access, and the way people relate to them. It is this (finding useful expression under the headings of *sustainable resource management (SRM)* and *implementational capacity (IC)*) which defines the sustainability or otherwise of human development. The action taken as a consequence of SR will change over time in response to an unpredictable and complex mass of variables, such as need, circumstance, belief and technology to name but a fraction. The foundational imperative is for a constant and culturally entrenched sustainable re-evaluation of environmental resources:

“each generation must take up the challenge anew, determining in what directions their development objectives lie, what constitutes the boundaries of the environmentally possible and the environmentally desirable, and what is their understanding of the requirements of social justice” [Meadowcroft, 1999, p.37].

Land use development planning in England is just one small sector of governance in which this re-evaluation must become the substantive precursor to decision making. The ability of SR to make an impact here, where it has been given a largely unparalleled profile, can be held up as a mirror in which some of the problems and potential for moving development towards a sustainable trajectory may be viewed by others.

In this light the findings and conclusions to be drawn from this study of institutional influence both undercut and underscore more specific investigations of the relationship between sustainable development and land use planning. It also has methodological implications for work carried out in adjacent sectors of government intervention.

Chapter 8 illustrated how the identified features of constraint and facilitation coalesced around two broad themes:

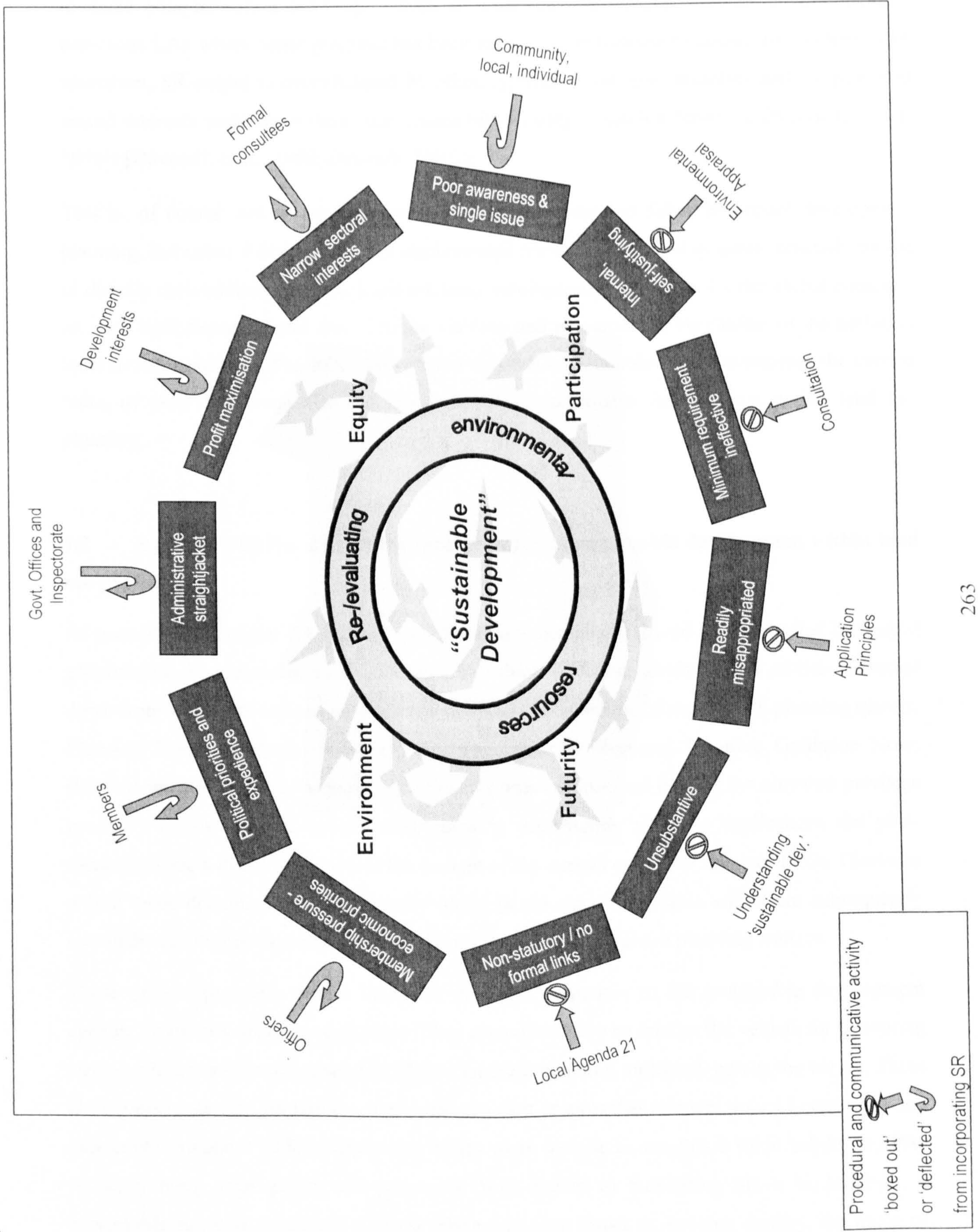
- i.) 'boxing-out' potentially influential procedural activity: the consigning of activity with a direct bearing upon SR to functional elements of the plan preparation process which could be and were significantly insulated from the moments of contentious decision making;
- ii.) 'deflecting' potentially influential motivation within communicative activity: SR was not engendered, encouraged or given room to find expression amongst the players involved. The effect of this was to negate its influence in deliberation and mediation.

The principal features making up these two themes are figuratively represented in Figure 9.1 overleaf – the motivation to take on SR amongst groups of players is shown as deflected by established elements of either the system itself or the power behind group related vested interests; in a similar vein the potential of procedural functions, and cognitive issues which may inform them, are shown as denied functional access to SR for a range of reasons which LPAs may or may not, at their discretion, seek to counter.

As suggested LPAs may take it upon themselves to break down the procedural and cognitive barriers which will insulate plan preparation from the influence, at an administrative level at least, of SR. Such efforts, however, will take commitment, time and resources, the latter two of which are often operationally insuperable in the face of strict budgets and a process which central government is increasingly demanding must be speeded up. The case study findings also suggested that even within LPA Policy Sections a 'belief' in the efficacy of development plans cannot be taken for granted: "a development plan is a repository of pious hope".

It is important to note that the two themes identified are not separate. Deflected motivation is almost certain to influence efforts to work SR into procedural activity and understanding and vice-versa. The links between the two should be viewed as self-reinforcing: for example, elected members solely concerned with economic growth are unlikely to put extra resources into an environmental appraisal which may highlight the negative aspects of a high profile inward investment initiative; similarly a Regional Government Office under pressure to get development plans adopted as quickly as possible is unlikely to sanction extended periods of consultation. From the other perspective a potentially highly motivated community group is less likely to realise what might be gained from SR in a local area which has given scant attention to the production of an LA21 strategy; similarly, motivated policy officers are likely to be disillusioned by a lack of commitment to the environmental appraisal of an emerging development plan.

Figure 9.1 – Barriers to the incorporation of 'sustainable re-evaluation' within land use development planning



With regard to building a plan from a firm foundation of SR, local planning authorities have yet to make comprehensive headway – even in what may be termed ‘beacon’ environmentally conscious LAs where some progress has been made and motivation translated to an element of mediation, SR output is overwhelmed by other, typically economic, priorities and the powerful vested interests underlying them (e.g. Lancashire County Council’s Structure Plan of the mid-1990’s [Davoudi, *et al.*, 1996; Davoudi, 1997]).

This is, of course, not to say that sustainable development has failed to impact development planning, but rather that the measures implemented are not, in the first instance, crucially rooted or directly derived from their localities and then, subsequently, related to a wider global context – an issue both elemental and crucial to the viability and permanent entrenchment of the notion in local decision-making. The following section expands on this point as it summarises the current ‘state of play’ with regard to the incorporation of sustainable development within land use planning.

9.2 Summarising the state of the incorporation of sustainable development within land use planning

As presented in Chapter 2 local land use planning is essentially driven and controlled by central government. The hierarchical arrangement by which direction, guidance and advice is passed down from Whitehall to local councils is a defining characteristic of the English planning system. Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) (supported by Regional Planning Guidance Notes (RPGs)) are the principal vehicle for achieving this control and despite the elevated privilege presently bestowed upon development plans in determining planning applications the plans themselves are a direct reflection of the content of the current extensive range of PPGs. Guidance within these documents is substantively found in the shape of criteria which are subsequently established as highly significant ‘material considerations’ in land use planning matters.

These criteria presently define LPAs’ professional responses to the sustainable development agenda within their development plans. They can collectively be seen as the vehicle for delivering sustainable resource management (SRM) in land use planning uniformly across the nation. There is of course a certain attraction to this approach as it ensures that national policy is extended and delivered throughout all local areas and, for the more specific issues, this is often helpful to LPAs in determining local policy and proposals. With regard to facilitating SR it is, however, a remarkably negative approach. Criteria relating to such issues as housing density, the reuse of

brownfield sites and the location of trip-generating development close to inter-modal transport interchanges become the central markers in deciding whether a specific proposal is 'sustainable'. It is the meeting or manipulation of these criteria which developers seize upon to validate their proposals. Considerations as to whether a development is appropriate to sustaining the local environmental resource base, as determined through SR, are 'crowded out' by pressure to satisfy and test against 'sustainable' criteria – which themselves are subject to discretionary balancing in the decision making process. This is, of course, an overly simplistic picture as decisions *are* made with a strong recourse to local circumstance. The point to be made, however, is that these 'sustainable' criteria define the parameters of the issue in its local context, rather than the other way round in which the local context defines the requisite criteria.

This state of affairs partially accounts for the 'gap' between well developed conceptual strategies pertaining to the advancement of sustainable development and specific proposals which bear little specific relation to them. It is the specific policies and proposals which are subject to representations and a strong defence is generally dependent upon reference to PPGs as the principal means of legitimising them, especially for contentious issues. With a presumption in favour of development, albeit with reference to the development plan, the burden of proof is reactive rather than proactive in nature. Attention is therefore directed at making proposed development less unsustainable rather than as sustainable as possible from the outset. The situation is akin to that quoted by Shove [1995] in her discussion of the merits of regulation in the construction business:

“The only way to get us to change is to change the regulations.’ With these words, house builders, architects and developers confirm conventional wisdom and, with half a smile, reaffirm their own conservatism” [p.159]

The capacity to implement the incorporation of sustainable development as presented in PPGs is thus a very narrow and essentially administrative one. This is certainly not in keeping with a process required to be tied in to decision-making from the outset of consideration. Implementational capacity (IC) in this sense involves awareness raising, long term vision, and inclusivity so that if criteria are applied they are considered against an open and established background of SR. More recent PPGs have attempted to introduce meaningful frameworks through which criteria should be applied such as 'sequential testing' and 'plan, monitor and manage', but these only serve to reinforce the approach of containment within the established conventional confines of matters deemed sectorally pertinent to the use and development of land. Calls to extend the remit of the system towards one of 'environmental planning' [Blowers, 1997]

in which SR would have a broader space in which to operate seem likely to remain unanswered without a radical reinvention of its workings and sphere of influence.

As was illustrated in Chapter 8 the use of criteria acts to suppress SR as, so long as they are built into policy and decision making, there is no need for plan preparation processes to raise environmental awareness, an understanding of application principles, the repercussions of modern consumption and alternative 'sustainable' approaches to the demands of everyday living. Consequently, within the present arrangements, LPA officers, members and external administrators are not motivated to become experts in these fields as they are not formally required to bring such considerations to bear upon their deliberations. LAs are free to pursue established agendas without the need to review their activity through the lens of SR so long as due acknowledgement and reference is made towards centrally defined 'sustainable' criteria. In development plan preparation, mediation issues typically revolving around economic growth, regeneration and private profit can therefore retain their dominance. Caldwell's [1990] view that

"the politics of environment and economy are presently stuck at an elementary level of discourse at which minds do not meet and arguments by-pass, leaving attitudes and beliefs unengaged and unchanged" [p.117]

is still very much alive and well in the English development planning system at the turn of the millenium.

It can be argued that a more informed public might not tolerate this sectorally induced lack of capacity to manage a comprehensive response to the sustainable development agenda. As we have seen however the opportunities for public engagement are unlikely to reach a motivational level which could lead to such questioning or pressure to hold LPAs 'sustainably' accountable. The issue here goes far deeper than a lack of LPA resources, commitment and creativity. Efforts to raise levels of participation additionally come up against a public opinion which is sceptical of government institutions and unwilling to engage in the planning process [Macnaghten *et al.*, 1995, Macnaghten and Pinfield, 1999]. Involvement is polarised around single issues which stand to directly affect short term individual and community wellbeing – arguments relating to sustainable development may or may not have a bearing in the mediation of such issues but certainly do not as a matter of course or point of discursive departure.

By searching for the essence of activity which drives sustainable development, in the shape of a 'sustainable' re-evaluation of environmental resources, the findings have revealed an institutional arrangement with only a very limited ability to push the agenda forward. Those looking for a

sectoral example of local governance which has been transformed by the introduction of sustainable development will presently need to look elsewhere.

9.3 Easing the constraints – possibilities and options

The principal conclusions of this study have, from the findings, painted a picture of persistent constraint to SR across both the procedural and communicative elements of development planning. Figure 9.1 illustrated the presence of a ring of ‘barriers’ preventing the potential for SR being realised in the practice of plan preparation. During the empirical studies glimpses of opportunity were detectable, more in terms of ‘if only...’ than demonstrable evidence of barriers being dismantled. If the efforts of enlightened practitioners are championed and resourced at a senior executive level one cannot help but feel that progress could be made to strengthen the sustainable credentials of decision making. The planning system has several inherent strengths which, if played to with commitment and creativity, have the potential to tip the balance away from a reactive response limited to making development less, or at least appear less, unsustainable and move towards what might be described as a founding presumption in favour of sustainable development. Such strengths are that:

- by definition, planning looks to the future;
- by endeavouring to serve the public interest, issues of equity are inherent to the decision making process;
- it has a long history of responsibility for environmental protection;
- the technical bent of the professional planner has relevance in terms of evaluating environmental resources;
- public participation is an in-built procedural function, and;
- its methodology of balance gives it discretion in weighing the benefit of development against the needs of environmental integrity.

With these strengths in mind, there are several areas within the existing arrangements where headway could be made:

i.) Public consultation and participation exercises could focus upon raising local environmental awareness and linkages to global imperatives. Encouraging people to see things in ‘sustainable’

terms and thus bring an SR based view to bear upon the consideration of issues, policies and proposals. A strong public response can then enter the formal political arena through elected representatives;

ii.) The environmental appraisal of development plans can be externalised so that all stakeholders have their say and an opportunity to consider what is meant by environmental impact in sustainability terms;

iii.) State of the Environment reporting and monitoring can be twin-tracked with plan preparation, with a high profile role in the preliminary issues formulation stage;

iv.) LA21 initiatives and strategies can be hooked substantively into the plan making process;

v.) the term sustainable development can be dropped and replaced with something more popularly meaningful and tangible;

vi.) plan documents can be arranged and presented in a more accessible manner and different media experimented with.

All of these possibilities, or other creative variants, could be trialled and taken on now. They are not however guaranteed success due to the more pervasive and rigid constraints associated with the institutional structure of the system. In fact, a failure for any such efforts to actually influence the outcomes of plan preparation could set back future possibilities through disillusionment and aggravated scepticism.

Ultimately the path to successfully incorporating SR within the preparation of development plans will require at least a downgrading of the privilege of centrally derived criteria for determining land use allocations. With this shield down, or at least weakened, the overwhelming power which vested and mutual interests in economic growth are able to deploy in the development planning process would be reduced. Assuming that the radicalism stops here, the operational and executive space might then exist for enlightened LPAs to introduce locally pertinent SR processes as the building blocks for plan preparation. For success such processes would require responses to both SRM and IC that were clear, astute and tailored to the needs of managing land use allocation.

Drawing upon the review presented in Part 1 (especially Chapters 1 and 3) the following theoretical constructs would seem worthy of consideration.

9.3.1 Shaping sustainable re-evaluation in an enlightened development planning process

It is not the purpose here (or within the remit of this thesis) to proffer a prescriptive framework for SR in development planning, although it does point to the opportunities for further study, it is, however, appropriate to consider an outline direction from reflection upon the research findings.

Assuming the principles of the English land use planning system remain intact the most suitable responses to SRM and IC appear to relate to the concepts of ‘environmental capacity’ and ‘collaborative planning’ respectively. The search should be not for an SR framework which runs counter to the dominance of ecological modernisation (as the contemporary western conceptualisation of sustainable development [Hajer, 1995]). To remain within the bounds of possibility it needs to accept the shortcomings of implementation based upon evidence-based managerialism, eco-efficiency and trade-offs. Within this acceptance the requirement is for an astute and selective use of ‘application principles’ in a manner attuned to professional competencies, global imperatives and what Vigar *et al.* [2000] refer to as

“the emerging practices of a strategic, proactive and place-focused regional and local governance” [p.278].

Ideas of an area’s capacity for development are far from new in land use planning and have recently been notably revived in formal calls for LPAs to carry out urban capacity studies in an effort to promote the use of brownfield sites. As an approach to SRM the selective area-based use of environmental capacity studies could be drawn out of the early environmental appraisal of outline policies and proposals. The use of the Quality of Life Capital methodology [CAG Consultants and Land Use Consultants, 2001] would be a useful point of departure in combination with State of the Environment reporting. The intention should be not to stultify development proposals but rather to present a range of possible scenarios which highlight the losses and gains to the local community and the environmental impact at the regional, national and global scales. The concern with long term, cumulative and indirect effects is essential together with multi-stakeholder perception studies. When taken as a whole the evidence will supply a firmer basis for strategic land allocations than sterile criteria-driven debates and bargaining procedures [Drummond and Swain, 1996] (e.g. relating to trip generation, green belt designation, housing figures, or the availability of brownfield sites).

As the corollary to SRM in incorporating sustainable development in development planning IC’s role essentially relates to combined issues of equity and participation as access and involvement in decision making. The empirical research tackled these under the heading of communicative activity and, in SR terms, found that the plan preparation process was far from facilitative. Moves

towards a more 'collaborative' approach [Healey 1996; 1997] founded upon ideas of communicative rationality offer a counterpoint to the methodology of conventional public participation exercises. The methods currently employed in such exercises can critically be seen to legitimise plan preparation whilst concentrating manipulative power in the hands of those who understand the intricacies and machinations of the process and have the resources to exploit them [Reade, 1987, Chambers, 1998]. For SR to be a meaningful process it must encapsulate the views of *all* relational groups within an LPA's administrative area whilst at the same time mobilising and sensitising these groups to SRM and its rationale. The approach advocated by Healey [1997] in her exposition of 'collaborative planning' appears to offer a cohesive response to this requirement especially with regard to shared claims, justification and accountability.

The weight of the conclusions to this research come down heavily in their suggestion that the arrangements of English development planning require extensive, and potentially radical modification, if they are to be justifiably associated with the promotion of sustainable development. Claims that sustainable development is at the heart of the system are presently essentially hollow. Calls for change at this time are highly pertinent as the Government is currently consulting on a range of alterations to the system which have far reaching implications for its future operation [DTLR, 2001]. It would be an opportunity missed if these were not briefly summarised and related to the above conclusions.

9.4 Delivering a 'sustainable' change?

Under concerted pressure from almost every quarter in the land use planning arena the Government published a Green (consultation) Paper in December 2001 billed as the most significant proposals for change to the planning system in fifty years and correspondingly entitled *Planning: delivering a fundamental change* [DTLR, 2001]. With regard to the preparation of development plans the problems were well established and have been highlighted in the research findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6, i.e: an overly complex and inconsistent hierarchy of plans; excessive and unfocussed national planning guidance; a lack of community engagement; a drawn out, slow and bureaucratic preparation process in which stakeholders struggle to sustain their involvement; a lack of necessary skills and understanding amongst elected councillors; and, a lack of certainty over applications being determined in a plan-led system.

The fundamental change put forward is indeed just that for development planning, with the key proposal being the abolition of structure, local and unitary development plans. It is envisaged that

they will be replaced with a single level plan referred to as a Local Development Framework (LDF), essentially comprising:

i.) a statement of core policies setting out the LAs vision and strategy to be applied to the promotion and control of land use development across its area. This should be the direct spatial complement to the authority's Community Strategy and contain clear, deliverable and timetabled objectives facilitated through a set of criteria based policies. Previous Public Consultation Statements are replaced with a Statement of Community Involvement applicable to the continuous review of the LDF.

ii.) detailed action plans focused on areas of change where site-specific policies are needed to guide development. They could also address the needs of Conservation Areas, Village Plans etc and may be prepared on a topic basis to cover issues such as greenbelt boundaries or safeguarded land.

It is envisaged that LDFs can be prepared in a matter of months and should be reviewed annually. They should also be subject to a sustainability appraisal, guidance for which will be issued separately and take account of the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Strategic planning, with the exception of waste and minerals is to be removed from county responsibilities and transferred to the regional level through (unelected) Regional Chambers and regional planning conferences. In this arena it is proposed that Regional Planning Guidance will be replaced with Regional Spatial Strategies and with which LDFs and local transport plans should ensure consistency.

At the national level it is envisaged that PPGs will need to be pared down and rationalised to reduce prescription and detail. Where appropriate policy may be made at the regional and local level.

These proposals do indeed appear to simplify and 'refresh' development planning and offer some additional room in which SR can manoeuvre. Barring the use of sustainability appraisals, however, there is nothing which advocates or introduces SR. As with the current system all is implied. The transferring of some policy guidance, presently set nationally, to local and regional levels does appear to be a positive move but the tenor of the Green Paper as a whole is not one which appears to raise the profile of environmental considerations – the focus instead is upon business and the community, the apparent replacement of LA21s with Community Strategies being a case in point.

What one appears to see, with direct reference to this research, is a revamped system which, as with its predecessor, has the potential for SR to gain a foot hold but not one in which it is made a requirement. The constant re-evaluation of LDFs is certainly an apposite characteristic and sustainability appraisals would appear to be necessary replacements for sterile environmental appraisals but both are as likely to be subject to ‘boxing-out’ and deflection as the current arrangements. There is, however, some indication that the consultation process may lead to useful modifications. The planning minister, Lord Falconer, was recently quoted as saying:

“The Planning Green Paper has been criticised , and I think fairly, for not emphasising sustainability sufficiently” [Planning, 22:03:02].

So perhaps there is hope that a researcher in five years time will not find him or herself drawing up a similar diagram of constraint as that presented here in Figure 9.1.

9.5 Reflections on the research process and opportunities for further study

There are potentially as many research frameworks for examining the influence of sustainable development as there are frameworks for both understanding the notion and translating it into practice. From the research perspective, this thesis has developed and worked from a unifying position at the heart of sustainable development’s social reality, i.e. the ‘sustainable’ re-evaluation of environmental resources. At the level (general influences of constraint and facilitation) and stage (relatively early in the notion’s introduction) of the inquiry in the field this has proved an effective and apposite approach. By dropping right down to the building blocks of what sustainable development amounts to in its social expression, however, the methodology is very broad brush. The hope is that further research within land use planning can build upon this foundational approach and its findings to produce more detailed datasets and appreciations of the issues covered – e.g. environmental appraisal, LA21/community strategies, membership engagement and stakeholder relations. Using SR as the point of departure it should be quite possible to build more nuanced lines of inquiry which develop and work on the finer details of institutional examination. The propositions for change put forward above (9.2) are of such a detached theoretical nature that they could not be related in terms of ‘best practice’ and it is here, from an SR base, that there is significant potential for further work.

Another important issue is that the presence of the tenets of sustainable development (environmental protection, futurity, equity and participation) have been implicitly assumed in discussion and investigation of SR in its institutional context. To advance understanding there is a

need to look at each of these in turn with regard to the specific issues of further investigation. Breaking down to facilitation and constraint at this level is important in attempts to fine tune or re-adjust the direction of SR-derived policy and proposals.

As alluded to in the previous section, the proposed ‘fundamental changes’ to the planning system stand to re-write the institutional context of development plan preparation. If LDFs are to be integrated and supportively coupled with other strategies, opportunities for the examination of SR related communicative activity (motivation and mediation) will become significant at these new interfaces. The implications for planning practice, and subsequently research in the field, are both challenging and exciting.

The SR-based methodology developed and used in this thesis should also be readily transferable to other fields out side of land use planning – in fact to anything laying claim to the ‘sustainable’ prefix, which currently and rightly covers just about every aspect of human activity and relations.

9.6 Final remarks

The evidence and conclusions of this piece of research do not paint an especially positive picture of the adequacy of the institutional arrangements of land use planning to advance sustainable development. The response has been constructed at the margin of our patterns of production and consumption when it actually needs to be built into the very heart of them. The empirical work has illustrated a deeper malaise than marginalisation in mediation. The whole project, even in its reactive criteria-driven guise, is failing to motivate the principal decision-makers.

In a final personal reflection, one is left to ponder what might actually reverse this lack of motivation. It seems that the pressure to sustainably re-evaluate our environmental resources is simply insufficient, despite mounting incontrovertible evidence, to turn hearts and minds away from conventional and entrenched socio-economic imperatives. The increasingly parlous state of our natural environment has yet to make a telling impact on our everyday lives, although, as it has in certain other parts of the world, this will surely come. Current (re)activity under the banner of sustainable development is simply buffering us from reality. The best that can be hoped for is a ‘soft landing’. Sustainable re-evaluation will surely establish itself as a part of our lives but, by the time it does, ‘sustainable development’ will have lost its essential proactive meaning. It will, by necessity, have become something which might be termed ‘sustainable *adaptive* development’ - with a telling, if not inappropriate, acronym.

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Appendix A - Summarising New Labour's guidance/policy pertinent to planning for sustainable development

Legislation / policy / guidance	Date
<i>Sustainable Local Communities for the 21st Century: Why and How to prepare a Local Agenda 21 strategy</i> [DETR]	1998 (January)
<p>Drawing extensively on work done by the LGMB, this brief document seeks not only to re-emphasise the importance of LA21 in local government but also to telegraph central government policy with regard to advancing the notion of sustainable development. All local authorities were requested to adopt a LA21 strategy by the year 2000 as a main stream activity at the centre of good local governance. Performance, through Best Value; integration, through links with other local duties and plans; consultation, through working with and involving local communities; education, through awareness raising; partnership, through strengthening cooperation between the statutory, voluntary and community sectors; and measuring and monitoring, through reporting indicator data, are all put forward as key components of the LA21 process.</p>	
<i>Planning for the Communities of the Future</i> [DETR]	1998 (February)
<p>This White Paper was a response to the previous administration's Green Paper <i>Household Growth: Where Shall We Live</i> [DoE, 1996] which in turn attempted to tackle the demographic and social trends which were resulting in household growth outstripping population growth. Central to all the policies presented is a recognition that truly sustainable settlements must offer a higher quality of life than that currently enjoyed by the majority of the urban population. The key aims are to make urban areas more attractive and to protect the countryside.</p> <p>The paper represents an important shift from the previous philosophy governing housing provision described as 'predict and provide' towards an approach which is more bottom-up and which has been labelled 'monitor and manage'.</p>	
<i>Modernising Planning: A Policy Statement by the Minister for the Regions Regeneration and Planning</i> [DETR, 1998, January] and <i>Modernising Planning: Improving Arrangements for the Delivery of Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans</i> [DETR]	1998 (March)
<p>Emphasises the need to secure the aims of sustainable development within a stronger regional planning context. The planning system needs to be plan-led, open, transparent, speedy and efficient in order to bring a degree of certainty in handling business and community interests. There is also a requirement to co-ordinate land use planning with other policy areas and approaches including, where appropriate, regional economic strategies and economic instruments to achieve the balance of social, economic and environmental considerations which lead to sustainable development. The thrust of these policy directions, in engendering consistency and co-ordination should assist in decision making over conflictual issues which the sustainable development agenda throws into greater relief.</p> <p>With specific regard to improving the arrangements for the delivery of local plans and UDPs the following three measures were introduced as possible regulatory modifications: i.) revised consultation arrangements; ii.) a two-stage deposit process designed to encourage LAs to negotiate with objectors prior to the public inquiry, allowing authorities to make a formal set of changes to the plan before the inquiry, and; iii.) a requirement to make the Inspector's report available within 8 weeks of its receipt by the LA.</p>	
<i>Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice</i> [DETR]	1998 (October)
<p>Brings together advice and experience in an effort to assist in delivering sustainable development through the land use planning system, from incorporating principles through to implementation. It aims "to help plan-makers determine what is special in each particular environment" [para. 1.27]. Guidance on how planning can contribute towards meeting transport objectives is given some priority in the light of the publication of the White Paper on the future of transport, <i>A New Deal for Transport: Better for everyone</i> [DETR, 1998, July]. The advice offered is far from prescriptive. The strongest line is taken on entrenching the 'sequential approach' to development from retailing and town centre uses [PPG6] into housing [PPG3] and transport [PPG13]. In terms of principle there is an acknowledgement of demand management but this is set against more prosaic terminology.</p> <p>The issues and methods raised for consideration do however imply a significant re-evaluation of environmental resources, for example: mixed-use development, re-using urban land, increasing urban</p>	

densities, Green Belt deletions, defining landscape character, devising maximum parking standards, identifying opportunities for combined heat and power schemes. Such considerations should find expression through a methodology founded upon strategic awareness, community involvement and vision which has iterative and measurable characteristics (indicators and targets).	
<i>A Better Quality of Life: Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK</i> [DETR]	1999 (May)
<p>The aim of the strategy is “ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come”. This spans four key objectives:</p> <p>i.) social progress, which recognises the needs of everyone; ii.) effective protection of the environment; iii.) prudent use of natural resources; and iv.) maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.</p> <p>The strategy outlines ten principles and approaches through which it is apparently envisaged that environmental resources will be re-/evaluated: i.) respecting environmental limits; ii.) the precautionary principle; iii.) making the polluter pay; iv.) combating poverty and social exclusion; v.) transparency, information, participation and access to justice; and</p> <p>Devolution is seen as an important aspect of sustainable development – in terms of ‘thinking globally/acting locally’. The Government aims, over time, to reform the tax system in ways which deliver a more dynamic economy and cleaner environment: shifting taxes from positives, such as employment, towards negatives, such as pollution, while subsidies and voluntary agreements have an additionally important role to play.</p>	
<i>Local Government Act 1999</i> [HMG]	1999 (July)
<p>The implications for SR of the 1999 Local Government Act are indirect but potentially significant. The Act abolished compulsory competitive tendering and introduced a new approach to the improvement of local services. From April 2000, local authorities must achieve ‘best value’ by continuously improving the quality and efficiency of their services in consultation with local people. To achieve this councils are required to review all their services over a five year period, set tough targets for improving them, and publish a Best Value Performance Plan every year to show how they are doing and where they are going.</p>	
<i>Quality of Life Counts – Indicators for a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom: a Baseline Assessment</i> [DETR]	1999 (December)
<p>In 1999 the Government revised the national set of sustainable development indicators published in 1996 in <i>Quality of Life Counts</i>. The new set of approximately 150 indicators place a greater emphasis on social issues and also includes a subset of fifteen key headline indicators. The daughter document <i>Regional Quality of Life Counts</i> and <i>Local Quality of Life Counts</i> were subsequently published in 2000. Following the commitment, made in its sustainable development strategy, to review and report annually on progress towards sustainable development the Government launched its first annual report on the subject <i>Achieving a Better Quality of Life – Review of Progress Towards Sustainable Development</i> in January 2001. The report identifies key issues relating to quality of life and focuses on progress against each of the fifteen headline indicators. It also discusses strategic developments, the principles and approaches, and priority actions. Apparently having recognised the importance of continuous and regular monitoring, reporting and reviewing progress, the Government launched, in parallel to the annual report, a new website: www.sustainable-development.gov.uk.</p>	
<i>Planning Policy Guidance Note 12: Development Plans</i> [DETR]	2000 (January)
<p>Both formally emphasises the Government’s commitment to a plan-led system, and, stresses the need for these ‘leading’ plans to be prepared and updated more quickly and efficiently than has historically been the case. New procedures are introduced to facilitate this speeding up whilst not fundamentally altering the approach to preparation.</p> <p>The four broad objectives of <i>A Better Quality of Life</i> are restated and a list of environmental considerations for development plans is presented. The list does not claim to be exhaustive but the very nature of PPGs implies that it is probably deemed comprehensive in terms of material considerations. It can be seen as reflecting the key areas pertinent to SR and thus, for the purposes of this review bears quoting in full:</p> <p>“Environmental Considerations for Development Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • energy conservation and the efficient use of energy, global climate change, and reduction in greenhouse gases (PPG22 on renewable energy, PPG13 on transport and reducing the need for travel); • air quality and pollution (PPG23 on planning and pollution control, DETR 	

Air Quality and Land Use Planning guidance note, issued under cover of DETR Circular 15/97);

- noise and light pollution (PPG23);
 - the need to sustain the character and diversity of the countryside and undeveloped coasts (PPG7 on the countryside, PPG20 on coastal planning);
 - conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and species, including the promotion of biodiversity and environmental enhancements to meet biodiversity action plan targets (PPG9 on nature conservation);
 - the impact of development on landscape quality (PPG7);
 - policies and proposals for the improvement of the physical and natural environment in urban areas, including sustaining the character and vitality of town centres, making provision for tree planting and open spaces and the general re-vitalisation of urban areas (PPG6 on town centres and retail developments, PPG3 on housing);
 - the need for better urban design, including the appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings (PPG1);
 - policies which help preserve the built and archaeological heritage (PPG15 on the historic environment, PPG16 on archaeology);
 - policies for coastal protection, flood defence, and land drainage issues (PPG20 on coastal protection, DoE Circular 30/92 and advice from Environment Agency on flood protection and land drainage issues);
 - the need to protect groundwater resources from contamination or over-exploitation (advice available from Environment Agency);
 - the environmental effects of unsustainable or poorly controlled waste management and mineral extraction, processing and tipping operations (PPG10 on waste disposal and management, and Mineral Planning Guidance (MPG) Notes);
 - the need to avoid development on unstable land (PPG14); and
- policies designed to secure the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and amenity of the land, including tree and hedgerow protection and planting (PPG7).” (para. 4.4)

<i>Guidance on Preparing Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks</i> [DETR]	2000 (February)
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Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks are envisaged as high level documents setting out a vision for sustainable development in each region and the region’s contribution to sustainable development at the national level. The outcomes from producing such frameworks are anticipated as:

- identification of the links between different regional activities and initiatives with a common and agreed high level vision;
- definition of sustainable development objectives based on wide-ranging support;
- definition of regional indicators and targets to support regional objectives;
- illustration of how objectives can be met and contribute to moving indicators in the right direction, both regionally and nationally;
- identification of gaps between the local and national levels;
- point up significant challenges;
- links into existing regional work to ensure that it contributes to sustainable development;
- Establishment of processes to take both the framework and existing regional work forward.

<i>Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing</i> [DETR]	2000 (March)
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Formally sets out a new policy direction for the delivery of housing through the planning system based upon the ‘plan, monitor and manage’ approach. An essential feature of this methodology is that new homes are provided in the right place and at the right time. In terms of SR this requires consideration of locations which can offer: linkages to public transport; integration with shops, local services and jobs; the creation of mixed communities; a greener landscaped environment; high quality design and layout; and, the most efficient use of land.

This last point is central as the PPG establishes that priority should be given to reusing previously developed land within urban areas, bringing empty homes back into use and converting existing buildings, in preference to the development of greenfield sites. The national target being sixty percent of additional housing to be provided on such ‘brownfield’ sites. In order to make the best use of the potential to recycle land and buildings in any one location, the guidance has, for the first time, set out

the expectation that all LPAs should undertake urban housing capacity studies. These studies are to sit at the heart of the planning for housing process, and form the basis for both the sequential approach and the managed release of sites.

The planning process should follow a search ‘sequence’ starting with the re-use of land in urban areas. Greenfield sites should only then be considered where they form urban extensions, followed by locations around nodes in good public transport corridors. Even where greenfield sites are identified, the presumption will still be that brownfield sites should be phased for release first. In keeping with this approach, the guidance contains a number of important new features:

- an emphasis on more efficient use of land, including densities of at least thirty dwellings per hectare and parking standards resulting in no more than one and a half spaces per dwelling;
- authorities should thoroughly assess applications to renew existing permissions and applications for greenfield allocated sites in the light of the new guidance, particularly the sequential approach;
- all greenfield housing developments in excess of five hectares or one hundred and fifty dwellings must in future be referred to Central Government before they are approved;
- a pro-active approach from local authorities, including wider use of compulsory purchase powers to assemble urban sites.

Local Government Act 2000 [HMG]

2000 (July)

This legislation represents the enactment of significant elements of the White Paper *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* [HMG, 1998]. From the perspective of this research the importance of the Act relates to the governmental arrangements for community involvement in SR. The Act requires LAs to produce a ‘community strategy’ for:

“...promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their communities, and so contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.” ... “The community strategy should cover all three in an integrated way. In developing their strategies, local authorities and their partners should have regard to the Government’s sustainable development strategy” [*Preparing Community Strategies: Draft Guidance to Local Authorities*, 1990, June, para.16].

The intention here is to subsume LA21 activity and initiatives into a more structured framework built upon local partnerships but driven by local authorities (formally acknowledged in the local government White Paper *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services* [DTLR, 2001, December]). The motive force behind this revised approach being the power created by the Act for local authorities to do anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area, but always with regard to central government guidance.

The impact for land use development planning are potentially very significant as the links between community strategies and development plans is explicitly made – the two are viewed as complementary with regard to both process (specifically consultation) and output.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 11: Regional Planning [DETR]

2000 (October)

Strengthens the role and effectiveness of RPG which should concentrate on strategic issues with a spatial strategy extending beyond land use issues. Introduces a non-statutory examination in public, sustainable development appraisals, the need to consider the European context and complement RDA and biodiversity strategies. Major retail, hospital and leisure facilities to be located within urban areas to combat social exclusion.

Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance [DETR]

2000 (November)

This policy document is the ‘Urban’ White Paper which took the Urban Task Force’s June 1999 report *Towards an Urban Renaissance* as its foundational source of material. One of the key challenges of the Paper is to reduce the impact which urban living has on the environment. In this light environmental re-evaluation means: better planning and design, especially relating to access and public transport; improving the pool of professional planning skills; using previously developed land; maintaining the existing urban environment; introducing Local Strategic Partnerships to assure community input into Community Strategies.

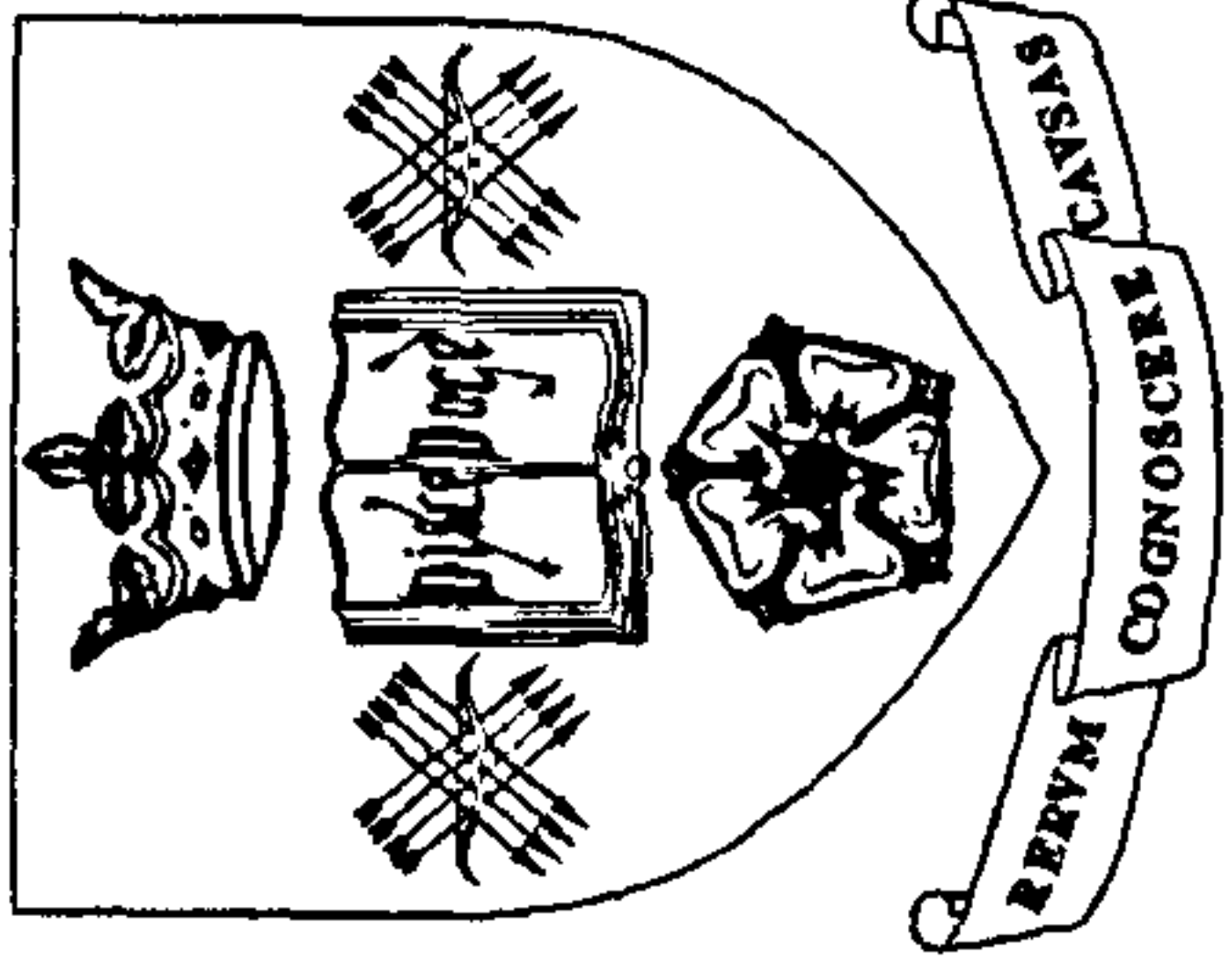
Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport [DETR]

2001 (March)

This PPG specifically extends into land use planning the policy content of the White Paper *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone* [DETR, 1998, July] which introduced five year Local Transport Plans prepared by county councils and unitary authorities and focused on the maintenance and management of the road network rather than on new construction. The new guidance is a significant step towards integrating planning and transport at the local level. It encourages the use of more sustainable modes of travel, particularly public transport and importantly, to integrate local transport investment decisions (as proposed in Local Transport Plans) with location decisions for major land

uses. The most significant introductions are all SR related to a re-/evaluation of environmental resources:

- Transport Assessments to replace Traffic Impact Assessments in an effort to ensure that assessments of major development proposals cover access by all modes of transport;
- well-designed and well-conceived Park and Ride Schemes to be encouraged;
- promoting housing, jobs and services in rural service centres support to reduce long distance commuting from rural to urban areas; including a positive approach to farm diversification to enhance rural employment opportunities;
- reviewing parking standards as set out in the previous PPG13.



**THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
DEPARTMENT OF TOWN AND REGIONAL PLANNING**

Strictly Confidential

**QUESTIONNAIRE EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE AND EXPRESSION OF *SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*
IN LAND-USE DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

- ➡ The information you can provide through this questionnaire is very important to my research
- ➡ Please return the questionnaire even if you find there are questions/sections you are unable to complete
- ➡ If you would like to receive a summary of the results of this survey please tick the box at the end of the questionnaire

Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided to:

Richard Hales, XX Street Name, Village, Town, County, Post Code

by **Friday 15th May 1998** if at all possible

Sustainable Development and Development Planning Survey

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible with regard to the Unitary Development Plan currently being prepared/reviewed by your Development Planning Team (or which has been recently adopted by your LPA).

As a guide the response areas are shaded grey with many questions being answerable simply by means of tick boxes (i.e.). Space is provided at the end of the questionnaire for any additional information or comment that you may wish to add pertaining to the incorporation of sustainable development into development planning.

A. Departmental details

A1. Please complete the following departmental details

(a) **Title of Dept./Division which takes responsibility for town and country planning matters:** _____

(b) **Title of Section/Sub-division responsible for development plan preparation:** _____

(c) **Your name and job title:** _____

B. Plan status, preparation schedule and document set

B1. Please complete the following plan details:

(a) **Full Title:** _____

New Plan: **Review:** (tick as appropriate)

(b) **For period:** _____

B2. Please enter completion, or anticipated completion, dates for *each* of the following stages:

(a) **Preliminary draft:** _____ (b) **Deposit draft:** _____ (c) **PLI / EIP:** _____ (d) **Adoption:** _____

B3. Have any of the following documents been produced as separate supportive/supplementary items with *specific references* to advancing sustainable development?

(a) **Background issues papers** Yes No (b) **Discussion documents** Yes No (c) **Vision statements** Yes No

C. Non-statutory inputs

C1. The following is a list of non-statutory documents which have potentially strong links to the promotion of sustainable development.

Please indicate below: *firstly*, which (if any) are in existence for your L.A. area and,

(Using the tick boxes) *secondly*, if they do exist, who prepared them and whether they have been used as inputs in the Development Plan preparation process.

Please enter the details of any *other* non-statutory documents linked to promoting sustainable development in your area (excl. LA21) into section (f).

Documents	Exists for Local Authority Area?		Prepared by whom?		Used in Dev. Plan?	
(a) State of the Environment Audits/Reports	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Nature/Biodiversity Conservation Strategies	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Local Environment Agency Plans	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Air Quality Management Plans	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Integrated Transport Plans	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Others (excluding LA21) - please specify below						
Title: _____					Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Title: _____					Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

D. Definition of Sustainable Development

- D1. ■ Has your department adopted or constructed a specific definition of 'sustainable development' for reference in Plan policies/proposals and their preparation?
 Yes No
 If 'Yes', please specify definition...

E. Public Participation & Partnership in Development Planning

- The questions within this section relate to issues of public participation/consultation and partnership building.
 E1. ■ During plan preparation, have the public consultation/participation procedures employed exceeded the minimum statutory requirements? Yes No
 If 'No' please move directly to section 'E3'

- E2. ■ The following is a list of possible methods which may be used to extend public consultation/participation procedures beyond the minimum statutory requirements.
 ■ Please indicate below: firstly, which (if any) have been employed by your LPA during plan production and,
 (Using the tick boxes) secondly, if they have been used, at which of three stages in production they have been used (tick as many boxes as necessary):

Consultation / participation procedures	Used during Plan production?		During preparation of Draft Plan			After prep. but before deposit of Draft Plan			After deposit of Prepared Draft Plan		
(a) Questionnaires	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Public meetings	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Workshops	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Forums	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Focus Groups	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) 'Planning for Real'	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Others - please specify below			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- E3. ■ Has the introduction of sustainable development as a central objective in development planning led to re-evaluation and modification of participation / consultation procedures in Plan preparation? Yes No Comments/Observations/Details...

E4. ■ Have any identifiable partnerships been built between the LPA and other sectors (e.g. business, public/private interest groups, academia, etc.) in an effort to advance local policies/proposals for sustainable development? Yes No
 If 'Yes' please enter below the key partners and the specific objectives of such relationships in terms of promoting sustainable development (e.g. awareness raising, sharing ownership, implementation etc.):

<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Objective(s) of relationship</i>

F. Local Agenda 21

■ The questions in this section relate specifically to Local Agenda 21 and any relationship it may have with development planning

F1. ■ Has the Local Authority completed and published an LA21 strategy document? Yes No
 If 'Yes', please enter... Date: _____ Title: _____
 If 'No', is progress being made towards the production of such a document? Yes No
 If so please enter... Estimated completion date: _____

F2. ■ Has the Local Authority created a specific LA21 Officer/Co-ordinator position? Yes No
 If 'Yes', under which department has it been created:
 If 'No', which department/team/individual has been given responsibility for LA21 activity?

F3. ■ Does some form of interdepartmental body/committee exist within the Local Authority to promote sustainable development/LA21? Yes No
 If 'Yes', please give details, including the nature of the role which your department plays in this:

F4. ■ Have any identifiable links been established between LA21 activity and the Plan (e.g. occasions in which LA21 activity or output has influenced the preparation of Plan policies / proposals)? Yes No
 If 'Yes' please enter details/exemplars below (if 'No' please enter any comments/observations)...

G. Supplementary Planning Guidance

■ In the context of advancing sustainable development, the use of Supplementary Planning Guidance has been recognised as a potentially helpful means of integrating the output from LA21, or other socio-environmentally oriented local initiatives into land use decision-making.

G1. ■ Has this happened in your LPA? Yes No

If 'Yes' please enter details/exemplars below...

Project(s) from which SPG(s) derived (e.g. Community Design Statements, Village Appraisals etc.):

Details of SPG(s):

H. Environmental Appraisal

■ The following section relates to the 'environmental appraisal' of development plans as a means of evaluating Plan policies and proposals with regard to environmental sustainability: using the D.o.E.'s 1993 'good practice' publication as a yardstick.

H1. ■ Has an Environmental Appraisal of the Plan been carried out? Yes No

If 'No', please move on to Section 'I'

H2. ■ To what degree do you consider that the appraisal process has met or is meeting the guidelines put forward in the D.o.E.'s *Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans: A Good Practice Guide*? (please tick *one* box from the list of four below, and fill in details as appropriate)

i.) Exceeded / extended guidelines If you have ticked this box please indicate how the guidelines have been exceeded... (e.g. assessing against locally generated criteria concerning equity and quality of life as well as environment - moving towards 'sustainability appraisal')

ii.) Comprehensively followed guidelines Comments on guidance...

iii.) Partially followed guidelines If you have ticked this box please indicate the problem areas and the reasons for them... (e.g. lack of resources, political commitment etc., or use of alternative methodology)

iv.) Don't know - Guide not consulted If you have ticked this box please indicate the appraisal methodology employed...

I. Environmental Valuation and Capacity

■ Concepts of environmental capital and/or capacity appear to have some bearing in the ongoing debate regarding the incorporation of policies/proposals to promote sustainable development in development plans. At present such issues are finding expression in the identification and characterisation of environmental stock and an awareness of environmental thresholds in terms of ascertaining limits of acceptable environmental change.

- I1. ■ Has any attempt been made to characterise and/or categorise environmental resources in the Plan's local area? Yes No
If 'Yes' please give details below...

- I2. ■ Has any attempt been made to forecast the impact of development activity on the environmental resource base? Yes No
If 'Yes' please give details below...

- I3. ■ Has any attempt been made to develop indicators which reflect technical and/or perception information pertaining to specific components of the environment and their change over time? Yes No
If 'Yes' please give details below...

- I4. ■ If you answered 'No' to all the questions in this section please go directly to Section J overleaf.
■ If you answered 'Yes' to any of the above questions in this section, has the environmentally-based information or framework put together ...
- | | | | |
|------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (a.) | ■ been a central component of an Environmental Appraisal of the Plan ? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b.) | ■ led to the identification of environmental capacities ? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c.) | ■ revealed environmental thresholds ? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d.) | ■ permitted the setting of specific environmental targets ? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
- If you have answered 'Yes' to (b.), (c.) or (d.) please indicate below the issues/topic areas for which such information was most pertinent:

J. Approaches/Principles & Policies/Proposals

- As endeavours have been made to translate sustainable development from rhetoric into action a range of potential approaches or principles applicable to land use regulation have been identified.
- The purpose of this section is to attempt to ascertain if, and in what capacity, any of 5 such principles/approaches have found expression in your Plan.
- The 5 principles/approaches to be considered are as follows:
 - ① **The Precautionary Principle...** As expressed through policies or proposals which, either, regulate against development types and/or location where there is a significant degree of uncertainty over whether substantial or irreversible damage to the environment may result, or, are directed at preventing or solving a perceived environmental problem before scientific proof is available.
 - ② **Environmental Thresholds / Limits...** As expressed through policies or proposals which, either, make judgements about the ability of environmental resources to accept demands upon them without irreversible or otherwise unacceptable loss or damage, or, set limits / thresholds for development beyond which demands could no longer be met without damage.
 - ③ **Environmental Compensation...** As expressed through policies or proposals which require compensation for any loss of socio-environmental value, caused as a result of new development or change of use, with commensurate socio-environmental benefits.
 - ④ **Demand Management...** As expressed through policies or proposals which attempt to modify forecasted demand for development rather than simply accommodating it, on the grounds of maintaining or improving socio-environmental conditions.
 - ⑤ **Best Practicable Environmental Option...** As expressed through policies or proposals which attempt to meet demand for development whilst applying performance standards to minimise environmental degradation.
- The following sub-sections inquire about the level and areas of expression of each of these principles/approaches in turn.

J1.

① The Precautionary Principle [Examples of policy/proposals deriving from this principle/approach would be those advising, that when the environmental impact of a proposed development is uncertain, that a precautionary approach should be adopted (such as instances where inconclusive evidence is presented as to the influence of development on drainage patterns, adjacent wildlife, quality of life etc.).]		Has this principle/approach been expressed in the Plan? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If 'No', please move on to Section 'J2'</i>	
How would you describe the influence of this principle/approach on the Plan (please tick as appropriate)? Weak (a peripheral influence) <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate (a significant influence) <input type="checkbox"/> Strong (a central influence) <input type="checkbox"/>			
In which of the following sections/areas of the Plan does it find notable expression (please tick as appropriate)?			
a.) Overall Aims & Objectives		Comments / Observations:	
b.) The built environment & land-use / transportation		d.) Energy Use & Production	
c.) Natural resource management		e.) Pollution control	
		f.) Waste management	
		g.) Wildlife & countryside	

J2.

2 Environmental Thresholds / Limits
 [Examples of policy/proposals deriving from this principle/approach would be those which regulate against development if a specified socio-environmental threshold has been breached (such as barring further development in an area once either specified traffic or air pollution levels pass calculated thresholds, or a certain minimum area of public green space had been reached, etc.).]

■ Has this principle/approach been expressed in the Plan? Yes No *If 'No', please move on to Section 'J3'*

■ How would you describe the influence of this principle/approach on the Plan (please tick as appropriate)?
 Weak (a peripheral influence) Moderate (a significant influence) Strong (a central influence)

■ In which of the following sections/areas of the Plan does it find notable expression (please tick as appropriate)?

a.) Overall Aims & Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comments / Observations:
b.) The built environment & land-use / transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c.) Natural resource management	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	d.) Energy Use & Production	
	e.) Pollution control	
	f.) Waste management	
	g.) Wildlife & countryside	

J3.

3 Environmental Compensation
 [Examples of policy/proposals deriving from this principle/approach would be those which state that the loss through development of a particular socio-environmental resource must be compensated by some means on a 'like-for-like' basis or otherwise (such as requiring in instances where development will lead to the loss of habitats or environmental amenities in one location that they be reinstated in another)].

■ Has this principle/approach been expressed in the Plan? Yes No *If 'No', please move on to Section 'J4'*

■ How would you describe the influence of this principle/approach on the Plan (please tick as appropriate)?
 Weak (a peripheral influence) Moderate (a significant influence) Strong (a central influence)

■ In which of the following sections/areas of the Plan does it find notable expression (please tick as appropriate)?

a.) Overall Aims & Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comments / Observations:
b.) The built environment & land-use / transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c.) Natural resource management	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	d.) Energy Use & Production	
	e.) Pollution control	
	f.) Waste management	
	g.) Wildlife & countryside	

J4.

4 Demand Management
 [Examples of policy/proposals deriving from this principle/approach would be those which attempt to reduce demand or need for activities or services which are considered to be environmentally degenerative (such as minimising travel requirements through encouraging mixed-use or brownfield development)].

■ Has this principle/approach been expressed in the Plan? Yes No *If 'No', please move on to Section 'J5'*

■ How would you describe the influence of this principle/approach on the Plan (please tick as appropriate)?
 Weak (a peripheral influence) Moderate (a significant influence) Strong (a central influence)

■ In which of the following sections/areas of the Plan does it find notable expression (please tick as appropriate)?

a.) Overall Aims & Objectives	d.) Energy Use & Production	Comments / Observations:
b.) The built environment & land-use / transportation	e.) Pollution control	
c.) Natural resource management	f.) Waste management	
	g.) Wildlife & countryside	

J5.

5 Best Practicable Environmental Option
 [Examples of policy/proposals deriving from this principle/approach would be those which permit development so long as certain specified socio-environmental standards are met (such as low energy use design and public transport access) or those which encourage/require new technologies to minimise environmental impact (such as renewable energy plants or combined heat and power schemes)].

■ Has this principle/approach been expressed in the Plan? Yes No *If 'No', please move on to Section 'K1'*

■ How would you describe the influence of this principle/approach on the Plan (please tick as appropriate)?
 Weak (a peripheral influence) Moderate (a significant influence) Strong (a central influence)

■ In which of the following sections/areas of the Plan does it find notable expression (please tick as appropriate)?

a.) Overall Aims & Objectives	d.) Energy Use & Production	Comments / Observations:
b.) The built environment & land-use / transportation	e.) Pollution control	
c.) Natural resource management	f.) Waste management	
	g.) Wildlife & countryside	

K. Constraints on fully incorporating the sustainable development agenda in development planning

K1. ■ The following is a list of factors which you may or may not consider restrictive to your LPA's endeavours to fully promote sustainable development within land-use development planning.

- For each factor please indicate the degree of restriction which you feel they have applied, expressed in terms of 'none', 'minimal', 'moderate' or 'major'.
- If you feel there is a need to comment on or qualify your choice please do so in the shaded space provided.

Potentially Restrictive Factors	Degree of Restriction				Comments
	None	Minimal	Moderate	Major	
a) Lack of time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Lack of funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Lack of departmental staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Lack of departmental staff awareness / training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Lack of commitment from Central Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) Insufficient guidance / advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g) Lack of commitment from other departments in authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
h) Lack of understanding / awareness from members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
i) Lack of commitment from members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
j) Lack of awareness / understanding from local community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
k) Lack of commitment / support from local community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
l) The strength of lobby groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
m) The process of development control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
n) Other.... <i>please specify</i> ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

L. Adjectival Associations - Sustainable Development & Development Planning

■ In this final section please indicate which member of a pair of adjectives you would most associate with the entities firstly of *sustainable development*, and secondly of land-use *development planning*.

For the purposes of these two questions please consider both entities as **procedural concepts**, i.e. is sustainable development more of a comprehensive than an incremental process? more of a radical than a revisionist process? more of an innovative than an unimaginative process? etc., and then likewise for development planning.

- To do this please enter a cross in one of the five boxes which separate the two adjectives - considering the boxes as a scale between each pair of adjectives, i.e.:
 - marking either the far r.h. or far l.h. box suggests that you would strongly associate the r.h. or l.h. adjective with the entity being described over the other adjective;
 - marking either of the adjacent boxes to the outside ones suggests that you would associate one adjective over the other but not as strongly;
 - marking the central box suggests that you would equally associate both adjectives with the entity in question;
 - placing a line through all five boxes suggests that you feel neither adjective is appropriate.

L1.

Sustainable development

a)	comprehensive→					←incremental
b)	radical→					←revisionist
c)	innovative→					←unimaginative
d)	holistic→					←sectoral
e)	proactive→					←reactive
f)	integrative→					←fragmentary
g)	strategic→					←opportunistic
h)	intuitive→					←rational
i)	idealistic→					←pragmatic

L2.

Development Planning

a)	comprehensive→					←incremental
b)	radical→					←revisionist
c)	innovative→					←unimaginative
d)	systemic→					←sectoral
e)	proactive→					←reactive
f)	integrative→					←fragmentary
g)	strategic→					←opportunistic
h)	intuitive→					←rational
i)	idealistic→					←pragmatic

M. Additional information / comments

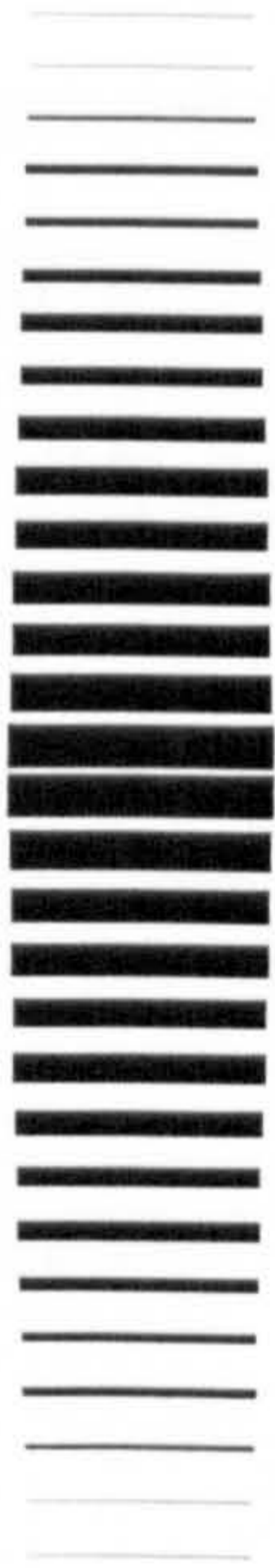
- Please use the space provided below to enter any additional information or comments you may have with regard to the above questions or otherwise.

Very many thanks for completing this questionnaire

■ It would be of great assistance to this research, in both a supportive and comparative capacity, if you could return (with the completed questionnaire) a copy of the current draft of your Unitary Development Plan (together with any explanatory memorandum and/or supplementary documents if at all possible).

■ Would you like to receive a copy of the results of this survey once they have been assimilated? Yes No

■ Would you and other members of your department be prepared to discuss further the issues raised in this questionnaire as part of an in-depth case study? Yes No



Appendix C – Full survey results: frequencies and supplementary comments / details

The following frequency tables and supplementary respondent comment/detail boxes have been generated solely from completed questionnaires received from 79 LPAs (out of 106 - 75% response rate) by 6th July 1998. In the majority of cases the following figures are given as percentages of these 79 cases.

[For 35 of the 79 replies the adoption date/year had slipped beyond 1998 - 26 specifying 1999, 2 specifying 2000 and a further 7 unable to be more specific.]

The following abbreviations are used throughout:

SP: Structure Plan

UDP: Unitary Development Plan

AWLP: Area Wide Local Plan

A1.1 Supportive/supplementary & non-statutory input documents

■ Supportive / supplementary documents with specific references to advancing sustainable development:

Document Types	LPAs producing documents (%)
Background papers	30%
Discussion documents	13%
Vision statements	5%

■ Non-statutory documentary inputs which have potentially strong links to the promotion of sustainable development:

Documents	LPAs for which docs. exist (incl. those in preparation) (%)	LPAs using docs. as inputs into dev. plan preparation (as % of those for which docs. exist)
SoE reports	58%	25%
Nature/biodiversity strategies	67%	30%
LEAPs	60%	8%
Air quality management plans	34%	1%
Integrated transport plans	39%	17%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Additional documents influencing plans but not placed by respondents into above categories	
Rural economic issues study	Green space provision in new housing dev.
Economic development document	Parking strategy
Town centre strategy	Cycling strategy
Countryside strategy	Rural environment strategy
Study of vacant industrial & commercial premises	National Park management plan
Sustainable transportation policy	Landscape and wildlife strategy
Tourism strategy	Habitat survey
Energy and the urban environment	Harbour management policies
Urban open space strategy	Estuary management plan

A1.2 Adoption or construction of specific definitions of 'sustainable development' for reference in Plan policies/proposals and their preparation:

■ (Brundtland def.: "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" [WCED, 1987, p.43])

Definition status	LPAs (%)
Adopted/constructed non-Brundtland def.	16%
Adopted Brundtland def.	39%
Not adopted or constructed def.	41%
Unknown	4%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Examples of adopted/constructed non-Brundtland definitions (though lineage clearly apparent):

- SP: “Sustainable development means meeting needs and improving quality of life in the present, whilst conserving human and environmental resources so that the options and the quality of life available in the future are at least as great as we enjoy today.”
- SP: “Meeting development for social and economic needs in a manner that does not exceed levels or take forms that cannot be sustained in the longer term without detriment to key environmental assets, capacities or thresholds.”
- AWLP: “The need for development to secure higher standards of living should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
- AWLP: “Sustainable development is that which can serve the interests of economic development at the same time as those of conservation and enhancement of the environment and protection of existing and future communities.”
- AWLP: “Balance the development needs of the District with the protection of its environment, providing an environmentally sustainable future for generations to come.”
- AWLP: “All development must take full account of the need to protect the environment so that present day demands do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and enjoy a high quality environment.”
- AWLP: “To ensure that all development proposals take full account of the need to protect the environment so that present day demands do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and enjoy a high quality environment.”

Reasons for no definition being constructed/adopted:

- AWLP: “Not a specific ‘mantra’ for universal use!”
- AWLP: “We believe direct reference to sustainable in policy is not appropriate since it is not clear enough for Local Plan policy. The need is for the sum of policies to move in a sustainable direction”
- AWLP: “This may have to come, but we believe there has been too much defining and not enough doing!! We are working towards more sustainable forms of development - thinking about each issue and addressing issues in an increasingly holistic way - it therefore follows that the development which arises (or is stopped) will be sustainable.”

A1.3 Public consultation / participation during plan preparation:

■ Exceeding minimum statutory requirements:

Min. statutory requirement exceeded?	LPAs (%)
Yes	84%
No	8%
Unknown	8%

■ Methods for consultation / participation and stages used in plan production process:

[Key for stages, or combination of stages, when method used in production process:

1 = During preparation of Draft Plan

2 = After preparation but before deposit of Draft Plan

3 = After deposit of prepared Draft plan

4 = 1 + 2

5 = 1 + 3

6 = 2 + 3

7 = 1 + 2 + 3

[Figures shown for these stages (1-7) are actual numbers of LPAs employing the specific ‘method’]

Method	LPAs (%)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Questionnaires	53%	19	9	2	5	4	1	2
Public meetings	90%	19	17	1	19	3	2	10
Workshops	20%	11	2	1	2	0	0	0
Forums	32%	9	3	3	7	0	0	3
Focus groups	13%	4	2	2	2	0	0	0
Planning for real	1%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	43%	10	6	1	11	2	2	2

■ Re-evaluation / modification of participation / consultation procedures as a consequence of introduction of sustainable development:

Re-evaluation / modification?	LPAs (%)
Yes	27%
No	73%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Other consultation/participation methods (excluding the ubiquitous use of exhibitions):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Special material for blind, deaf and ethnic minorities ▫ Audio cassette ▫ Local Plan newspaper ▫ Consensus building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Short form (v. accessible) summary in local libraries ▫ Local Plan helpline ▫ Video for individuals / groups
Comments made on re-evaluation/modification of methods in the light of sustainable development agenda:	
<p>Methods changed through...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: "consulting people at an early stage of the process and more thoroughly". • UDP: "a re-evaluation of way we undertake the forthcoming Review of the UDP and how we involve the public. Looking at innovative ways such as the role of 'planning for real' exercises, building upon experience of a 'village design statement' process". • UDP: "a limited change - focus groups "have stressed the need to have a plan which is sustainable and enables us to discuss the wider issues of sustainability with regard to various issues". • AWLP: participation in environmental appraisal . • AWLP: "more awareness of the importance and value of public participation and involvement". • AWLP: "incremental changes" as the nature of the process is such that it is difficult to do otherwise. • AWLP: "second Environmental Appraisal carried out post publication of SOE report" • AWLP: "Focus groups for our Agenda 21 process which will feed into review of policies." • AWLP: engaging communities in evolving Village Appraisal-Village Design Summary initiatives. • AWLP: moving "environmental issues up in the political agenda". • AWLP: workshops with individual communities. 	
Reasons/comments given for no re-evaluation/modification during plan preparation...	
<p>Methods not changed because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: "if anything consultation has been less participative than in the past due to diminished resources." • UDP: "the underlying principles of the consultation were compatible" with sustainable development. • UDP: "in the current resource climate - all but statutory responsibilities have now been cut back - we do what is necessary to fulfil our statutory duties under the development plan regulations". • UDP: sustainable development appeared "too late to impact significantly on Plan proposals which were drafted in the early 1990's." • UDP: "most of consultation organised and took place before Rio - otherwise things would have been very different" • AWLP: "the responses we have received indicate that our consultation procedures are more than adequate (this was backed up by the inspector's report)." • AWLP: "consultation of relevant bodies has always been wide and covered these subject areas". <p>Methods not changed but...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: Review will concentrate on plan preparation "as a consultative/participative process, including visioning and focus group work on lay issues, particularly urban capacity (what environmental resources are valued?)." • UDP: presence of sustainable development agenda "provides a more 'informed' public response and consideration by Local Planning Authority." • UDP: "the planning system has for many years taken into account environmental/sustainability issues. The increased importance given to the issues in national guidance has led to a more explicit treatment of the issues in Development Plans." • UDP: "will do when preparing the Review of the Plan" • AWLP: "consultation was broad and wide ranging in any case and took account of sustainability from the outset." 	

- AWLP: “would consider undertaking ‘planning for real’ exercises on Local Plan Review.”
- AWLP: “the review will be very different.”
- AWLP: “it may well do when the plan is rolled forward.”
- AWLP: “may do when plan is reviewed.”
- AWLP: “it is likely that there will be modification of participation/consultation procedures in the light of sustainable development issues.”

A1.4 Local Agenda 21 status, links to development plans, partnerships, and SPGs:

■ Status of LA21 strategy document:

Status	LPAs (%)
Completed	22%
In progress	51%
None	19%
Unknown	8%

■ Creation of specific LA21 Officer / Co-ordinator position:

Status	LPAs (%)
Yes (within directorate covering planning)	15%
Yes (outside directorate covering planning)	54%
Not created	28%
Unknown	3%

■ Interdepartmental body within LA to promote LA21 / sustainable development:

Status	LPAs (%)
Yes	67%
No	28%
Unknown	5%

■ Identifiable links established between LA21 activity and development plan:

Status	LPAs (%)
Yes	29%
No	66%
Unknown	5%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Comments made on nature of linkage between LA21 activity and development plan preparation:

- SP: Through LA21 forum.
- SP: “Valuable input and ‘sounding-board’ provided by Local Agenda 21 Forum”.
- SP: “The A21 process has followed behind the Structure Plan Review process - sustainability principles in the structure plan tend to have been reflected in the A21 document rather than the other way round. In the longer term, an aim of A21 is to influence the planning process”.
- SP: “Numerous impacts as a consultee and as producer of technical and practically based information on facilitation of sustainable development. Unfortunately this is found to be neither politically acceptable nor approved of by DoE (despite PPG7’s recommendation to heed LA21 process). Unless LA21 is conformist in terms of PPGs it is disallowed”
- UDP: “Plan has effectively blazed a trail for certain aspects of LA21”.
- UDP: “Chapter on the subject in the UDP”
- UDP: “Information exchange on good practice on sustainable development. LA21 Unit input to establishing a framework for the sustainability Appraisal of the Review of the UDP”.
- UDP: “The UDP’s timing did not enable many of the emerging ideas/policies to be incorporated in the Plan, but some ‘prototype’ policies have emerged”.
- AWLP: Land-use discussion group.
- AWLP: “Conservation and biodiversity policies”.
- AWLP: Via environmental appraisal
- AWLP: “Consultation/workshops with LA21 Groups during Plan preparation”
- AWLP: “The influence has been indirect - the Local Plans Officer and Landscape Architect are

involved in both LA21 activities and plan policy formulation. The two activities influence each other”.

- AWLP: “The Environmental Strategy Officer was involved in the environmental appraisal of the Local Plan”.
- AWLP: Workshops centring on ‘how should we live?’ issues.
- AWLP: “LA21 is referred to in Environmental Section of Local Plan but only general comment acknowledging its importance”.
- AWLP: “The development of a Nature Conservation Strategy/Biodiversity Action Plan will inform review/alteration of the existing/future plans”.

No linkage, but...

- UDP: “an LA21 action plan is rarely a matter of development planning - if anything the influence has so far been the other way round - the UDP has influenced the LA21 documents. Most environmental initiatives relevant to statutory land-use planning are already in the UDP via modification to PPG advice, objection and modifications at inquiry etc.. If anything the UDP is furthest advanced in environmental terms than much of the other mainline council services”.
- UDP: “LA21 activity can be interpreted very widely and the UDP was prepared taking into account a wide range of environmental concerns”.
- UDP: “once the post of LA21 Officer is filled it is anticipated that there will be more concrete links between LA21 activity and the Plan”.
- AWLP: “no LA21 officer until after PLI”
- SP + UDP + AWLP: several statements of potential intent on Review, for example:
 SP: “a more significant influence during Review”
 AWLP: Council has been actively involved in LA21 work - “the challenge for the future is to translate the skills, initiatives and knowledge gained into the context of development planning/Local Plan Review”.
 AWLP: “it will have greater influence at the review stage as the concept becomes clearer and the aims more practical to achieve.

■ Creation of partnerships between LPA and other sectors to advance sustainable development:

Partnerships created?	LPAs (%)
Yes	41%
No	56%
Unknown	3%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Partners:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Business ▫ Local residents ▫ Bus companies ▫ Environment Forum ▫ University ▫ Parish and Town Councils ▫ English Nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Institutions ▫ Recognised groups and organisations ▫ Cycle groups ▫ Local interest groups ▫ Local college ▫ Voluntary conservation groups ▫ Environment Agency
Nature of partnership:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: Objective is “economic and social regeneration” • SP: Through LA21 Forum • SP Through LA21 • SP: External verification panel (university and environmental groups) to analyse the Environmental Appraisal. • SP: “Building of partnerships for specific sustainability issues a matter for Review” • AWLP: “Awareness raising” • AWLP: The principle is the early involvement of our partners enriches our strategies and plans. Create a shared sense of ownership and facilitate easy implementation”. • AWLP: To develop environmental good practice with local businesses, and for practical education on LA21 issues with the local college. • AWLP: For ‘low-key’ projects. 	

- Use of SPGs to integrate LA21 output or other socio-environmentally oriented local initiatives in land-use decision-making:

SPGs used	LPAs (%)
Yes	32%
No	67%
Unknown	1%

- Supplementary comments/details

Comments made on Role/status of SPGs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: "Endeavoured to but too much opposition - wanted to facilitate profound interpretations of sustainable development through 'sustainable development briefs for developers'. • SP: Not considered an issue at strategic level - left to districts. • AWLP: "In pipeline". • AWLP: Village Design Statements and Parish Appraisals yet to be SPG but are material planning consideration. • AWLP: "Development briefs with public consultation". • AWLP: Via environmental appraisal. • AWLP: Separate SPG Note produced on 'Planning for Sustainable Development'.

A1.5 Environmental appraisal, Environmental valuation and capacity:

- Carrying out of environmental appraisal of development plans (%), and where carried out degree to which DoE 'good practice' guidance followed (actual numbers of LPAs):

Appraisal carried out	LPAs (%)	Degree to which guidance followed	LPAs
Yes	75%	Exceeded	13%
No	25%	Comprehensively	39%
		Partially	46%
		Guide not consulted	2%

- Supplementary comments/details

Comments made on DoE Guidance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: [having followed guidance comprehensively] "Preparing an appraisal in line with the guidance is very demanding of staff time. Few objectors commented on it (not even DoE!). It is doubtful if it was worth the effort involved". • SP: "The guidance is adequate but the role of SEA should not be over-estimated". • SP: "The flexible approach in the DoE guide has been adopted by the County Council to suit the scope of planning issues prevalent in the County".
Restraints on carrying out and effectiveness of environmental appraisal:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: [no EA as a published document] "All policies are scoped via PPG advice and tested at inquiry for compliance by pressure groups and statutory consultees!!" • UDP: "Lack of time/resources; stage reached in Plan process" • UDP: No EA carried out - "decided it would delay adoption of plan undesirably. Await review process". • AWLP: "Have not updated appraisal because of time constraints and need to adopt Local Plan asap". • AWLP: "There had been decisions taken at Structure Plan level which committed the Local Plan to certain actions/policies regardless of outcome of environmental appraisal". • AWLP: "Lack of resources". • AWLP: "Lack of time and resources at the time plan under preparation limited methodology to having draft plan scoped and housing land site proposals evaluated". • AWLP: "Lack of resources / difficult to assess effects". • AWLP: "In order to bring greater objectivity to the exercise, defining local/regional capacities and thresholds would be immensely useful. But again, issues of resources (financial and temporal) prevent any district or borough council to seriously address the issue. In this respect it is generally felt that the County Council, English Nature, and the Environment Agency should provide a lead on this topic. Until a robust framework of indicators and defined environmental limits is established -

and legal standards as proposed by the EU - the present worth of EAs is in encouraging corporate working and highlighting the role of a local plan in contributing to an LA21 strategy”.

- AWLP: “Cost/benefit appraisal indicated that a full analysis would not be cost effective. We felt we had done more than most”.
- AWLP: “Did not follow a ‘matrix’ approach as this was not felt to be particularly helpful or aid understanding of the issues”.
- AWLP: No EA carried out - “Plan is too advanced to delay process by carrying out an appraisal ... environmental appraisal/capacity could be incorporated in to next dev. plan review”.

■ Attempts to characterise and/or categorise environmental resources in plan area:

Characterisation/categorisation	LPAs (%)
Yes	47%
No	52%
Unknown	1%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Comments made on procedures for characterisation/categorisation of environmental resources:

- SP: “Assessments of nature conservation value, landscape quality and other considerations, such as groundwater protection areas. Comparison undertaken to compare provision and incidences with other counties in England.”
- SP: Characterisation “based on critical/constant capital model”, output used for “setting levels of necessary development and economic activity within the County”.
- SP: “Not in the terms meant by this question. We have an ongoing environmental monitoring project to update info. in the SOE report.”
- SP: “Incorporated into the SOE.”
- UDP: Characterisation/categorisation not carried out “in the terms of the current documentation terminology - but heritage / nature conservation / landscape / water resources and coast are all directly evaluated and considered in the UDP in some detail”.
- UDP: “Partially but...a commitment to a more comprehensive approach in future.”
- UDP: “Work is ongoing to develop procedures.”
- UDP: “Work is being carried out on assessing the capacity of the urban area to accommodate further residential development.”
- UDP: “Some initial categorisation and work commissioned by Regional Planning Conference - all on-going, will be part of Review.”
- AWLP: “Ongoing debate as part of the Local Plan Review.”
- AWLP: “In a fairly broad brush manner between Critical Environmental Capital and Constant Natural Assets.”
- AWLP: “Planned as part joint structure plan preparation.”
- AWLP: Via County Council/Wildlife Trust biodiversity strategy.
- AWLP: “Covers best and most versatile agricultural land, SSSIs and biological heritage sites.”
- AWLP: Being done through County framework.
- AWLP: “All known sites of nature conservation importance mapped.”
- AWLP: Contributed to major County study - “the Countywide Audit will affect our review and lead our environmental appraisal. It is an excellent attempt to which our council contributed! (same comment applies to LEAP)”.
- AWLP: “To be taken down to district level from existing County bio-diversity plan (budget available).”
- AWLP: “Only very general statements made within various aspects of the plan.”
- AWLP: “Not a comprehensive survey”...“it is acknowledged that further work is necessary.”
- AWLP: “Not formally.”
- AWLP: “First stage habitat survey, landscape surveys.”
- AWLP: “Ecological, archaeological, geological, listed building, Conservation Area data/surveys all fed into plan.”
- AWLP: “Statutory and local designations e.g. SSSIs, SNCVs, SAMs.”

■ Attempts to forecast the impact of developmental activity on environmental resource base:

Forecast of impact	LPAs (%)
Yes	29%
No	70%
Unknown	1%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Comments made on procedures for forecasting impact of developmental activity on environmental resource base:

- SP: "Identification of geographical areas which are unable to continue to meet trend development rates without some significant detrimental impact upon the environment".
- SP: "At strategic level so many unknowns and variables mean this is inexact".
- UDP: "Not explicitly as per current documentation - but the council would not be allocating sites which would harm environmental resources - local councillors and residents are already very vociferous about any hint of harm".
- AWLP: "In Environmental Appraisal of Local Plan".
- AWLP: "Via Environmental Appraisal".
- AWLP: "Such a forecast has always been a fundamental part of the planning process".
- AWLP: "As with all aspects of planning, impact on the environment has been assessed, e.g. views, landscape, wildlife, habitats, historic environments etc.".
- Being done through County framework.

■ Development of indicators which reflect technical and/or perception information pertaining to specific components of the environment and their change over time:

Development of indicators	LPAs (%)
Yes	15%
No	82%
Unknown	3%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Comments made on development of indicators:

- SP: "In the process of establishing process for monitoring sustainability indicators".
- SP: "Currently being developed".
- UDP: "The Council proposes to prepare an annual monitoring statement for the plan which includes environmental information".
- AWLP: "Indicators developed by environment working parties in the County - final outcome not yet available".
- AWLP: "Information is kept which could be used for this purpose such as housing completion, brownfield/greenfield split, demolitions, industrial land take up rate, SBI Survey".
- AWLP: "Is planned as part of LA21/indicators work".
- AWLP: "Work is currently being advanced by this Authority on behalf of the County".
- AWLP: Being done through County framework.

■ Use (as % of authorities where such attempts have been made) of characterisation / categorisation and/or impact forecast and/or indicators in:

- a.) environmental appraisal;
- b.) identification of environmental capacities;
- c.) revealing environmental thresholds; and
- d.) permitting the setting of specific environmental targets:

a.) Used in environmental appraisal	50%	b.) Used to identify envir. capacities	9%
c.) Used to reveal envir. thresholds	9%	d.) Used to set specific envir. targets	11%

A1.6 Expression of potential approaches / principles to incorporating sustainable development in land-use development plans:

Key to principles/approaches listed/displayed below:

PP = Precautionary principle

ETL = Environmental thresholds/limits

EC = Environmental compensation

DM = Demand management

BPEO = Best practicable environmental option

■ Strength (% of all LPAs) in plans:

Strength of expression	PP(%)	ETL(%)	EC(%)	DM(%)	BPEO(%)
Strong	15%	5%	14%	37%	5%
Moderate	23%	15%	30%	27%	28%
Weak	13%	5%	27%	11%	19%
None	48%	71%	25%	21%	46%
Unknown	1%	4%	4%	4%	2%

■ Areas of expression in plans (as % of LPAs which indicated some expression):

Section / area of plan	PP (%)	ETL (%)	EC (%)	DM (%)	BPEO (%)
Overall aims & objectives	51%	39%	20%	69%	48%
Built environment & land-use/transportation	51%	61%	36%	90%	66%
Natural resource management	59%	37%	29%	26%	38%
Energy use & production	27%	8%	2%	26%	56%
Pollution control	34%	17%	7%	16%	40%
Waste management	22%	8%	2%	19%	31%
Wildlife & countryside	73%	46%	80%	31%	27%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Comments on expression of 'precautionary principle':
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: "Precautionary principle was included in the main strategic policy in the consultation draft plan, but was deleted in light of comments that it was unworkable in practice". • UDP: "This has to be limited to areas permitted by national advice - you could not for instance get away with it at appeal/inquiry for most issues". • UDP: "This approach is contrary to national planning policy guidance. The LPA is required to demonstrate what harm a development may cause if it is to refuse planning permission". • AWLP: "Expressed indirectly". • AWLP: "The precautionary approach is inferred" • AWLP: "There is scope throughout each section to implement the precautionary approach against a proposed development" • AWLP: "Overall strategy of development restraint in the County Structure Plan forms a key element in the Local Plan's aims and objectives".
Comments on expression of 'environmental thresholds and limits':
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: "Not called thresholds". • UDP: "This is mainly the job of our statutory advisors in MAFF, English Nature and at the Environment Agency - they will 'shout' is relevant thresholds are breached". • AWLP: "Many objections - await Inspector's report!" • AWLP: "Weak in terms of <u>specified thresholds</u>, strong/central in terms of implicit judgement". • AWLP: "We have criteria based policies that set out acceptable forms of development and site specific polices which have thresholds - but these are not figurative as a threshold is difficult to quantify". • AWLP: "Not specifically". • AWLP: "All open space is protected"
Comments on expression of 'environmental compensation':
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: "A general background concept". • AWLP: "Always been central to planning in District" • AWLP: "S.106 agreements used though not emphasised as environmental compensation" • AWLP: "The Local Plan inspector disliked the key policy, and it has now been taken out of the

Plan”.
Comments on expression of ‘demand management’:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: “To minimise take of land on basis of household forecasts”. • SP: “Demand management critical to entire approach and provision made for future development”. • SP: “Planning as a form of demand management naturally regulates development activity - now under banner of sustainability”. • UDP: “This is what planning is for!” • UDP: “Would consider that the policy forms an adjunct to the plan and not the central premise on which it is based”. • AWLP: A central theme - practical application/achievements will be harder to gauge however”.
Comments on expression of ‘best practicable environmental option’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: “Overall strategy has been to accommodate need remaining after demand management process on settlements with the best employment and service opportunities so reducing the need to travel, minimise pollution and reduce impact on the countryside”. • SP: “Least unsustainable development” • SP: “The right words are used but are open to interpretation by local planners and developers”. • AWLP: “Not specifically”.

A1.7 Factors constraining full incorporation of sustainable development agenda in development planning:

■ Level of restriction of given factors

Potentially restrictive factor	Major restriction LPAs(%)	Moderate restriction LPAs(%)	Minimal restriction LPAs(%)	No restriction LPAs(%)	Unknown LPAs(%)
Lack of time	28%	39%	25%	5%	3%
Lack of funding	22%	46%	24%	4%	4%
Lack of staff	40%	33%	23%	2%	2%
Lack of dept. staff awareness/training	14%	39%	41%	4%	2%
Lack of commitment from Central Govt.	20%	35%	32%	9%	4%
Insufficient guidance/advice	17%	35%	41%	5%	2%
Lack of commitment from other LA depts.	24%	27%	39%	8%	2%
Lack of members’ understanding/awareness	22%	38%	33%	5%	2%
Lack of members’ commitment	21%	32%	37%	8%	2%
Lack of community understanding/awareness	14%	34%	44%	4%	4%
Lack of community commitment/support	10%	41%	39%	6%	4%
Strength of lobby groups	9%	20%	49%	17%	5%
Process of development control	20%	46%	22%	9%	3%

■ Supplementary comments/details

Comments made on ‘lack of time’ constraints:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “More from less is the rule of the day”. • UDP: “The current emphasis on ‘speeding’ up the planning process is likely to ensure that this remains a restriction”. • AWLP: “Always more that we could do”. • AWLP: “Following Government timetable for local plan production/coverage”.
Comments made on ‘lack of funding’ constraints:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: “All down to finance” • UDP: “More from less is the rule of the day”. • UDP: “To employ consultants etc. to devise indices etc.”. • AWLP: “Always more that we could do”.
Comments made on ‘lack of staff’ constraints:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “More from less is the rule of the day”. • UDP: “The current emphasis on ‘speeding’ up the planning process is likely to ensure that this

<p>remains a restriction”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWLP: “Always more that we could do”.
<p>Comments made on ‘lack of commitment from Central Govt.’ constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “Lots of fine words but little help and lots of ‘loopholes”. • UDP: “Main problem is the lack of sufficient resources being made available to LAs”
<p>Comments made on ‘insufficient guidance/advice’ constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “The ability to ‘prove’ a sustainability case is very difficult other than in theory”. • AWLP: “There may be too much”. • AWLP: “Although central guidance exists it is often open to interpretation or fill of ‘weak’/vague statements of which local authorities are left with the challenge of implementing sustainability at the local level whilst maintaining a balance of provision for future generations”.
<p>Comments made on ‘lack of commitment from other LA depts.’ Constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “No time to consult other departments” • UDP: “These run to different rules and different objectives - planning is still a ‘restraint”. • UDP: “We don’t always feel that other departments are moving towards the same goals!”.
<p>Comments made on ‘lack of members’ understanding/awareness’ constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “Members often support in principal but in practice short termism prevails in decision making”. • AWLP: “Members understanding of the issues is quite good - but their willingness to fund extra work...”.
<p>Comments made on ‘lack of members’ commitment’ constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “Members would be happy for more excuses/reasons to say ‘no’ to development!”. • UDP: “Members often support in principal but in practice short termism prevails in decision making”. • AWLP: “Members understanding of the issues is quite good - but their willingness to fund extra work...”.
<p>Comments made on ‘lack of community understanding/awareness’ constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “Especially developers”. • AWLP: “Some local communities very supportive, others <u>no</u> support or, if do, no action, apathy!”.
<p>Comments made on ‘strength of lobby groups’ constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “Nationally huge lobbies still strangle many policy approaches”. • UDP: “Competing pressure groups often using sustainability to argue cases”.
<p>Comments made on ‘process of development control’ constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDP: “The legal requirements and realities (e.g. burden of proof) at inquiries etc. is a different world!” • UDP: “Sustainability needs to be made a central material consideration”. • AWLP: “Applications have to be determined and decisions defended within current legislation”. • AWLP: “There is no clear PPG on sustainability”. • AWLP: “Section 54A is getting in the way and sustainable development initiatives need a little time - time DC doesn’t enjoy”.
<p>Other constraints:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP: “The variations with which people define sustainable development and ease with which patently unsustainable planning masquerades as being sustainable”. • UDP: “Planners dismissing sustainable development as a fad/bandwagon”. • AWLP: “Communication between departments”. • AWLP: “The main restriction on the promotion of sustainable development comes from a lack of strategic/holistic approach from Government, e.g. lack of integration between land use planning and transport/choice in education promotes lots of journeys to school by parents dropping off children - the list is endless! Development plans at present only tinker around the edges”. • AWLP: “A detailed assessment is not a priority at the present time”. • AWLP: “Lack of proof (i.e. quantifiable tests which will stand up to scrutiny at a public inquiry)”. • AWLP: “What about changes to the building regulations?!! Energy efficiency dwelling, water storage measures etc.”. • AWLP: “Nature of the area”.

A1.8 Adjectival association - 'sustainable development' & 'development planning':

■ Key to results columns in table below:

Column:

1. % of LPAs choosing adjective 'A' over adjective 'B' to describe concept;
2. % of LPAs choosing adjective 'B' over adjective 'A' to describe concept;
3. % of LPAs both adjectives equally to describe concept;
4. % of LPAs choosing neither adjective to describe concept;
5. % of LPAs unwilling / unable to answer.

Adjectives	Concept of Sustainable Development				
	1	2	3	4	5
A. comprehensive vs. B. incremental	51%	14%	20%	0%	15%
A. radical vs. B. revisionist	39%	13%	28%	4%	16%
A. innovative vs. B. unimaginative	66%	4%	14%	1%	15%
A. holistic vs. B. sectoral	73%	3%	10%	0%	14%
A. proactive vs. B. reactive	62%	8%	15%	0%	15%
A. integrative vs. B. fragmentary	68%	9%	9%	0%	14%
A. strategic vs. B. opportunistic	62%	8%	14%	1%	15%
A. intuitive vs. B. rational	13%	36%	35%	1%	15%
A. idealistic vs. B. pragmatic	28%	19%	35%	3%	15%

Adjectives	Concept of Development Planning				
	1	2	3	4	5
A. comprehensive vs. B. incremental	52%	11%	23%	0%	14%
A. radical vs. B. revisionist	9%	32%	37%	4%	18%
A. innovative vs. B. unimaginative	33%	15%	35%	0%	17%
A. holistic vs. B. sectoral	37%	18%	27%	3%	15%
A. proactive vs. B. reactive	33%	19%	32%	0%	16%
A. integrative vs. B. fragmentary	48%	9%	25%	0%	18%
A. strategic vs. B. opportunistic	66%	6%	11%	1%	16%
A. intuitive vs. B. rational	5%	41%	35%	3%	16%
A. idealistic vs. B. pragmatic	9%	35%	37%	3%	16%

Appendix D - South Tyneside Case Study Databank

Key: (X): exists but copy not held
hwn: hand-written notes
pc: photocopy

Development Services publications/reports re. UDP

B1	1991 December	UDP - Consultation Draft Summary
B2	1995 April	UDP - Deposit Draft Plan
B3	1995 April	Environmental Appraisal - Deposit Draft Plan
B4	1996 November	Topic Paper 1 - Environment
B5	1996 November	Topic Paper 2 - Economic Development
B6	1996 November	Topic Paper 4 - Sport and Recreation
B7	1996 November	Topic Paper 5 - Transportation
B8	1996 November	Topic Paper 6 - Shopping (X)
B9	1996 December	Topic Paper 3 - Housing
B10	1997 January	PLI Round Table Discussion Paper - Green Belt and Land Constraints
B11	1997 January	PLI Round Table Discussion Paper - Housing Land
B12	1998 May	Report of the Inquiry into objection to the Deposit Draft Plan (1995) and statement of proposed changes (1996)
B13	1998 May	Inspector's recommendations on objections to the Deposit Draft Plan and officers suggested Council decision
B14	1998 June	Inspector's Report Addendum (attached to Sept. mods. below)
B15	1998 September	Schedule of statement of proposed modifications
B16	1999 October	UDP – Adopted Plan
B17	2000 July	UDP: Annual Monitoring Statement 2000

Other documents

C1	1993 January	Westoe Colliery - The case against closure
C2	1993 August	Great North Forest - Forest Plan
C3	1996 April	South Tyneside Regeneration Strategy
C3a	1996	Tyne & Wear Development Corporation web pages (http://www.tagish.co.uk/twdc/)
C4	1997/1998	South Tyneside Action Group Newsletters
C5	1998	South Tyneside Planning Handbook
C6	1998 September	STRIDE - Community Enterprise Guide
C7	1998 December	South Tyneside Regeneration Strategy – Consultation Draft
C8	1999	About South Tyneside (Local Authority web-site – http://www.s-tyneside-mbc.gov.uk/aboutst.htm)
C9	1999 March	South Tyneside MBC – Economic Development Plan 1999/2000
C10	1999	Catherine Cookson Biography
C11	1999	Regeneration of South Tyneside web-site (http://nt1.s-tyneside-mbc.gov.uk/~dserv/regen1.htm)
C12	1999	Structural Funding Details, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear web-site (http://www.tagish.co.uk/ethos/tap/sfunds5/2d3a.htm)

Notes and documents from field visits

D1	1987 June	Chief Planner's primary objectives for the Plan (pc)
D2	1988 April	TDSC - Transportation (pc)
D3	1988 July	TDSC - Significant aspects of the new PPGs (pc)
D4	1988 October	TDSC - Shopping provision (pc)
D5	1988 November	TDSC - Population and Housing (pc)
D6	1988 December	TDSC - Economy and Employment
D7	1989 January	TDSC - Report on 'UDPs for the Tyne & Wear Met. Area: Draft Strategic Guidance' (RPG1) - how this differs from advice from Districts (hwn)
D8	1989	Response to Draft RPG1 (hwn + pc)
D9	1989 February	TDSC - Public Consultation, a recommended approach (pc)
D10	1989 April	TDSC - Recreation and Leisure (pc)
D11	1989 April	TDSC - Mineral Planning Guidance (pc)
D11a	1990 January	TDSC - A Review of Current Environment Policies
D12	1990 December	STMBC - <i>South Tyneside - Beyond 2000: A strategy for the future</i> - response to RPG1 (pc)
D12a	1991 November	Previously confidential memorandum from the MBC Chief Executive to the Chief Planner
D13	1992 June	STMBC - Public consultation draft - Introduction and Part 1 policies summary (pc)
D14	1992 June	Views canvassed on 12 SPGs as well as consultation draft (hwn)
D15	1993 March	TDC - Consultation response and strategic issues (pc)
D16	1993 July	TDC - sites for economic development (pc)
D17	1993 September	TDC - sites for economic development (pc)
D18	1993 October	TDC - sites for business and clean industrial use (pc)
D19	1993 October	Sustainable development and the ST UDP (pc)
D20	1993 November	TDC - Land for economic development (pc)
D21	1994 December	Special TDC - ST UDP Deposit stage (pc)
D22	1995 January	TDC - Recommendations from Advisory Committee Meeting (hwn)
D23	1995 April	Public consultation statement - would have accompanied Deposit Draft (hwn)
D24	1995 November	TDC - Responses received during deposit stage and future progress
D25	1996 June	Proposed changes (pc)
D26	1996 June	Statement of proposed changes (hwn)
D27	1996 August	Note to Inspector on Plan Review (HWN)
D28	1996 September	TDC - Response to statement of proposed changes (pc)
D29	1996 September	Pre-Inquiry meeting (hwn + pc)
D30	1996 September	PLI schedule (pc)
D31	1996 December	Opening statement on behalf of ST MBC by Mr. Tobias Davey QC (hwn)

Interviews - Officers, Members & Others (F: face-to-face; T: telephone)

	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Organisation</i>		
A1	Team Leader Policy	South Tyneside MBC	F	19:01:99
A2	Senior Planning Assistant - Policy	South Tyneside MBC	F	19:01:99
A3	Manager - Local Development	South Tyneside MBC	F	20:01:99
A5	Senior Assistant Director - Client	South Tyneside MBC	F	26:01:99
A6	Manager - Policy and Regeneration	South Tyneside MBC	F	27:01:99
A7	Team Leader - West Area Team	South Tyneside MBC	F	26:01:99
A8	Team Leader - East Area Team	South Tyneside MBC	F	27:01:99
A9	Senior Planning Assistant - Policy	South Tyneside MBC	F	29:07:99
A10			F	07:01:99
A10			F	27:01:99
A11			T	16:07:99
	<i>Members</i>			
A5	Chairman - Town Development Committee	South Tyneside MBC	F	26:01:99
A13	Lib. Dem. Councillor	South Tyneside MBC	T	09:06:99
	<i>Others</i>			
A4	Principal Policy Officer	Govt. Offices for the North East -	F	20:01:99
A12	Director, Development Plans	Planning Inspectorate	F	23:02:99
A14	Policy Officer	Durham County Council	T	28:05:99
A15	Policy Officer	Sunderland City Council	T	04:06:99
A16	Planning representative	English Nature	T	15:06:99
A17	Planning representative	Durham Wildlife Trust	T	28:05:99
A18	Planning representative	Great North Forest	T	14:05:99
A19	Planning representative	Cussins Homes	T	17:05:99
A20	Principal Planning Representative	House Builders Federation - N.E. Region	T	11:05:99
A21	Planning representative	Rathbone C.I.	T	14:05:99
A22	Planning representative	Tilcon Ltd. (aggregates)	T	11:05:99
A23	Planning representative	Boldon Environmental Care Group	T	28:05:99
A24	Planning representative	Fellgate Residents	T	15:05:99
A25	Planning representative	South Shields Progressive Association	T	11:05:99
A26	Planning representative	Local (river based) business	T	11:05:99
A27	Planning representative	Cyclists' Touring Club	T	11:05:99

Additional Correspondence

A26_a Local (river based) business
A20_a HBF N.E. Region
A14_a Durham CC
A15_a Sunderland City Council

Additional Documentation

A21_a Rathbone CI (written objection)