The Strategic Planning Process and Public Participation: A Case Study in South Yorkshire 1973-1978.

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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The Strategic Planning Process and Public Participation: A Case Study in South Yorkshire, 1973-1978.

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Summary

The thesis presents an analysis of strategic plan-making in the metropolitan county councils during the 1970s, principally through a case study of local authority activity in South Yorkshire between 1973 and 1978. In addition to the detailed case study some original empirical material and secondary analysis was undertaken in the other metropolitan county councils (apart from London) in order to draw comparisons between planning processes and public participation.

The research employed a variety of methods/ techniques including non-participant observation of many formal and informal meetings within local government, secondary analysis of published and internal documentation from local authorities in South Yorkshire and the other metropolitan areas, interviews with samples of members and officers in the five South Yorkshire local authorities and with selected planning officers in the other five metropolitan county councils. A small survey of local groups and voluntary organisations in South Yorkshire was undertaken towards the end of the time period under study. In addition, the close involvement of the researcher with the planning process gave many opportunities for informal discussion with key personnel. Towards the end of the planning period the examination in public was covered in full by attendance and recording of all sessions, together with secondary analysis of all submitted documentation and the DOE day summaries.

A context is provided in the early sections, not only to the strategic planning process and planning participation but to the democratic roots of participation in politics. The empir ical material is presented in three sections, namely, the strategic planning process and public participation, relationships between local authorities in the two-tier system of local government in the metropolitan areas, and central-local relations.

The main findings under these three heads show, respectively, that;

a) professional planning staff and local councillors held distinctively different views on the nature of the planning process, on the role and nature of public participation in planning, and ultimately, on what was felt to be a justifiable and acceptable set of strategic planning policies for the county;

b) the split in town planning responsibilities and functions between the two tiers of local government in the metropolitan areas led to tension and confrontation at both the technical and political level. This tension was exacerbated by the rationalistic and comprehensive approach to plan-making favoured by the professional officers in the county.

c) the role of central government in moulding the structure plan towards an outcome favoured by the centre (ministers and civil servants) overrode the distributional and interventionist strategy favoured by the county council leaving a trend-following, market oriented framework in place as the approved plan.

A number of broader observations based on the findings conclude the study.

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I take complete responsibility for the work that follows. Advice freely given can be neglected. Any sins of omission or elision are mine alone.

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

> Young Lovell Brown, taking his place for the first time in the Press Gallery of the South Riding County Hall at Flintonbridge, was prepared to be impressed by everything. A romantic and inexperienced young man, he knew that local government has considerable importance in its effect on human life...His heart beat, and his eyes dilated. Here, he told himself, was the source of reputations, of...bridges, feuds, scandals, of remedies for broken ambitions...of bans on sex novels in public libraries, of educational scholarships, blighted hopes and drainage systems. (Holtby, 1983, 21)

This study began from discussions between the author and practitioners in the planning department of South Yorkshire County Council in 1974. At that time they were beginning the task of preparing the first structure plan for the newly created metropolitan county council of South Yorkshire and were intending to include a major programme of public participation as an integral part of the planning process. As this was a relatively new and unknown step for many of these young professionals they wished to chart the value and pitfalls of the participation programme as it evolved. A research project by an independent agent to evaluate the programme was proposed and approved by the county planning committee.

The aim of the research from the local authority's perspective was largely instrumental in seeking to monitor the success of a participation programme. A variety of techniques for involving the public were being proposed, including some innovatory approaches. It was considered important by the planners that these were assessed as well as the effect that public comment and information on public opinion had on the content of the plan.

As the following account will record, the ambitions of the planners to carry through extensive public participation at all stages of the strategic planning process were never fully fulfilled and the innovative programme ran into difficulties. An evaluation of the programme was possible but the following record of the interlinking of the programme with the political process provided another dimension to the research project. We hope that this account has value as a record of how and why difficulties occurred in carrying through the participation programme and the strategic planning process. There have been relatively few accounts of the planning process gathered through the research technique of non-participant observation. Accounts of structure plan-making by planners who were intimately involved in the process tend to be truncated, have a technical emphasis and might be said to be partisan. One of the primary aims of the South Yorkshire planners in proposing an evaluation by an 'outsider' was to achieve a level of distance and objectivity which they believed could not be achieved by an assessment relying on their own staff.

We believe that this account has value even though the events being described and analysed occurred some time ago. The study is structured around three main themes; strategic planning, public participation in plan-making and policy making in a setting of national policy and government. We suggest that all three subjects are of great pertinence and relevance today. Even if the specific example and detail which make up this case study are historic, in the sense of referring to a context and set of circumstances that existed in the past, the subjects of the study remain of importance in the 1990s.

We link the topic of public participation in planning to the wider and more crucial subject of democracy and public policy. During the 1980s Britain has seen a trend towards the centralisation of governmental decision-

making. Some commentators have seen the Thatcher years as representing the further growth of 'cabinet government' and centralisation of decision-making within the British governmental system. For example, the 1980s have seen the abolition of the metropolitan county councils and a considerable extension of the powers of central government over local authorities in matters of finance and spending. The manner by which these changes have been introduced has disturbed many people because of their belief that retribution was being taken against some of the most powerful critics of the Thatcher government, that is, the Labour leaders and majority groups governing the English conurbations. Discussion of local democracy and popular participation in policy-making seems pressing today when government power is being centralised and open government appears more distant than ever.

One of the consequences of the demise of the metropolitan counties has been the lack of an effective planning machine and framework for policy making and implementation in the English conurbations. The principle of structure planning was evolved as a response to a growing economy in the 1960s. Nevertheless, strategic planning had a different emphasis in the metropolitan areas when compared to the shire counties. While the shires faced the principal concerns of controlling urban growth and conserving agricultural land and rural landscape, the conurbations in the 1970s were already facing problems of declining populations and a crumbling economic base with all the associated problems of unemployment, poverty, decrepit infrastructure, poor housing and environment. Those problems have not gone away since the 1970s and although in the 1990s many urban areas have seen some regeneration, the problems of the older urban areas remain. The Thatcher government has relied on a variety of ad hoc measures and special agencies to deal with the urban problem during the 1980s

and although a large variety of policy interventions have been made through special programmes there has been a net withdrawal of public sector resources from local government in the cities. Lack of co-ordination and inconsistent policy has meant an exacerbation of the underlying structural problems of the older manufacturing cities whilst London suffers a depening crisis of lack of investment on basic infrastructure and planned development. The demand for over-arching mechanisms of policy-making, control and management in the conurbations has grown in response to the gap left by the abolition of the metropolitan counties. The metropolitan district councils left as unitary authorities after 1986 have sought to achieve some degree of coherence and collaboration by consultative devices but these can never substitute for an executive body with the power and resources to act for the conurbation as a whole. Many would agree that a need for strategic planning in the urban areas has not subsided despite slower growth and loss of population. On the contrary, the need is as great or greater than ever. With this in mind we feel that this account of strategic policy-making in the 1970s will have value in prompting those who wish to reinstate a metropolitan planning system in the future. This account can be taken as a cautionary tale which serves to remind professionals, technical officers, local and national politicians and civil servants and members of the public that policy is not made in a vacuum.

The third theme, relations between the main bodies concerned with strategic policy-making in South Yorkshire metropolitan county is also relevant to any future proposal for reinstating an overarching system of strategic planning in the conurbations. Whilst the South Yorkshire experience may not have been typical, the failure to develop a meaningful dialogue between county and districts in the metropolitan areas and the single-minded pursuit of an ideal plannning process,

participation programme and, ultimately, plan by the county planners and politicians added to the likelihood of confrontation. The confrontation with the government (via the Secretary of State for the Environment) led to the negation of much that the county council wished to achieve in strategic planning policy by the modifications demanded to the structure plan. Much that was offered and put into effect by the South Yorkshire planners was valuable but the other side of the narrative shows that much of the effort, talent and resources were squandered. If there is a move in the future to reinstate strategic planning in the metropolitan areas at a sub-regional/ city-regional level the lessons of the 1970s will have to be taken into account.

However, the three themes of public participation, strategic planning and policy-making in complex inter-organisational contexts are not only treated in terms of practical lessons for a possible future. We have also sought to put the account and experiences into an explanatory framework which draws on ideas beyond the relatively narrow frame of planning practice and theory.

Briefly to describe the following work in greater detail we begin by setting a context. Section 2 provides a background to local politics by charting some of the major themes in South Yorkshire's history through the Industrial Revolution and up to the time when the new metropolitan county was formed. The intention is to show that local economic and industrial circumstances can be a powerful conditioning factor in political conciousness and action. The section also draws attention to the changing nature of local politics as the independent self-sufficiency of the master craftsmen gave way to the more collective political response derived from larger workplaces and industrial enterprises. The radical tradition in South Yorkshire local politics is identified as a theme which can be tied back into the case study of

politics and town planning that follows. The South Yorkshire plan was radical in its commitment to cheap, subsidised public transport and strong egalitarian principles. What can also be drawn out of this contextual picture of local politics is evidence that localities develop specific cultures and political traditions which have long-lasting effect. This theme was difficult to assert when the field work was being carried out given the dominance within urban studies at that time of a powerful Marxian school of thought which gave short shrift to the idea that local politics could be influenced by local circumstances, preferring to argue for the structural dominance of economic power and the necessary congruence of state and capitalist interests.

Section 2 continues with an account and analysis of the local events preceding the setting up of the metropolitan county councils, of the first election and subsequent elections for the South Yorkshire council and a record and comparison of the elections in the other metropolitan counties during the period of the study.

The period covered by the fieldwork is from 1973, when the first metropolitan county council elections took place, to 1979 when the Secretary of State for the Environment gave his ruling on the modifications that he wished to see incorporated in the structure plan before giving it approval.

In section 3 we consider strategic planning and public participation. A context is painted which includes a broad description of the genesis of the two levels of development plan introduced in 1968. The revised development plan system was an attempt to overcome some of the shortcomings of the earlier system introduced in the 1940s. A summary of developments in the field of planning theory at this time is also given, particularly with respect to the dominance of procedural models of a

generic planning process. Theories and models of planning procedure which became popular in the 1960s made a profound impact upon professional activity during the heyday of structure plan preparation. We also turn to public participation in planning. The concept of democracy is considered as a basis for developing the discussion on public participation in planning. Previous research work on this topic is summarised.

The following section develops an analysis of the planning approach and public participation process taken by the metropolitan county planning authorities. The purpose of the analysis is to give a yardstick against which to consider the major element of the thesis, the case study in South Yorkshire. The information for the analysis of strategic planning in the metropolitan counties was gathered from primary and secondary sources, the former by interviews with senior planning staff in the respective local authorities.

Section 5 contains an extended description of the strategic planning process in South Yorkshire and the place that public participation played in the process. The original elements of the chapter are drawn from fieldwork in South Yorkshire as well as analysis of much internal documentation in the county council files. The chapter introduces some of the results from our surveys of councillors and officers in the local authority. The various techniques of involving the public and collecting information are described and an assessment made of their technical merits as well as the impact that the programme as a whole had upon the content and philosophy of the plan.

The next part of the thesis covers the broader policy-making environment of structure plan preparation in South Yorkshire. At times, the single-mindedness of the county planning staff in South Yorkshire left this observer with

an impression that they were the sole guardians of the 'public interest' in the county. Ultimately, it was impossible to forget that power is shared within the British local government system. The metropolitan district councils took an avid interest in the strategic planning process and the planning policies proposed by the county. The earlier account of strategic planning in South Yorkshire is focussed on the internal politics of the county. As the policies of the plan were finalised the influence and reaction of the district councils became more pertinent for the planners and county councillors given their role in statutory consultation. Nevertheless, the final power of veto and sanction in strategic planning lies in Westminster and Whitehall. The final substantive section of the thesis explores the variety of views taken towards the structure plan, planning process and participation programme in South Yorkshire from the perspective of the metropolitan district councils and, particularly, central government. Original material is provided in the form of interview responses from district council staff and councillors. The examination in public of the structure plan was recorded in detail as an element of fieldwork. The proceedings are subjected to analysis as a means of assessing the purpose and outcome of the inquiry.

The concluding section of the work seeks to draw out some broader conclusions from the case study. In particular, an attempt is made to place the findings into a larger theoretical frame and point up matters of wider explanation and general significance.

Before launching into the substance of the study it is appropriate to mention the circumstances by which the study came to be done and, briefly, to indicate the methodology adopted.

The author has a long-running commitment to involvement in the community. Having arrived in Sheffield in 1969 to take up a lecturing post at the university I was rapidly drawn into giving advice to community groups, teaching adult education classes and other local activities outside the confines of the university. This brought me into close contact with planning officers and elected members in the area. When the Department of Town and Regional Planning was approached in the winter of 1973/74 by officers from the newly formed county planning department seeking help with monitoring and evaluating the public participation programme associated with structure plan preparation the request was taken as a rare opportunity to systematically study the strategic planning process at first hand. The topic was of direct interest to me and nested closely with previous research work and interests. The advantage of an approach from the local authority was that (in principle, at least) access into the inner workings of a local authority department was being offered on the understanding that the focus and findings of the study would be of relevance to the county council.

From the outset the county council indicated that although they were particularly keen for the study to proceed they were unable to provide any financial support. An advantage was that the agenda for the research could be negotiated rather than commissioned directly by the local authority. A number of discussions took place between the author and senior staff in the county council during 1974 resulting in an application to the (then) Social Science Research Council for a research grant to cover staff support and incidental costs associated with carrying out the study over the period of plan preparation.

The broad aim of the research was to consider the way in which information gained during the course of public

participation in the planning process was utilised. Four main areas of iterest were identified in the application for funds made to the SSRC.

a) to consider the reasons and background to the participation programme in preparing the structure plan for the county
b) to consider the way in which the information gathered during the programme was used in the planning process
c) to consider the impact of public participation on the 'traditional' roles of members and officers within local government
d) to maintain a watching brief on public attitudes towards the public participation programme.

Approval was given for the study by county planning committee on 16 September 1974 and the department undertook to inform members and officers in the county council and the metropolitan district councils "who might benefit from the project and whose co-operation would be appreciated" (letter from county planning officer, 18 September 1974).

The research approach included non-participant observation of a wide range of meetings relating to the public participation programme and the structure planning process. These meetings ranged from internal discussions involving county council planning staff, joint meetings between officers from more than one department in the county council, meetings between county council staff and officers in the four district councils, to committees and sub-committees involving county council members alone, county council members and officers, or joint county-district member meetings with officers in attendance. In addition, public meetings and special events such as "open days" held to inform members of strategic planning issues or public participation steps were attended and recorded (with a team of assistants on those occasions when several small group discussions were timetabled to take place simultaneously). In addition, a number of structured interview surveys were carried out at various stages during the fieldwork period with the intention of

gaining specific information and attitudes of key informants about the participation programme and the planning process.

One of the consequences of being an observer at a large number of meetings and events relating to the plan was that members and officers (county and district) became well known to me and as a consequence it was possible to build up an informal relationship with a wide range of key actors. A decision taken at the outset of the study was to keep a file of notes taken at meetings or during informal discussions. Well over 100 key meetings were attended in the period from 1974 to 1978.

In addition to non-participant observation of meetings and working sessions in the local authority a number of surveys were undertaken during the period of the research. These included questionnaire surveys of a sample of county councillors, of all planning officers on the professional salary grade in the structure plan team, of key members and officers in the four metropolitan district councils and of a sample of community organisations that had taken part in the public participation programme.

Another element of the research programme could be labelled as action research insofar as the author joined a "community worker" team charged with extended the representativeness of the community groups involved in the public participation programme. Apart from giving first hand experience of one of the more innovatory techniques of public participation introduced into the South Yorkshire programme that experience was valuable for allowing the author direct access to public attitudes to the structure plan and participation at an early stage in the planning process. The team was asked to take part in a number of feedback meetings with county planning

staff which would most likely have otherwise been closed to the author.

The approval given to the research by the county planning committee and county planning staff also allowed access to the files of the county planning department. In particular, this source of information was valuable in opening up the wide variety and range of papers about the planning process. It also allowed for comparisons to be made between early drafts of papers and final versions which added insights into the technical and political parameters and developments within a policy-making body.

As an extension of the original research design a decision was made in 1977 to obtain interviews with planning officers in the five metropolitan county councils outside London. The impetus for this came from contact with key officers in an informal Metropolitan Planning Officers seminar which had been set up to discuss common issues and approaches to structure planning in the conurbations. The interviews were arranged relatively easily and entailed a visit to each of the authorities with a predetermined set of questions. These were defined after a review of the major structure plan documentation from each metropolitan county. The interviews normally took two hours. Later structure plan documents were obtained as they became available and contributed to the analysis of variations in approach taken by the six authorities.

In addition to observation, study of documentation and survey/ questionnaire, it was also possible as a frequent visitor to county hall to obtain off-the-cuff impressions and information from members and officers. For example, as I became better known and a familiar face, councillors or staff would pass the time of day or offer an apt illumination of opinion and contemporary events prior to the start of a meeting. On some occasions there were

opportunities for longer discussions. For example, the author was invited to take part in a debate about the structure plan with the chair of county planning committee on regional TV in 1978. The car journey in an official vehicle allowed a useful hour in which to check out his views on current political climate and political vetting of the structure plan process.

However, no research process runs without setbacks or difficulties. A recognised danger of participant observation is that over time the observer can be drawn into the ethos and 'culture' held by the subjects of study. However, by use of a number of research techniques we believe that a 'triangulated' perspective has been achieved and that objectivity has been maintained.

The initial diffidence and caution that some county planners and other officers showed towards having an 'outsider' present at their working meetings gave way to acceptance. However, there was always a sense in which the officers from the district councils regarded the research and this researcher with some suspicion. This was probably due to the county council being the 'sponsor' of the study. Whilst the second and third tier officers in the district councils saw the author (and occasional assistants) on a relatively frequent basis other officers and members who only occasionally attended joint county-district meetings were sometimes less happy with our presence.

The chief planning officer of the largest district in South Yorkshire frequently referred to me as the "county council researcher" and sometimes objected to my presence at working meetings ("I thought this was going to be a private meeting"). On such occasions I offered to leave but this was usually declined. It became apparent that this behaviour was symbolic insofar as it offered another

opportunity to 'get-at' the county. Another manifestation of the fragility of county-istrict relations was that district council staff would occasionally attempt to bring me into a policy debate as if seeking an arbiter when positions became polarised. It was essential to reaffirm neutrality at such times. This never became a serious problem but a minor stir occurred after an early working paper from the study was circulated in 1975 giving the research aims of the study and some initial observations and findings. Reaction to this paper was mildly critical and defensive from both sides of the county-district divide which was reassuring in one sense, because it suggested that the paper was not partisan. On the other hand, I believe that it was this paper that hardened the view of some district council members and staff that the purpose of the study was largely for the county council's benefit. I do not think that a underlying suspicion about the auspices of the study was ever eliminated from the minds of some of the district council members and officers. For example, when we came to interview district council planners the senior staff in one district they were extremely keen to spend a long time in interview and to present a well developed rationale for their concerns about the planning approach taken by the county. A possible methodological lesson to take from this experience is that statements of consent to the study should have been obtained at the outset not only from county planning committee but also from the politicians and officers in the four districts.

Yet this was not the only difficulty faced by the researcher. When I came to seek advice about the sample appropriate to the survey of county councillors the chief executive of the county council raised objections in principle to the survey and stated that to expose members to a probing questionnaire on structure plan matters would be disruptive. At this time the whole project looked to be in jeopardy because the chief executive

expressed surprise that the study was taking place and indicated that until that time he had not known of it. It was only after the county planning officer intervened and indicated that county planning committee was supporting the study and that a decision had been taken in committee that the interviews went ahead. However, the chief executive insisted on the removal of a number of questions from the schedule principally relating to the past political activities and experience of members. The reason given by the chief executive for exclusion of these questions was that they did not relate to the specific aims of the study (they were, of course, included to provide some context for interpretation of the specific questions on planning and participation).

The period (late 1975-early 1976) when we had intended to begin interviews with members was one of some sensitivity within the county council about the structure plan. This period saw Labour Group leadership in the county expressing concern about the structure plan process and public participation. The chief executive was keen not to offer any hostages to fortune or stir up further aggravation. The effect of his caution was to delay the interviews by over 6 months.

The test of the study must ultimately lie with the reader's assessment of the conclusions and whether they are merited on the basis of the information and findings which follow. The case study is valuable for the detailed insight that it can provide but its main limitation as a research technique is the generality of the conclusions. We hope the combination of case study and comparative work has overcome the inherent constraint.

SECTION 2

SOUTH YORKSHIRE: CONTEXT

Background to Politics and Policy-Making in South Yorkshire

> "...I'm not really an enthusiast about local government, but you do at least get solid concrete results - swimming baths, sewage farms." He smiled bitterly. "You begin by thinking in terms of world revolution and end by learning to be pleased with a sewage farm." (Hotlby, 1983, 124)

South Yorkshire has a history of political radicalism. Recent political events have highlighted South Yorkshire councils as being in the forefront of local government opposition to the legislation introduced by the Thatcher government aimed at restricting the expenditure and actions of local authorities. However, the tradition of radicalism dates back into the eighteeenth century and earlier. The village of Loxley, now a residential suburb of Sheffield is claimed locally to be the birthplace of Robin Hood. Some might claim that the acts of redistribution from rich to poor which were characteristic of the 'merry band of Sherwood' have a parallel in the cheap fares policy on South Yorkshire public transport from 1975 until the mid 1980s. However, the tradition of radicalism in the locality can be more firmly charted. South Yorkshire grew in size of population and importance with respect to labour history during the Industrial Revolution and local politics still reflect the nature of class struggles as they emerged during the period of rapid expansion of English industrial capitalism.

Being far "from the sea, poorly provided with natural navigable rivers, hilly and thinly populated ...(South Yorkshire)...remained a backwater until two and a half centuries ago" (Pollard, 1976). Sheffield has been portrayed in similar vein as a "hilly side track" (Hampton,1970), "an isolated community" (Mathers, 1979), well away from the main North-South and East-West routes of

communication in England and neglected until industrialisation precipitated the exploration of the natural resources of the area. The isolation of the region was itself a factor and influence on the emerging profile of the manufacturing base during the eighteenth century. The making of high quality iron and steel and the manufacture of cutlery and small tools emerged as a distinctive local specialisation. A combination of factors lay behind this historical development. The proximity of coal deposits and iron ore together with water power from the rushing streams descending from the Pennines and the local millstone grit for grinding wheels gave the raw materials for metal manufacture and cutlery making. Another factor in the developing specialism of Sheffield craftsmen was poor transport links with the rest of the country and the ports. Production of goods of high value was necessary to offset the inherent disadvantage of location (a continuing problem with Sheffield in the 1980s being one of the largest cities in the country and yet suffering from a comparative lack of investment in inter-city rail improvements in comparison with Manchester and Leeds). Diversification to overcome market disadvantage led to the development of high levels of skill and craftmanship which may still be found in the remaining pockets of the steel and metal manufacturing industries within the region. The vast shakeouts and decimation of the steel industry and associated engineering and metal crafts sectors in the 1980s have failed to dislodge the specialist and high quality end of the industry although the mass production of cheaper cutlery has shifted to the lower wage economies of the Pacific rim.

Being hemmed in by the surrounding girdle of hills and high moors Sheffield and its region supports a population with a strong sense of autonomy and independence. This was consolidated by the presence of workers with a strongly developed political consciousness such as coal miners. The

confidence which went with high skill and craftmanship is overlain with a strong collective tradition that comes from hard and dangerous work and, in the case of mining, a tight locality social structure. Local identity is also strengthened by relatively low historic levels of migration, either into or out of the area. During the period of early industrial development population growth in Sheffield and nearby towns was due in the main to short distance migration from the rural hinterland. Apprentices taken into the cutlery trades in Sheffield during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries mostly came from within a 21 mile radius.

> In 1851, half the adult population of Sheffield had been born elsewhere, mostly in villages in the immediate hinterland... (Reid, 1976, p.280)

In the most rapid period of industrial growth in the region the agricultural areas of Yorkshire and Derbyshire became the principal catchment for new industrial workers. In this respect Sheffield may be contrasted with other northern towns which gained population during the Industrial Revolution where migrants came from further afield and where proximity to national, and in the case of ports, international routes led to a more cosmopolitan workforce and population.

A high degree of self containment may have reinforced the strongly held attitudes of independence and communal awareness which are reflected in comments which describe the populous city of Sheffield as 'the largest village in England'. A long-standing rivalry between Sheffield and Leeds for primacy as the principal city in Southern Yorkshire verges on chauvinism, heavily tinged with parochialism. The deeply held attachment to the area and the rivalry between nearby towns can be found in much documentation. Armytage notes in a reference dating from

1862 that people in the Sheffield locality vigorously opposed the suggested transfer of a college in Rotherham to Bradford, arguing that it was a 'South Yorkshire institution' (Armytage, 1976). One of the more recent manifestations of this strong sense of local identity was the appearance of lapel badges proclaiming the wearer as coming from the 'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire' and first worn by local miners at a national rally in November 1979.

The combination of strong local identity among its population combined with traditional Yorkshire bluntness has reflected on political ideas and actions. There is a sense in which South Yorkshire politics mixes the personal, the local and class ingredients in a local political culture whose main characteristics are proletarian consciousness and powerful local independence; a combination of ingredients which has led local politicians and people to never be slow in expressing their point of view. It is a volatile combination. Local politics can show a parochialism which turns to chauvinist defiance and aggressive assertiveness when challenged yet can also be a base for the creation of new ideas and radical policies. Hampton in discussing the socio-economic profile of the city based on the 1961 Census and indicating the 'under-representation' of the middle classes in comparison with other major English cities observes that the "emphasis on manual occupations...has caused Sheffield to be a radical city" (Hampton, 1970, p.44).

Examples of the independence of local political culture are numerous in the history of South Yorkshire. For example, a protest of 1791 against enclosure of the commons and waste land near Sheffield attracted several thousand people whose sentiments, aroused by the injustice they felt in loosing their grazing rights, went on to openly condemn the monarchy

and the system of taxation. Donnelly and Baxter note that "at the outbreak of the French Revolution, Sheffield was fertile ground for both radical ideas and the growth of popular political clubs" (1976, 91). A Society for Constitutional Reform formed at this time by a group of artisans reached a membership of 2 000 within a few months. Both Cole (1938, 149) and Thompson (1963, 195) mention that of other places outside London, Sheffield was one of the strongest centres of Reformist feeling in the closing years of the eighteenth century. A radical newspaper, the Sheffield Register, extended the discussion of democratic and anti-loyalist ideas as an ingredient of this radicalism. The state's reaction in the period included the killing of two demonstrators by loyalist gunfire and several woundings of civilians in a sabre charge by the militia when breaking up a demonstration.

Despite state reaction and force an underlying sense of crisis and demand for change pervaded local politics into the early nineteenth century. High grain and bread prices fuelled antagonism among the working class. There is evidence of a secret organisation commited to a revolutionary path to change whose membership included names connected with the Society for Constitutional Reform. In 1802 secretive evening meetings were being held to discuss insurrection and arms were being manufactured and hidden around the city. Despard's arrest in London was followed by arrests in Sheffield with the outcome of two local men getting heavy sentences for procuring and secreting a large quantity of pikes.

The economic distress of 1812 saw the re-emergence of political dissent which followed a period fo relative tranquility in the wake of the suppression of 1802-1803. The local militia depot was stormed and sacked by hungry townsfolk. Contemporary evidence suggests that amongst the

crowd were those who saw the protest as more than a spontaneous expression of hunger, poverty and hardship. Reporting the mass meetings in Sheffield during 1816, Earl Fitzwilliam, a local aristocrat said that the disturbance "was not the consequence of distress - not the want of employment - not the scarcity or dearness of provisions but ...the offspring of a Revolutionary Spirit" (quoted in Connelly & Baxter, 1976). A Sheffield man betrayed after attending a secret meeting confessed to have been a supporter of Despard for 28 years.

Surveying the period spanning the turn of the century, Connelly and Baxter suggest that "the continuities in personnel, ideas and tactics...make up the revolutionary tradition" that led into the period of rapid industrial expansion and population growth.

> Between 1801 and 1851 the population of the country as a whole was doubled while that of Sheffield was trebled and ... the death rate of the town was well above the average of the county ... (Pollard, 1959, p.6)

Connelly and Baxter add to their comment on the underlying revolutionary tradition by stating that "a similar case could be made for other communities in the West Riding" especially Barnsley and Wakefield.

Sheffield appears as an important link in a chain of regional contacts which formed an elementary national movement.

> Our research on the South Yorkshire region suggests that the revolutionary tradition appeared in a robust artisan culture and that it was based an shared experience of economic and political exploitation. In this sense it constitutes a proto-working class response to the advance of early industrial capitalism (Connelly & Baxter, 1976,p.112)

Tholfsen refers to Hampden clubs in Sheffield devoted to political discussion and agitation between 1816 and 1819

(Tholfsen, 1976,p.49). Working class radicalism developed as a formidable ideological force in the period between 1816-1836 in areas such as South Yorkshire (Tholfsen, 1976, p.49; Thompson, 1963, p.603-700). Whilst the basis of this radicalism reflected the ideas of Tom Paine and represented a liberal attack on aristocratic control during this period, a transformation into a more class conscious, anti-capitalist critique was also apparent. Working class radicalism came to reflect not simply a set of political demands for the franchise but also an attack on the established order which resulted from dialectical opposition to the ideology of 'utilitarian liberalism' adopted by the middle class in the early nineteenth century (Tholfsen, 1976,p.26).

During the prosperity of the 1830s and given the greater industrial strength of the working class further evidence of the underlying politics of the majority emerged. Radical Associations appeared although Baxter notes that within South Yorkshire Rotherham and Doncaster were "more politically backward". Chartism developed as a popular movement. Rising support was expressed by the large numbers attending rallies and meetings. Calls for physical force and 'ulterior measures' brought Establishment fears to the surface with official repression in its wake. In September 1839 a week of skirmishes and disturbances in the streets of Sheffield followed a Chartist 'church going'. Some of the more moderate of the local Chartist leaders left the city in fear of their freedom. A group who intended to take their demands beyond the public meeting included a young distillery worker called Samuel Holberry. He and others were arrested as they were about to embark on a major rising. The intention was to fire a number of prominent houses and a barracks on the edge of the city as a diversion in order that the Town Hall might be seized along with the

main coaching inn. Stopping the mails was to be the Chartist signal for a national uprising.

Despite the economic depression of 1838 and the distress of 1847-49 the relative prosperity of skilled workers in Sheffield and South Yorkshire in the period was improving. Artisans at this time "found little attraction in socialism and did not conceive of the class struggle" (Pollard, 1959, p.41) and other historians have noted a decline of interest in revolutionary ideas among the skilled workers as mid century approached. Cole notes that "as long as British capitalism could maintain its prosperity...the demon of British Revolution had been put safely to sleep" (Cole, 1941, p.23). Yet a number of contemporary events in South Yorkshire show that an underlying radicalism still burned. For example, Chartists gained seats on Sheffield Town Council in 1846 and a handful of Chartist councillors remained in place for a few years. These electoral victories indicated that there was a basis of radical support from the workers in the city. It was support from the skilled artisans and those workers who had managed to elevate themselves into the role of 'little mesters', that is small owners of workshops or water mills who would contract out work or space within the interrelated processes of cutlery and small tool manufacture. In 1849 Chartists held 22 seats out of a Council of 56 yet they were always in a minority and could not defeat the middle classes on political issues which would affect bourgeois interests. The local Chartists proved to be concerned about retaining control over their own township areas and afraid of collectivist ideas which would mean municipality-wide and redistributional policies including proposals for municipalisation of gas and water supply in 1851.

An Owenite missionary, George Jacob Holyoake, moved into Sheffield in 1841. Holyoake was a militant crusader for the

working class and for the radical transformation of society. He described himself as an agitator. Holyoake became a prominent figure in mid-Victorian radical movements which embraced socialism and cooperation. He seems to have found a congenial and supportive environment in Sheffield and new converts to the Owenite critique of the existing social and economic order. Holyoake was connected with a journal 'The Reasoner' launched in 1846 which provided a platform for opinion on the far left of working class radicalism and he attacked, for example, the general complacency and satisfaction with British trade and economic relations epitomised by the Great Exhibition of 1851 by drawing attention to the poor health and mortality rates among cutlery workers (Tholfsen, 1976, p.114).

A Chartist candidate, Thomas Clark, stood for Sheffield in the General Election of 1847 but the movement seems to have suffered from a degree of parochialism and incorporation. Owenites and Chartists were vulnerable to assimilation into middle class liberalism in the mid century years. For their part the middle class tempered the philosophy of utilitarianism with the prospect of joint action with the working class to secure economic and social advance for all.

By mid century it seems that South Yorkshire followed the rest of the country in assimilating the 'new spirit' whereby working people were accepting elements of middle class ideology and values (Webb, 1920, Chap.4) with a concomitant acceptance of working class movements operating within the capitalist order rather than seeking its overthrow (Cole, 1948, p.148). This period lies at the centre of one of the scholarly disputes in recent English social history. On the one hand the period is seen as the beginning of a pervasive diversions of the working class from an agenda of radical reconstruction of capitalism. Comparisons are made with the traditions of working class radicalism in the rest of Europe

which remained confrontational whereas in England a permanent loss of revolutionary zeal is frequently evidenced. English working class ideals are thought to have been incorporated, defused and ameliorated with the consequent acceptance of the values of individualism, self-help and respectability. On the other hand there is a view that the 'traditional' values of workers were simply submerged or channelled in different directions. Thompson warns against too simple an interpretation of a complex period and its political processes. History is not "a tunnel through which an express races" just as class relations within capitalism is not ordained to follow a single path. Religion provides one of the factors from which alternate interpretations of history have flourished. Perkin (1969) sees the growth of 'dissenting' sects as part of the reforming process and a major influence promoting amelioration and reformism in the English working class whilst for Thompson (1963) they form an element of continuity in sustaining working class radicalism.

A major disruption to the picture of mid-century quiescence in Sheffield were the 'Outrages'. The organisation of traditional Sheffield handicrafts was unusual in being subdivided into a series of linked but independent processes. In being transformed from the raw steel an item of cutlery would go through a sequence of forging, rolling, stamping, rough grinding, shaping, fine grinding, sharpening, fixing of handles and packaging. This subdivision of labour process was reflected in seperate ownership and control of the stages. "The concept of the self-contained factory, where each operation was subject to the control of a single guiding hand, was alien to local light industry" (Pollard, 1959, p.55). Workers might spend part of their time on jobs for a large manufacturer but could also pay rent to a 'shop' owner and take in work from one or more outside masters. It was relatively simple for a

worker to progress from wage labour to taking in business on their own account, becoming tenants and charging piecework rates, to taking on apprentices and journeymen. By ploughing back income or taking advantage of easy credit from suppliers the skilled worker could become a 'little mester' or manufacturer in his own right.

In this environment of independent artisanship the relative industrial calm created by the availability of employment, growing trade and relative wealth was shattered, quite literally, by the issue of price fixing. The 'Outrages' (a term coined by the national press and the middle class in a Victorian 'moral panic' representing their fear of the new self-confidence of workers and their trade union organisation) were a series of disputes between fellow workers and 'little mesters'. They were a result of restrictive practice in which "the immediate economic interests of the middle-class leaders and the working class electorate were opposed to each other" (Pollard, 1959, p.120). Those established craftsmen or 'little mesters' who failed to keep up their weekly subscriptions to the trade association or who employed apprentices in preference to trained workers and so undercut wages were subject to pressure from co-members. The form of pressure on the 'rebels' ranged from horseplay, through 'rattening' whereby tools or the canvas driving bands for their grindstones in collective workshops and mills were removed, to more extreme measures such as gunpowder attacks on workshops and homes and even to shootings. From the evidence presented to the Trades Unions Commission of Inquiry of 1867 it appears that these practices dated back for many years and were likely to continue. The events were part of a system of rough and ready justice worked out amongst people who worked together and within an interrelated manufacturing process which relied on solidarity and accord. The close knit nature of community and enterprises soon meant that the unions quickly

knew when a trade was becoming overstocked with apprentices or a workshop was offering low rates. A rigorous code of conduct was especially condemning of those who had taken advantage of union services, such as the payment of unemployment benefit, and then ceased to pay their union dues when back in work.

The reaction of the state was firm and represented bourgeois fears but the relevance of the 'Outrages' here is to illustrate the cohesive forces at work in the local working community. Members of the trade associations believed that they were "entitled to apply sanctions like gilds and local authorities" and "their champions were claiming privileges which were elsewhere assumed to belong only to Government itself" (Pollard, 1959, p.152). The unbowed attitude and demeanour of those who appeared at the Inquiry illustrated the self confidence of local workers and clearly got up the noses of those in authority.

It is important to note that the 'Outrages' were manifestations of traditional craft organisation rather than a portent of later trade unionism; "a survival from an earlier period, from the eighteenth century and centuries beyond...(Pollard, 1971, p.v). More prefigurative was increased agitation for changes in master-servant relations and for improved safety in industry during the 1860s. A series of major strikes and lock-outs created a spirit of industrial warfare in the North. An extensive stoppage on the Yorkshire coalfield in 1864 coincided with strong pressure at the Trade Union Conference for change in labour law.

The growth of heavy industry and engineering and the concomitant weakening of the light trades within Sheffield was well established by 1870 but the complex organisational and industrial texture of the city survived into the

twentieth century. Remnants of the older workshop tradition can still be found in Sheffield today. Indeed, the contracting system which by 1890 had almost ceased to exist outside South Yorkshire was still found, albeit on a small scale, within the cutlery trades in the early twentieth century.

The mid nineteenth century saw a new influx of workers into the heavy trades. They "arrived from the countryside and from other iron working districts, often without their families, attracted by high wages and quick advancement" (Pollard, 1959, p.170). The engineering industry became the model of organised labour in Sheffield having uniform wage levels and strict apprenticeship provisions resulting from the activities of well developed amalgamated societies.

By the end of the century working men were being elected to Parliament in ever greater numbers. Penetration of municipal government began somewhat earlier. The establishment of local School Boards under the Elementary Education Act of 1870 provided one such opportunity for expanding working class influence on local affairs followed later by the abolition of the property qualification for (male) town councillors in 1878. Only three working men were put into Parliament as a result of the 1880 General Election and they were returned as Liberals. By 1885 the number had increased to eleven. Alliance with middle class radicalism was a route for working people to political influence. In Sheffield the local Liberal newspaper, the Sheffield Independent, offered a radical outlet for ideas. Liberal MPs for the city were partially attuned to working class ideas because of the many artisans on the electoral register even before the Reform Act of 1867. Yet the Conservatives were in control of town council from 1883 to 1901. Writing about the period it was said of Sheffield that "the charge would have been justified a century ago

when in political terms the town, for all its early radical tradition, was unenlightened and behind the times" (Mathers, 1979, p.8). Major municipal improvement schemes were advanced in the late 1880s. Local water companies were acquired by the council in 1887 with municipalisation of the markets, tramways and electricity undertaking in the 1890s. Gauldie and others have noted that Sheffield was at the forefront of providing council housing for its poorer families.

> A meeting called in 1889 on the 'Housing of the Poor in Sheffield' was attended chiefly by working men and resulted in the formation of the 'Sheffield Association for the Better Housing of the Poor'. This society and the very active interest of Sheffield's trades council formed a pressure group pushing the town council towards action. (Gauldie, 1974, p.298)

The period of Conservative party control on Sheffield Council.at the end of the last century was supported by the "self interest of many skilled tradesmen and 'small masters'" (Mathers, 1979) and was followed by a period of Lib-Labism which lasted until after the 1914-18 War. The number of wealthy steel manufacturers sitting on town council declined appreciably in the 20th century from over one third at 1900 to 20% in 1920. The traditional base of local Liberal support was found among the 'shopocracy' who represented a strong political presence on town council. Small businessmen maintained strong links with Chartists between the 1840s and 1870s and dominated the Liberal majority from 1901.

The Sheffield Labour Association formed in 1882, promoted working class candidates to stand as Lib-Labs in local and national elections. Edward Carpenter formed the Sheffield Socialists in 1886 although this had very little direct relationship with working people. Even the Federated Trades Council in 1900 was said to principally represent workers in the older, conservative small cutlery trade who provided the

bulk of Lib-Lab councillors. Heavy industry workers were the first Labour representatives on the Council at a time when the local Labour party had "a greater proportion of workers and Trade Union officials than might be expected. Members of the upper, middle and professional classes did not become involved until after 1919" (Mathers, 1979, p.39). Ironically, the period of Conservative majority on Sheffield town council in the late nineteenth century had the effect of expanding municipal involvement in the city against the opposition of Liberals who counselled economy in the use of resources. Although the Conservative party probably supported municipalisation for reasons of political and personal opportunism the period did set the scene for later municipal socialism. There is little doubt that the evolution of socialist ideas were linked to the development of heavy industry. The ILP were active in the region from the 1890s although they never had the same degree of influence on local politics as in other nearby cities such as Bradford. Attercliffe constituency was fought by an ILP candidate in 1893, nominated by the Trades Council after the Liberal Association turned down a worker candidate. ILP candidates were put up for town council elections in 1894, 1895 and 1897 in the Lower Don Valley wards which were dominated by workers in the newer heavy industries. The Trades Council was precariously held in Lib-Lab control over the turn of the century.

Out on the coalfield South Yorkshire miners were little affected by the newer socialist ideas such as those coming from the ILP. Pelling remarks that "it was uphill work, as was demonstrated by the failure of the ILP candidate in the Barnsley byelection of 1897" (Pelling, 1954, p.190). The traditional support among miners for Lib-Labism and the relative prosperity of the coalfield are given as reasons for miners' moderation towards the expanding Labour movement to which we might add the parochialism that can come from

small communities held together by strong work and family ties.

From the period of the First World War a powerful thread of working class radicalism emerged in local politics. Pollard records that up until the War local Labour politics was inward looking, "concerned more with immediate problems of social amelioration than with control of the state machine" (Pollard, 1959, p.201) The war showed the working class that the national government was happy to ignore trade union rights. As an important centre for munitions supply Sheffield remained in full production but the workforce saw efforts at dilution of labour and conscription of skilled and exempted workers. Being in the birthplace of the shop stewards movement workers in Sheffield looked to their representatives who stood outside the formal trade union structure as a way of dealing with day-to-day grievances and a means of uniting the various trades and the 'diluted' workforce. Feeling against the war were being openly expressed against a currrent of jingoism elsewhere and demands for peace negotiations came from the Sheffield District Committee of the A.S.E. (later the AEU) in 1916. In November 1916 Sheffield shop stewards were supported by a mass meeting in a call to strike over the case of a fitter called Hargreaves who had been conscripted (against the exemption agreement for skilled men working in the armaments industry). Despite the threat the Government failed to act and 10 000 skilled men came out on strike, despatching a team of delegates to bring out other munitions workers elsewhere in the country. Hargreaves was released from the army within 2 days. The success gave a great boost of confidence to the Shop Stewards movement. A further series of actions against dilution and pay were organised nationally with support from the Sheffield shop stewards who in turn were supported by mass meetings which united skilled and unskilled workers. Success fed militancy as did the

news of the Russian Revolution which drew the movement to express "dislike of rationing, the censorship and allegations of war profiteering at home...(Pollard, 1959, p.274). Mathers comments that within South Yorkshire "the political significance of the Shop Stewards Movement was...that...it introduced shop-floor workers to industrial and political militancy of a kind unexperienced in living memory" (Mathers, 1979,).

Nationally, working class commitment to socialism and a Party for labour was increasing. The municipal elections of 1919 were considered by the local newspaper in Sheffield to have been the most sensational in the history of the city with the Labour Party gaining seven seats and a completely new body of councillors being elected. The summer of 1919 saw extensive strikes in South Yorkshire. Sheffield "was one of the most active centres of the 'Hands Off Russia' campaign" (Mathers, 1979, p.198). Labour Party membership was rising rapidly and with the high levels of unemployment in the 1920s another breakthrough in local labour politics was the success of Labour candidates at Attercliffe, Brightside and Hillsborough in the Parliamentary elections of 1922.

In November 1926, the Labour Party took control of Sheffield Council, an achievement "not only remarkable in itself but unique in the country... (Mathers, 1979, p.219). Labour has retained control in Sheffield since that time apart from losing the majority in 1932 in the face of national support for Ramsey McDonald in Parliament and when Labour support was at a low point in the country. A Labour majority was returned in 1933. The other year when Labour lost control of the city council was in 1968-69 when a massive swing in the country to the Conservatives combined with an unpopular local decision on council house rents gave a suprised Tory Group temporary control of the council.

Barnsley's political history in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century bears some similarity to that found in Sheffield. A working man was elected to municipal office late in the last century.

John Normansell served on the borough council in 1872 with the financial backing of the Yorkshire Miners' Association (YMA). However, the local Labour movement remained in the shadow of Lib-Labism until after the First World War. The YMA, for example, continued to support the town's Liberal MP, Joseph Walton, a colliery owner, until he retired in 1922. In 1918, however, the Trades Council and the Labour PArty merged into a formal alliance with the specific intention of fighting the local elections on an independent basis. This they did in 1919, and as early as 1921 temporarily won a majority on the council as a bloc in the aldermanic elections against a fragmented group of Liberals, Independents and Conservatives. Labour quickly assumed control of the Bóard of Guardians and began their continuous control of Barnsley Council in 1927, interrupted for only a few years in the early 1930s as a consequence of the events surrounding the National Government debacle. (Lowe, 1986, p.125-26)

A small group of leaders with power within the miners' union and the shopworkers' union in the Co-op were influential in those early campaigns. The names of a handful of men recur in the political history of the inter-war period in Barnsley and they continued to hold influence up to the 1950s. One man, Sheerian held the joint ofice of seretary of the Trades Council and the Labour Party between 1918 and 1953. The closed and authoritarian nature of political control during the period was partly due to the lack of an effective challenge to the leadership.

Yet Lowe states more than once that the Labour Party machine in Barnsley during this remarkable period was fragile despite massive electoral support. Low membership and few activists gave a shallow political defence against attack which was challenged to effect by a Ratepayers' Association in the mid 1970s. When there was little local challenge the

Labour vote held strong. In 1967-68 when the country saw large swings against Labour and Sheffield lost control of the city council only one seat in Barnsley slipped out of Labour control.

The 'big issue' (as Hampton calls it) of 1967 in Sheffield local politics is worth recounting, for some of the key figures in that series of events reappear in the forefront of decision-making and events within South Yorkshire County Council from 1972-73 onwards. In 1967 Sheffield City Council decided to introduce an income-related rent scheme for council housing as a way to increase revenue at a time when high interest rates was creating difficulties in balancing the housing revenue account. Alongside this proposal was a rent rebate scheme, the whole package being in line with national recommendations. Opposition from tenants focussed both on the principle of means-testing which was associated with stigma and previous experiences of national assistance and also on detailed objections to the proposed scheme, particularly the adult occupier surcharge which would 'catch' working children still living in the parental home. A campaign of opposition developed with the setting up of tenants' associations on individual estates and eventually a city-wide body. (A full account can be found in Hampton, 1970, chapter 10.) Labour Group deferred implementation of the scheme for three months in the face of this opposition but then decided to proceed. The tenants' movement immediately implemented a threatened rent strike and a campaign of lobbying councillors which reached such a pitch that Labour Group formally dissociated from the the Federation of Tenants' Associations and declined to attend further tenants' meetings. Two Labour councillors refused to accept their Group decision and continued to attend tenant meetings whilst seeking to devise a new rent scheme which overcame objections. The dispute had split the Labour Party in Sheffield and Councillors Roy Thwaites and George Wilson

who defied their colleagues' on Labour Group represented a strong feeling of dissent against the scheme. Powerful interests such as the Trades and Labour Council openly supported the tenants. A mediator in the disagreement was Alderman Ron Ironmonger whose moderate attitude and desire to heal the schisms was overtaken by the local elections of 1968 when Labour lost a number of 'safe' seats and lost control of the council. Admittedly at a national level 1968 was 'Labour's worst year since 1931' (Lowe, 1986, p.98) but in 1969 the swing back in favour of Labour within Sheffield was dramatic, helped by a more chastened approach by Labour politicians and the promise of a permanent liaison structure between tenants and Town hall and a programme of building more tenants halls on the estates.

This period is significant for local politics in Sheffield and South Yorkshire for reasons which extend well beyond this dispute. Seyd suggests that the rent issue "prompted the first changes in local politics with a new leadership, the development of a more influential local Party input into Council matters, and the recruitment of a new generation of Labour councillors which was given an additional boost by the 'all-out' elections of 1973" (Seyd, 1987, p.144).

Since the late sixties Sheffield and South Yorkshire have been identified by the political opponents of labour as a base for "municipal Marxism" run by "Town Hall Pol Pots" (New Statesman, 31/1/1980 which may reflect the tendency of the ruling groups on the City and the (late) County Council to openly display their ideology, itself a reflection of the confidence of long term electoral superiority and characteristic Yorkshire forthrightness.

Drabble (1987, 1989), in her fictional representations of Sheffield (identified as Northam) draws a contrast.

> The political atmosphere here seems more decent, more realistic, less febrile and opinionated than the atmosphere in London. This is partly because the left here has more roots, more confidence, more sense of tradition...True, Northam has a tradition for being extremist, for being of the 'loony left', but anybody who lives there knows that this reputation is greatly exaggerated. Northam is a solid provincial town... (Drabble, 1989 (1990 edition), 55)

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

Lancaster

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A1

York

M6

Blackpool

Burnley

Leeds

Bradford

Preston

Halifax

Blackburn

Dewsbury

M62

Goole

Kingston upon Hull

Proposed Humber Bridge

Humber

M61

Wakefield

Southport

M62

Rochdale

Huddersfield

Scunthorpe

Grimsby

Bury

Dearne

Don

Bolton

Barnsley

Wigan

A1(M)

Doncaster

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

M18

Manchester

St Helens

M62

M63

Liverpool

Rotherham

Warrington

Sheffield

Birkenhead

M56

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

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Chesterfield

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Lincoln

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Stoke on Trent

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Background to South Yorkshire County Council

The context for the creation of the Metropolitan County Councils in general and South Yorkshire in particular is to be found in the discussion, debate and action taken with respect to the reform of local government in England during the 1960s. The debate had been opened earlier in the century but despite the views of some influential political figures little had been done in the way of a fundamental rethinking of structure. The nineteenth century division of the rural County Councils (with a pattern of second-tier urban and rural districts) and urban Boroughs was felt in some quarters to be inappropriate to the changed circumstances of a developed industrial society but successive governments were reluctant to grasp the nettle of major reform. A sense of tradition and history implied continuity with the old divisions which stretched back several hundred years. However, the underlying pressure for change became more insistent in the late 1950s. The key event was the creation of the Herbert Commission which was given the task of considering the local government system in the capital resulting in the creation of the Greater London Council and the London Boroughs.

Until the report of the Herbert Commission there was no great wave of enthusiasm for radical change to the structure of English local government. The members and officials of local government did not want upheaval and there was no significant lobby for change. Incremental change had been the norm with assignation of new functions where this was felt necessary, the augmentation or reduction of scope of functions as services became more or less important and opportunities for amalgamation of authorities or change of status. These changes at the margin were felt adequate and could be accomodated without disruption. The rationale for the Herbert Commission was the growth of the capital city and the

problems that followed. One of the main problems was the difficulty of planning for transportation and physical development within the then existing government structure in London with its complex network of different local authorities. Another problem was (sub)urbanisation and the spread of development into the areas surrounding the capital. The tightly drawn boundaries around London and other urban areas were under pressure from spreading development and the influence of urban centres was broadening considerably in an age of mass transit and wider mobility.

Rhodes has suggested that a "favourable political circumstance" lay behind the setting up of the Herbert Commission and the subsequent reform of London government (1970, p.233). The move of Henry Brooke to Housing and Local Government in 1957 put in place a Minister who had experience of local government in London and who was sympathetic to the advice of civil servants. He had a deep commitment to town planning and the need for a local government which could accomodate coordinated urban development.

The heat of the debate and the detailed arguments created during the collection of evidence by the Commission need not concern us. What is significant was the decision by the government to proceed firstly with the Commission and then with reform on the basis of the recommendations. The only viable alternatives to be presented during the inquiry were to either preserve the existing structure and create some mechanism for the comprehensive treatment of the problems due to urban spread and development, or to create an over-arching local authority which would plan for growth and administer a considerably larger area than the London County Council. The Herbert Commission favoured the latter course of action and so paved the way for the Greater London Council.

The White Paper of 1961 maintained the momentum towards change, followed by the London Government Bill and the 1963 Act. The significance of this period was the introduction of a new type of structure into English local government, namely a two tier arrangement in urban areas. The new London authorities were formally in place by 1st April 1965.

The Labour government that came to power in October 1964 was keen to press forward with reform. Crossman as Minister of Housing and Local Government was instrumental in the wider changes. The Redcliffe-Maud Commission was established in 1966 and was asked to report within two years. The members of the Commission were carefully selected in order to embrace all of the main interested parties and in anticipation of radical proposals. The evidence presented to the Redcliffe-Maud Commission was notable in comparison to that offered to the Herbert Commission because of the strong waves of opinion favouring fundamental reform. Whilst the prior example of London government was relevant to this reformimg climate a broader sense of modernisation and pressure for change in many aspects of British life and institutions was spreading through the country. The Wilson government is popularly remembered for its efforts to respond and accomodate to the 'white heat of technology' and set the base for a new Britain with a growing economy and more prosperous population. In Labour's scenario a more appropriate local government structure was essential and the far-reaching recommendations of the Redcliffe-Maud Commission caught that spirit.

The Commission took a lead from the London reforms by proposing a two-tier structure for the largest urban areas where their populations exceeded one million (Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester). Considerations relating to the desire to achieve "good units for planning and transportation" permeate the report. These

were to be the main functions of the upper tier authorities in the metropolitan areas along with other services such as police and fire. The lower tier authorities were to carry out the main 'consumption' based services of education, personal social services and housing (although the creation of housing <u>policy</u> was to be an upper tier responsibility). The unitary authorities outside the conurbations were identified on the basis of their coherence in terms of employment, recreation and transportation, that is, they were to be focussed on a major urban centre.

In the Redcliffe-Maud proposals, Sheffield and its environs were to become part of the Yorkshire Province. This was to cover

> the whole of the East Riding, most of the West Riding (excluding five county districts, which we consider best included in the north west province), part of the North Riding, part of Lindsey (Lincolnshire) and a very small part of Derbyshire, together with the county boroughs associated with these areas: Barnsley, Bradford, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Grimsby, Halifax, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield, York. (p.190)

Within the province, Unit 12 (Sheffield and South Yorkshire) was to include the county boroughs of Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield, and a number of districts in North Derbyshire and West Riding. Chesterfield, Doncaster and the Hope Valley were considered for inclusion in the Sheffield and South Yorkshire local council area but the proposal was rejected by the Commissioners. Also considered appropriate by the majority of Commissioners yet rejected by the government was the application of the metropolitan (or two tier) principle to the West Yorkshire

conurbation. Commissioners obviously decided that South Yorkshire was not sufficiently urbanised or in need of the integrating mechanism of an upper tier authority. Also worthy of note from the report is that Doncaster was proposed as a seperate unitary authority within the province due to it being "compact and geographically cohesive" with neither "strong nor extensive" influence over the surrounding areas (op cit, p.200).

Subsequent discussion of the report in the Labour party at national level suggested that the number of two-tier urban authorities in England be increased to 9 including the Sheffield sub region.

A White Paper was published in February 1970 which embraced most of the Redcliffe-Maud recommendations but proposed five metropolitan unitary authorities. South Yorkshire was excluded from this set of proposals. It was the change of government in 1970 that led to its inclusion. The Conservative White Paper proposed the retention of the party's traditional seats of rural power by means of a two tier structure of local government across the country and this was to mean keeping the shire counties (a powerful argument used in favour of the continuation of the shire counties was their traditions stretching back into the Middle Ages). The boundaries of the metropolitan areas were also to become a subject of controversy under the Conservative proposals. In a decision redolent of the tight boundaries placed around urban areas by their nineteenth century forebears the extent of the city authorities was restricted by the Conservative government broadly to the areas of continuously built up development. The subsequent 1972 Local Government Act has been frequently criticised for the failure to pursue radical change and for its inconsistent logic and reasoning particularly in the divisions of functions which differ considerably between the shire and metropolitan counties.

In addition to the functions of strategic planning, passenger transport, consumer protection, police, fire emergency planning and recreation responsibilities (the principal functions of the metropolitan county councils) the shire counties controlled education, social services, libraries (felt by critics to be personal or 'consumption' services which should be contolled at the most local level of government). These latter functions together with housing, local planning, environmental health and other functions were carried out by the second tier districts in the metropolitan areas. Thus the former county boroughs retained most of their traditional functions.

The South Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council was somewhat different in geographic character from the other five insofar as the County included large tracts of countryside. One proposed explanation for this difference was that South Yorkshire sits between the Pennines to the west and north and the fens to the east. "(T)he new area was geographically well-defined and the boundaries fitted the map" (Clarke, 1986, p.7). Another explanation states that the underlying reason for the inclusion of outlying rural areas was to minimise the Labour vote in the contiguous authorities by containing them in South Yorkshire. One of the Conservative members of the Redcliffe-Maud Commission (Sir Francis Hill) has admittted that the boundaries of local authorities in the 1972 Act were drawn to benefit the electoral position of his party rather than serving the interests of good government, a view echoed by the first Conservative Leader of the Conservative group on South Yorkshire County Council (op cit).

The area formally designated as South Yorkshire thus included the four main centres of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield with the coalfield towns of the

Dearne stretched between them as well as the more agricultural areas around Doncaster. Talking of the Yorkshire province the Redcliffe-Maud report notes the local authorities

> face many problems. A basic one is the need to improve the physical environment of the older industrial areas: to replace poor housing, to encourage new employment in certain areas, to secure a modern pattern of main communications, to reclaim derelict land, to reduce smoke pollution. (Redcliffe-Maud Commission, 1969, p.191)

However, the problems that faced the new county council were not only those of environmental deterioration. Over 70% of the land area of the County was officially classified as countryside and over fifty per cent was in agricultural use. The new administration faced the task of integrating the traditions, expectations, politics and policies of an area which had previously consisted of thirty four local authorities ranging from small Rural District Councils to large self contained and capable County Boroughs, the latter unused to sharing local power. Clarke notes that the smaller authorities had developed their own forms of 'parish pump politics' and "they were not going to take easily to amalgamation into either the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley or the Metropolitan County of South Yorkshire".

A two year period of adjustment was written into the legislation.

> The Act was passed by Parliament in 1972 but the new councils were not to come into operation until the 1st April 1974. There were two phases in this transition. First there were to be joint committees established with elected representatives from the constituent authorities, and second there were to be elections in May 1973 for the new Councillors, giving them nearly twelve months to assume the mantle of responsibility. (Clarke, 1986, p.9)

At its first meeting in February 1972 the South Yorkshire Metropolitan County Joint Committee elected Ron Ironmonger as chairman and Stan Crowther from Rotherham

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Borough as vice-chair. A decision was also taken to set up a number of working parties to undertake preparatory work, predictably these covered the main functions for which the County would take responsibility. Other tasks of the Joint Committee were to work towards a scenario for the staff establishment and draw up job descriptions for the Chief Executive and other chief officers.

On the political front there was much to be done in working towards the elections, due in April 1973. The District Labour Parties, for example, nominated working parties to prepare an agenda and organisational structure covering the main functions of the new authority whilst the parent bodies prepared its panels of candidates and manifestos. An impressive group of established local Labour politicians who made up the Planning, Transportation and Industrial Development Study Group put together a statement which became the main plank of the South Yorkshire Labour Party's manifesto as a "sound Socialist basis for the programmes of the new County Council" (Clarke, 1986, p.10). Sheffield DLP representatives and councillors dominated the signatories to the document many of whom were to be successful in the elections to county seats. The significance of this document for this study were the commitments to participation of the public in the preparation of plans for the County and the treatment of public transport as a social service with free travel for the elderly, handicapped and disabled as a first step "towards the ultimate provision of free public transport for all" (South Yorkshire Labour Party, 1973).

The 1973 elections

The Labour Party study group report formed a substantial basis for the manifesto at the first elections with planning and transportation as the main themes. The Conservatives stressed the idea of a "Fresh Start" and

saw the elections as an opportunity to break the grip of the Labour vote in the region. The lack of any clear policy statement reflected the limited expectation of winning more than a few seats. The Liberal Party put up 35 candidates on a 'community politics' ticket. The unusual aspect of the election was the dozen or so Labour Independents who had failed to get official Party nomination and decided to stand despite the warning from the local officers that they would not be accepted under the Labour whip. For example, Dennis Eaden stood in Hoyland (near Barnsley) as 'Retired Steelworker'.

The outcome of the election was predictable. Out of 100 seats Labour won eighty two, seven were elected unopposed. Ironmonger said at the victory press conference that the party had expected seventy five and so they were well pleased with the even stronger position. Francis Butler, a well known and respected Sheffield city councillor won the only Liberal seat, whilst the Independents won four seats leaving the Conservatives with thirteen. The Conservative seats were in the suburban areas such as Sheffield Hallam or in the Doncaster rural wards.

An immediate issue for the incoming Labour majority was the election of Leader. Clarke suggests that there was little doubt about the choice (op cit, p.15). Ironmonger, a local political figure of some status in Sheffield purposely gave up a major controlling interest in borough affairs to play a significant role in the new county authority. The other figure of importance who won a seat on the new county council was Tom Baynham, former Leader of West Riding County Council returned from Adwick-le-Street (near Doncaster). Whilst Ironmonger represented the interests of people in the largest city in the county Baynham was a figurehead for the rest of the new authority. Baynham became Chairman of the new authority with Ironmonger becoming Leader of Labour

Group. The Chairman's role was seen as presenting the policies and direction of the county council to the public while Ironmonger as majority group leader held together the large and disparate body of Labour councillors (many of whom were strangers to each other in the spring of 1973).

Several members of the new authority held joint seats on the county and on their district council. For example, the new Leader of Sheffield District Council, George Wilson, gained a seat in Sheffield No.9 (Brightside, Nethershire). Other politicians who were well known in the area and who were later to move on to Parliamentary careers (such as David Blunkett and Bill Michie) held seats on district and county council from 1973.

Later elections for the South Yorkshire County Council

In 1977 the South Yorkshire County Council elections were set in the context of a national swing of opinion against Labour and, in contrast with the elections in 1973, all seats were contested. Additionally, a Ratepayer campaign was drawing strength from discontent among households in the outlying areas of the County which were incorporated at the time of reorganisation. These areas that had previously been paying urban or rural district levels of rates had found themselves having to pay rates at higher levels. The discontent was fuelled immediately before the elections by the announcement of a 12% increase in rates. The Conservative Party stood candidates in every ward and seemed confident of making gains. The Structure Plan was an element in the election with the Labour controlling group pressing to point out that progress had been made and that they had kept broadly to timetable. The draft Plan appeared prior to the elections but the detailed proposals created a wave of criticism in the press and from the District Councils.

The main issues in the critical reaction to the draft Plan were the proposals on land allocations and the fine mesh of detail in the Plan. The District Councils were particularly concerned about the preemption of their room for manouevre within the framework of structure plan policies. The formal publication of the draft plan gave an opportunity for the District Councils to publicly voice these concerns, which they did loudly and vociferously. This reaction became an issue in the election as did the draft plan's confirmation of a freeze on bus fares.

The cheap fares policy appears to have cheered the opposition parties prior to the 1977 elections for they saw this as a gift for them and an own goal by the ruling group on County Council. What the opposition had

misjudged was the popularity of the bus fares policy among the electorate. The most plausible reason for the reduced swing against Labour in the South Yorkshire elections of 1977 compared to swings elsewhere was grass roots support for a cheap public transport system. It may be that awareness of the popular support for cheap fares also quickly subdued the jubilation of the opposition parties when the policy was publicised in the draft plan. Even the normally partisan local newspaper, *The Star*, began to query why the local Conservative manifesto did not refer to fares policy; the underlying reason being nervousness about being seen as the party that was likely to raise bus fares significantly if voted into power.

The Liberals felt that they could capture up to 6 seats in 1977 although their campaign was also seen as ambiguous. By arguing that the County Council was a 'white elephant' that was creating a mountain of paper from an expensive and wasteful bureaucracy which duplicated many District Council functions the Liberals were effectively saying 'vote us into an institution that we do not believe in'.

The Ratepayers candidates were seen as a particular threat to the Conservative Party who feared that their vote could be split where Tory candidates stood against Ratepayer nominees. This could provide an opportunity for the Labour Party or for Liberal candidates to take marginal wards.

The outcome of the 1977 election in South Yorkshire was 62 seats for Labour, 31 for the Conservatives, 4 Ratepayers, 2 Liberals and an Independent. Despite losing 20 seats Labour remained firmly in control of the County.

The result has to be viewed in the context of very large national swings (of 20%) against Labour. Of the other MCCs (apart from South Yorkshire) only Tyne and Wear was Labour controlled after the elections. The Labour leadership in South Yorkshire had some cause for relative satisfaction in (only) seeing a local swing against them of 11%. Retaining control meant being able to continue pressing for the kinds of policies that they had introduced in their first term of office. However the swing against Labour resulted in casualties. John Driver, the enthusiastic Chair of Planning Committee during the first term was a victim of Ratepayer reaction to the County in the Darton ward. This was a personal blow compounding the pressure that had fallen upon him from within County Labour Group for strongly supporting the Public Participation Programme and backing the approach taken by officers in the Planning Department.

As well as the loss of some familiar faces from the benches of County Hall through defeats at the polls there were other significant changes in the composition of the second County Council. In particular, apart from the continued presence of Bill Michie as Chair of Planning in Sheffield MDC there were none of the Sheffield Labour councillors that had enlivened debates during the first term. Sheffield District Labour Party had resolved that holding of office on both District and County Councils was unacceptable. Michie, as the exception that proved the rule, retained dual membership on the basis of the need for the Chair of Planning in Sheffield to keep a watching brief on the County Planning Committee. The Sheffield DLP decision can be seen as a mixture of concern both at the time commitment implied by dual office holding and the perceived conflict of interest in representing District and County when opinion on key matters of policy and control was divided (and division was likely to continue). Consequently, figures such as David Blunkett and George Wilson (then Leader of

Sheffield MDC) did not re-contest the seats they held in the first County Council.

The broader implication of the 1977 elections for politics in South Yorkshire was that the divisions and uneasy relationships that had come to characterise County-District relations at the official level were not reflected in public actions at the ballot box or (more contentiously) in public opinion. It can be suggested that the public did not perceive the kinds of policy conflicts that had permeated County-District relationships throughout the period from 1973 to 1977 and which were to continue through the second term. Clarke notes that the 1977 elections marked a watershed in public opinion.

> Certainly the press became noticeably less hostile to the County... In Sheffield, The Star began to print editorials supporting the County Councils' policies and dropped its earlier vitriolic comments for more considered 'statements of the pros and cons. (Clarke, 1986, p.43)

Sir Ron Ironmonger announced that he would not stand for the leadership of County Labour Group after the elections in 1981. The Deputy Leader, Ken Sampey, also announced in 1977 that he was to stand down and thus sparked keen competition for the post. The implication being that the victor would take over the leadership after 1981. Roy Thwaites won that contest and was soon thrust into overall responsibilty for the leadership of the majority group when Sir Ron suffered a stroke in the spring of 1978. Ironmonger was out of action for some months and never returned to full responsibility. He gave up the leadership role to Thwaites in March 1979 and took the deputy role in Labour Group.

It was during the second term of Labour that the phrase 'The Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire' gained currency. In holding firm to commitments that had marked the first term of office, the County Council under

Thwaites leadership found itself increasingly pressured by the Labour government to drop its key policy of cheap fares on public transport. In maintaining its belief in public transport as a social service the County was publicly presenting itself as operating to the 'left' of the government. Thwaites had been a vociferous Chair of the Passenger Transport Committee during the first term and was not going to back off from a policy which he saw as a symbol of the local party's principles as well as a vote winner.

The 1981 elections saw Labour in South Yorkshire return to the position that it had held in the period from 1973 to 1977. Labour won 82 seats with the other 18 places being distributed among Conservatives (14), Liberals (3) and one Ratepayer. The swing back to Labour was 12%, hence exceeding the swing against (11%) in 1977.

The period after 1981 falls outside the time span of the main structure plan-making activity in South Yorkshire. However, it is relevant to note that the increasing pressure that the Metropolitan County Councils' faced under the Thatcher government was due in no small part to that government's distaste for town planning. There is an element of irony and broader political opportunism in the growing support that the County Council was to recieve during the 1980s from the four Metropolitan District Councils. As the threat of abolition turned into reality at the 1983 General Election the 5 local authorities in the County formed a united front in opposition to the Government's proposals. Further irony is provided by this alliance which gave support to a system that was criticised by the national Labour Party after 1974 who favoured single tier, unitary local authorities.

It is also worthy of note that the names that figure prominently in Labour Group leadership on South Yorkshire

County Council and, specifically, on Sheffield Metropolitan District Council during the 1970s and into the 1980s were among those that played significant roles in 'the big issue' in Sheffield local politics during the 1960s, namely the dispute over tenancy and council house rents. Ironmonger, Thwaites and Wilson were all involved; Ironmonger as the mediator and Thwaites and Wilson as the 'turks' who stepped outside the Labour Group line to take up the tenants' perspective. Blunkett entered local politics as a councillor in Sheffield in 1970 at the young age of 22 years but he was to rapidly rise to leadership of the Labour Group taking over from Wilson in 1980. That change in control of Sheffield's Labour Group is said to have signalled the taking of power by the 'new urban left' following the movement into positions of influence of younger, more highly educated Labour politicians (compared to the past) in other large cities and conurbations. Whilst each of the key figures that we have identified in the politics of South Yorkshire and the County Council represent variations on local socialism they each contributed elements of radicalism to the tradition that stretches back into the seventeenth and eighteenth century in the locality.

The Metropolitan County Council Elections 1973-1981

The 1973 local elections for the new MCCs resulted in Labour holding 402 seats (67% of the total), Conservatives 141 (23%), Liberals 49 (8%) and other parties nine seats (1%).

The swings away from Labour in 1977 were dramatic. The overall majority won by the Conservatives gave them 360 seats (60% of the total seats), Labour held 213 (35%), Liberals lost 30 to hold 19 (3%) and the other parties ended up with same number of 9 seats (1%).

The 1981 results from local government elections showed that Labour had returned to an even stronger overall position in the metropolitan counties than had been the case in 1973. Labour held 426 seats in the MCCs (71% of the total), Conservatives 122 (20%), Liberals held 50 seats (8%) and other parties had dropped to hold only three places on the MCCs (1%).

Of the six Metropolitan County Councils, South Yorkshire shows much greater stability in the relative two party swing when compared to Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the West Midlands. This suggests that the party political preferences of the electorate in South Yorkshire are less fickle than elsewhere even when taking broadly comparable examples. The only note of caution in relation to this proposition is that South Yorkshire differs somewhat in geographic and socio-economic characteristics in comparison with the other conurbations.

Bristow views South Yorkshire and Tyne & Wear as vying for 'the position of least volatility' in his analysis of the three elections for the metropolitan county councils. Merseyside emerged as the Metropolitan County Council with the greatest swings of support over the elections of 1973,1977 and 1981 (Bristow, 1984, p.194).

There are numerous factors which affect voting behaviour in national and local elections but recent research has focussed on distinctions between social and spatial influences (Johnston, Pattie and Allsopp 1988; Miller 1987). Miller has proposed a two-step model whereby propensity to vote in local elections is influenced by personal characteristics at a socio-psychological level and by locality factors at the environmental level. Thus whilst age, socio-economic status and education affect motivation to vote, environmental factors come into play and compound or mediate likely voting behaviour. Among

the environmental factors that are influential in Miller's model of voting are length of residence and interest in local political affairs.

In South Yorkshire with a relatively stable population and a below average proportion of professional and higher managerial socio-economic groups the interaction of social factors and locale may have contributed to the more stable pattern of voting for Labour than was found in the other Mets.

The swings of public opinion which are reflected in the elections for the Metropolitan County Councils draws attention to the political environment within which the MCCs were operating. The debate continues about whether local government election results are dependent on voters views of national government actions and policies or whether they reflect a seperate and independent expression of attitude to local issues and politics.

There is some evidence in general and from the analysis of the outcomes of the MCC elections which indicate that local elections do provide an opportunity to register views about the performance of national government; an opportunity to record a 'protest vote'. One feature from the brief history of the metropolitan counties is that the periods when either the Labour or Conservative Party have been simultaneously in power in Westminster and at local level have been less frequent than when there were party political differences between centre and locality.

The Conservative Party was in power in Parliament during the first MCC elections in 1973 and Labour took control of all 6 metropolitan county councils. Labour won the 1974 General Election and three years later Conservatives made significant gains in the MCC ballots. As we have recorded above only South Yorkshire and Tyne & Wear maintained Labour control after 1977. The 1981 MCC

elections came two years after the Conservative government of Mrs.Thatcher was put into Westminster and the local electorate of the MCCs exhibited a decisive swing of allegiance to Labour. The pattern that emerges, therefore, is that the political party in Parliamentary opposition did relatively well in the MCC elections. The finding does suggest that there could be a reaction vote operating which may be feeding on discontent with national government performance. The other and qualifying observation to make is that the underlying electoral allegiance in the MCCs is towards Labour; a factor that was not lost on Mrs. Thatcher and her Cabinet in pursuing abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan counties.

Extending this kind of analysis to look at political congruence at all levels of government within the metropolitan areas, Flynn, Leach and Vielba show that the periods when all three institutions of government (national, county and district) have been under the control of a single party were relatively short. In the period 1974-1976 was such a time when Labour controlled all the MCCs under the watchful eyes of Labour ministers in Parliament and controlling Labour Groups in the MDCs. The second period of political congruence was 1979-1981 when several of the metropolitan county areas were dominated by the Conservative Party at a time when Mrs. Thatcher's government was newly elected. The exceptions to this pattern were South Yorkshire and Tyne & Wear. In Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and in the West Midlands the majority of MDCs were Conservative held during 1979-1980 but the balance shifted in 1980-1981 when only on Merseyside was there a degree of political congruence in the government of the area with the Metropolitan County Council and Parliament in Tory control and no overall balance of control on the Merseyside MDCs. By 1980 Labour held dominance among the

MDCs in the other five metropolitan areas. Flynn and colleagues conclude that

> only in three out of their ten years of existence have MCCs enjoyed support from the same political party at national and district level simultaneously. (op cit p.75)

However, party political congruence between the tiers of government does not mean agreement over specific policies. What is noticeable from the evidence is that South Yorkshire remained solidly under Labour control at both levels of local government (paralleled only by Tyne & Wear among the other MCCs) throughout the period of this study (in effect throughout the life of the MCCs). This did not mean that all was harmony between the county and district authorities or between the county and the Labour administrations in Parliament. Indeed, as a result of studying events in South Yorkshire from close quarters this appeared far from the case during the 1970s.

It has been stated that the party political colour of central government has little bearing on local government (Bristow et al, 1984, p.16). The basis of this observation is that both Labour and Conservative administrations in Westminster have shown "considerable congruence of policy" towards local government. This statement has to be qualified since the election of the Conservative government under Mrs. Thatcher's leadership in 1979 which signalled a very different approach to local government and the public sector in comparison with previous post-war administrations. Equally, given the changes introduced by the incoming Conservative government in 1980 in the Local Government, Planning and Land Act which promoted free market principles and played down the importance of planning controls and powers (with the formalisation of Urban Development Corporations and Enterprise Zones with the consequent reduction of local planning authority powers and elimination of direct

accountability for decisions affecting those areas) it is difficult to be content with the idea promoted by Bristow et al that change of national government is relatively unimportant to local government and their policies in the metropolitan areas. One consequence of the 1979 Conservative victory seems to have been the creation of a unified front among the Labour held local authorities of South Yorkshire (and elsewhere) in their opposition to the policy programme introduced by the Thatcher government.

Whilst strictly outside the time period covered by this study the position in terms of inter-local government relations within South Yorkshire after 1980 was much smoother than had been the case before. Several factors account for lower levels of friction between the tiers after 1980. Firstly, after 1980 the conflict between South Yorkshire local authorities about the structure plan lessened because of the ruling and amendments required by the Secretary of State for the Environment following the Examination in Public. The decisions went largely in the district councils' favour by reducing some of the controls and details of strategic planning policy to which they had objected. Specifically, by requiring the down-grading of the priority area policy which had threatened to direct county council resources away from the development areas most favoured by three of the district councils they felt their autonomy was less at risk. The effect of the Secretary of State's decision was to demoralise county councillors and staff but also to identify central government as the target for their resentment rather than the district councils. Secondly, after 1983 the possible (and then the actual) demise of the metropolitan county councils united the Labour local authorities in their opposition to the government. Thirdly, a new broom in Sheffield after Blunkett won the leadership contest in 1980 opened the possibility of a new approach to inter-authority relations involving the

largest and most powerful district council in South Yorkshire. Hence, after 1980 the County Council and the district councils (particularly Sheffield City Council) were better able to reach joint agreement on policy matters especially as the new leadership in Sheffield was openly supportive of county policies such as cheap fares (indeed, Blunkett claims some of the credit for putting forward the idea in the first place). In profiling the new leadership and committee chairs in Sheffield, the Guardian newspaper (6 January 1981) said

> Sheffield's influence on the county council ensured it was steered to the Left and the most important posts are all held by Sheffield men...

We will never know if a Labour administration in Westminster would have pressed ahead with further local government reorganisation if they had been in power in the 1980s. If it had done so their proposals could well have included abolition of the metropolitan counties given that during the 1960s Labour was disposed to implement the Redcliffe Maud findings and in the 1970s the Party had officially denounced the Tory scheme for reorganisation in favour of unitary authorities in conurbations and some form of regional government at a sub-national scale.

SECTION 3

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Structure Planning

The idea of structure planning, became current in British town planning in 1965 with the production of the PAG report. The origins of the term lie in the broadening focus of planning as it has developed in the postwar period and the differentiation of types of development plan.

The expanding concern with planning at a larger geographic or spatial scale has been an insistent issue for town planners in the 20th century. Hall notes that,

> ...in looking at the writings of Howard, Geddes and Abercrombie we saw that, increasingly from 1900 to 1940, the more perceptive thinkers came to recognise that effective urban planning necessitated planning on a larger than urban scale - the scale of the city and its surrounding rural hinterland, or even several cities forming a conurbation and their common overlapping hinterlands. Here, the development of the idea of regional planning in one commonly used sense of the word begins. (Hall, 1974, 81).

Expansion of the scope of town planning to a larger spatial embrace is a response to the growing scale of geographic organisation in modern society. Transportation improvements and developments, improved communications and ease of movement between home, work and leisure has allowed previously contiguous activities to become seperated in space.

However, other changes have created different pressures for change in the scope of town planning. Increased state intervention in the economy and in social affairs has also broadened the agenda of planning. A concern with social and economic policy has been grafted on top of the architectural and engineering basis of the profession.

Thus, planning in postwar Britain has been faced with the twin pressures of an expanding spatial focus and a

broadening policy agenda. Structure planning was a response to those twin concerns and to the problems which had dogged the development planning system set up under the 1947 legislation.

Planning at any scale is a notoriously difficult activity for it sets out to predict and anticipate future change. Not only do planners need to consider whether change would have occurred without planned intervention but they also need to predict the impact of their directed actions. With respect to the latter the planner always runs the risk of being proved wrong

> ...the conscious intent of the planner remains essentially..to encourage what is percieved to be benign development, and reduce the type of disbenefits normally associated with random change.... Although planning is concerned with predicting and attempting to control the future, some critics have asserted that the one thing which we know about the future with any degree of certainty is that it will not be like the past; yet, the past is the source of our knowledge about the future and it consequently provides the basis for our attempts at prediction and control. (Hart, 1976, 5-6)

It is just this line of argument that can lead on to the view that comprehensive, long-term planning is impossible because of the increasing rate of change in modern society and therefore the growing unpredictability of the future. However, there is an alternative and, perhaps, more commonly held view that derives from similar observations about the uncertain nature of the future which argues that the inevitability of change exposes the need for planning. In this view there is a dialectic between the current context within which plans are produced and the predictions that are made in plans themselves. Boundaries can be placed upon uncertainty such that

> ...planning is something more than a simple projection of the present, and the future is something less than a completely novel and

inherently unknowable set of impending conditions. (Hart, 1976, 6)

It is in this sense of growing uncertainty about the future set against a perceived need for some framework for decision-making that the development of strategic planning ideas and methods has been undertaken in recent years. The reaction against end-state or blueprint planning has been married with increased awareness of the interrelations between the economic and social processes and activities occuring at the urban/sub-regional scale. Raymond Unwin, chief planner for the first strategic plan for Greater London wrote that

> ...the making of a plan for a great city region is a somewhat daunting project because of two considerations which claim attention. They are as clearly true as they seem mutually paralysing. On the one hand the task as a whole is so complex that it can be comprehended only if attention is concentrated on one subject at a time; on the other hand the various aspects of the problem are so interdependent that they cannot safely be studied or handled seperately; for the main purpose of the plan is to establish harmonious relations among them. (Unwin, 1929, 8 quoted in Hart, 1976, 7)

This eloquent statement presents a principal dilemma facing the strategic planner.

As Hart goes on to note, by the 1960s a further factor had entered the equation. Instead of some idea of stasis and harmony which pervaded planning thought in Unwin's day more recent formulations of the task of strategic planning have accepted a dynamic conception of control with associated efforts to introduce elements of flexibility and open-endedness into planning proposals. A principal statement of these ideas is to be found in the report of the Planning Advisory Group.

The Planning Advisory Group

A whole set of problems became apparent with the system of development plans set up under the 1947 Town and

Country Planning Act very soon after the system was put into operation. To step beyond criticism into making positive proposals for change and improvements required a systematic review of the shortcomings.

The Planning Advisory Group was set up in May 1964 at the beginning of the period in office of the Labour administration headed by Harold Wilson. The terms of reference given to the Group were to provide advice and assistance to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the Ministry of Transport and the Scottish Development Department in developing a more responsive planning system.

In meeting the first part of its brief (which was to highlight the current problems with the development planning system) the Planning Advisory Group codified and clarified the increasing crescendo of criticism of the 1947 system and its workings. The review highlighted

a misleading concentration on precision and detail (para. 1.21),
an inflexible form and content for the development plan and a plan which was not easily adapted to accept new issues, new policies and new planning techniques (paras. 1.23-1.26),
a deficiency in relating to or incorporating other local policies particularly those tied to social and economic matters (paras. 1.24-1.27),
failure to provide effective guidance on development control for other officials in the same authority and for potential developers (para. 1.28),
an over-centralised and, hence, protracted system of agreement of plans by central government.

Richard Crossman, as the commissioning Minister, showed his obvious enthusiasm for the review in the introduction to the Report. He was committed to turn the proposals into legislation even before they were published and in his diaries Crossman reflected that the conclusions were not party political in nature but were the sort of principles "which any government will pass in due course" (Crossman, 1975, 621).

We should remember that this Labour administration was fired with considerable ambitions on a number of fronts. Among these was a concern to act on the regional problem. One of their boldest initiatives was the creation of the Department of Economic Affairs which produced a national plan and sought the overall coordination of economic growth and change. The formation of the appointed Economic Planning Councils and the advisory Economic Planning Boards was the regional arm of national economic planning. Although not initially intended to integrate economic and regional planning policy with more localised land use proposals and policies for the distribution of population and urban development, the newly formed DEA was soon drawn into accepting that wider remit (Hall, 1976, 172-174).

The context for the discussions which were taking place about the town planning system and its reform was that of future growth and change. The 1960s was a period of relative boom and economic optimism. GNP was expected to grow at 4% p.a. with concomitant growth in industrial, transport and other infrastructure. Population growth was also predicted up to 66 million by the end of the century. Development and rapid change were seen to be the pattern of the future and the then current town planning system was thought inadequate for the task of providing guidance. Previous post war Planning Acts of 1947 and 1962 were based on a belief that population was stable and that growth in other fields (such as the economy) was unlikely to have significant effect on land use patterns and the environment.

By 1964 the government and its advisors believed that future growth had to be accommodated. An unprecedented surge of development especially in and around existing urban areas was expected. PAG also believed that this had to be reconciled with the conservation of existing towns and their heritage as well as protecting the

countryside. The development planning system should therefore be adapted to

> ...(i) guide the urban development and renewal which is certain to take place.
> (ii) promote efficiency and quality in the replanning of towns.
> (iii) encourage better organisation and co-ordination of professional skills so that town and country are planned as a whole.
> (iv) stimulate more purposeful planning of rural and recreational areas.
> (PAG,1965, para. 1.33)

The basis for developing a revised system has been distilled down to 6 basic ideas.

> ...1. that future development plans should have a broader policy content.
> 2. that the distinction between strategic and tactical policy and decisions should be drawn with central government only having concern for the former.
> 3. that greater variety in types of plan was needed to deal with diverse local conditions.
> 4. that new styles and techniques for plan preparation were needed.
> 5. that greater public participation was called for.
> 6. that the development planning system should be a means of interpreting regional planning policies.
> (Solesbury, 1975, 245-246)

Flexibility and change and how to accomodate them plus a conscious intention to broaden the potential for inclusion of other (non-spatial) policies and commitments into the development plan was a primary goal of the revised scheme. The essential paradox in seeking to meet this goal was that in broadening the policy scope, spatial scale and the time horizons of development plans the potential for laying down the basis for even more uncertainty and inflexibility was increased. The two types of plan proposed by PAG were designed to meet this apparent paradox. Planning should under these proposals operate as a system which offered both a broad framework for accommodating the sweep of comprehensive policies as well as allowing a detailed focus on specific proposals. Structure plans would be "strategic, decision documents rather than detailed maps" so that a degree of

flexibility could be provided without the "detailed proceduralism and excessive formalism" associated with the previous system (Hart, 1976, 9-10). PAG accepted that any given plan is necessarily incomplete because of continuous change in the environment and that the necessity of frequent up dating followed from this (ibid.).

Two types of strategic plan were proposed by PAG. Urban structure plans were to indicate the broad form of the town and identify general policies, aims and the standards to be followed in order to remodel urban structure to meet anticipated needs and demands. County structure plans were intended for the larger shire areas consequently they were to embrace a wider policy sweep and would be less specific in identifying the locations and forms of new development.

The Planning Advisory Group saw the detailed local plan as a necessary and important element of the new system yet also suggested that local plans be prepared on demand. Normally local plans were also to be prepared after a structure plan was in existence. The PAG report begins the chapter on local plans by saying that the new urban and county plans "...are the anchors of the new system" (ibid., para. 5.1). Seeing the structure plan as a broadly based document and no requirement to prepare local plans until they were needed was part of an aim to cut back on local planning authorities workloads and particularly to reduce delays in the planning system. The latter aim was also apparent in the provision that local plans were not to be the subject of detailed scrutiny by central government.

The main purposes of the local plan were to be

a basis for guidance, control, coordination and promotion of development;
a spur to comprehensive environmental planning;

> an encouragement to public understanding and participation in the planning of a locality. (ibid., para. 5.8)

Three types of local plan were proposed. Action area plans were for areas where immediate implementation of planning policies was necessary and were to be used particularly in areas where large scale development/ redevelopment or environmental improvement were likely to occur. The Planning Advisory Group saw this as the most important category of local plans. It was recommended that the strategic plan should identify action areas where some attention was to be concentrated in the near future and that once the structure plan had been approved there would be a statutory obligation to prepare any identified action area plans.

District plans were intended to bridge between broad strategy and specific action areas particularly in the context of larger urban authorities. The district plans together would eventually build up into a mosaic covering the whole local authority.

The third type of local plan, town and village maps, would be specific about land allocations, reserved sites for public facilities and would also present a framework for traffic movement. Such plans were preferably to be simple, broad in scope and prepared rapidly in response to demand.

The PAG report was generally welcomed. It was felt to propose a form and style of development planning which would more adequately fit the rapidly changing situation of the 1960s. The logic of the planning scheme contained in the report was, however, dependent on a coherent machinery of regional planning and on the reform of local government (to provide larger, fewer and unitary local authorities) in order to be effective.

Legislation and Government Advice

The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act formalised many of the ideas contained in the PAG Report but did add some detail about the form of development plans as well as an elaboration of the procedures and machinery for their preparation and adoption. In particular, public participation in the planning process was made a statutory requirement at both structure and local plan levels. Local plan procedures were elaborated in order to ensure conformity with the structure plan.

The 1968 Act implied that responsibility for preparation of the new development plans would be vested in one local authority. The Royal Commission on Local Government in England and Wales had been sitting since May 1966 and there was some anticipation that larger unitary authorities would be recommended by the Redcliffe-Maud inquiry.

Even prior to the 1968 Act a number of experimental studies were underway incorporating some of the new planning techniques thought appropriate for strategic policy making. These sub-regional studies were being set up in urban contexts and covered large hinterlands. These efforts to test the principle of strategic planning also combined existing planning authorities showing the drift of official thinking was anticipating local government reform (Leicester and Leicestershire, Teesside, Coventry-Solhull-Warwickshire).

The term structure plan introduced into the 1968 Act and the Development Plan Manual (DOE, 1970) represents both the urban and county structure plans first identified in the PAG report. However, a need was also perceived for the preparation of plans for parts of a county area (the towns and urbanised parts of predominantly rural counties being an obvious case for this treatment) which could be prepared on Ministerial consent. These special consent

plans correspond to the town and village maps mentioned in the PAG Report. The different types of local plan in the legislation were to be district plans, action areas and subject plans. Subject plans (mentioned almost in passing by PAG) were elevated to prominence in the planners repertoire and were intended to deal with specific topics such as minerals, recreation or conservation.

The function of structure plans were to show and clarify a local authority's development and redevelopment objectives, indicate the physical structure of the locality and the transport system and provide a base for detailed planning and development control (MOHLG, 1965). The Manual brought in a greater emphasis on the structure plan as a means of locally interpreting national and regional policies and providing a basis for coordinating local decisions (including offering a framework for local plans and action areas) as well as providing a vehicle for bringing planning issues and decisions before the Minister and the public.

The Manual contained a great deal of operational advice to local authorities and to a high level of detail. For example, a listing was provided of matters which would be "generally appropriate" for inclusion in a structure plan. These matters included familiar topics such as population data and changes, employment, housing, and recreation but also education, social and commmunity services. In addition, the Manual (ibid., 28-29) and the later DOE publication on "Management Networks" (DOE, 1971) gave specific advice on the planning process by noting that the main stages of structure plan preparation would consist of

> defining aims,
> preparing alternative strategies,
> presenting a chosen strategy along with detailed policies and proposals.

A provision for local planning authorities to come together to form a joint board for the purposes of preparing a structure plan was built into the legislation.

The 1971 Town and Country Planning Act consolidated the earlier legislation but did not appear to anticipate the forthcoming changes in local government structure.

There was a broad consensus among planning professionals and writers that the logic of the new system made local government reform more compelling (Hall, 1974, 178). The broader mandate implied by linking local policies with regional and national issues and the increased spatial scale introduced by the concept of strategic planning pointed unambiguously in the direction of larger local planning authorities and areas where urban and service hinterlands could be considered as a whole. However, the local government structure that was adopted by the incoming Conservative government in the early 1970s made the possibility of effectively implementing the new planning system much less likely. Whereas the advice of the Redcliffe Maud Commission sought larger and reformed local government areas the 1972 Local Governemt Act in England and Wales compromised the findings of the Commission. The Act "...superimposed a two-tier local government structure on the unitary approach of the 1968 Town and Country Act, and divided the planning process." into two parts (Brazier & Harris, 1975, 255). Whilst local government reform did reduce considerably the overall number of local authorities (which was generally anticipated and welcomed) the effect of the reform was also to increase the number of local planning authorities by a factor of 3 (from 138 to 422).1 The effect of the 1972 Act was, therefore, to raise the possibility "...of throwing into confusion a system of strategic land-use planning and local development control that had scarcely

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1 see p. 80.

begun to operate" (Alexander, 1982, 20). This confusion was particularly likely to occur in the newly defined metropolitan areas because

> ...in the lower-tier authorities of the six metropolitan counties, with the exceptions of Trafford, Tameside and Knowsley which did not include a former county borough, there already existed one or more planning departments, and even in the three exceptional metropolitan districts one or more of the constituent municipal boroughs or urban districts had had planning powers delegated to them by the county council. Thus it was the six upper-tier authorities, charged with the intellectually more stimulating task of strategic planning (as opposed to local planning and development control), that had to establish planning departments from scratch." (ibid., 21)

The Department of the Environment, perhaps belatedly, anticipated these difficulties by offering advice on cooperation between local authorities (DOE, Circular 74/73). There was a growing awareness of the dangers of inter-authority disagreement and dispute with consequent delays and inefficiency in preparing development plans. Later in 1974 (a year and a half after the first elections to the new metropolitan county councils) the Department of the Environment re-advised local planning authorities (DOE, 1974, Circular 98/74) of the three main functions of the structure plan (being; development proposals for the area, interpreting national and regional policy, and a framework for development control). However, the circular was most notable for listing 10 topics which the government expected to see in the first statutory structure plans. County councils were being strongly advised get on with production of the documents with a restricted set of key issues at the expense of a more comprehensive document.

Another indication that delay was a principal concern for the government was the machinery introduced for public review of structure plans. The Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 1972 introduced the Examination in Public which was intended to limit the number and extent of

public representations on the published strategic plan. The government had clearly been disturbed by the time and resources consumed by the public inquiry into the Greater London Development Plan. It had been anticipated that the GLDP inquiry would last from October 1970 until the following March or April. In the event 28 000 objections were recieved and the panel sat for nearly two years (237 days of sitting) in hearing a great many of these objections in public session.

The Sub-Regional studies.

A principal intention of the sub-regional studies was to develop local experience of a broader, more stratgic approach to town planning. Cowling & Steeley (1973, 3 and 18) in their review of the studies suggest that they owed more to the evolving ideas of strategic planning than to the 'old-style' development planning. The model terms of reference given by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government combined a traditional land-use framework with PAG-type aspirations for the studies to help show how a bridge might be created between local planning and regional policy. For example, the study of Coventry-Solihull-Warwickshire (CSW) had terms of reference (drawn verbatim from MOHLG advice) to

> ...prepare proposals for the major land uses in the sub-region, having regard particularly to the development of the population, employment, recreation and shopping in relation to each other and to transport. The purpose of the study is to serve as a bridge between regional considerations and the development plans of local authorities and to provide the authorities concerned with a common framework within which they can co-ordinate their plans and programmes. (CSW, 1971, 184)

The model terms of reference consisted of two main sections; the general conditions and terms and, secondly, a listing of the main topics to be covered. The general terms emphasised a focus on the sub-region as a whole and attention was given to choice of an area covering several

local authorities, which could be treated as a relatively autonomous unit from the point of view of planning and transportation policy.

The locations chosen for the sub-regional studies shows no obvious rationale and indicates opportunism more than design insofar as these were areas where the local authorities had already shown some desire to come together to consider interrelated problems and policy needs. Central government direction and influence was strongest in setting up those studies where future developments of national importance were in prospect (Humberside and Severnside). In the other cases the uneven distribution of studies indicates the influence of local factors such as political motivation. This is not to indicate that central government interest in the studies was not strong. On the contrary the opportunity that they offered for shared experience of this new form of plan-making and the chance to codify operational methods and techniques was welcomed for the potential contribution to developing a new approach to the statutory system.

The most notable achievements and innovations were felt to be in the realm of planning techniques (Cowling & Steeley, 1973; Kettle, Lichfield & Whitbread, 1975; Wannop, 1985). Subsidiary conclusions drawn from the studies were that inter-authority cooperation and shared technical work was possible, that strategic planning could form a link in a policy chain stretching from the national to the local level and that a more comprehensive approach (embracing , at the least, land-use and transportation issues) was feasible.

The technical/ operational advances that were incorporated into the sub-regional studies represented the development of a 'systems approach' to planning (McLoughlin, 1969; Chadwick, 1970). Drawing on earlier

advances in computer technology and the mathematical representation of complex systems the systems approach had been seen as a technical aid to breaking down the stages of decision-making. In Ashby's words (quoted in Cross & Bristow, 1983)

> ...the gradual awakening within the planning profession in England of an awareness of a technology gap between planning as it was being practised and work in other professions, notably engineering.

was a spur to technical innovation.

The contribution made by the systems approach to planning has been described as one of the most significant changes to professional practice in the century with the CSW study as a high water mark of technical advance (Hall in Goodall & Kirkby, 1978).

> ...The rather disjointed sequence of survey, analysis and plan, which formed the backbone of land use planning for more than fifty years, has been gradually replaced by a more logical process, drawing upon ideas from decision theory and systems analysis. This process requires an explicit statement of planning objectives or problems, the generation and evaluation of alternative sets of policies designed to meet these objectives, and the selection of a preferred set of policies. Plan-making is seen to proceed in a series of cycles, each cycle including some or all of the stages in the process, and the planner is expected to 'learn' as he moves from one cycle to the next. Once produced a plan is not to be regarded as fixed for all time, but is expected to be kept up-to-date by means of a continuous process of monitoring and review. While a number of variations in this basic approach to the planning process have developed over recent years, the acceptance of the need for rationality has been widespread. (Batey & Breheny, 1978, 257)

The systems approach to planning drew directly on models of problem and task definition in the sphere of industrial and commercial management. In management theory and practice, process models which conceptualised the task of the manager as making decisions by stepwise analysis followed by prescription had emerged under the

label of 'management by objectives'. A dynamic, iterative approach towards decision-making reflects the cybernetic principle which is central to systems thinking.

Among the specific techniques employed within the strategic planning studies were ways of structuring and decomposing problems in order to help with the analysis and understanding of complex decisions. The origins of these techniques lie in war-time operational research (OR) used later with some success in the private sector and then applied to public sector problems. The distinctive approach to emerge from the Institute for Operational Research has been called 'strategic choice' principally associated with Friend and Jessop (1969). The essence of the approach is to identify planning as decision-centred, that is to see planning not as designing some end-state or ideal model of the future but instead to see planning as solving problems in the present. The means to do this is seen as working in a step by step way with a 'technology of choice' which shows the interrelationships between decisions and identifies the principal areas of uncertainty.

The early sub-regional planning studies were where the systems approach and the OR-derived techniques of structuring decision-making and choices were pioneered.

A general problem with the sub-regional studies was their status as special studies which insulated the teams to a degree from the hurly-burly of day-to-day decision-making in local government. As a consequence there was only a limited initial survey of public values although simple sets of demographic and economic data about the local population was collected in order to be fed into the later stages of the planning process. As an example of the goal setting stage, the Coventry-Solihull-Warwickshire study identified four major goals (choice,

flexibility, economic development and environmental protection) which were then elaborated into 37 aims. Absence of a survey of public opinion has been seen as a critical defect in the study (Kettle, Lichfield & Whitbread, 1975, 189) particularly as it meant a lack of criteria to feed into the planning process at the stage of plan evaluation. In the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire study a related criticism was made that policies which were seen as politically feasible were assumed to be in accordance with public preferences and values.

The promise and confidence exuding from the sub-regional studies gave the Ministry and the planning profession considerable encouragement. Apart from showing that the strategic approach and new techniques could work the studies were also completed within relatively short periods of time (the Notts-Derbyshire study took 15 months; Coventry-Solhull-Warwickshire took 32 months; and the Leicester sub-regional study about 2 years. The exception was the Teesside Survey and Plan which took 4 years to bring to completion). The message for the planning profession was that

> ...inter-authority collaboration was feasible and could be positive in outcome, strategic planning was not only within the capability of the profession but that the challenge of planning at a larger spatial scale had generated a response which promised enhanced rationality and a range of new and apparently workable techniques for dealing with complexity.

The introduction of statutory structure planning.

The Department of the Environment began to issue formal commencement orders for structure plan preparation in 1971 (prior to local government reorganisation) although some local authorities had anticipated the issue of orders by undertaking preliminary work. Teesside, South Hampshire and Leicestershire were the first places to be given formal approval to proceed. All had been the subject of exploratory work at the sub-regional scale in

the 1960s. A number of urban authorities had also been gearing up for commencement including Brighton and Worcester (the locations of urban structure plans along the lines of the PAG proposals). Eight urban authorities in the West Midlands were advancing towards plan preparation (including Coventry and Solihull). These and a number of shire other counties and district councils were served with commencement orders in 1972. All other commencement orders had been issued by late 1974.

Because of the need for many local authorities to build up professional teams and to cope with the major upheavals of local government reorganisation a slow start on structure plan work was the norm. The local authorities where work had begun prior to reorganisation were able to submit their plans relatively quickly to the DOE for approval. In some cases the submission required some updating of data and policies and completion of the statutory procedures (for public participation and so on) required under the 1971 Act. Thus, for example, Coventry and Solihull made formal submissions in 1973 and the other West Midlands District councils (previously county boroughs) were able to submit in 1974. However, for most of the new local authorities the time taken from commencement order to submission was considerably longer. Dorset (excluding SE Dorset) and the Isles of Scilly did not submit a structure plan to the DOE until 1981, seven years after commencement was ordered.

The political and organisational disruptions caused by local government reorganisation, particularly the creation of a two tier system and the division of planning functions between the tiers, was a factor making for delays in the production of structure plans. Behind these delays were less supportive environments for innovative technical work and for inter-authority collaboration than had been created in the experimental study areas. The context for this early work was

somewhat abstracted and idealistic. By the time that local government reorganisation was underway something of a reaction against the systematic methods had already set in. Delay caused by inter-authority conflicts and extended, sequential planning processes was of concern. In addition the national economic position had changed from the optimism of the 1960s. By the early 1970s a downturn in national economic fortune was in prospect making the demand for a development plan framework appear less pressing in many localities.

Ironically, concerns about possible delays in completion of strategic plans were beginning to surface in the DOE at this time. These concerns were being openly expressed by the mid 1970s. Circular 98/74 was an overt expression of that concern within central government. Its message to local authorities was that they should refrain from deep and detailed study of 'secondary' matters and instead to attend to a limited number of key issues for inclusion in their structure plans.

One analysis of the approaches taken towards the preparation of structure plans and the technical work carried out by structure plan authorities has shown not only a wide variety of methods and techniques that have been used in practice but also evidence of 'periodisation' in the approaches used (Breheny, 1982). Four main periods were presented and these broadly correspond to the times taken to submit the structure plans for DOE approval. The plans which were derived from or based upon the prior work undertaken in the sub-regional studies maintained a systematic, rational approach derived from procedural planning theory and systems thinking. The plans included in this first phase of submissions included the West Midlands urban structure plans and submissions from the Teesside area, Staffordshire, Hereford and Worcester and Hampshire.

Most of these were submitted for approval by late 1974 or early 1975.

The plans which were completed during 1975 and 1976 were more diverse in terms of the techniques and methods of plan preparation used. This 'second phase' appears to have been a period of experimentation with alternative models of planning process. Examples from the second wave of plans include the submission from Humberside where policies were developed on the basis of simple projection of existing trends in population and measures of growth as well as showing existing land use commitments (incrementalism); identification of current issues in planning and development (problem-solving) in the Hertfordshire submission; and various efforts to apply methods of strategic choice (such as in West Berkshire).

A third phase was labelled pragmatic/rational because of the liberal adaptation of the systematic methods introduced in the 1960s. The purpose of these adaptations were to take short cuts through the overall process or to take account of local circumstances (such as restricting coverage or skipping over extensive data collection stages).

A handful of local authorities showed little enthusiasm for the task of structure plan preparation and needed a good deal of prodding and persuasion before making a submission to Whitehall. Among the local councils which did not make a formal submission until the period between 1979 and 1982 were a number who eventually offered a skeletal and sparse document for approval. These submissions show evidence of rapid preparation and completion under pressure. A number are short, tending to raise issues rather than point to policies to deal with them. Where policies are stated they offer little justification or rationale for the prescriptions. For

these reasons Breheny has labelled this as the 'irrational' phase.

Elsewhere it has proposed that the different contexts of shire and metropolitan counties leads to a "clear distinction between approaches to the use of methods" (Batey & Breheny, 1978, 263).

The nature of the planning task was relatively more straightforward in the shires. Despite the boundary changes limited population and employment growth and, hence, limited expansion of the urban centres were expected. Established forecasting and spatial allocation methods could be re-employed to effect and consequently the planning task appeared to be a familiar one. In addition the disruption caused by local government reorganisation was less. Internal organisation and practices were established and even with the movement of staff the basis of professional teams were in place.

In the metropolitan areas the planners in the newly created county councils not only had to deal with all the problems of bringing a new organisation into being but faced a much more complex and seemingly intractable set of planning questions. By the early 1970s the large urban areas were seeing population and employment decline, serious inner city social problems with widespread poverty and deprivation often with an ethnic dimension, a collapse of the traditional urban industrial base and a crumbling environment and infrastructure. Local authorities in these areas were facing increasing problems of service delivery and funding. The major strategic planning issues for the metropolitan counties were therefore not simply physical/spatial but also tied closely to social and economic malaise (Batey & Breheny, 1978, 263).

In the metropolitan areas there appeared to be a stronger attachment to the methods and techniques which were capable of handling the complex relationships between social and economic problems and linking these to proposals for spatial and environmental change. Among these were process models of planning procedure, modelling of traffic, housing and shopping behaviour and needs, and techniques, such as AIDA (Analysis of Interconnected Decision Areas) which was evolved specifically with the type of complex decision context of the metropolitan areas in mind (Hickling,1974).

AIDA symbolises the spirit of the strategic planning movement of the 1960s. Implicit within the technique is an acceptance that contemporary problems in local government and planning are complex and that the local authority area can be seen as an interrelated system. The technique aims to identify the relationships between problems and issues in the 'decision environment' and to allow the consequences of potential policies for dealing with these issues to be identified. With AIDA 'option graphs' can be represented which show decision-makers where choice is possible. The illustrative work of Friend and Jessop illustrated three examples of how the technique could be applied to town planning (op.cit., 1969). They were all cases of demand for land allocation; inner city redevelopment, outer suburban housing expansion and land needs in an urbanised sub-region. The essence of the technique when applied to planning issues of this type was to show possible incompatabilities between alternate physical development options or policies. Among the virtues and attractions of AIDA are "that it was easy to understand, it enabled large problems with many possible 'solutions' to be studied systematically and it could be used whatever quantity of data was available" (Batey & Breheny, 1978, 263).

The context for developing strategic plans in the metropolitan areas was therefore one of

> a major reorganisation of local government,
> an acknowledged set of complex and interrelated social, economic and environmental problems,
> professional interest in the idea of systematic methods of decision-making backed by the paradigm of procedural planning theory,
> a partially developed and tested set of techniques which offered potential for dealing with the complex issues to be found in the cities which were archetypes of systematic method.

Under the 1972 Act shire counties (which remained largely intact) became responsible for structure planning and normally for local plan-making. District councils were made responsible for development control (except for matters of strategic importance where applications for development were to be decided jointly). In the metropolitan areas the division of planning functions was complicated further by the metropolitan district councils taking on the local plan-making function as well as day-to-day development control matters.

Planning Theory.

This new movement within the practice of planning was accompanied by considerable activity by academics and researchers in the field of planning theory. As a professional field, town planning was not renowned for theoretical rigour. The 1960s saw efforts to rectify this traditional state. Much of the inspiration for the explicit development of planning theory came from the philosophy of science and established fields within the social sciences. Planning has always been eclectic in relying on bodies of knowledge and theory such as economics, sociology and geography for the insights that they gave for dealing with the activities and behaviour of people in their spatial worlds. In planning theory the use of already assembled knowledge of human behaviour ('theory in planning') became distinguished from generalised propositions ('theory of planning') about planning as a process (Faludi, 1973). The work of the systems theorists in planning has become known as procedural planning theory; a paradigm of action derived from

> ...a general systems model which ascribes to planning certain societal tasks (notably self regulation). These tasks are to be pursued through a problem-solving technology based on rational procedures and methods for decision-making. Characteristically these procedures and methods focus on the cla rification of policy goals, systematic analysis, logical generation of policy alternatives, systematic evaluation of these alternatives and monitoring performance. This type of conceptualisation rests on the assumption that there exists a distinctive type of planning thought and action... Its central value is to promote the "rationality" of societal action.. Its prescriptive emphasis is on organisational structure and decision-making methods which will promote rational decision-making. (Healey, McDougall & Thomas, 1982, 8)

The paradigm is seen by these authors as one of two dominant approaches or theoretical positions in urban and regional planning since the second world war. The first

was derived from the architectural and aesthetic approach labelled the urban design tradition. The second, procedural planning theory, had strong influence in the USA in the 1950s and became popular in the British context during the 1960s. The principal exponents of the approach at that time were McLoughlin and Chadwick (Chadwick, 1966). McLoughlin's work has been seen as the less directly eclectic and is now considered to be one of the seminal texts for the procedural planning approach and for planning thought and methodology.

The essence of procedural planning theory is less the exploitation of computer technology (although the ability to store and interrogate large quantities of data and to run iterative sequences for evaluation is an important consequence of the computer revolution) than the greater use of systematic procedures. Reviewing the first years of statutory structure planning it has been said that

> ...(a)lthough some of these methods are computer-based and make use of quantitative data, these features are less important than the fact that they are <u>systematic</u>. This means that, like the planning process, a method can be expressed as a series of logical steps. The development of such methods has been an important feature of the move towards rational strategic planning. (Batey & Breheny, 1978, 257)

Procedural planning theory provided the conceptual basis and the methodological lever to take planning out of the urban design tradition into an era of strategic planning. It came to symbolise a shift from the approach taken after 1945 and a new orientation capable of meeting the demands of development and growth in the 1960s. A contemporary and parallel debate about the needs of planning education also gave backing to the adoption of procedural planning theory. This was the 'generalist-specialist' debate whereby there were those who believed that professional education should be broad in nature and attempt to teach prospective and young practitioners a

problem-solving approach which was applicable in a variety of circumstances and contexts. The other side of the debate took the position that planners deal in the development and improvement of the physical environment and should, therefore, specialise in education based on the architectural, engineering and surveying roots of the profession. Procedural planning theory offered the generalists an approach within planning education which was not only applicable to urban design scales but also to other areas of policy and service provision at the local level. The derivation of procedural planning theory from systems thinking also added status to the teaching of planning by linking the base of the subject to older scientific traditions. The prospect of moving on from the 'aesthetic mystique' was a powerful motivation for some. Equally a 'theory of planning' offers the potential for original contributions to knowledge from academics, researchers and practitioners within the planning schools and offices.

Closely linked to the orthodoxy of procedural planning theory is the idea of rationality. However, there are varieties of rationality and different interpretations by philosophers of science about what is to count as rational action. Debate about this variety of meaning in relation to planning has spawned a range of essays and conferences since the 1960s (Healey, McDougall & Thomas, 1982; Breheny & Hooper, 1984).

In this author's view (Darke, 1982 & 1984) the concept of rationality that is commonly accepted by procedural planning theorists is limited, being equivalent to the notion of formal rationality defined by Max Weber in his studies of the historical development of modern industrial society (Weber, 1958). Weber distinguished between two forms of rationality. By formal rationality Weber meant seeking a rational outcome by an accurate calculation of the consequence of an activity in terms of

assumed common ends. When considering rationality with respect to economic action Weber saw these universal ends in economic terms, principally by reference to the criteria of profit, efficiency and competitive advantage. Substantive rationality on the other hand appears to have been defined by Weber as a mode of calculation or analysis where attention is paid to different values and ends (Parsons, 1947, 35). Put simply, the concept of formal rationality seeks logical action within a set of assumed values or ends whereas substantive rationality takes a broader and more questioning perspective towards values or ends by asserting that rational choice can be made between alternate values. For some planning theorists (Reade, 1987) the idea of choice between competing ends is untenable. The reason for this objection seems to be that there can be no absolute standard against which to measure the relative value of ends. A related objection is that planners are not politicians and should not impose their own perspectives or values upon others. One corollary of this is to imply that choice between competing values is to be left to some other process, namely, politics. There would seem to be some point in this argument even though it appears to assume that a neat differentiation can be drawn between ends and means; values and the measures that might be used to attain them. A much more serious implication that might be drawn from the objection that it is not possible to make a rational choice between values is that <u>no one</u> is capable of deciding between different values. It is one thing to say that choice between means where ends are given may be an easier task than choice between ends themselves but to imply that choice between ends is impossible is absurd and a counsel of despair. Ultimately, such a position about ends, values and politics cannot be sustained and runs the risk of giving autonomy to those who have the power to reify their preferred values.

The German school of philosophy and social criticism has extended the Weberian analysis of rationality. Members of the Frankfurt school of critical theory have extended the analysis by not assuming that the formal rationality of modern capitalist society is necessarily benign. Where Weber pointed out that the growing dominance and pervasiveness of formal rationality was leading towards increased bureaucracy and standardisation of social, organisational and governmental relationships he also saw net societal advantage from these trends. The comparison drawn by Weber is between the patronage, favouritism and nepotism of previous epochs. The Frankfurt School on the other hand compares the formal rationality of modern capitalist society not to a more unequal past but sees that control and domination of technical knowledge can be coercive and undemocratic. They among others saw that the destructive force of modern technology, power and weaponry can work against freedom and emancipation. Whilst the latter may be the outcome of the 'long revolution' leading from the Enlightenment, modernism has a darker side which can be turned against the weak and the non-conformist. In their less sombre moments the Frankfurt school saw a technically advanced future where everyone has access to information and knowledge and thus has the ability to make fully considered decisions for themselves. In this vision they saw some compatibility between technical advance and specialised knowledge on the one hand and emancipation and democracy on the other. In terms of planning theory and the connections we are seeking to illuminate here the dangerous antithesis that may occur between technical control and domination of knowledge and democracy. That antithesis may be mirrored in a planning process where planners seek a rational process free of values and imply that they alone can work through the technical complexities of the planning process.

Public Participation in Planning

> ...As I see it, when you come to the bottom, all this local government, it's just working together - us ordinary people, against the troubles that afflict all of us - poverty, ignorance, sickness, isolation - madness... (Holtby, 1983, 495)

Local planning authorities Britain have been required to involve the public in the preparation of development plans since 1968. The reasons for the introduction of the statutory requirement were varied, as are reactions to the legislation. Some planning authorities interpreted the legislation as an opportunity to open up the planning process and actively sought wider popular involvement in plan-making. Other authorities have done relatively little by way of public involvement and seem to have been principally concerned to satisfy the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Later, we consider a number of aspects of the public participation programme in South Yorkshire but initially a broader focus is presented. It is necessary to consider the introduction and practice of public involvement and participation in planning in a wider context. As Boaden et al (1980) have indicated

> ...(p)ublic participation in planning cannot be divorced from more general questions about democracy and the appropriate role of government. (ibid., 7)

We begin with that broader agenda.

Democracy and Participation

Miliband begins his study of capitalist democracy in Britain (by which he means the period since the Second Reform Act of 1867 and particularly since the further extensions of suffrage earlier this century) by observing that the political system

> ...has served, so far as is possible, to prevent rather than facilitate the exercise of popular power either in the determination of policy or in the conduct of affairs. (Miliband, 1982, 1)

The assertion acknowledges a long standing tradition in British political philosophy which has been suspicious, critical and opposed to the extension of widespread majority participation in government.

On the face of it the claim made by Miliband appears to overlook the recent efforts made by government, by pressure groups and by the public in general to extend the opportunities for more people to be integrated into decision-making and the implementation of public policy. More fundamentally, the proposition may also be challenged by reference to the very extensions to suffrage which Miliband uses to define the period of modern British politics. A simple challenge to the statement would be that far from denying popular power the British political system embodies the essence of democracy by allowing the majority of adults the chance to take part in the periodic election of our political leaders.

The crux of the argument and the polarised differences that can result revolve around different interpretations of democracy. Different definitions of democracy offer widely different places for popular power and participation so it will be useful to begin this discussion of public participation in planning by a more theoretical review.

Democracy

There are dangers in trying to 'freeze' a definition of democracy especially given that this is one of the most important concepts in social and political discourse. The idea of democracy has a long history and yet is a dynamic concept being adapted to the ages and circumstances in which it is employed. It is an 'essentially contestable' concept. Yet it is possible to seek out the common core of meaning that lies beneath the varied and complex interpretations. (Arblaster, 1987, 8)

At root, the notion of democracy is based on the exercise of popular power, power which rests with the people. On that there is little disagreement from writers about the concept. However, disagreement begins to show as soon as definition is taken further. Yet even given the great diversity of opinion and interpretation we can broadly distinguish two types of democracy:

> ...direct or participatory democracy (a system of decision-making about public affairs in which citizens are directly involved) and liberal or representative democracy (a system of political rule embracing elected 'officers' who undertake to 'represent' the interests and/or views of citizens. (Held, 1986, 7)

Participatory Democracy

Democracy is said to have been invented in Ancient Greece. The word itself has Greek roots meaning literally, rule by the people or the many. Greek democracy (specifically in the Athenian polis between 462 and 322 BC) was direct democracy. The assembly of the people was sovereign. Open debate, freedom of speech and equality before the law were central to this mode of democracy. All citizens were able to participate in decision-making and indeed many did through a system of rotating office-holding. Thus the effective operation of

the polis depended upon an active citizenry. "...The citizen could only flourish as a person by acting as a part or a member of the whole, the community" (Arblaster, 1987, 22). The success of democracy depended upon the citizens' accepting their civic responsibility and hence identifying themselves with the city state. Self sufficiency or the wholly private person was seen as irresponsible, literally an idiot, because he was unconcerned with public affairs (Green, 1973, 79).

In fact, perhaps a quarter of the total adult population comprised the citizen body. Those who were excluded were women, foreigners, slaves and those men who had disqualified themselves by crime or past misdemeanours. For these exclusions many writers have criticised the modern tendency to look back at Ancient Greece with approval. Not only has this example been seen as deficient because the majority of people were excluded from participation but it is pointed out that direct democracy could only work in a state of limited size (probably never more than 50 000 citizens) such as the polis. Yet, in return, it may be argued that nowhere has been more successful in bringing as high a proportion of the population into direct control of civic affairs. Rather than being of limited modern relevance the experience of Greek democracy can be a symbol of efforts to extend participation and enhance popular power.

After the disappearance of Greek civilisation democracy also disappeared for a long time as a form of government in Europe. As an idea which embraced the notion of equal political rights it was probably never entirely lost. Beneath the traditional hierarchies and monarchies of Europe the hopes and aspirations of the dominated majorities occasionally erupted in statements or actions directed towards a more equal social order. In Britain, the Levellers, Diggers and other radical groups and groupings expressed popular dissent against aristocratic

power and class domination. The history of ideas of popular sovereignty in medieval Europe is still being excavated but there are those historians who see the stirrings of democratic ideas even before the brave episodes of the period between the 14th and 17th century. Perkin sees democratic and participatory ideas in the elections of the Anglo-Saxon kings. He quotes with approval the statement made by Archbishop Aelfric when he declared that "(n)o man can make himself king, but the people have the choice to elect whom they like" (Perkin, 1973, 6).

In reality this early statement gives little indication of a broader direct democracy that was clear in the debates between the Levellers and Cromwell. Rather it offers a comment which was more in line with the conventional view of democracy that was to emerge in British political thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Representative Democracy

The idea of democracy that did develop in the Industrial Revolution in Britain was significantly different from the direct democracy found in Athens those centuries before. The idea of government by the people themselves, of popular sovereignty, was squeezed by the arguments of those who saw the complexities of life and decision-making growing greater and more extensive. There were those who never accepted the sovereignty of elected bodies such as parliaments. The basis of conventional political philosophy was however being laid down by writers such as Locke in the late 17th century. He believed that civil government must be based on contract and consent. Ultimate power still rested with the people but they were to give their consent to representatives to act on their behalf. Edmund Burke, the liberal/ conservative philosopher who is associated with the

mainstream of British democratic politics also accepted parliamentary sovereignty and government. Yet if Burke was a democrat he was a sceptical one because he believed that not all voters were equal. Burke raised the notion of the tyranny of the majority, rule according to the wishes of the 'mob' which has given support to later writers who feared popular power. For Burke

> ...a perfect democracy was "the most shameless thing in the World" (*Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790) for **democracy** was taken to be 'uncontrolled' popular power under which, among other things, minorities (including especially the minority which held substantial property) would be suppressed and oppressed. (Williams, 1976, 85)

This emerging orthodoxy also wished to see political rights and participation restricted to property owners. The Whig view was that landowners ought to rule within a system that defined democracy as the right to vote for representatives in the legislature. The propertyless were seen as stupid, unrespectable and incapable of political judgement because they were not economically independent and were unfamiliar with wise management of personal or civic affairs. The prospect that the poorer sections of society might be entrusted with making the laws which fell on all was abhorrent to these writers.

The principal voice of dissent from this growing orthodoxy was Rousseau. He wrote that

> ..The people of England think they are free. They are quite wrong. They are free only when they are electing members of parliament, as soon as they are elected, the people are slaves, they are nothing. (Rousseau, 1963)

The pursuit of the general good was also of concern to other 18th century political philosophers. Bentham and other Utilitarians considered that not only should enhancing the sum total of happiness be a goal of good government but also that its more equitable distribution throughout society should be a factor in wise decision-making. James Mill recognised that powerful minorities

such as the aristocracy would always promote their own interests above others. The general good could only be sustained if the whole community or population is party to government and its decisions. Mill presented the representative principle with great clarity. Frequent elections was the safeguard against the abuse of political power. Mill met the bourgeois objection to the extension of suffrage by believing that the lower classes would respect and follow the example shown by the 'wise and most virtuous' parts of society, the middle class.

The wider surge of radicalism that accompanied the French revolution (where the prospect of sweeping away despotism, oligarchies and the dominance of the propertied seemed strong) was relatively short-lived. J.S.Mill was less convinced than his father of the value of democracy even where this was based on the representative principle. He reasserted the fears that individual freedom would be endangered by the 'tyranny of the majority'. He favoured the control of government being safely in the hands of a small, educated elite drawn from the upper class. To be sure this social and political leadership would be periodically elected but once in parliament they were to be trusted with 'wise' decisions in the manner they saw fit.

Out of this tradition the idea of broader, popular power came to be seen as anti-democratic.

> ...In this liberal tradition, democracy meant open election of representatives and certain conditions (democratic rights, such as free speech) which maintained the openness of elections and political argument. (Williams, 1976, 85)

From the middle of the nineteenth century, elite leadership and the representative principle on the one hand and the extension of popular power on the other became radically opposed and inimicable in their extreme forms. Some writers even saw the extension of popular

power as undemocratic and the idea of democracy was treated with caution, even disdain.

Somewhere between the 1850s and the present those negative beliefs were overturned. Now very few would openly criticise the idea of democracy. The concept is used (flexibly) to identify 'good' and 'bad' nations and the ultimate criticism of any society is to condemn it as undemocratic. Nevertheless the old distinctions still have currency. Instead of condemning the 'mob' as in the past, recent elite theorists of democracy use the idea of 'mass rule'and the 'masses' as terms of disapproval. A familiar charge of unenlightened public opinion and lower class inability to understand affairs of state are contained in these modern versions of elite theory of democracy. A passive electorate is welcomed.

> ...The belief that a very high level of participation is always good for democracy is not valid. (Lipset, 1960, 32)

Alongside this reassertion of a traditional theme was a reformulation of the idea of the general good. Pluralism came to be seen as the normal and healthy position in politics whereby a changing coalition of people were formed around different issues. The role of government was to mediate between different interests and the general good flowed from the decisions and compromises made by elected representatives. The 1950s also saw the notion of the 'end of ideology'. Within pluralistic politics where all could form groups to share and lobby for their common interests but where there was general agreement on the boundaries of acceptable state policy, members of government needed expert support to reach decisions as rationally as possible. Policy science and decision theory gave that technical promise of an end to confrontation and dissent.

In reality, rather than being a period of growing acquiescence in the West the 1960s was a time of

burgeoning demands for greater participation in government by a whole range of groups. Public apprehension was raised by the prospect of larger bureaucratic influence and control. Participation and popular power were thought by some sections of society to be endangered by

> ...celebrations of actually existing democracies founded on lukewarm politics and a 'mainly passive electorate'. (Arblaster, 1987, 55-56)

Before expanding on the significance of the late sixties for participation in local services, including town planning, it will be helpful to stay at a broader level of analysis in considering state-society relations in modern Britain.

State and Society

The dominance of indirect/ representative theories of democracy in political philosophy serve to legitimate and support divisions between state and society in Western capitalist nations. In the direct democracy of Athens the distinction between state and society was literally meaningless because the citizen's identity was defined in terms of government and the state. However, where government and state authority and power is vested in representatives acting in the public interest then the division between the state and the mass of the people is formalised.

Nevertheless, this formal differentiation of state and society does not mean the relations are fixed. The dynamics of social, economic and political change over the past century have seen concomitant changes in state-society relationships. In the formative period for modern Britain around the turn of the century

> ...(m)any of the dominant patterns and relationships which defined the character of British society and the role of the state in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century were eroded and transformed...A

> key factor in the relations between state and civil society in this period is the shift in the character of representation. (Hall, 1984, 7)

The expansion of adult suffrage was part of this transformation with the enhanced political influence of the working class changing the political balance in elections to government. The state began to assume a more interventionist approach to industrial and social affairs during this period.

Accounts of the period and the influence that the extending franchise had upon government policy and politics often conflict. A common characterisation is to see the transformation in state-society relations as a victory for liberalism, democracy and reform. The long standing resistance by dominant interests to the extension of the franchise finally crumbled without major conflict and breakdown in social relations. The fact of a 'bloodless' transition is taken to indicate a reconciliation between capitalism and democracy with the rich and propertied relinquishing of some of their traditional power. From this reformist perspective the state-society relationship became pluralisitic in giving a broad spectrum of classes and groupings political influence and access to government. Another aspect of pluralism is that its proponents assume no absolute determining relationship between the economic base of society and politics, political power and the form of the state. Although the transition into the twentieth century and the extensions to the franchise did not change the ownership of capital and property within British society it is said to have created a different conjunction of political power and influence. The result was to open the state to wider influence and control.

Against this liberal-reformist perspective Marxists have argued that despite expansion of the electorate the overlap between economic and political power is still considerable. The needs of capitalism as the engine of

the economy will remain central to the concerns of government and representatives or associates of the capitalist class will remain dominant within the state. Those influences which support capitalist interests may be direct or indirect. In Miliband's instrumentalist analysis (Miliband, 1969) there are three ways in which the agencies and personnel of the state come to represent those interests. Common class backgrounds and ideologies between the senior officials of government and the captains of industry, direct pressure and influence by industry and business and the dependence of the state on continued capitalist accumulation are identified as the principal forms of interaction. More complex and subtle Marxist analyses of state-capital relations maintain that the state is formally independent and autonomous but serves to mediate the interests of different fractions of capital (finance capital, industrial capital etc.), or that the state acts to create the conditions (political or ideological) under which society can be moulded (through hegemony or socio-political leadership) towards capitalist ends and ideas.

The discussion by Hall of the formative period for modern British politics (between 1880-1920) indicates that the state was transformed at that time and that a crisis in the 'old order' precipitated the change. Elements of the crisis included

> a sharp decline in Britain's economic performance,
> loss of world leadership in manufacturing and trade,
> slow pace of change in transferring to new forms of production and technology,
> increased investment overseas rather than in the domestic economy.

Extension of the franchise and the effects of the economic crisis enhanced the self conciousness of the working class as a political force. It is claimed that the threat of class confrontation, industrial unrest and the creation of an independent political party representing the working class all played a part in the

reformist attitude on the part of government. Yet the working class was not wholly unified and divisions between the older craft workers and the less skilled employees in mass production industries split the full effects of popular political pressure.

The declining international competitiveness of the British economy and the onset of the First World War added further dimensions to the political equation. The outcome has been described as a 'historic compromise' between labour and traditional elites which gave popular forces

> ...wider representation in the state: but at the price of remaining subordinate, rather than a leading or hegemonic element. The power bloc was therefore modified and reshaped; it had to pay greater attention to the winning of popular consent. But it was not radically democratised. (Hall, 1984, 44)

Developing this historical summary of state-society relationships into the present we can identify the 40 years since the second World War as an equally turbulent period of change.

Initially, the fifteen years to 1960 were said to be "an age of consent, faith in authority" and the legitimacy of government (Held, 1984). The post war Labour government rose to popular expectations of reconstruction and change by an extensive legislative programme to create the 'welfare state'. The era was also marked by frequent references to the return of Britain to its former world status as an economic and political force. This optimism was fed by an expanding economy, full employment and increased educational and job opportunities. Living standards started to climb after wartime austerity and universal affluence seemed possible. The political sphere was marked by apparent consensus. Research on public attitudes conducted at this time showed high levels of loyalty towards the system of government,

deference to state authority and a lack of extremism in political thought (Almond & Verba, 1963). A high degree of compliance with state institutions and government was seen as the 'end of ideology'. The creation of growing affluence and material comfort was thought to be engendering quiesence in politics. A narrowing of the ideological spectrum was fuelled by the Cold War and popular fears about Stalinism. Marxist theories of the demise of capitalism and the creation of a new social order lost their attraction to a working class that was anticipating or getting new housing, an extended educational system, a National Health service and other state led services. Through this period even if there were detailed differences of approach and opinions towards the welfare state from the two major political parties there was consensus on the value of a state supported framework of social policies and services.

Recent re-evaluations of the period have cast greater doubt on the extent to which there was strong popular support for state actions and policies. Re-analysis of the contemporary empirical studies of political attitudes and beliefs have indicated that the extent of agreement over values was far from widespread (Pateman, 1980). Large proportions of the working class expressed distrust and alienation towards the state. A strong correlation was found between allegiance to liberal-democratic values and socio-economic status. Those who were seeing others getting greater benefits from the postwar expansion than themselves were deeply resentful. The apparent consent within the working class towards the system of government and the institutions of the state may have been due to an 'instrumental' attitude whereby the promise of affluence and higher living standards quelled deeper distrust towards state authority and motives.

In retrospect, there was some cause for caution about the nature of and long term prospects for the gains created

by the welfare state. Britain began to fall back in the world economy. External competition meant the loss of markets, falling profits and real wages all fed by low levels of investment and poor productivity. Cycles of boom and slump linked to fluctuating unemployment levels and inflation, industrial confrontations and a growing fiscal crisis within the state came to be the pattern of the 1960s and 1970s. 1968 was the watershed when widespread dissent across the advanced capitalist world and parts of the communist bloc shattered any remaining illusions of postwar consensus (Hall et al, 1978).

Initially, the state's response to the growing economic and political crisis was corporatism. The 1964 Labour government under Wilson made efforts to plan the economy in order to accomodate expected future growth and development. New mechanisms of economic negotiation and control included the National Economic Development Council and the National Enterprise Board. The National Plan was short lived as its predictions and projections were soon shown to be deficient. The Plan was also overturned because the implications of wider state control over the economy were resented and opposed by powerful interests. However, in order to achieve the degree of forward control required to implement a national plan, cooperation and collaboration of the main parties in the economy was essential. Corporatism, sometimes referred to as tripartism, was the name given to the attempts to bring the two sides of industry and the state together in order to negotiate agreements about economic change and development.

Corporatism has been defined as

> ...a political structure within advanced capitalism which integrates organised socio-economic producer groups through a system of representation and cooperative mutual interaction at the leadership level and mobilisation and social control at the mass level. (Panitch, 1979, 123)

Of interest to this review of state-society relations and democracy is the way that tripartite arrangements were themselves based on the representative principle with trade union and industrial leadership directly involved in negotiations with government and promising compliance from their memberships. In the event as the economic crisis deepened in the 1970s that compliance could not be delivered. It was always an open question whether the rank and file of the trades union movement were committed to corporatist decisions. The breakdown of relations between the Labour government and the unions in 1978-79 and the strikes that followed marked the fragility of 'agreement'. Today corporate mechanisms and the corporatist debate have largely been eclipsed in the face of the Thatcher governments antagonism and policies towards the trade unions (Thompson, 1984).

Open evidence of problems within the state and growing popular suspicion and distrust towards the state in many parts of the world in the late sixties were theorised in alternative ways.

Two of the principal explanations for the recent difficulties facing the liberal-democratic governments of advanced capitalism are, on the one hand, the theory of overloaded government and, on the other, the theory of a crisis of legitimacy. The theory of overloaded government takes a pluralist approach towards an explanation of the crisis in believing that the variety of sectional interests within society demanding state action has swamped the capacity to act. (The theory of overloaded government is associated with the work of King (1976), Brittan (1975 & 1977), Rose & Peters (1977), Huntington (1975) and Nordhaus (1975).) Meeting the range of plural demands in a spirit of appeasement, governments have become overwhelmed by the scale of these public pressures. The incremental and unrelated nature of these demands also creates problems because actions

are implemented in the absence of any long term planning of expenditure or resource distribution. State policies and agencies have proliferated with little noticeable effect on the problems or any lessening in the scale of public demands. The state ends up in a vicious circle where it tries to meet the unending stream of demands with fewer and fewer resources.

The other main theory, of legitimation crisis, of the 1960s and 1970s in western democracies is marxist in orientation. The theory is associated principally with Habermas (1976) and Offe (1984). The basis for the theory is to link the state to the economy insofar as the resources available for government intervention are constrained by the fluctuations of the accumulation process. The corollary is that the state's room for manouevre on policy will be constrained by the needs and interests of the private business community. The state has faced the recent instability of the economy by efforts to organise support and to maintain economic health by its own programmes of intervention (for example, by takeover or support of ailing sectors). The added burdens to state expenditure of such actions leads into deepening fiscal crisis which further undermines rational efforts to direct the economy and maintain, inter alia, jobs and incomes. Public support for state policies is weakened as people see that efforts to maintain commitments are ineffectual and a crisis of public confidence or legitimacy ensues.

Although starting from very different theoretical premises these theories share some common features. Clearly they share a concern with the same phenomena, which is the efforts made by liberal-democratic states to apply resources and political power to national problems, particularly to the maintenance of the economy. Exercise of that power relies ultimately on popular acceptance of the authority or legitimacy of the state. The deepening

economic crisis of the 1970s has undermined popular acceptance of state authority as it becomes progressively blocked and restricted in its efforts to get out of the crisis.

There are difficulties with the theories such as the observation that as broad explanations they both do not cope with the complexity of state-society relations in this period. Held (1984) believes that popular consent for state authority and power was never universal (with empirical studies which show continued distrust and alienation from government institutions) nor is there much evidence that state power has been eroded despite the crises in national economies and of legitimacy. On the contrary, there is a contrary trend in the emergence of the 'strong state' with an expanding repertoire of methods of surveillance and public control which give the lie to the idea of a weakening of state authority.

The twin issues of whether the democratic gains made within British society over the past century have benefitted the working class, or the 'masses', and whether the nature of state-society relations are changing and developing towards a more participatory form are questions which impinge directly on this study of public participation in strategic planning. The late 1960s was a key period for state-society relations in the West with a number of events in Europe and the USA precipitated by protests against government policies and decisions accompanied by calls for greater openness and popular involvement. It was also a significant moment for public participation in planning in Britain with the introduction of a legal requirement that local planning authorities involve people in the planning process.

Pressure for Participation

The context for the pressure for greater political participation in government decision-making in the late sixties included a growing appreciation that poverty and inequality had not been overcome in the postwar period. For example, Abel Smith and Townsend (1965, 57) showed that over 14% of survey households were living below an acceptable level (taken as 140% of the contemporary national assistance level. Additionally, differentiations of popular demands were beginning to develop such as race and gender groupings making independent demands on the state. A general process of concentration and centralisation of power was not confined to the state but found in industry and commerce. The takeover and merger of firms and production units was mirrored by trends of merger and expansion in trade unions. Allied to the concentrations of economic power was the increased interpenetration of economic interests with the state. The demands for participation and a more participatory form of democracy were seen as "directly connected with the context of growing 'corporatism'" (Arblaster, 1972, 50). The frequently explosive reactions against state power and policies in this period showed that the industrial nations were not as monolithic in their values and aspirations as had been suggested by the prevalent theories of politics. The position of students in these confrontations of state and people is not coincidental. Whether we consider the anti-Vietnam demonstrations in the USA, the Paris events or the efforts to open up debate and freedom in Prague a key role was played by the student movement. Rising living standards and the expansion of education were general tendencies which foster independence and therefore provide a countervailing and contradictory tendency for decisions to be made by elite groupings at greater distance from public scrutiny. Student demands which began in disputes with the authorities at the Sorbonne expanded to embrace demands for changes in de Gaulle's policies and for a different form of French society. Many commentators

believed that France was brought to the verge of a popular revolution in 1968. Stedman Jones (1969) in commenting on the rise of militant student movements across the globe believed they had begun to alter the nature of politics. Rising educational standards were not confined to the small proportion of the population that had entered higher education. The working class was also implicated in reaction against limited tasks and the "...increasingly blatant irrationality of the economic system" (ibid., p.32). "Students are formally trained to develop a creative and critical intelligence" yet were faced with "stifling careers" (ibid).

One of the most funmamental statements of the period came from students in the USA.

> ...We will replace power rooted in possession, privilege or circumstance by power and uniqueness rooted in love, reflectiveness, reason and creativity. As a social system we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation. (Port Huron statement, Students for Democratic Society, 1968)

Participation in a different form of politics became symbolic as "the remedy for the accumulated ills of poverty, apathy, slavishness, inauthenticity, incompetence, manipulation and, above all, powerlessness" (Kaufman, 1968, 202)

Yet as Arblaster has noted

> ...(o)n the one hand participation as a demand reflects the tensions and dissatisfactions which..(economic, social and political tendencies in industrial societies) have generated. On the other hand, participation is offered as a solution, or part of a solution, to these tensions and troubles. (Arblaster, 1972, 41)

One of series of well known cartoons produced during the events in Paris summed up the limitations of participation on the state's terms. (Fig.3.1).

je participe
tu participes
il participe
nous participons
vous participez
ils profitent

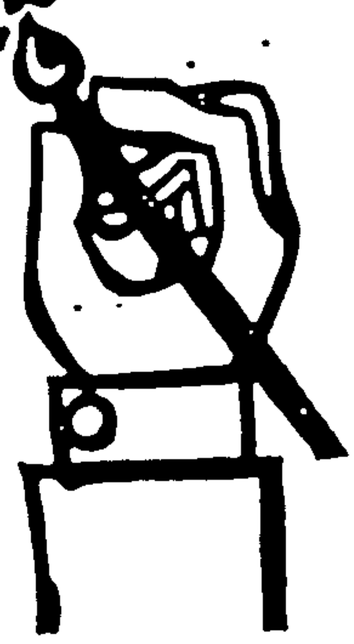

Figure 3.1 French Student Poster. In English, I participate; you participate; he participates; we participate; you participate ... They profit

The double edged nature of participation is the way that acceptance of opportunities to participate in governmental processes of decision-making in itself becomes a legitimation of the right of the state to make decisions and to set the policy agenda. Incorporation is another part of the price of acceptance of the state's invitation to take part in its political debates.

The pressure for participation did not only come from a discontented population it also came from within the state itself. Richardson (1983) says that in Britain widespread acceptance of the idea of participation touched every area of social policy.

> ...In 1968, the Seebohm Report on the reorganisation of the local authority personal social services urged the new Social Services Departments to consider how clients might be more involved in decision-making and service delivery. In 1974, the reorganised National Health Service introduced the Community Health Councils, set up to provide a means for consumer representation in health service administration. In 1977, the Taylor Committee, established to consider arrangements for school management, recommended greater parental involvement on governing boards. In the same year, the Housing Review carried out by the Department of the Environment urged the implementation of systems for tenant participation in council-housing management. (ibid., 3)

Was this a conspiracy among those in power who sought to incorporate dissent or was it a genuine change in the state's attitude to participation and democracy? Many (but not all) of these proposed and actual changes were in services which fell within the orbit of local government. However, it is in relation to the sphere of *consumption* that official calls for consumer participation were made. It has been said that it is in the area of the social wage, of services provided by the state for individuals and households that participation was most pressing in order to defuse discontent. Local government has been called

> ...the Achilles heel of the British political system...partly because of its specific mode of operation - it is relatively open to political pressures from non-capitalist interests...(but also) because of its specific range of functions - i.e. it is oriented to the provision of services on criteria of need, and thus represents a potential challenge to the market and the commodity form on which capitalism is based. (Saunders, 1980)

Local government during this period was the focus of other pressures. In particular, there was pressure mainly from the centre "...to transform local government from a traditional administrative backwater into a modern and efficient system based not only on the provision of the usual services, but on the percieved needs of the local area" (Cochrane, 1986, 62). The essence of that pressure was seen clearly in the debates within the Royal Commission set up to consider the structure of local government (Redcliffe Maud, 1969) which was charged to make recomendations not only about future size and character of the areas administered by local authorities but also to take account of "...the need to sustain a viable system of local democracy". (ibid., vol.1, iii)

The Redcliffe Maud Commission tried to face the conflicting claims of efficiency and democracy in local government. It considered a good deal of evidence and commissioned its own extensive research studies to explore issues such as the notion of scale economies. Much of the evidence was inconclusive but the views of the government and civil service won through in pressing for larger units of local government (Stanyer, 1973). The context for the Commission's deliberations was of expectations and pressures for change. Of the plethora of British political and administrative institutions none was felt to be so urgently in need of reform than local government "...with its aura of neo-gothic town halls, geriatric aldermen and parochial bureaucrats" (Sharpe, 1980). Lack of sensitivity to public needs may have been part of the critique of local government which precipitated central government efforts for reform.

However, the orthodoxies of local government included the 'electoral chain of command theory' (Dearlove, 1979, 29) in which it was assumed that "...policy demands flowed from electors to councillors (through the agency of regular elections) and then on from councillors to officers (through a key convention of representative government, which assigns officials the role of passive administration)" (ibid., 30). Concerns for efficiency often outweighed the pressure for enhancement of democracy. New approaches to management were pressed which added greater internal centralisation of decision-making in local government (Bains, 1972) and loosened the chain of accountability that was assumed in the electoral chain of command. Indeed, there were those who saw the introduction of corporate management, corporate planning and, even, community development as giving less democratic control over officers actions and discretion (Benington, 1976; Cockburn, 1977). In Lambeth, Cockburn saw the neighbourhood councils and community development workers as part of a link between corporate management and the local people.

The contradictory pressures of democracy and efficiency continuously face local and central government.

Public Participation in Town Planning

The requirement for public participation in town planning has been part of legislation for two decades. The statutory condition that local planning authorities involve the public in decisions affecting the environment and development is unusual for a number of reasons. The clauses about public participation in the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act and later planning acts are remarkable for being the only legal demand for such involvement in English public law until tenant consultation was written into the 1980 Housing Act. The range of local services which lend themselves to public participation and political involvement is wide (Boaden et al., 1982), yet in transport, education, local health and social services, for example, the public is not legally entitled to be consulted or invited to participate over decisions which affect them. Of course, many local authorities have involved the public and continue to involve people in many non statutory ways in the development, improvement and management of local services but it is only in the field of housing and the planning of the physical environment that communal involvement is enshrined in legislation.

The significance of this legal requirement is that it officially expands the idea of political participation beyond the electoral principle. It allows the potential for citizen involvement in matters of key local and personal importance to be raised in a direct and unmediated manner and at times when decisions are being made.

Linked to this change in the nature of political participation is a further change which is that the legislation expands the notion beyond individual response. Collective involvement of community groups and organisations is possible and has been encouraged under

the planning legislation (and the housing legislation appears to accept the idea of tenants on estates being a collective entity).

We should not assume that participation in local decision-making became a live issue only in the 1960s. It is salutary to find that

> ...(i)n the nineteen forties, as now, there was considerable discussion on what has come to be termed 'public participation'. Again, then as now, there was anxiety lest 'public discussion' and 'representations from responsible quarters' should so clog up the administrative machine as to make it unworkable. (Cullingworth, 1975, 251-252)

The references to 'responsible quarters' comes from the proposals made by the Harrison committee on reconstruction of war damaged areas whereby planning authorities were to submit outline plans to the Minister. The plan would be published and representations taken into account before the Minister directed on the detailed proposals. The form of public discussion and making of representations was unclear. The committee talked of the possible need for "a new technique". The problem of dealing with potentially large numbers of participants was acknowledged and "by some means or other" people might need to form themselves into "convenient groups" for the purpose of stating their views. The public inquiry format was not considered appropriate for broadening the base of public involvement although this was an option available at the discretion of the Minister. More open form of public hearing was another technique considered. The committee also pointed out the value of early consultation with possible 'responsible' bodies which might overcome later difficulties. Official reactions showed that administrators were worried about opening the floodgates of public opinion.

Calls for the incorporation of greater participation by the public in public policy-making and particularly in

town planning became more frequent and insistent in the 1960s. At that time members of the public were able to express views on planning applications and in public inquiries over important environmental issues. Yet to do so required resources, perseverance, confidence and skill from the ordinary citizen. Public inquiries are legalistic in their organisation and coverage and can be intimidating for the layperson.

There was a general questioning of official policies and the political status quo in the 1960s. The most dramatic and memorable manifestations were the anti-war demonstrations about North American policy in Vietnam, the 'events' of Paris in May 1968 which questioned the policies and style of de Gaulle's government and the rise and subsequent suppression of demands for greater freedom in Czechoslovakia.

Factors that have been identified as lying behind these happenings and demands include growing public awareness, knowledge and understanding of policy matters due to improved communications and education, a more pluralistic atmosphere due to rising prosperity and higher expectations as the postwar economies expanded.

Many of these demands were openly or implicitly critical of established governments and their operating principles. In extreme cases the response from the state was repressive but in other cases the force of popular feeling and official sympathy combined to achieve an opening up of the government machinery.

Richardson (1983, 100-116) sees three factors in the 'genesis of participation'. They are

(i) fashionability or 'jumping on the bandwagon',
(ii) growth of consumer demands,
(iii) the needs of service providers.

She rejects the first explanation and suggests that the other pressures came together to provide a coherent basis for the development of new forms of public involvement.

In terms of local government in the United Kingdom the 1960s was a decade of change. A large number of official inquiries and studies were proposing new ways of carrying out familiar tasks or offering radical proposals for the future. Key documents were produced in the fields of education (Plowden report on primary schools (1966), Newsom report on secondary education (1963), Robbins on higher education (1963)), the social services (Seebohm (1968) on a family service), and the structure and functions of local government (Redcliffe-Maud Commission and the earlier Maud Report on the workings of local government). Behind the latter were concerns about the organisation and management of local authorities and a powerful movement was developed towards introducing greater efficiency in town and county halls. These pressures for managerial change and technocratic developments in the state were creating official demands (in terms of larger local authorities and more centralisation of decision-making) which appeared to run counter to public demand for local control. Strengthening local democracy and greater public participation in policy-making were means of reconciling these competing trends. Opinion remains divided over whether the state's response of 'opening up' channels for participation was manipulative (Dearlove, 1979, Cockburn, 1977) or benign (Boaden, 1982).

The early discussions of public participation in planning drew extensively from North American experience. Citizen participation in urban renewal had become accepted in the USA during the 1950s and a growing literature containing accounts of these activities was being studied by planning professionals and teachers in the UK. We could draw an analogy between the broad interest in reconciling

the demands of democracy and efficiency within government and internal tensions within the planning profession. The planning profession was undergoing its own managerial and technocratic revolution with the emerging interest in systems theory; generic models of the planning process and the application of computer technology to some of the complex informational and data manipulation needs of practice. "Bringing people back in" was a potential antidote to the 'distancing' effects of these technical and technological innovations in planning practice.

Damer and Hague (1971) have considered a number of other factors which they consider were influential in fuelling the rising level of interest in public participation by planners. Environmental change, urban growth and development were generating a broader quest for popular influence. Public reaction and opinion was being roused by the property boom and growth of urban areas as well as appreciation that state action (such as high rise council housing) was not always sensitive to peoples needs and requirements. The planning profession was also coming in for criticism for its part in overseeing the delays and other inadequacies of the 1947 development plan system.

In addition, Damer and Hague (ibid.,) saw interest in greater public participation by planning professionals as not only being generated by external changes in the context within which planners worked. They believed that the participatory principle was central to the ideology of planning, arguing that the social ethic of planning rested on ideals of social justice, social order and community life and this they believed coincided with participatory principles requiring communication of policy ideas and consensus building.

McAuslan (1980) has placed democratic principle and popular participation within the framework of planning

law and ideology. Three underlying ideologies of planning law are identified as

> the law exists and should be used to protect private property and its institutions: the common law approach.
> the law exists and should be used to advance the public interest: the public administration/ planning approach.
> the law exists and should be used to advance the cause of public participation: the radical/ populist approach.

From the latter perspective it is denied that the public interest can be determined by public servants on the basis of their own knowledge or views and it is accepted that planning decisions should be taken only after full public debate and consultation.

We have attempted to trace through the way in which the idea of participation came to take a more central position among the competing ideologies of planning. An editorial in the Journal of the Town Planning Institute in 1964 took the view that

> ...the public must be given a greater opportunity to take part in the process of implementing their own environment if they are to applaud the means whereby the plans are to be achieved.

Plans "could be explained" to the public and "a choice between alternative schemes of equal merit given to members of the community". Early contributions set a theme of "responsible action" (Jackson, 1964, 231) by allowing "residents ..(to) see the wisdom of plans for urban expansion" or opportunities "of reaching agreement by all parties" (ibid., 233). In concluding Jackson says that "...the advocacy has been for public education, not public relations" (ibid., 236).

A flavour of paternalism still pervades these early statements. The report of the Planning Advisory Group shows even more strongly a pragmatic rather than an analytical conception of participation by the public.

The report speaks of the planning profession needing t undertake publicity for its contribution to be understo by the public.

> ...Public relations in this sense costs money but i must not be skimped and it is well worth the expens of doing it well. (MOHLG, 1965, para.7.42)

The planners aim for publicity and participation must b towards "...winning support for their proposals". (ibid para.7.43)

The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act offered the potential for public participation.

> ...the local planning authority shall take such steps as will in their opinion secure
> (a) that adequate publicity is given in their area to the report of Survey..and to the matters they propose to include in the plan;
> (b) that persons who may be expected to desire an opportunity of making representations to the authority with respect to those matters are made aware that they are entitled to an opportunity of doing so; and
> (c) that such persons are given an adequate opportunity of making such representations;
> and the authority shall consider any representations made to them within the prescribed period.
> (T & CP Act, 1968, 3(i))

It is worth commenting that there is an in built assumption in this enactment that the public has to take an active role in making their views known and that the idea of 'adequacy' is vague.

A more extensive approach to public participation was taken in the Skeffington Committee report. The committee had been set up by the Minister of Housing and Local Government with a brief to review

> ...the best methods, including publicity, of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their area (Hansard, 21/12 1967).

Although the giving of information and allowing opportunities for representations to be made by the

public was part of the concern of the committee they also added two other important dimensions to the emergent debate. Firstly, the Skeffington report saw the public playing a more active role in policy-making with potential for sharing in the formulation of decisions and identification of options. Secondly, the committee talked of ways to involve that substantial section of the public who were 'non-joiners', that is, those people who were not members of organised groups. The committee recommended that for the active citizenry public meetings or community forums could be effective in getting across information and generating public debate. However, the less active could be incorporated into the publicity about and discussion of policy by using community development officers to go out to the public and take a pro-active role in opening up the policy process.

The report seemed, therefore, to go beyond the narrow view of public participation previously adopted by planning professionals and public servants. Nevertheless, it was not received uncritically. The report was accused of completely lacking a theoretical context for consideration of public participation in planning. Planning was said to have been understood by the committee as "...an apolitical activity operating in a culturally and politically homogenous society" (Damer & Hague, 1971, 223). Whilst it is the case that the report often appears to assume that the outcome of public participation will be "greater understanding and cooperation" in relations between the public and local authorities this has also been the drift of much democratic theory and political philosophy. The broader aim of participation seen by thinkers such as Mill was to enhance citizenship and understanding of competing interests.

Other criticism of the Skeffington report was more benign believing the committee to be confused rather than overestimating societal consensus. The report

> ...includes a little of everything and as a result is full of contradictions and vagueness. There is an attempt to fuse together the classical notion of education through participation, improved efficiency of decision-making, preservation of representative democracy and involvement of the apathetic. (Thornley, 1977, 38)

Healey (1983, 52) takes the view that the committee did not consider any way of coming to decisions about land and development other than by professional officers leading the process. The public's role was to provide information within established political processes with which they concurred.

The Government's reaction to the Skeffington report took 3 years to appear. Circular 52/72 from the Department of the Environment did not take up the idea of community development officers which was given some prominence in Skeffington. 'Non joiners' are mentioned but no special measures are suggested for involving the majority of the population in planning participation apart from stating that "...much could be usefully achieved by ensuring that local councillors are kept fully informed" (ibid.) of planning matters. The circular was cool about much of the committee's work and qualifications are made about the majority of the recommendations. The most positive response was to reinforce the emphasis on publicity.

One of the contradictions in the Skeffington report was the failure to differentiate the types of plan within the new system enacted by the 1968 legislation. However, it was suspected that public participation would be easier to develop around more immediate planning issues at the local plan level than the broader and less obviously localised policies contained in structure plans.

Circular 52/72 marked an overt expression of the government's ambivalence about public participation in planning. The government admitted to having little experience to pass on to local planning authorities and were particularly unsure about the forms of public participation most appropriate to structure planning.

Through the 1970s there was growing official concern that participation was partly to blame for delay in completing plans. Since the mid 1970s official advice was to play down the importance of public participation despite its retention in planning legislation.

Politicians and other interests were also becoming concerned. The House of Commons Expenditure Committee (Environment Sub-Committee) met in 1976 to "...examine, in the light of recent legislation and reports, the system of land-use planning and development control in England and Wales in relation to planning applications, appeal procedures and determination, with a view to identifying reasons for delays and the resource costs that such delays create". The sub-committee took evidence from a range of professional and business organisations and from one community group. The evidence probably represents a representative cross-section of professional and elite opinion at the time.

An Under-Secretary of State at the DOE indicated that public participation "...does cause delay", going on to add that "...(i)f I were to make a guess...I would say that most authorities devote probably about 9 months to public participation" (ibid., para. 19). This was qualified by the observation that the most effective feedback had come from organisations rather than individuals.

Other participants who mentioned delay as a result of public participation included

Mr. George Dobry (para. 145)
Royal Town Planning Institute (memo.,section 8) 1
British Property Federation (memo.and para. 424)
House Builders Federation (memo. and para. 543) 2
Bovis Homes (memo. and paras. 639-640) 3
Association of Metropolitan Authorities (Para.690) 4
Association of County Councils (memo.)
Association of District Councils (memo.& para.24) 5
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

Some of the evidence was less critical. For example, the District Planning Officers Association said that

> ...(p)ublic participation ..take(s) time but we think at the end of the day that time will have been well spent because we have sought the views of the people who are living in the area. (Report of evidence: para. 1462)

However, the general discussion was highly critical of public participation seeing it as "obstruction" and "objection", and not useful to the planning process because of the intrusion of "politics".

Presenting the alternative view the North Southwark Community Development group felt that

> ...delay is not a problem...if schemes are delayed then this is not, in our experience, to the detriment of the community...there is then an

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1 "...We feel that there is little evidence as yet to suggest that informal participation exercises have proved very succesful in reducing the time taken to go through statutory procedures."
2 "...we are extremely sceptical of the value of the current vogue for excessive participation."
3 "...Too frequently public participation in planning policies becomes a political platform of the opportunity for an individual to emphasise out of all proportion the particular arguments for or against a particular policy."
4 "...One has to accept that a greater involvement of the public is going to lead to an element of delay... something which Parliament has required...and...not...always taken into account the consequences of it."
5 "...This is not to say that the public should not continue to be involved wherever there is a genuine interest, but consultation is carried out at present at substantial cost and there is little evidence that it has practical effect other than in political and public relations terms."

> opportunity for the public to be involved in a way they would otherwise not be.

This sole voice from the public itself was, perhaps inevitably, disregarded in the growing official disenchantment with the public participation element of planning legislation and process.

Delay was of concern to business interests, the property industry and builders. The evidence brought to the sub-committee on actual delays due to the public participation element of the development planning process was extremely limited. On the other hand, the DOE produced an average figure of 2 years 3 months for the period from local authority submission of a completed structure plan until approval (based on the few plans that had been recieved from the main bunch of commencement orders in 1973). In one case 12 months intervened between the completion of the examination in public and the presentation of required modifications by the DOE. Other evidence to the sub-committee indicated that public participation programmes added 9 months to the local authority timetable of plan preparation. At this time the DOE was anticipating submission of the majority of structure plans in 1977; an average of 4 years for plan preparation to which would be added a further 2 years before statutory approval was given. The proportion of time that public participation would normally be expected to contribute to this extended process being one eighth.

The position in the 1980s has been to return, in practice, close to that obtaining prior to the 1968 Act with acceptance of 'consultation' and some notion of a public right to be informed about matters which will affect them. Local authorities have been left with a more open brief where if they wish to undertake a comprehensive public participation programme they may do so but there is no governement pressure or requirement.

Indicative of the changing orientation towards public participation in planning during the 1970s are the public views of ministers. Ernest Armstrong MP, Under-Secretary of State at the DOE said at an RTPI conference on participation in planning in 1975 (Estates Gazette, 1975) that it was not merely an aid to better planning but also the practical application of the democratic rights and opportunities of citizens. This statement came a few months before his colleague, Mrs J Toohey, Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for development plans and regional strategies said that public participation at draft plan stage "changes nothing" (Planning, 1976).

By the late 1970s Michael Heseltine was making statements which talked of the rights of citizens to influence the direction of local planning policy (RTPI Summer School, 1979), and of the need to enthuse the public if plans were going to succeed (Joint Local Authority Association conference, Scarborough, September 1979). Yet three months later was reminding the TCPA that participation had to occur within a structured system and at "...the end of the day the responsibility of the locally elected authority is to reconcile whatever conflicts have emerged" (TCPA National Conference, London, December 1979). Meanwhile, Tom King was asking whether the government had taken a wrong turn in promoting participation in planning.

> ...By that I am not suggesting that public participation is a bad thing, or even that there is too much of it. I do not mean that. I wonder, however,...whether public particpation has not been shangaied by articulate pressure groups; whether it has not become a medium for sophisticated specialist lobbies to the exclusion of the ordinary citizen. (RTPI/RICS Joint Study Day, October 1979)

The DOE Circular on development plans published in 1981 (23/81) stated that the contribution that the individual citizen and interest groups could make to the planning

system was still a feature of development plans. No effort was to be made to change the legal requirements found in the 1971 Act; yet

> ...(o)nly one stage of publicity and public participation will normally be necessary for a plan or alteration....Authorities may undertake further work but this will not normally be necessary to meet the statutory requirements and authorities should be satisfied that the further work and delay that it entails is clearly justified. (ibid., p.4)

The advice represented a further change from the earlier circular (52/72) and the justification was put down to "experience". Examinations in public could be dispensed with by the Secretary of State if he felt that no further information was required and a decision could be reached on the basis of representations.

Theories of Participation in Planning

Thornley (1977) has placed the ideas implicit in public participation in planning into a broader framework of democratic theory and theories of society. The fundamental distinction between explanations which emphasise social order and social conflict is used to examine participation in town planning and government. In the first of Thornley's perspectives, stability and consensus are emphasised. There is an assumption of shared values across society. The demand for participation is seen as requiring official response by means of publicity and collection of more and better information so that policy makers can make more appropriate decisions.

The second perspective recognises that social conflicts and divisions exist, are inevitable and that currently powerful groups will not easily relinquish their relative advantage. Demands for enhanced participation are often the lever used by less powerful groups for increasing broader awareness of structural divisions among their

fellow citizens as a prelude to demands for fundamental change. Social class is seen as the basic structuring division within modern industrial society.

In a third perspective divisions and conflicts are recognised but are considered capable of containment and management through concessions and bargaining. Participation processes are part of the bargaining mechanism.

One interpretation of the official views and advice on public participation in planning drawing on Thornley's framework has suggested that they exhibit a consensus perspective and consider that values and needs are shared (Gutch, 1979, 7). Thus, when participation creates delay in the planning process or few people become involved in participation programmes official response may be to curtail them. The cost may be counted as a loss of information and goodwill with a possible loss of popular support for the policies that emerge from plan-making but reduction of participation opportunities is not seen as a fundamental infringement of rights.

Techniques of Public Participation

Richardson (1983) introduces various 'forms' of participation after differentiating direct and indirect means of influencing the policy process. Indirect participation is taken to be involvement by people in the policy process where there is no direct contact with the decision makers. Under indirect forms of participation she includes voting for representatives (where the principal difficulty for the representative is seen as whether to attempt to reflect voters concerns or act by using personal judgement about decisions), participation in pressure groups (where the leadership of the group may act on behalf of the membership to represent collective views), referenda and social surveys are other forms of participation if the results are linked to policy making.

In direct participation people are in direct contact with the decision makers at some stage and are able to make their views known face to face. Consumer participation in a range of services is one of the forms of direct participation. Richardson embraces a range of direct involvement including taking part in discusions about policy at the point of delivery of the service (clinics, schools, advice centres, etc.) through to influencing the overall basis of policy by involvement in policy making committees, lobbying decision-makers, public meetings with MPs and councillors and so on. Not all of these will necessarily lead to incorporation of public views. Some consultative mechanisms whereby the public is involved in discussion of policy are little more than 'talking shops' where no action is taken or where the decisions are taken at a higher level.

The difference between forms of participation was recognised in a well known classification of participation by Sherry Arnstein (1969). The 'ladder of participation' stretching from Manipulation through

Therapy, Informing, Consultation, Placation, Partnership, Delegated Power to Citizen Control offers various forms of relationship between governors and governed with the last being, in Arnstein's terms, the most acceptable given her definition of participation as "a categorical term for citizen power" (ibid., 216).

Others have pointed out that this typology is 'one sided' in being unreceptive to the way that governments may involve different groups in the population in different ways. Thus some groups may have relatively privileged access to decision-making by involvement in working parties or consultative groups set up by government. Others (and to make Arnstein's point), such as the "...have-not citizens presently excluded from the political and economic processes" (ibid.) are set at a different point in the typology. Another critique is that the approach takes little account of the broader implications of citizen control, such as the dysbenefits of uncoordinated actions or short term perspectives on policy. Rather like the vision of pure liberty which can be no more than a remote and unrealistic idea to counter the centralising tendencies of modern society, citizen control may be a "mental counterpoise".

Dennis developed a typology of participation which recognises some of the conflicting interests. Four criteria are used to construct a typology. These are

> the locus of power (in the sense of the right to participate at the point of authoritative consideration of an issue),
> the locus of influence (in the sense of the ability to ensure that at the point of authoritative consideration the outcome will be that which the wielder of influence intended),
> who benefits?,
> the orientation of the participants to the rules of the game.

The typology is capable of application to different forms of democracy (direct or indirect) but Dennis considers

				Locus of Authoritative Decision			
				Officials		Citizens	
				Who Benefits?		Who Benefits?	
				Officials	Citizens	Officials	Citizens
Locus of Influence	Officials	Orientation to Rules	Expedential	AaI	AbI	CaI	CbI
			Principled	AcI	AdI	CcI	CdI
	Citizens	Orientation to Rules	Expedential	BaI	BbI	DaI	DbI
			Principled	BcI	BdI	DcI	DdI

Fig 3.2 A Typology of Participation (Dennis, 1972, 264-270)

corruption neglect of duty	consultation tokenism	manipulation	special pleading
bureaucracy consultation with official bodies	paternalism		citizen control
		'industrial relations'	
	consumer sovereignty		direct democracy

Partial elaboration of typology.

only the representative tradition in his explication. The resulting matrix offers 16 possible forms of interelation and potential consequence, only some of which are labelled. (Fig 3.2)

With little practical experience within the profession to help local authorities to carry out their new statutory responsibilities the Department of the Environment supported a major research project to provide guidance. The Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning was coordinated by Dr. W. Hampton of Sheffield University. Four teams, in addition to the coordinating group, undertook studies relating to participatory planning in Cheshire, Merseyside, North East Lancashire and Teesside. South Yorkshire was added to the group of authorities studied within the Project, principally because of the broad programme that was introduced by the county. The purpose of the research was specifically to consider the effectiveness of various techniques of publicity and public participation when employed in different circumstances. A series of working papers were produced between 1974 and 1978. These were about particular techniques of public participation used in the case study areas ranging from publicity and use of the media to consultations with groups, use of working parties and studies of individual responses from members of the public (Linked Research Project, 1974-1978). In later work from the teams the context of public participation was incorporated and a series of more theoretical and generalised papers ensued. In their most recent work the team has prepared a text book on participation in a range of local services (Boaden et al, 1982).

The Linked Research Project work is valuable for its fundamental approach within the terms of reference given by DOE. An essential element of setting up a public participation programme is setting the objectives and

aims. Hampton (1977) has identified two major objectives which may be served by the introduction of public participation into the statutory planning process. Firstly, the planning process like any 'democratic' policy process willl benefit from information which helps increase the fund of knowledge and data that the policy makers have at their disposal. Equally the more information that the public has about the implications and consequences of policies the better able will they be to make an informed choice of their preferred policy outcome. Thus, the policy process will be improved by the dispersal and collection of relevant information. Secondly, public participation will have effects which will extend beyond the immediate purposes of the specific policy making task. The promotion of participatory opportunities may encourage groups and individual members of the public to take a more active part in the policy process. Hampton calls this "enhancing citizenship" which may be considered as an independent objective.

Out of these two principal objectives a "schema of participation" is evolved. Public participation techniques were classified in three groups. There are techniques which are concerned mainly with dispersing information (such as newspapers, TV broadcasts). There are, secondly, techniques which are principally effective for gathering information from the public for contributing to the policy process. Thirdly, Hampton et al classify some techniques as promoting interaction between the public and policy makers. We can see that the context within which the researchers were concerned to contribute to the planning process is that of an established representative democracy where closer ties between policy makers and the public may usefully be forged for instrumental and more fundamental democratic reasons.

The Linked Research Project team go on to propose that the three fold classification of techniques can be further differentiated insofar as the public are not taken to be a homogenous mass. That is, there are members of the public who are members of influential bodies such as major non-governmental organisations which coordinate particular activities and campaigns. Extending the idea of the public to include all who are not directly involved in local government we might also include business organisations in this category of 'influentials'. The term "major elites" is used to identify this grouping. "Minor elites" are more local organisations and interest groups who represent particular sectione of the local community. Finally, there are individual members of the public. The value of making this kind of differentiation is that these three categories of the public may be more appropriately involved in the planning process by means of different techniques of participation. Thus, major elites could be effectively brought into a dialogue with a local authority through a working party but this could be impossible as a way to involve the public "as a collectivity of individuals".

The differentiation of techniques of public participation in this way owes a small debt to the Skeffington report. The committee (to give an example) saw that public meetings might be effective as a way of getting information over to those who were likely to go to meetings (those with strong concerns or interests, pressure groups and the like) but that a different form of information giving would be necessary for those who were not activists and members of interest groups. For the 'non-joiners' the Skeffington Committee proposed community development workers who would call on people in their own homes and localities in order to provide information from the authority.

Out of this systematic analysis of the objectives, techniques and categories of the public who may be integrated into a programme of public participation, the Linked Project team indicated that various models of participation were open for local authorities to employ according to resources and skills available, to the kind of policies being sought, to the political aims and mood of councillors and so on. Thus, if the authority wished to work closely with commerce and industry in dealing with, say an industrial estate programme then information to and from the employers and trades unions in the locality and some form of working party arrangement might be appropriate. If the authority was seeking policies for dealing with run down residential areas then a more appropriate 'model' might be work with the general public in the area concerned. Of course, the team were specifically enjoined to consider participation in structure planning and the upshot of the broad scale and content of county plans was likely to require a multi faceted and diverse programme of public participation if all sections and all elements of the populace was to have some involvement.

Some of the most telling evidence from the Project was of planning authorities around the country that had undertaken, for example, a social survey of local attitudes to environmental problems with little forethought about how the data might be processed and used. The result was that the completed questionnaires were left untouched and resources used unnecessarily.

The schema could be used for checking the logic and consisitency of models or programmes of publc participation. For example, Hampton suggests that a programme of participation would be incoherent if seeking to develop interaction and dialogue with the public when only telling them of decisions already taken by the

RESPONSE TYPES AND METHODS			
TECHNICAL (i.e. Measurement)		INSTITUTIONAL (i.e. Political-Social response mechanisms)	
RESPONSE TYPE	RESPONSE METHOD	RESPONSE TYPE	RESPONSE METHOD
A. Behaviour	Behaviour mapping. Observation of behaviour settings. Behaviour check-lists used by observer. Activity self-reports used by observer. Use of documents. Information tests. Retrospective case-studies. Analysis of complaints & suggestions. Interviews. Questionnaires. Behaviour self report schedules. Sociometric analysis of reported behaviour.	1. Communication to the general public	The detailed application of a particular response method can often serve to achieve several response types. For example, public meetings can achieve types 1 and 3; Advisory committees of various types can serve the fulfilment of all four types. A general check-list of methods might include:- public meetings, exhibitions, brochures/ newsheets, invitation of comment from groups or individuals, monitoring of press, TV/radio, presentations to community or other organisations, response to inquiries, representations to advisory committees, seminars and workshops, charrettes, structured (regular) liaison with organisations.
B. Conation		2. Communication to groups, organisations and their representatives	
C. Perception/	Cognitive maps. Psycho-physical measures of distance Adjective check lists. Semantic differential. Repertory grids.	3. Communication from the general public	
D. Attitudes	Scales (structured). Unstructured (questionnaire, interview, sentence completion).	4. Communication from groups, organisations and their representatives	
E. Judgements (preferences/ evaluations)	Questionnaires. Games. Interview. Futures modelling. MAUT. Other paired comparison/ranking exercises e.g. PET, SCG. Planning Kits. Revealed Preference		

Fig 3.3 Participation Response Types & Methods
(after Sinclair & Johnson)

planning authority and showing interest only in the opinions and attitudes of major elites.

The work of the Project has been used in practice and some of the work within the public participation programme in South Yorkshire benefitted from the advice as well as formal evaluation by Dr. Hampton's team.

One issue not directly tackled by the Linked Project (lying outside their remit) was the integration of information and data derived from public comment into the planning process. The issue was recognised by the Linked Project team in a working paper on public participation in strategic planning on Teesside when the authors said that

> ...the process of assessing the response needs to be considered at the same time as the programme for public participation is prepared...The analysis of the response is not an ad-hoc nuisance tacked on at the end of a...programme. (Hampton & Walker, 1975, 19)

The case study areas covered by the Linked Project provide enough evidence of public comment that was never fully recorded, or detailed public responses that were disregarded, simplified or overlooked.

Research at Aston University attempted to identify stages in an 'ideal' planning process with the 'needs' for information, public reaction and response. The analysis adopts something of the Linked Project approach by differentiating techniques for disseminating information and for gathering public response (Fig. 3.3). They appear to conclude that during the stages of the planning process requiring evaluation of policy options and decision-taking, public participation is not considered necessary (Sinclair & Johnson, n.d.).

Spires (1979) provides a further typology of the range of techniques available to planners which are ordered in

terms of whether they contribute principally to giving information to the public or, alternatively, provide information to the planning authority.

There does seem to be some agreement on the purposes of public participation in planning and on how to classify the variety of techniques. The majority of the planning based literature takes an instrumental approach whilst there is a more fundamental orientation in the discussions of planning participation which originate from sociologocal and political analyses of planning decision making. The 'objective' that is most likely to be left out of the reckoning in planners' discussions is the broader concern for the contribution that participation might make to democracy and 'citizenship'.

SECTION 4

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

Strategic Planning and Public Participation in the Metropolitan Counties.

> "...I should like you, if you will, to come over here for a moment and look at these. I've been having some plans made out...I want you to help me decide if there might not be something more than amusement in it. Now here's the Waste...And if the Ministry of Health would let us drain it as part of a big town planning scheme...It's a dream, of course, and Westminster may turn us down, but..." (Holtby, 1983, 77)

London remains a special and unique case in English local government and in terms of its specific problems and planning issues. For this reason it is considered valid to initiate a separate discussion of the development of approaches to structure planning and public participation during the 1970s in the 6 other metropolitan areas.

The six metropolitan counties created under the 1972 Local Government Act were simultaneously faced with the tasks of setting up their planning committees and departments and beginning the process of preparing a structure plan. In some cases prior strategic planning work was already going on and arrangements for joint working between pre-reorganisation local authorities were in place. In this area the new county planning departments were not all beginning their work from scratch. They were also able to benefit from the emerging results of initial evaluations of the earlier work on strategic planning.

One of the most significant of these evaluations of prior strategic planning experiencse was the work of a team of researchers at the Centre for Environmental Studies which had been commissioned by the Department of the Environment. The interim findings from this study along with contributions from practitioners who had been involved in the early strategic planning exercises were presented at a conference in 1971 (CES/RTPI, 1973). The

outcome from this evaluation was to indicate some difficulties with putting the idealistic models of systematic, procedural planning into practice. A principal difficulty was found in seeking to move from a generalised definition of goals (as the first step in the model planning process identified by procedural planning theory and the systems approach) to operational objectives which could be used for policy development and evaluation (ibid., 33). The rather abstract concern with overall goals found in the models of process was being replaced, as a result of application in practice, by a more grounded effort to define local problems and an understanding of the main strategic issues affecting land and land use in a locality as the initial step in the planning process. The idealistic sequence had evolved in practice to become "...a recurring (cyclic) examination of problems, definition of objectives, derivation of alternative policies and proposals, evaluation and selection" (ibid., 12).

The main findings from the DOE commissioned research into methods for strategic planning showed that two main approaches to the planning process were in use in the early period of structure planning (Drake, 1976). Out of the 8 case studies only 2 local authorities had chosen a clear goals-led methodology whilst the majority of strategic planning teams in the sample had set out to identify aims/ operational objectives as the first step in policy development. The planning process thus began either with a statement of objectives or with the initial listing and ordering of local problems relating to the environment. In contrasting the two main approaches Drake showed that one of the drawbacks of the goal-led process was uncertainty about how goals might be identified at the outset. The case studies showed that goals were normally 'picked out of the air' and often were so generalised as to be uncontroversial, if not banal. An example was the statement from one of the case

study authorities that policies should be '...for the good of the people of the area' (ibid., 152). Given this kind of breadth in the goals used then almost any set of subordinate aims or objectives could be legitimately linked together. Where planning goals and objectives were derived at the outset they were shown to be inadequately linked and articulated.

> ...Four particular criticisms can be levelled at the specification of objectives in current practice:
> (i) they are defined at too high a level of generality,
> (ii) they often do not seemingly play a very significant part in the subsequent plan-making process,
> (iii) clear and explicit priorities are not defined,
> (iv) quantified performance criteria, measuring the extent to which particular proposals meet stated plan objectives are rarely achieved.(Barras & Broadbent, 1982, 145).

Drake made similar comments when noting that too high a level of generality in goal setting or incompatability between goals results in meaningless evaluation and a tendency for policies to be 'self-justifying' (op.cit., 153).

These observations signalled a growing tendency among practitioners to favour problem definition as the first stage in the strategic planning process, a sequence that seemed particularly appropriate to the context of the metropolitan areas where immediate problems were pressing and the definition of overall goals for diverse localities was difficult to achieve. Among other dangers of the goal led approach was the observation by a practicing planner that in attempting to use it

> ...(w)e were heavily dependent on having the right data at the right time - for example, we were depending on getting the '71 census results early in 1972 - and there was also a danger of research studies developing in depth with a risk of not being directly relevant to policy definition, which on previous experience could well have been hurriedly done at the end of the process.(Noble, 1973, 19).

Equally problematic were the attempts at dynamic modelling of local activities on land derived from the earlier land use/ transportation studies which made immense demands on technical capacity, professional time and other resources. "...Often the real issues which faced an area were given minimal attention because of the overwhelming demands of data preparation and processing" (ibid.,).

Interestingly, this view from the practitioners in a metropolitan context was echoed from planners in the shire counties.

> ...Given the triple requirements that structure plan policies should be based explicitly on reason and not on inspiration, should have integral policies for transportation and should be capable of being monitored and replicated, it is entirely proper that models of systems and of decision-making were welcomed.
> The corollary is that the subsequent disillusion with oversized and generally non-dynamic models caught structure planning in its wake. The association of structure planning with complex techniques cannot be ignored when considering criticism of structure planning and drawing conclusions about its future...
> A related problem for advanced and highly specialised methods on structure planning...has proved to be of major consequence, namely public involvement. The need to relate the choice of policies to debates with lay people is not easily reconciled with the 'black box' approach of many computer models. (Ashby, 1983, 129)

A review and reassessment of the planning process undertaken by the strategic planning team on Merseyside was influential in spreading the legitimacy of a more pragmatic and less abstracted approach. With the exception of the West Midlands County Council (which was itself 'unique' because of the initial inheritance of a large number of completed or near completed urban structure plans) all the other metropolitan counties adopted a problem led process. The essential elements of the approach were "...problem selection and perception,

verification, alternatives, evaluation and plan" (Turner, 1977, 175).

Not that the problem-led planning process was without its own limitations. It was proving attractive to the new county planners because it appeared to overcome some of the difficulties identified with the more abstract approach. Among the claimed advantages for the problem-led process were greater ease in showing the relationship between problems/issues and the operational objectives which follow, a more flexible planning process which can be adapted to changing circumstances if need be, and greater potential for incorporating public participation within the planning process. In reality these claims were not always met. For example, the DOE sponsored study found that in many of the case study authorities the planners had experienced difficulty in trying to involve the public and even elected members in the planning process.

Another finding relevant to the debate about planning methods and techniques is that the reaction of practitioners to the AIDA approach to complex problem solving was mixed. The technique was "...useful as an attitude of mind" but it could "...get taken to extremes and become a hang-up" (Drake, 1976, 157).

However, some of these critiques benefit from hindsight and reflection. In the pressure to get on with the task of structure plan preparation in the metropolitan areas in the early 1970s the county planning teams were strongly drawn towards contemporary thinking and experience about planning and process. Planning teams were hungry for advice and direction in the face of a new system of plan-making. A potent influence was offered by the Merseyside planners who brought a reflective stance to their experience and whose close links with the CES researchers gave them opportunities for broadcasting

their views and giving them broader academic validity. The Merseyside team not only championed the problem-led process but did so within a mode of 'learning from experience'. For example, they were sceptical of finding a popular consensus as a result of widespread consultation about either the main problems existing in their locality or about the priority to be given to tackling key problems in the county. It was this scepticism about the value of widespread public consultation and caution about the practical and political value of a systematic build-up towards policies and strategies that differentiated the planning process adopted in Merseyside from the other metropolitan counties (excepting West Midlands because of its unusual position of inheriting a large number of urban structure plans in various stages of progress). The planning teams in Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear and West Yorkshire all accepted the need for the identification of environmental problems as a first step in the planning process whilst continuing to show faith in the systematic process models favoured by the theorists (Turner, 1977, 1).

Merseyside were also the exception in closely tying their planning procedures to the political process and in drawing the elected members more directly into the early stages of plan preparation.

With the exception of West Yorkshire (which drew on the established data base and previous technical work provided by the former West Riding County planners) all of the other metropolitan county planning teams had to begin from scratch the task of assembling relevant information for the new county areas. Additionally, the new counties had to assemble new planning teams and (again with the exception of West Yorkshire) this meant building a team of planners from diverse backgrounds and previous appointments. In these circumstances

undertaking an initial survey and data collection exercise was helpful, if not essential, in team building and familiarisation. Allowing a relatively straightforward survey task to get underway bought time for team leaders and senior staff to jointly develop and refine their approach to the planning process as a whole. Data collection and survey work also could familiarise new staff with the characteristics of the area. Early contact with the public also allowed an opportunity to publicise the existence of the new county councils and the tasks and functions they were charged to perform. When this demand for basic data was linked with the problem-led process, data gathering could also be tied to public consultation on percieved problems and priorities.

South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester adopted a systems based methodology for the later stages of the planning process which drew inspiration from AIDA. The combination of a problem-led planning process and the AIDA technique has an attraction by leaving planners

> ...free to formulate the problem without constraint as to the 'consistency' and 'coherence' of the set of issues in their design graph. It does not matter whether the decision areas representing the choices are defined broadly or narrowly, generally or specifically. (Hickling, 1978, 459)

The 'robustness' of the AIDA technique was seen as a positive advantage in situations where the environmental problems identified for priority action were likely to be disparate and diverse in range and spatial scale. Public consultation was also expected to identify problems which covered the socio-economic spectrum as well as the usual land-use matters. AIDA was thought capable of handling such complexity.

The stance towards the planning process in Merseyside and the West Midlands was very different from that taken in the four other metropolitan counties. We have already indicated that in Merseyside a problem-led process was

favoured. However, the planners did not believe that public consultation would produce a consensus on problems or priorities. In the West Midlands the first task of the new county planning department was to bring some coherence and integration to the various existing urban structure plans. A secondary task was to begin a process of review and revision particularly with respect to data and policies in the inherited plans. The need for review was a consequence of public expenditure cuts and the economic recession which was beginning to have an impact on the county.

Public participation in relation to structure planning was less extensive in the five other metropolitan counties when compared with South Yorkshire. Tyne and Wear and Greater Manchester County Councils set out with the intention of going beyond the statutory requirements on public participation. West Midlands (in their county-wide plan), West Yorkshire and Merseyside stressed consultation with established bodies and agencies above a more broadly based programm of public participation.

Having introduced a summary of the strategic planning process and public participation in the 6 metropolitan county councils a more detailed survey follows. The author undertook a review of the documentation produced by the planning departments and also carried out a number of extended interviews with senior professionals during the summer of 1977.

Merseyside

A joint working arrangement between the constituent pre-organisation authorities had been created on Merseyside in 1970. The steering committee made up of the joint authorities had resolved to undertake extensive consultation on the aims of the plan. A team of planners (the Joint Team) was seconded to begin work on background

studies intended to lead into strategic planning for the sub region. The leader of the Joint Team was later appointed as Executive Director of the Merseyside County Planning Department under Audrey Lees as County Planning Officer. When Ms Lees left Merseyside to take up the post of Chief Planner at the GLC the second in command was awarded the principal role. Thus, there was a degree of continuity in the leadership of the Merseyside planning team which dated back to the early 1970s.

The pre-reorganisation team worked on a number of fronts. Principally, the Joint Team were concerned to collect information and data for a Report of Survey. However,the Team also embarked on consultation and participation work. For example, they sponsored a sample survey of households to gain a cross sectional perspective on public opinion about environmental matters, and conducted interviews with local councillors for their views on strategic planning questions.

In that initial period (1972-1974) four elements of public participation and consultation were identified. Firstly, the collective views of organisations that operated at the sub-regional level were considered important. These bodies included local authorities, public utilities and statutory undertakers, trade associations and major pressure groups. A Review of Merseyside (1973) was prepared with basic information about the area and the issues facing Merseyside. This was the basis for generating comments about strategic planning aims from the main local organisations and interest groups. 1 500 copies were made available. One hundred organisations were sent the Review . Half of the consultees responded with comments.

A second element of initial consultation was a home interview survey. A random sample of 2 000 households classified by income and occupation was identified. The

survey was then conducted on the basis of 50% interviews with the head of household and 50% with housewives. The questionnaire probed on 37 potential key issues for future planning in the area.

Elected members were identified as a third target group. A postal questionnaire was sent to every elected councillor in the Merseyside area in order to identify problems ward by ward. Initially 469 councillors were sent the schedule. 215 came back (45% response). At reorganisation of local government further schedules were sent to the councillors elected onto the new authorities. Ultimately the survey covered 800 members. Response rate was only 50% but at least one response was received from 95% of the wards on Merseyside.

Fourthly, consultative groups were created. These were made up of local authority officers, specialists from other public bodies and from key organisations in the private sector. Twelve such groups were formed to act as a broadly based source of expertise and advice on key planning issues. The topics around which the groups were built were; finance, education, social services, health, transport, housing, industry/ commerce, shopping, recreation/ leisure, environmental services, urban conservation and rural conservation. An example of consultative group composition can be seen from the Housing topic area where participants included several Directors of Housing from the constituent authorities, public health officials, representatives of housing associations, building society staff, estate agents and representatives of the House Builders Federation. The group discussed public and private sector housing matters and the overall housing position in the county.

These consultations can be seen as part of a planning process which sought to identify local problems prior to developing planning policies and ultimately building up a

county wide strategy derived from a wide range of data and opinion. The report provided by the Merseyside team for the joint CES/RTPI conference on "Progress in Structure Planning" in 1973 recorded their explicit use of the planning process to

> ...co-ordinate interests, activities and policies - both within and outside the planning authority's control. The validity of this approach was, perhaps, uniquely a function of the team, steering committee and consultative groups. (Zetter, 1973, 372)

The response to the Review of Merseyside produced by the Joint Team (which was not fully reported until 1975) was dominated by local government perspectives. Of the 100 respondents, two thirds were local authorities and the remaining 30 or so responses came from central government, statutory undertakers, trade unions, trade associations, environmental groups and social service bodies. In the view of the new county planning team about half of these 'inherited' responses were not useful because respondents had little of value to contribute at that stage. By these comments the new team were indicating that asking people for abstract views about the future was unproductive.

The social survey was carried out by Social and Community Planning Research. 1 429 interviews were completed. From the analysis of findings ten problems were identified as significant (based upon frequency of mention). These were related to housing conditions, jobs, local problems (vandalism, dirt and smells), environmental appearance and lack of facilities (for play, sports, cheap public transport). Inner city residents, those on large council estates and unskilled worker households were particularly badly hit by these problems. Again the report of findings took some time to appear.

The incoming team employed by the new Merseyside council therefore inherited a number of peices of work in progress including elements of public participation.

Having finalised a number of draft reports containing information about the county which went towards the Report of Survey the new team worked relatively quickly to produce a 'Stage 1 Report' in September 1975. This was centred around a strategy of urban regeneration on Merseyside. It openly marked an approach to strategic planning and policy making at variance with that found in the other metropolitan areas and to a large extent from the approach begun by the joint team.

It has been said that Merseyside "...adopted a maverick approach, leaping in one step to diagnosis and treatment...followed by Reports of Survey...and lately a more detailed prescription" (Turner, 1977, 2).

The "Strategy for Merseyside" was said to have been the result of "long and lengthy consultations" involving a chief officers group within the county council and corresponding groups in the New Towns, Department of the Environment and the senior management teams from neighbouring district and county authorities. The county planning officer was keen to develop a "...vibrant political debate" on the strategy but apparently this was blocked by the first Leader of the county who was not in favour of extensive discussion of the issues raised in the report. However, this focus on working within the 'traditional' political process is indicative. The planners were intent on developing a dialogue with elected members and central government as a central priority in consultation and participation.

The incoming team of planners appears to have preferred consultations with major parties in the county rather than with the public as a whole. Indeed, the report of

the CES/RTPI conference in 1973 notes the careful reference to 'consultation' rather than participation throughout the presentation by the Merseyside planners. At this conference the central idea behind the Merseyside approach to process was that the county planners could act as catalyst for the integration of a range of policies, only some of which would originate from the new county council.

In 1976 the county council produced a further report 'Targets for Merseyside for the 1980s' which explained the urban regeneration strategy in more detail and set out the council's views on what it believed should be its commitments in various areas of policy.

The rationale for this way of proceeding was to get reaction to specific policies from key groups and individuals as quickly as possible. The 'Stage One' report was targetted at powerful institutions including the regional office of the DOE and to Whitehall. The intention was "...cash-in on the impetus of the Inner Area studies and on growing central government commitment to the inner city" (Struthers, 1977, personal interview). Lobbying of central government was considered a legitimate tactic in securing enhanced public expenditure on Merseyside. The county sent their reports direct to London and pressed for responses from civil servants and politicians. They also sought official visits from Ministers and officials to show the conditions on Merseyside at first hand. The planning team were more outgoing and aggressive in their approach to central government than planners in the other metropolitan county councils. This direct approach to central government complemented the Merseyside view that political commitment is essential at the local level. The essence of successful policy-making was seen as securing resources and ensuring that policies were implemented. Outcomes were considered the ultimate measure of a

successful planning process not following a technically correct methodology or using sophisticated techniques of plan generation and evaluation. Having gained political commitment it was considered likely that the means would be supported to follow through from policy to implementation. The initial strategies report was described as a 'first stab' and the result "..of an intuitive feeling at the time". This report was then followed up with "...a standard exercise in the evaluation of alternatives - to prove that we were right about our choice of strategy" (Struthers, 1977, personal interview). Methodology was used as a form of post-hoc justification to confirm policy rather than as a means to progressively evolve a set of planning strategies.

However, it was not entirely the case that the new broom of the incoming county administration swept away the legacy from the former joint working towards the structure plan for Merseyside. In effect, two different approaches towards plan preparation were being worked through alongside each other in the period after reorganisation of local government. The joint team had systematically begun the process of data gathering and problem identification in the mode of the prevailing orthodoxy. The incoming county planning team seem to have cut through that process to move rapidly to a statement of strategy which then became the basis of consultation and lobbying. Yet the products of the initial joint team approach continued to feed into the planning process and the committee cycle and proved useful as input to the reports of survey. Nevertheless, the rationale of a systematic build up of information and individual policies towards a strategy was overturned by the incoming team.

Public participation took a secondary position in the context of a 'politically led' planning process. No special responsibility was assigned within the team of

planners for public participation work and the principal contact with the public was through senior staff meeting with representatives of the major voluntary organisations in the county. Our interviewee indicated that the new county planning team had "drawn back" from the kind of public participation programme anticipated by the joint authority team and followed by other metropolitan counties such as South Yorkshire. One reason for this was that the Leader on Merseyside County Council between 1973 and 1977, W.H.Sefton, was "...against public participation, mainly because it was on the basis of community politics that the Liberal party had been brought to a position of strength on Merseyside". The Leader had convinced (or had silenced any opposition within) the controlling Labour Group that public participation had little to do with the political process. Indeed, he argued that public participation was outside formal politics and that councillors were autonomous in policy-making. Nor was the Leader persuaded that the local authority had a statutory duty to set up a programme of public participation. Sefton had made personal contact with the Secretary of State for the Environment about the Stage One report (the "Strategy for Merseyside") and had been told that what the County was doing with respect to structure plan preparation and public participation was satisfactory.

The low key approach to public participation was not confined to the first Leader and his colleagues on Labour Group. Ms Lees as county planning officer had strong views on the role and place of participation in the planning process. In a paper given to the Town Planning Summer School in 1973 just before she took up the post on Merseyside Ms Lees spelt out her ideas about participation. She introduced the paper by noting that local government and planning had failed to define the "...aims of society and the selection of priorities" and that pressure for greater participation by the public in

decisions was a result of this failure. While noting the potential value of participation given the relatively open-ended commitment of the legislation she adds that her experience as Director of Environmental Health and Protection Administration with the City of Liverpool (a post that allowed a great deal of corporate responsibiltity and where she was able to introduce a great many important innovations in inter-departmental working and council practices) "...brought home to me some real difficulties". Among these difficulties was generating participation rather than protest. The former required, in her view,

> ...a grasp of all the essentials so that comment can be relevant and effective. For this reason, I think that planning participation is more successful when it is undertaken by responsible and widely representative groups. (Lees, 1973, 23)

The community councils and similar bodies that had grown up in Liverpool were not just pressure groups for change but also acted as "...responsible bodies prepared to work constructively and often in co-operation with the local authority in an endeavour to inform, help, influence and sonmetimes fight for the interests of the local community". Such groups may act as a forum for local debate and a bridge between the community and local government. However, she warned that the only truly representative local bodies were the councils of democratically elected members who could individually act as 'antennae' in recieving and giving out information. During our interview with a senior county planning team member, the county planning officer was quoted to us as having said that more people could be reached with a 10 minute slot on local TV than was possible by any other means.

The implications that can be drawn from these sources are that the most senior planning officer in Merseyside believed that organised groups were the most appropriate point of contact for public participation (because they

were prepared to do 'the work' of understanding the issues and complexities of policy-making, that the 'traditional' mechanisms of collecting information and opinion (such as social surveys) were long winded but, alternatively, that politicians were the most appropriate and legitimate channel for 'sensing' public opinion and were, in any case, the final arbiters on matters of policy.

Informing the public of political decisions was a central purpose of public contact. Where dialogue was sought by the Merseyside planners it was with key representatives of major organisations and other public bodies. Our respondent talked of being in an "outgoing department" but contacts were with 'major elites' and only occasionally with 'minor organisations'. When questioned about the limited amount of contact between the general public and the planning process the reply was that

> ...people did come up to the county planning officer and say 'I saw you on TV'. That is feedback. People do respond.

In addition, our interviewee added that the planning department used the press to publicise issues, gave press briefings and senior staff did go out to give invited talks around the county.

> ...We have a colour slide presentation and a small exhibition for that purpose.

The reluctance to be drawn into public participation except on their own terms was reflected in the comment that the planners were not inclined to

> ...engage with the inner city action groups who are pretty aggressive and anti-bureaucracy. We are afraid of getting our fingers burnt.

By mid 1977 we were told that the consultative groups were being "wound down" and that after contacts had been made the county council was finding it easier to go directly to talk with the people they knew in the

district councils and in other key bodies. These bodies were said to be"informed of what is going on". Contact with other 'outside bodies' was informal and only became active when those bodies requested it but the team kept in touch with the Chambers of Trade and other organisations over the major reports that the county council produced. Umbrella organisations such as the Councils of Social Service provided "...good contacts on the voluntary side", but the civic associations and pressure groups were "drawn from professional workers, especially people employed by the University". The Stage One report had been widely distributed and it was said that the public were aware of the strategy.

> ...In the end our critics will be few and far between. We have made a conscious attempt to contact the most influential sections of local public opinion.

Central government reaction to the Stage One report was said to have been one of suprise and concern at the way that Merseyside council had used the strategy document as an attempt to directly change centrally determined policy. This signal of concern was to be followed by more detailed criticism when the DOE indicated that they were not satisified that all the necessary process stages had been carried out in the preparation of the Merseyside structure plan. Specifically, pressure was progressively put on the council (via the North West regional office of the DOE) to provide a full and reasoned justification for the policies and overall strategy. The implication to be drawn from this central government reaction is that the DOE was itself operating with a particular model of an appropriate process for structure plan preparation. Merseyside had not matched up to that model of a measured and systematic planning process resulting in a strategy evolved from a series of prior stages. The county began to bear the cost of unorthodoxy by having to backtrack and 'fill in' stages that they had chosen to transcend.

The incoming local administration following the elections of May 1977 signalled a change in the county council approach towards the public (although the general strategic planning approach appears not to have been radically revised). The successful Conservative group were keen to make an impact on the local electorate and the new chair of planning committee wanted to take a strong line on the structure plan and public involvement. Our respondent said

> ...most of the groups who participate are middle class anyway. The new group of Conservatives are also middle class and they see the chance to get support for their policies from the articulate public.

Commenting on the planning process in Merseyside in 1978 a principal planning officer in the county council stressed the necessity of 'realism' and concern with implementation.

> ...I wonder whether planners can afford to ignore the irrelevance of some of their (and my) activities on day to day decision making. (Williamson, 1978)

He went on to indicate that strategic planners may have shown too great a concern with the 'big' issues when a large number of small decisions made over a period of time could have a more important and significant local impact. In this vein the key role of a strategic planning authority was in providing "...bridging mechanisms between one agency and another" when the complexity of social and economic issues in conurbations and inner cities was increasing.

Pressure from central government eventually meant that the county planners were eased towards a formal public participation programme on the draft structure plan. The draft plan was published in 1979. Publicity included the plan document itself which was deposited at all libraries and local government offices. Copies were sent to a prepared list of consultees. Apart from local

authorities and other public bodies there were 73 named organisations on the list. A number of these were of 'quango' status such as the Housing Corporation, Inland Waterways and the National Economic Development office. Of the remainder, 22 were industrial /commercial bodies, 7 were 'housing or social' bodies, 23 were environmental groups and 8 were recreational/ leisure organisations. The AA and RAC were contacted as were the schools of planning at the University and Polytechnic. All secondary schools, FE colleges and teachers' centres were also sent copies of the draft plan.

As can be seen the main consultation process was focussed on umbrella organisations and 'major elites'. Individuals who were contacted included the Archbishop and Bishop of Liverpool respectively, all local MPs and MEPs. No 'minor' individuals or organisations (meaning people or groups operating at less than sub-regional level) were circulated with the full document.

A structure plan Broadsheet was produced in quantity (50 000 copies) and distributed to libraries, schools, voluntary organisations and other bodies.

Other publicity about the plan included 100 poster displays in all libraries during the three month period of the programme. Twenty small exhibitions covering the plan were placed in 40 venues for approximately one month periods. These exhibitions were located in libraries, sports centres and municipal offices. Three major exhibitions were mounted at the St.Helens Show, the Southport Show and in the foyer of the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo building, all for short periods of time.

Regional TV presentations included four programmes on structure plan issues in June 1979 as well as occasional news items.

There were a number of schools broadcasts on local radio linked to a Planning Education Project that was launched in conjunction with Liverpool Polytechnic. The project was intended to stimulate interest in planning matters in secondary schools. In its first year the project produced four radio programmes. A schools pack was the major element of the project which went out to all interested schools in the county.

No open public meetings were held but offers of presentations were made to organisations. A tape slide introduction was produced for this purpose. Forty groups took up the offer.

The University of Liverpool Institute of Extension Studies held a number of weekly study groups on the structure plan during the Spring term. Twelve study groups were established in various parts of the county.

The Participation Statement includes the comments made by organisations and groups as a result of the statutory stage of public participation. Although many pages of comment are reproduced the number of participants was very low. Only the 5 district councils within the metropolitan area and Cheshire County Council appear to have made representations from among 11 local authorities directly affected by the plan. One parish council replied. Eight other government agencies/ public bodies replied from a list of 45 consultees. Twenty of the 70 plus contacted organisations commented and a further 20 replies were recieved including a reply from an individual local councillor. On the assumption that the public bodies, government departments, public utilities would have replied in any case the programme appears only to have raised 40 replies from other organisations/ official consultees. Three hundred and eighty five seperate comments are recorded from the total range of consultees representing an average of 5 to 6 comments per

contact. The number of individuals who responded is not recorded in the Participation Statement although there were 261 comments from individuals.

The report identifies 34 organisations that voiced general approval of the strategy. One organised group expressed doubt over the strategy and another group was disappointed at not finding reference in the plan to their particular concerns. The county planners report no criticism of the strategy itself from individual respondents.

The county council was said to be "delighted" (and no doubt relieved) that after the examination in public the Secrtetary of State asked for few modifications to the plan. More private concerns expressed at the time were that the minister had shown a lack of understanding of the inner city problems of Merseyside or was as committed to the regeneration strategy as they wished.

In terms of planning process, the intentions of the Merseyside team were summed up by the report from the joint CES/RTPI conference of 1973 which said that

> ...power appeared to be moving away from technical centres to an ambitious ideal where the structure plan was a highly political document, possibly changing as often as control of the council chamber. The plan, then, is no longer a document almost insulated from the political superstructure.

Where that political superstructure includes central government as well as local institutions and personalities the outcome of even a 'politically sensitive' planning process cannot be assured.

<u>West Midlands</u>

At the time of local government reorganisation the position of the new county planning department was complicated by the existence of a number of completed or

nearly completed 'urban' structure plans prepared by the pre reorganisation boroughs. Thus, Coventry and Solihull Borough Councils and Warwick County had submitted structure plans for DOE approval by April 1973 (that is prior to the first elections for the new County Council). West Bromwich, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Walsall, Warley and Dudley Borough Councils had submitted plans for central approval by April 1974 (that is, before the 'appointed day' for the reorganisation of English local government). The new metropolitan county administration therefore found that by the time that it was finally and formally constituted there were 9 'completed' structure plans under its jurisdiction. If we consider the contiguous areas as part of the planning and decision-making context for the West Midlands County there were also completed and submitted plans for the counties of Worcester and Stafford. The implication of this position was that if approved each of these strategies were statutory documents so that the new county council would have to negotiate and coordinate closely with the other authorities. In any event, such negotiation and consultation would have been part of the normal pattern of debate and decision about strategic planning matters but the county had an immediate part to play in the public examination of the 6 borough level structure plans submitted in 1974 and in the Staffordshire Structure plan examination.

The principal point to be made at this stage is to note that the context and work of the West Midlands County with respect to structure planning for the whole area was entirely different from that obtaining in the other 5 metropolitan counties outside London. The new county council was faced with serious questions about the nature of and basis for collective policies on housing, employment and transportation. Firstly, there was no necessary consistency on these key matters between the former borough councils plans and, secondly, the 1971

Census results became available at the time of re-organisation and consequently provided an up-to-date data source which necessitated a review of assumptions in the borough plans. Accordingly the new council set to work on a county-wide structure plan. A meeting between the chief executives and planning officers from all local authorities in the county in late 1976 agreed to the joint preparation (county/districts) of information and reports of survey as a major part of the process of structure plan review.

In the event the process was largely internal to the county planning department, building from some of the information contained in the prior structure plans, up-dating and adding further data and deevloping a county-wide perspective on major issues. The planning process was not helped by the poor atmosphere of inter-authority relations and this partly explains its opacity. The county planners were reliant on the goodwill and sanction of the districts while harbouring strong negative views about their 'partners'. Not only did the county planners believe that the prior plans were wasted effort but all the districts "...were united in the view that they can manage without the metropolitan county" (Johnston, 1983, 8).

By late 1978 three alternative comprehensive strategies had been crystallised. These were presented to councillors and to chief officers in the county and it was agreed that they should be published and public debate encouraged. The strategies were

> ...given a reasonable degree of publicity, although it is probably fair to say that the public response was poor and ambivalent. The principal statutory consultees, such as the Districts, primarily used the consultation period to update themselves on the structure plan, compare the work of their own previous structure plans, and identify the issues needed to be taken into account in the final plan. (Struthers & Brundell, 1983)

The Strategic Choices document of 1978 was followed about one year later by draft proposals for the structure plan. There followed an "extensive programme of publicity". The media was supplied with material for publication. Exhibitions were held in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry. An exhibition bus toured the county stopping in most major centres. Publicity material was distributed to schools, libraries and public offices. The county planning department evaluated the press coverage as "good" but were disappointed with the limited air time given to the draft county plan.

15 000 people were counted through the exhibitions. 60 000 copies of a special county newspaper (free) and information packs were distributed. Forty special meetings were held for voluntary organisations, interest groups and other bodies. The county council also gave tailored presentations to leading councillors in the district councils and all district council planning committees.

> ...(T)he main purpose of the structure plan publicity was firstly to inform and secondly to encourage a response. (ibid.)

"Formal consultees" saw the full draft written statement and were invited to comment. "Informal groups" (such as residents associations) were sent the summary or "popular" material. The general public were approached through advertisements in the press, on radio, posters in buses, local libraries and at exhibitions. A standard response form was included in the free newspaper. About 500 "informal" groups and individuals responded on the coupon. Eighty groups and organisations sent in more detailed comments.

The comments were generally said to be in support of the strategy, which incorporated Priority Areas for treatment (particularly housing improvement and land regeneration). The most frequently mentioned topic by the groups was

transportation. Two petitions were recieved in connection with provision of public transport; one with 350 signatures.

The period of consultation ran effectively from October to December 1979. The planners appear to have been satisfied with the response and the basis of the programme. They considered the publicity material to be easy to read and made attractive by extensive use of photographs and good layout.

> ...Undoubtedly this helped to avoid misunderstanding and enabled both the layman and professional to comprehend the overall strategy and intentions of the plan. (ibid.)

This comment from the published account of the strategic planning process in West Midlands sits a little uneasily with the earlier recorded comments by one of the authors. In interview during 1977 our contact showed a good deal of ambivalence towards public participation in strategic planning. Comments from that interview indicated that there was a feeling within the county planning department during 1977 that public participation did not provide any significant contribution to policy-making because the results represented "...the combined views of a series of untypical people". On the other hand there was a need for publicity and efforts to "...sell the idea of the structure plan". Brundell went on to identify the potential danger of a gulf appearing between the decisions incorporated into the plan and public reaction when policies were implemented. He used the example that some people may find "...factory units being built down the road". Discussion had occured within the county planning department about how to put across the range of strategic choices to the public. The favoured approach in 1977 was to take a questionnaire to a sample of people in the county. A 'game' approach which gave a choice of options within a constrained budget was considered for inclusion. Agreement had been given later in 1977 for

the sample survey/ projective technique format to be implemented within an estimated budget of £1 000. The planners were, however, finding it difficult to get agreement for this scheme from the politicians. Our respondent commented that public participation was time-consuming (at another point in the interview he commented that public meetings were extravagant in the use of senior planners time) and that it could be particularly costly when trying out new techniques. In the event; members concern at the cost and the 'need' for limiting expenditure to a programme which was felt to be more directly within the meaning of the legislation meant that the planning 'game' was dropped. Councillors had apparently said that little was to be gained by the asking people about options. The 'game' approach was disliked by members particularly because it could give the impression of planning being a technical process offering a systematic path to decision-making whereas they saw it as a political matter and wished to make their own decisions from among the options. Another insight into member's attitudes about public participation was shown when they stepped in to curtail the appearances by the county planning officer on local TV (where he was frequently invited to react to local planning issues). The councillors had said that they did not like that kind of publicity.

Brundell said in interview that there were two main planks to the county council's thoughts about participation. Firstly, an emphasis on providing information and publicity to the public in order "...to put across our message at specific stages". The options stage was to be the main focus for publicity during the plan-making process. The second main element of public participation was meetings with interested bodies. The targets for this were umbrella organisations representing a number of local groups, such a residents associations. Whether such meetings would be run was dependent on

expressions of interest by organisations. The procedure being followed at that time was to invite one or two nominees from a range of organisations to county hall for a presentation by the planners on strategic issues. This process had begun before the final formulation of the alternative strategies. However, the considered assessment of the planners was that this approach had caused problems because the presentation was too abstract and ungrounded in the experiences of the invited nominees. The intention had been to get people involved at an early stage so that they would be informed and prepared to give comments later in the planning process.

The Examination in Public was in the minds of the planning department in all these preparations for the alternative strategies stage and the draft plan. The EIP was expected to be smoother if the planners had maintained contact with the interested organisations.

> ...A lot of trouble can be saved by meeting the public before the Examination - including other local authorities. (Brundell, 1977)

The Conservative Party gained control in West Midlands in 1977 prior to the interview. Our interviewee said that he could detect "no great enthusiasm" for public participation among the incoming majority group. There was a fashionable concern for open government among the new members but in the event they moved quickly to close down the links that the county planning officer and the department had built up with the media. Brundell added that the structure plan team was interested in using councillors as

> ...agents in the participation process. They might be briefed about the structure plan and so perform their proper role (ibid.).

He went on to say that some of his colleagues believed that the department only gave the attention that it did to partici pation "...because councillors do not do their job". Nonetheless, he added that there were colleagues

who felt that the direct involvement of councillors "...could be a mixed blessing".

The plan was completed in 1980. The EIP took place in March 1981 and the Secretary of State gave approval a year later. The basis of the plan was in 5 principal objectives

(i) regeneration of the older urban areas to improve the overall quality of life;
(ii) Encouragement of economic prosperity and development of employment opportunites throughout the County;
(iii) Improvement of housing conditions;
(iv) Conservation and the best use of resources in terms of energy, land and money;
(v) Protection and enhancement of open land and the built-up area.

A strategy of regeneration was followed with the identification of Priority Areas for action. These included the inner cores of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

The planning process in West Midlands towards the county-wide plan differs from that found in any of the other metropolitan counties by virtue of the unique circumstances facing the county planners at the time of local government re-organisation. The process was largely an internal review and consultation with the district councils on the basis of pre-existing urban structure plans with the aim of creating a consistent and coherent corporate policy framework. In effect, the county planners were already appraised of the problems and opportunities facing the West Midlands and undertook to bring that information up to date and attempted to achieve a concensus between the local authorities on the favoured strategic policy. The county planning department found itself in a beleaguered position, not only from largely antagonistic district councils but also from other departments in the county itself where

corporate planning ambitions and positions of internal power were being being played out.

The approach to public participation for the county-wide structure plan was sparse given a belief that the public could only usefully comment upon already formulated proposals. Where a proposal had been made for public participation on a set of strategic options for the county this had been vetoed by the politicians. However, given the comments of the interviewee and other indicators there appears to have been no great enthusiasm among the planners themselves for an extensive or outgoing programme of public consultation and participation.

Greater Manchester

Work towards a strategic plan for the Manchester sub region began in 1973 under joint working arrangements with representatives from the constituent local authorities. A project report had been prepared in April 1972. The crucial decision-making or action stages in preparing the plan were defined in the project report as

> defining the issues (Report of Survey stage),
> choice of strategy (Alternative Strategies stage),
> the Draft Plan (the draft Written Statement),
> the submission.

One analysis of the planning approach in Greater Manchester has noted the importance of the process adopted.

> ...The new County Council endorsed the importance of establishing a process for the preparation of te structure plan, rather than regarding is as a single operation. It accepted that there were likely to be problems in the supply of data in many fields, that long term forecasting would be even more than usually difficult under the conditions ruling in 1973-74, and that the first plan should therefore not attempt to look at a longer period than to 1986 (fifteen years from the 1971 Census), although the original SELNEC project Report (SPPOG, 1972) expected most material to look to 1991 and some to

> 2001. However, it agreed that certain attempts could usefully be made to look very broadly at possible long-term scenarios for the county. Towards the end of this work there was a change of emphasis from the passive and rather mechanistic projection methods of the scenarios towards a more active policy-making and evaluation of the scenarios, using some ideas borrowed from the operational research techniques known as 'analysis of interconnected decision areas' (AIDA)... (Fenton, 1983, 32).

A "major programme" of public participation was written into the initial reports of GMC planning process. The Report of Survey (GMC, 1975) notes the aim

> ...to provide, throughout the County, the maximum amount of information and to stimulate the maximum level of public involvement throughout the structure planning process.

The Report continues that the programme of public participation

> ...must of necessity advance on two fronts in order that both organisations/ interest groups and the majority of people who belong to neither are informed and involved.

A further comment is that the

> ...process began before the Greater Manchester County Council came into being under joint working arrangements when formal consultations were carried out after the commencement order in February 1973.

Over 10 000 copies of a pamphlet about the structure plan and over 2 500 booklets were distributed at this time. More than 80 written responses were recieved from the pamphlet distribution, although the report adds that about 60 of these were of local significance only.1 The booklet entitled "First Review of the Study Area",

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1 In all GMC documentation on the consultations and replies to the various stages of public participation reference is made to 'written responses'. This does <u>not</u> refer to the number of individuals, groups or organisations who responded but to the number of substantive issues raised by respondents. Consequently, the number of 'written responses' is greater than the numbers of individuals / groups who responded at any stage.

resulted in 77 responses. In vindication of an apparently low response the report goes on to state that the number of replies recieved is not a measure of the effectiveness of public participation. That depends, it is suggested, on the information conveyed.

Respondents to the leaflet and the booklet were classified as follows

Private individuals	7%
Amenity Societies	15%
Industrial/ Commercial Interests	16%
Residents Associations	8%
Local Authorities	18%
Recreation/ Leisure Organisations	19%
Other	17%

A public attitudes survey was carried out by the county council in 1974 with a sample of 2 000 households. The survey was carried out by Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR). Successful interviews were gained with 1962 households.

The council also produced a free newspaper, 'Context', which was delivered to all households in December 1974-January 1975. This contained information about the structure plan timetable and also information on the form and context of plan preparation. The public was invited to comment but the response was limited.

Exhibitions were mounted in county hall in 1974 explaining local government reorganisation and the intention to continue with preparation of the structure plan. Again invitation to comment was extended to members of the public but to little avail.

A councillor survey was also carried out at this time which comprised a questionnaire sent to all members on the joint authorities; a total of 1 850 elected

representatives. The response rate was poor at 366 replies, or 20% response.

The Reports of Survey were published in October 1975 covering seven subjects (Employment and the Economy, Housing and Population, Local Authority Financial Resources, Open Land and the physical restraints on development, Shopping, Social Aspects, Transportation).

A 40 page summary document covering all seven main reports was made more widely available. Under each topic heading the report offered a number of choices which were intended to alert the public to the problems which the plan would seek to address.

650 seperate individuals, groups and organisations were sent the summary leaflet and invited to respond with their views on the key problems they wished to see dealt with.

A potential limitation on gaining widespread public response was that GMC had a policy of not providing the full documentation free of charge and asked £1 for each Report of Survey; a total of £6 was charged for a full set of 7 papers. This is likely to have dissuaded some organisations from getting hold of the full Reports of Survey. However, in addition to the reports sent out to bodies on the GMC circulation lists a further 400 requests for information were recieved (summary reports or full papers).

On publication of the Reports of Survey in summer 1975 a further free newspaper was also produced (120 000 copies). Exhibitions about the Reports were mounted in each of the metropolitan district areas (10 centres) for one week. 700 copies of the summary leaflet were distributed at the exhibition sites. A press conference was held and 11 articles in the local press resulted. A

one day conference was arranged for voluntary organisations in conjunction with the Manchester Council for Voluntary Service. Thirteen public meetings were held at the request of voluntary organisations/ commercial interests. Four adult education courses on planning matters and the structure plan were arranged by the University of Manchester.

One hundred and six questionnaires were returned from the various exhibition sites. The council counted a total of 5 600 visitors to the exhibitions.

120 written comments resulted from consultations with named organisations and interested individuals who had obtained the reports. This represented less than 100 individuals or organisations (Planning 156, 5/3/76). Analysis of the Participation Statement (GMC, 1979) indicates that this represents comment from 81 seperate sources (individuals, groups and major organisations). Half of the respondents at this stage were representatives of 'major elites' (that is, local authorities, government departments and nationalised bodies/ quangos). The other respondents were equally split between 'minor elites' (community groups, commercial interests etc.) and individuals.

This level of response is not high but the planners had not anticipated a strong response in the early stages of plan preparation despite the initial intention to offer opportunities for public response at key stages of the planning process. The county planning officer, J. S. Millar reported to the February meeting of the county planning committee that the public response to the reports of survey was "discouraging". Only seven of the ten district councils had replied within the ten-week consultation period (Planning 156, 5/3/76). However, the Report of Survey had mentioned that the stage when alternative strategies became available

> ...may be when the public feel that more effective opportunities for involvement can take place.

The Alternative Strategies report was published in April 1977.

The original intention appears to have been to have consulted the public on up to 6 strategic options but the Participation Statement (GMC, 1979) notes that "...simplification was felt essential if the lay public were not to be discouraged from participating in the planning process" (ibid, 41). As a consequence a set of three strategies was evolved for public comment and official consultation (GMC, 1977) from a larger set of options. The three stategies were identified as

> I Exploitation of market trends towards decentralisation,
> II A more balanced, middle of the road, strategy aimed at the more equitable distribution of resources throughout the County,
> III A problem orientated strategy aiming to concentrate resources within the existing built-up area.

The alternative strategies were presented in a main report of 81 pages available for sale at £2. A summary booklet of 22 pages (free) was also produced (5 000 printed). A leaflet entitled "Your Chance to Plan THE NEXT MOVE" publicised the report and summary booklet. 50 000 were printed and circulated in the area. Distribution included dispensers for the leaflets and posters. Arrangements were made with 83 large stores to display material about the proposals. Demand for information and published materials was high and the summary leaflet was reprinted.

Public participation at alternative strategies stage largely followed the earlier pattern. Consultations with organisations and community groups, leaflet distribution to shops and supermarkets, and media coverage was the main 'menu' of techniques.

The results of the programme were not impressive. 1 050 organisations and individuals were consulted or informed of the availability of materials. Sixty six of these made a response to the County Council. Just under half of these were 'major elites', slighly fewer were 'minor elites' whilst only 8 individuals replied. Over half of the 'major elites' who responded at this stage had also made representations on the Reports of Survey. Only a handful of 'minor elites' and individuals made comments at this and the earlier stage.

The county planners identified 50 articles in the press. The leaflet drew 100 responses for more information.

Fenton (1983) commented that the process of 'consultation' (which GMC used specifically to mean contact with known, specific addresses drawn from the participation register) delayed progress in plan preparation. He states (with an apparent sense of delay) that it was "...not until mid April 1978 when the draft written statement was published". Publication of the draft statement was accompanied by media coverage and by a series of public gatherings and special meetings with community groups.

The draft Written Statement became available for statutory public participation 12 months after the Alternative Strategies report. The publication of draft plan was a further point at which public participation was to be sought. The main report was sold for £2.50 while a key diagram and an abstract which summarised the national and regional context for the plan were available free of charge. A press conference and planned announcement were made with much preparation and contact with news editors in order to create a high level of coverage. A leaflet was produced (75 000 copies distributed through 250 outlets) urging people to read the main text and summarising the planning process and

the timetable of public meetings. Reply paid response forms were included which gave a limited opportunity for comments. An 'incentive' was offered by a competition for those who did reply. A major exhibition was held at the Manchester Show. Posters and bus posters were produced. Eleven public meetings were held and 15 special meetings requested by organisations.

Response was muted. The media did respond with about 27 column metres of articles, 4 hours of radio air time and 6 minutes of TV material. The exhibition tent was visited by 30 000 people. The public and special meetings drew about 500 people (total) respectively. There were 430 reply paid coupons returned from the leaflet (less than 1% of the population). One hundred and seventy three organisations or individuals responded to the consultations. Around one quarter of these were 'major' and 'minor elites' respectively. Twenty 'major elites' had made representations at the three main stages of the planning process. Very few 'minor elites' (3) and individuals (2) had similarly sustained their involvement.

The interview with a senior member of the department during summer 1977 quickly revealed that the "major programme" was a euphemism. The approach to public participation was described as "fairly low key" and this was explained in terms of changing attitudes among the members and professionals. There had been a

> ...move away from some of the more enthusiastic and extensive manifestations of public involvement.

The experience of GMC was seen as a retreat from the spirit of the late 1960s. Evidence of a less central role for public participation was that no specialist post was provided on the establishment although in practice a senior planner (level PO3) was dealing with "...the mechanics of participation" aided by a more junior member of staff.

A coolness towards public participation could have been that

> ...there has certainly been little response from the public - the quality has been good but there is little width.

Fenton makes similar comment saying that the actual effects of public participation on structure plan policies was difficult to assess. The response from the public was acknowledged to be low but additionally it has been stated that there were conflicts and contradictions in public opinion especially from the public bodies that were formally consulted (Fenton, 1983). The public response was said to come mainly from those with special interests. Public expenditure restraints were also cited as a restriction on the programme. There does seem to be an element of self fulfilling prophecy in some of this evidence. Clearly the county planning department was not, on its own admission, very active in publicising the various stages of the planning process and a number of minor obstacles were placed in the way of easy public access to information. To later argue that there were limitations in the quality of the comments and response from the public in the face of these barriers to good communication seems disingenuous.

In May 1977 the political balance of the council changed. The Labour councillors who were in control prior to the second county council elections were acknowledged to be split into two factions. One grouping saw public participation as important but had retreated from that position when the budget was squeezed. The other (dominant) grouping felt that public participation was undemocratic. Participants were suspected of not being representative of the whole population.

The incoming Conservative group were "still finding their feet" at the time of the interview but a comment that was

already being made by the new majority group was that they had heard little about the structure plan from constituents "so publicity must be largely ineffective".

A flavour of the planners attitude to the participation programme can be judged from the respondent's observation that public response to the Reports of Survey were

> ...by and large acceptable. The strongest message recieved was from cyclists groups who said that there was nothing in the Reports about cycling.

He further admitted that the Department

> ...had not been too rigorous about the validity of the responses.

There is no evidence to indicate that a systematic effort was made to relate public opinion to the identification of preferences or identify areas of further professional work. The alternative strategies had been honed down solely on the basis of professional judgement about the links and compatabilities between different policies. As we understood it this was also a purely professional stage with councillor involvement solely at the formal level of approval for the production of the alternative strategies report.

A negative reaction from councillors towards free newspapers had led to use of advertising space in the commercial press for publishing details of the alternative strategies.

A contacts register of organisations had been built up from responses to the initial announcement of the plan and the publicity around the Reports of Survey. However, our interviewee remarked that the list had not yielded much by way of response in the later stages. The planners were "fairly disappointed". Indicative of the casual approach to public participation was the lack of a closing date for public comment on the alternative strategies. The leaflet on alternatives was said to have

had a "very small penetration" although 5 000 had been circulated within the County and the main report had gone to "quite a few".

Nevertheless, public opinion seems to have some effect on policies. Public comment had given support to home improvements rather than clearance. It was also said that the coverage of the plan was affected by early consultations and public representations. The DOE advice on key issues and Regional Office pressure had suggested that recreation policy, minerals working, refuse disposal and environment policies could be left out of the plan but they were included because of "outside pressure" (Fenton, 1983).

The approach to the planning process taken by the team in Greater Manchester was, in part, a reaction to the initial experience of joint working on preparing the ground for the structure plan prior to reorganisation. A number of working sub-groups made up of professional staff from the sponsoring local authorities had been formed in order to carry out initial survey work and to reach joint agreement on how to prepare the plan. One of the sub-groups had been concerned to develop an approach to plan evaluation. A long list of objectives had resulted. In the view of an interviewee from the county council these had proved to be "...mostly abstract and useless" (Turner, 1977, personal interview). An assessment by the new county planning team had "recognised the limited value of this approach" and consequently there was "a complete revulsion against it". A problem solving approach was adopted in its place.

"...The preparation of policy options owes much to the Institute of Operations Research work" (ibid.). The GMC strategic planners went through three cycles of option and strategy definition. Firstly, a pilot or experimental cycle was undertaken by planning officers at

a relatively junior level (local authority professional officer grade PO1 or below). This was followed by "a much more rigorous cycle of option definition where the methodology was followed very closely and strictly". This stage was completed in September 1976. However, the senior staff/ chief officers in the department did not accept the results of this second stage of option definition. Fenton notes that it was the result of a discussion between officers and members in October 1976 that reached the conclusion that the six strategies derived from the second round of option definition were not acceptable. It was at that stage that a third round of policy/ plan generation was initiated. The second round options were said to be "...too sophisticated for public consumption" (ibid.). The interviewee at GMC said that these options had "...been too technocratic and the range of option choice was thought to be too wide" (Turner, 1977). Consequently, a third cycle was undertaken with the involvement of chief officers and "it was during this cycle that emphasis was given to realism" (ibid). Certainly, the report on Alternative Strategies contains a numer of references to "realistic choice" (GMC, 1977). Our interviewee did acknowledge that the alternative strategies had been put together on the basis of compatability between policies and much of this process of assembling strategies was determined by the professional judgements of senior staff (ibid.).

> ...(T)he policy components of the plan evolved from a process whereby initial survey work revealed problems, and study of these pointed to criteria or factors which could help define alternative solutions whose relative costs and benefits could be evaluated. All this took place in a learning situation both for the officers and for members in which refined options - termed 'building blocks' in the Alternative Strategies Report... - were then examined to explore their relative affinities or contradictions for options in other fields. From these results, two packages of 'prime mover options' were obtained and, because of their polarised nature, a 'middle ground' strategy was constructed between them.

> ...The responses and the committees' formal and information (sic) reactions to them provided the officers with their brief for preparing the draft plan... The general tenor of the public's response to the strategies report was to favour Strategy III (relative concentration), whereas the consultees, although more disparate, leaned towards Strategy II. The brief falling between Strategies II and III. (Fenton, 1983, 37-38)

A comment in the technical press at the time of the publication of the draft written statement noted "...its similarities with the contemporary round of Structure Plans..." which "...marks it as one of the 'same stable' of current practice..." but goes on to say that the county planners have been "...rather bolder in their pursuit of solutions...particularly in their reliance on quantitative prescriptions of future demand in several fields". The commentary concludes in cautionary tone that "...there must be some doubt as to the robustness of policies so reliant on detailed technical forecasts of future needs."(Osborn, 1978).

The Greater Manchester structure plan documentation is suprisingly short on detailing the technicalities of the planning process (compared, say, with the extensive discussion of methodology in the Tyne and Wear documents). The post-hoc commentaries by two members of the planning team helps to throw further light on the process. Drawing together the evidence it would seem that a problem-led process was followed incorporating a form of policy development and evaluation using the 'AIDA technique. The team set out to build a set of policy packages across the range of topics which could lead towards a number of strategies by combining policy elements from different packages. The evidence also shows that at key points in the planning process senior staff (and less crucialy, members) intervened to question the options or alternate strategies as being unrealistic. A conclusion would be that the AIDA type of approach to policy devlopment is valuable as a tool for checking the coverage and totality of policy options but that

political judgement and pragmatism had to be introduced in the lead up to the choice of the final and published set of alternative strategies. The preferred strategy was influenced to some extent by public opinion and consultation with other bodies (local authorities, statutory undertakers etc.) but in Fenton's account the team was said to have been briefed (presumably by senior planning staff and county councillors) on the 'acceptable' focus of the draft plan.

The Greater Manchester structure plan was noted for the the large number of amendments proposed by the Secretary of State following the examination in public.

> ...Virtually no subject area is unaffected. More than 40 per cent of the policies will be deleted and further 20 per cent will be substantively amended... The report of the panel which conducted the examination in public identified no less than 39 policies which it felt were unrelated to land use, and another 11 which it felt were not of structural importance. (Bruce, 1980)

The panel considered the four central themes and concluded that these were not used as a guide in preparation of the plan but rather were "...an assessment of what the policies sought to achieve". More basic as a criticism from the panel was the conflict between their perception (and behind them the planners in the DOE) of the proper concerns of planning. At root these differing perceptions concerned whether structure planning should deal only in land use issues or respond to socio-economic problems. The panel thought that the Greater Manchester plan confused these approaches but in siding with the official DOE view they were also critical of the broad strategic package that the county had attempted to provide. Other contemporary criticisms noted the excessive complexity of many policies, the attempt to make provision for every eventuality, the production of a morass of detail and that many of the responsibilities of the districts were being usurped by the plan. One other consequence of the complex, technical process and product

in Greater Manchester was felt to be its failure to enlist the understanding and political commitment of local councillors (Bruce, 1980).

West Yorkshire

The county planners sought to adopt a "problem-solving approach" in laying down the philosophical and practical basis for preparing a structure plan (WYCC, July 1974) but this Management Statement (Project Report) also observed that care should be taken to avoid a "...myopic concern with only pressing short term problems" (ibid.). It was stated that problem solving reflects, as realistically as possible, what local authorities can do under present powers to remove problems faced by the community. The county planners believed that this approach would and should be widely understood and that interim statements made during this process would allow for "meaningful public participation". At the end of each phase of technical work it was intended that an annual statement would allow a review of progress towards the strategic plan and ensure wider discussion of the issues raised.

The planners indicated that in order to encourage and support a "fairly continuous dialogue" with organisations and people, the county council decided from the outset to divide plan preparation into four main phases, with an annual statement being prepared at the end of each stage. The first phase was described as 'picking up the threads' and focussed on the prime or main problems and opportunities facing the county, assessing existing policies and devising interim policies to deal with immediate strategic issues. The second phase, characterised as 'developing strategic choices' ended with the final listing of major issues to be addressed in the plan and developed a number of 'themes' or ways of planning for the future in West Yorkshire. Phase three called 'detailing the policies', led to a preferred strategy with the draft written statement as the annual report to the public. The final phase was the refinement of the plan on the basis of public comment and reaction.

From an early stage the West Yorkshire planners began "...a process of public and agency consultation leading to problem identification". Overall responsibility for the public participation programme was vested in one of the four executive officers (effectively deputy county planning officers) in the county planning department (the other three areas of responsibility being transportation, housing/ resources/ social factors, research & intelligence). The executive officer responsible for participation was also in charge of environment (that is, derelict land, pollution control, recreational development). Reporting directly to the executive officer (participation and environment) was a senior planner with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the public participation programme.

An initial leaflet announcing the need for structure plan preparation was distributed to all households (c. 720 000) in 1974. The leaflet drew responses from 480 members of the public.

A second element in the participation programme in phase one of the planning process was a public attitudes survey. This was undertaken by Opinion Research Centre (ORC) during 1974-75. 2 500 households were sampled. Firstly, a random sample of 1 500 from the electoral register was taken to achieve a representative cross section of opinion. A further 'booster' sample was also drawn on the basis of areas where there were particular (and different) kinds of planning problems (12 polling districts were chosen). The intention of the booster study was to deepen understanding of local isues in various parts of the county. The senior planner in charge of running the participation programme said that the booster gave "...useful supportive information as a supplement to the main sample".

The rationale for this early activity mirrors that found in the other metropolitan areas which was to follow "...a problem-solving discipline" (Briscoe, 1983).

A third element in the first stage of the participation programme was to establish contact with numerous public and private agencies to explain the county council's intentions in preparing the plan and the timetable being followed. As has been found in evidence from the other new metropolitan counties one of the reasons for early publicity about strategic planning was also intended to raise interest in and focus attention on the new County itself.

Briscoe states that the social survey was of debatable value. He notes that the results "...probably added little to the identification or perception of problems to which the plan was addressed" (ibid.). However, the professionals that we interviewed who were working directly on the participation programme were less critical of the first stages of the programme. They indicated that the public attitudes survey (PAS) had certainly influenced the choice of key issues but that the influence had not permeated through the whole span of structure plan work. As an example, it was noted that economic and employment issues were not prominent in public comments in the initial stages yet the topic was a strong element in the plan. On the other hand, recreational needs particularly for teenagers which came up as an issue of concern for the public in the results from the PAS was reflected in the policies within the Written Statement.

The county planning department appeared to be strongly committed to the idea that planning was more than the production of a statement or plan. Stress was placed on the process and the planning department showed a concern to set up procedures and mechanisms which would allow

developments and changes in the fortunes and circumstances of the county to be monitored and assessed on a continuous basis. This approach also seemed to imply a continuing commitment to inform the public of changing planning and policy issues. The philosophy of flexibility and adaptability is reflected in the adoption of annual statements as a principal feature of planning in West Yorkshire. These annual statements were described as 'management documents' by the interviewees.

The first annual statement (WYCC, July 1975) represented the culmination of the first year's work by the planners. The planners had sought to establish the planning policies inherited from predecessor authorities, existing commitments and recent trends and changes in population and economy, housing, industry, transportation and other key areas corresponding to government advice (in DOE circular 98/74). Among the intentions of the first annual statement was the further identification and elaboration of key issues and problems, to review progress in strategic planning and to allow public discussion of current strategic planning issues. A preliminary analysis of the public attitudes survey was provided along with a preview of the following stages in plan preparation.

A consultees list had been prepared early in the life of the new authority and this was used to post out copies of the first annual statement and other publicity/ participation material. A problem that had soon emerged was that the list "...could run to thousands of addresses if we included all the local groups". For this reason the decision was taken to work wherever possible through umbrella organisations in order to make consultation more manageable. Even so the listing of overarching organisations had reached 500 by the time of our interviews and was still expanding. It was said that any interested body that showed some corporate role or

responsibility was accepted onto the list and the county council was said to give the benefit of any doubt to organisations when assessing whether they qualified as a broader type.

The first annual statement also summarised the results of initial public contacts with organised groups in a review of major problems as percieved by the public. A series of 'markers' for policy development on pressing strategic planning problems were laid down. These were felt by the planners to need attention in the short term and more comprehensive treatment in the plan (such as the expansion of Leeds-Bradford airport).

Public response to the first annual statement was limited. The council held a number of public meetings both before and after publication. Three special county-wide meetings were held before publication for trades councils, chambers of trade and commerce, and parish councils respectively. After publication a further set of county-wide meetings was held for 'statutory consultees'. Apart from the meeting for parish councils the attendance was reported by the planners to be disappointingly low. Less than 50% of invited bodies sent representatives. Sixty two voluntary organisations sent in replies with substantive comments about the planning problems of the county as a result of participation on the first annual statement.

The second phase of work towards a West Yorkshire structure plan was principally concerned with the development of strategic choices. Four major aspects of evaluation were regarded as particularly important; Resources/ Implementation, Social Objectives, Flexibility, and Environmental Effects. Although the outline proposal for evaluation was noted in the first annual statement the detailed criteria for measuring any future alternative strategies were not spelled out. In

the event the second annual statement (July, 1976) was designed to promote public reaction to six distinct alternatives.

The second annual statement (July 1976) was a summary of the previous years work which had been spent clarifying the key issues and developing strategic policy options for these main topics. After providing some background information about the structure planning process and data about the county the main part of the report was to identify 6 themes which were said to represent "distinct but realistic alternative philosophies which could direct the future planning of this county" (WYCC, 1976, p.29). The six themes were

A Achieving a better environment.
B Supporting beneficial economic trends by assisting productive enterprise.
C Accepting positive market forces and initiatives. Minimum public controls and taxes - full economic costs passed on to consumer by public agencies.
D Allowing needs of relatively disadvantaged communities and households.
E Emphasis on regeneration of economically declining areas. Rest of county to solve its own problems.
F Tackling problems with policies that minimise consumption of natural resources, cash and capital assets.

The intention of the themes was achieve "public response...with definite biases in order to get reactions".

A leaflet about the planning process was sent out to over 600 groups and over 300 individuals along with invitations to attend one of a series of 17 public meetings. A free copy of the second annual statement and copies of a 20 page summary were sent to 550 umbrella groups (each document had a questionnaire attached although there was no freepost facility). A similar package was sent to 60 statutory consultees. Reference copies of this package were also made available at libraries, information centres, consumer protection shops

and Leeds Housing Department offices. Press statements were made to 4 evening papers, 25 local weeklies, the Yorkshire Post and some national daily papers. Exhibitions were mounted for a week in the five main towns in West Yorkshire.

The public response to the second annual statement was considerably better than that for the first. 16 000 summary copies and over 2 000 full statements were distributed. Nearly 12 000 people attended the exhibitions. Eight hundred people went along to the public meetings, an average attendance of 50. The average number of invitations to umbrella organisations to attend the public meetings was 57. Nevertheless attendance at the public meetings was patchy. Over 130 people attended the public meeting in Otley on November 8th, whilst only 15 turned up to Leeds (Crossgates) and 16 at Batley. The county believed that 43% of these were individual members of the public, the rest being representatives of organisations.

A total of 779 responses were recieved by early 1977. These comprised 605 individual replies. 17% of these came from Burley-in-Wharfedale as a result of the local community council's initiative where the statement was abridged and distributed to all households. 144 replies were from voluntary organisations (said to represent over 60 000 members) and 30 from statutory consultees.

The exhibition venues in Leeds and Bradford were the busiest, being in main shopping areas rather than in halls close to shopping centres.

There was little overall consensus in the comments and preferences for any of the six themes except where small localised areas were concerned. Theme A was by far the most favoured.

The evaluation stage preceding the production of the second annual statement was a relatively crude judgemental process intended to throw up varied, and to some extent artificially differentiated alternatives which could be discussed by politicians and public. Briscoe believes that the theme approach may have been introduced because it invited (and achieved) public rejection of the most extreme 'political' options. The effects which could be shown to follow from pursuing those alternatives were illustrated in the statement. Briscoe also volunteers an alternative motive underlying the use of the theme approach which was that the responses were diverse and entirely as the planners had expected leaving members and officers open to select their preferred strategy without external constraint. The truth, says Briscoe, probably lies somewhere between these interpretations but he adds that whatever the motive the theme approach did enhance the participation programme. He also adds that although a variety of information was provided by the public response to the themes the experience showed that there is "...no linear methodology for devising strategic policy" from public comments (Briscoe, 1983).

The costs of the public participation programme (the county council preferred to call it consultation) on the second annual statement included £6 000 for printing the full statement (3 000 copies) and the 20 page summary (18 000 copies) with £250 distribution costs. Sales reciepts were £300. Professional and clerical staff time was not recorded in costing the printed materials. The exhibitions were staffed by professional planners (10 staff weeks) would total about £1 000. Therefore, the total cost for phase 2 participation could have been in the region of £10 000.

The interviewees indicated the positive support given by the county councillors. A handful of members were said

to have formed into a small group that had worked directly with staff dealing with organising the public response. The members group had met from time to time with the Assistant Director and the Executive Officer in charge of the programme to discuss publicity material. There was said to be "...some pressure from members to involve the public". The Leader at that time, Mr. Ken Woolmer, had remained in close and constant touch with the planners and with the public participation aspects of the planning process. Senior planning department staff had also discussed the programme rather than leave the programme details entirely as a matter for delegation.

The impression gained from the interviewees was that the Labour councillors were more commited to participation in the planning process than the opposition. The county council proved to be more politically balanced during its brief life than was the case in some other metropolitan counties. For example, in 1973 Labour took 51 (58%) of the 88 seats with the Conservatives gaining 25 (28%) seats.

The third annual statement was the draft Written Statement of the structure plan (WYCC, 1977). Again, the statement was presented alongside a popular summary and offered for public comment together with details of a series of public meetings (which were held between January and March 1978). The full draft was a document of 126 pages. The 20 page summary was published with a questionnaire for those wishing to comment (Freepost facility was offered). Over 1 800 full statements were distributed and almost 36 000 summary booklets. All voluntary organisations and statutory consultees were sent both documents.

A draft Report of Survey was also produced at this time. This was in two parts and was offered for sale to interested bodies. Copies of all the papers were placed

in libraries, information centres and the main local authority offices. Static exhibitions were planned along similar lines to those held during phase two. An alternative type of exhibition was provided in two PTE buses which were set up as mobile exhibitions and toured the county for an eight week period in January 1978. 413 venues were visited by these mobile exhibitions staying for a few hours in pre-publicised locations. There was a daily average of around 300 visitors to each bus over the 56 day itinerary (a total of 33 600). Betweeen 30 and 40 public meetings were proposed in the provisional programme for the public consultation on the draft plan. In the event 21 area meetings and 5 'topic' meetings were held during the consultation period. Area meetings were normally held a week after the visiting exhibition had been in the locality. At the meetings a tape slide presentation was followed by a brief talk by a planner to highlight issues of interest to the specific group or locality. Total attendance was over 1 400 people. Average attendance was about 50 people with by far the majority of attenders indicating that they represented established organisations. Media coverage included details of the bus itinerary and meetings. There was also coverage of the contents of the draft written statement by newspapers, local radio and regional TV news.

Two volumes of reports of survey were published simultaneously as further background to the draft statement (WYCC,1977).

The response to the draft plan was considered to have been good. 1 528 written replies were received of which 1 314 came from individuals. Half of these individual responses were said by the planners to have been generated by 'mass response' campaigns organised by transport and environmental pressure groups. Analysis of the responses indicated that those who did not own a car,

the elderly and manual workers were markedly under-represented. A similar bias in the types and membership of voluntary organisations that had responded was suspected but not confirmed.

The county planning department indicated that an overwhelming majority of the responses were in agreement with the three principles underlying the draft plan. These principles were

> to maintain and wherever possible, to improve the local economy,
> to ensure the efficient use of natural, financial and other resources,
> to assist deprived groups and communities.

Agreement was also shown for the 'urban' emphasis of the draft, that is , the concentration of development near to the existing towns of the county. A set of policies relating to employment, housing, transport, environment and leisure were also supported by the majority of respondents.

The outcome of consultations and further technical refinements was a finalised strategic plan published in late 1978 (WYCC, 1978).

The extent to which public comment was incorporated in the finalised plan is noted in the Participation Statement (WYCC, 1978). One issue raised by 8 organisations and 45 individuals was their concern about conservation and environment which they believed should be a further explicit principle on a par with the three published principles. The county council rejected this proposal by saying that the majority of people who had commented on the draft plan accepted the 'urban' emphasis which could lead to pressure being taken off rural areas and help with environmental improvements in disfigured towns and on the coalfield. On public transport concerns the county felt unable to support public opinion which called for holding down fares, increasing subsidy to

public transport and putting in higher capital investment particularly to railways. Concern at withdrawal of financial support for some local rail services was noted and the county did reconsider some proposals and promised future support in a few cases. Opposition to a number of major road schemes (for example, the well known Airedale proposal) was noted but the county commented that the ultimate responsibility for these lay with the Department of Transport. The county offered to press for public consultation on such schemes. Some changes were made to Green Belt policies and criticism of opencast coal extraction led to a firming up of the county council's opposition. The concerns shown by some voluntary organisations about the adequacy of recreational provision in the 'conurbation core' was not acted upon and policies in the draft written statement were not altered.

An overall assessment of the effect of public participation on the plan must be that in the context of strong support for the main thrust of the plan only marginal adjustments were made to meet critical comments from the public.

A planner who worked for West Yorkshire County Planning Department during this period has summarised the approach to the planning process.

> ...The process was...characterised by the, then, vague phrases of 'dialogue' and 'cyclic learning process'. Broadly, these reflected the belief that much of the content of strategic planning in West Yorkshire would be concerned with the action of other agencies with whom discussion, persuasion and compromise would be needed. They also indicated that the authority did not accept the static view of strategic planning, but that strategic policy would evolve and change over time and must be monitored and reviewed by means of an annual process of technical work and dialogue. It was accepted that the ideal of a continual process of annual plan and review was not possible, and that this would be distorted by the statutory requirement to submit a

structure plan to the Secretary of State and by other practical considerations.

...The adoption of this approach, rather than an objectives or key-issue approach, was certainly very important in influencing the style and organisation of technical work in the planning department, and probably assisted in developing the incremental approach to policy which, in retrospect, was what was required. However, this approach, while of technical importance, led to some very convoluted and semantic arguments, especially with district councils, because of the apparent conflict with the Department of the Environments' circular 98/74 (DOE, 1974) and the emphasis on key issues. (Briscoe, 1983, 99-100)

In our interviews with personnel in the county planning department these comments and descriptions of the planning process were confirmed including Briscoe's comments about the 'engineering' of public rejection of more extreme strategic alternatives. The chosen strategy was resource-led but the final document presented as the structure plan was more than a statement of existing commitments and realistic expectations. It was described as an 'advocacy document'. Rhodes believed that the planning team were "...firm believers in the process rather than the plan as an end in itself". It was said openly that the 6 themes put up for consultation and participation had "...definite biases in order to get reaction". The public "...tended to favour improvement of the environment whilst both the county council and districts were mainly concerned to help the local economy" (Rhodes, 1977, personal interview).

In summary, therefore, it seems that West Yorkshire did adopt a problem based methodology for plan preparation. The planners had apparently been influenced by a strongly held, if minority view within the planning profession, that yearly policy statements following an annual and cyclical programme of review and revision was a valid way of appoaching the strategic planning task. Apparently this was rejected in anticipation of objection from the DOE and the consequential prospect of abortive work. A

systematic and goal-led aproach to plan generation and evaluation had also been considered but again in the event was dropped in favour of the approach which put up a number of outline policies and 6 strategic themes for public comment.

The final plan was synthesised on the basis of a liberal and selective interpretation of the public comments recieved.

In the final analysis the West Yorkshire approach to planning process may be seen as 'pragmatic'. Yet the initial intention was a systematic, rational process based on problem identification and the use of plan generation methods which followed a set of objectives built up from the previously identified problems. The comment from one planning team member who believed that the process they followed was an end in itself is more symptomatic of a slavish adherence to the rational model of policy-making than to pragmatism. However, the intention to follow the problem-led approach and the cumulative progression towards a preferred strategy places West Yorkshire closer to the processes pursued in Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and in Tyne and Wear than to Merseyside. The difficulties and exigencies of going through the planning process diverted the planners away from a 'pure' rational model. The team seem to have worked to achieve rapid cycles of consultation, monitoring and review in a process championed in the idea of annual review (Parker, 1983) associated more with East Sussex (and other shire counties) than with the complex environment of metropolitan areas.

Tyne and Wear

The planners in Tyne and Wear County Council appear to have striven for and sustained a highly systematic planning process. The Project Report (TWCC, n.d.) noted

that structure planning is a continuous process insofar as, once prepared, the plan will need to be flexible and capable of change to meet future and evolving circumstances. It was said that the same flexibility needed to be shown in the process of plan preparation by making allowance within any strategic framework for new policies and decisions (such as possible changes in legislation and central policy). A cyclical process was anticipated as being most capable of meeting changing contexts and policies. A five stage process was identified at the outset based on "problem-solving".

> At an early stage, it was decided to adopt a planning method which emphasised the solving of problems... The main alternative would have been a method based on the identification of agreed aims and objectives which the plan would strive to achieve. There were two main reasons for adopting a problems approach. Firstly, so that planning effort would be concentrated on the more important matters in view of the need to prepare a Structure Plan in a relatively short period of time. Secondly, so that the development of planning policy would relate directly to people's experience of living and working in the County and would therefore encourage greater public response. (TWCC, 1977, 1)

Phase 1 was the main information-collecting and fact-finding stage. A review of existing policies and commitments was undertaken as a first step in the problem-solving method. A survey of local problems involved consultations with public and private organisations and individual members of the public. Tasks also carried out at this stage were to refine the assumptions and forecasts about changes in the county area and to summarise the main subjects for inclusion in the plan. The outcome of these various strands of work was a statement of key issues and a preliminary indication of the planning policies which could be employed to deal with the problems facing the county.

"...Alternative realistic choices for the future of the county" were to be identified in Phase 2 and subjected to consultation and participation. In addition, a small

number of 'alternative strategies' were to be defined at this stage.

The major task of Phase 3 was selection of policies needed in order to carry through the alternative strategies. Again it was intended that a widespread discussion would occur in order to determine "...the basis on which the Structure Plan is to be drawn up (i.e. which alternatives have been chosen)" (ibid.).

The fourth and fifth stages of the planning process were the statutorily required phases of public consultation on the plan and the examination in public. Phase 5 being the period when the Secretary of State's decision would be followed by any modifications to the documentation of the plan.

Work started on the planning process in October 1975.

The programme of public participation was published in 1975 and stated that the statutory requirements and duties were considered to be a basic minimum. The planning department expressed the intention of initiating a wide range of participation measures. The programme was intended to give individual members of the public and organised bodies alike reasonable opportunities to contribute and comment at various stages in the planning process.

Intentions for the programme of public participation included a series of public meetings chaired by county councillors, questionnaires to the public, opportunities for individual members of the public and organised groups to take part in survey work and to discuss strategic planning issues with officers and members. The key stages when public comment would be actively encouraged were

on publication of the interim report of survey,

on publication of the shortlist of alternative strategic choices,
at the preferred options stage,
at publication of the Structure Plan written statement.

The project report explicitly offered opportunities for public comment and participation in strategic planning issues beyond the last stage, that is as a continuing commitment after the definition of the agreed plan, but it did not make clear what those opportunities might be and at what stages in future monitoring and review of the plan those opportunities might be provided. The project report also added that the county council would consider seminars, exhibitions, leaflets, press releases and TV/ radio presentations as appropriate techniques of public participation.

In August 1976 the county council published the Reports of Survey with information on the topics of population, employment, housing, transport, environment and shopping. The reports also presented the results of investigations into social issues and a survey of resource availability. The reports of survey suggested that certain broad issues (key issues) could be defined where choices about the direction and aims of future action were required. The result of these choices would provide the 'theme' for planning policies under a topic heading. 13 key issues emerged from the reports of survey each having 2 or 3 choices attached to them. On employment, for example, more jobs as against better jobs was offered. On housing quality, policies of, either, new build after clearance of existing stock, or, rehabilitation and modernisation of existing housing were offered as alternative policy options. The key issues and attached choices were not considered to be independent nor of equal importance so that 4 'upper level' issues were distilled. It was believed that choices on these 'key' key issues would tend to dictate choices on several of the other issues. Equally, the 4 'upper level' issues were considered

important in their own right by determining the overall shape of the plan. These four key issues were thought to be central and determining elements in the definition of strategies. The team believed that these four 'upper level' issues dictated the policy choices (or 'sub-options' as they were called by the team) on the other 9 key issues. It has to be said that the reasons and explanations given in the documentation for the distillation of the four 'upper level' issues indicate that this was a decision based on a great deal of professional discretion.

> ...a fair amount of subjective judgement was involved in choosing the upper level ones. (Tyne & Wear, 1977, 3)

The four upper level issues were

> (1) the future number of people and jobs in the county,
> (2) the future distribution of people, jobs and resources in the county, and particularly the balance between the old inner areas and outer areas,
> (3) the balance between public and private transport,
> (4) the extent to which structure plan policies might reduce time and length of journeys, particularly journeys to work.

For each of the 4 upper level key issues there was a choice of two contrasting policies giving 16 possible policy combinations. All 16 of these combinations were assessed on the basis of the results from the NOP survey and from responses to the questionnaire contained in the household booklet on the Report of Survey. In addition to these views from the public the 16 'combinations' were also subjected to an evaluation in terms of the Northern Regional Strategy recommendations and an 'in-house' evaluation of the internal compatability of specific policies within the various combinations. Thus, despite the initial intention of having a set of themes which were derived from public opinion about problems and concerns two of the themes were introduced by the planning team itself in the light of the national and

regional context and their professional assessment of the inter-relationships between elements of policy.

Six skeletal strategies (or themes) were chosen by these methods for further development. They included the 5 most popular themes from the household interview survey and the booklet questionnaire returns plus a theme which projected existing development pressures and major spatial trends in the County. The latter not only gave a *laissez faire* policy but also a passive or 'conservative' strategy which was unlikely to interrupt existing trends. The 6 themes also embraced the preferences for future spatial policy identified by the district councils and other consulted public bodies.

A short list of 5 themes (combinations of upper level key issue policy choices) was drawn up and formed the basis of an outline strategies report which then went to public consultation in 1977 (TWCC, 1977). The document indicated how well each outline strategy 'performed' against a long list of strategic planning problems (such as, 'poor housing quality' or 'increasing journey lengths'). The strategic problems had in turn been matched by a pool of 118 potential policies thought to be capable of solving them.

The county council published a report on public participation at the report of survey stage in December 1976. The tripartite division between publicity, information and response was used as a way of structuring the programme. The distinctions bear some similarity to the classification adopted by the research team working on the DOE sponsored project on public participation in structure planning. For example, inward and outward flows of information to the local authority are identified as elements of participation. However, interaction or dialogue between the local authority and the public is not formally identified as an element of

the participation programme and this is a 'blind-spot' in the county's approach to participation. It is seen as an arm's length programme dependent on marshalling statistics and responses to be fed into the planning process at appropriate points.

Aspects of the 2nd stage programme of public participation were posters advertising the publication of the report of survey and details of where copies could be scrutinised. These were distributed to district councils, major offices, libraries, social security branches, banks and so on. A total of 456 known fixed poster locations were covered including 47 commercial sites in the county. 550 copies of the poster were distributed. A further 1 000 posters were placed on PTE buses.

25 000 leaflets were also produced and distributed. Again these were no more than publicity about the production of the report of survey and details of where it might be consulted.

A total of 29 articles in local newspapers were published about the report of survey. TV/ radio coverage was not adequately monitored. However, major coverage was given by 'Look North' on BBC and Radio Newcastle scheduled a phone-in on the reports.

At this time 2 information sheets were published giving greater detail (about the report of survey, about the strategic planning system and the programme of work of the county planners).

Full copies of the report of survey were made available for sale at a cost of £4.50. 600 copies were sold. 350 free copies were distributed to consultees such as the district councils, statutory undertakers, government departments and to all branch libraries in the county.

A 36 page summary was available (free) and 2 000 distributed to libraries and known community groups.

An eight page booklet which picked up the themes from the report of survey included a summary of the choices of planning strategy which could emerge from the report. The county council admit in their later documentation that due to difficulties of distribution not all households recieved a copy. Nevertheless, the council rec ved back 9 400 completed questionnaires (from the booklet) which represents about 2% of the households in the area. The booklet was also distributed to all community groups on a council register and to individuals, schools and others who requested it.

A random sample survey of households was commissioned from National Opinion Polls and Market Research Ltd. (NOP) with a total sample of 2 700 households. 1 968 completed interviews represents a 73% success rate.

Seventeen group discussions were held in the period from January to December 1976 including 7 meetings which took place after publication of the report of survey. Attendance at these meetings was low (16 recorded in Sunderland and 40 in Central Newcastle).

Seven responses were recieved directly from groups who had studied the full report of survey and 16 from groups who had seen the summary booklet. Twenty three individuals responded after studying the reports.

Additionally, the county undertook consultations with the district councils.

In their own assessment of this stage of public participation the county planners considered that bus posters and leaflets created the most interest among the

public (based on monitoring responses and calls made to county hall). This may not be suprising since these were the most widely available sources of information about the report. The council concluded that the rental of commercial sites for 'static' posters was not cost effective. Press and media coverage was felt to have been worthwhile and effective in raising public interest. However, the planners felt that the content of comments back from people as a result of media coverage were felt to be ad hoc and partial. The direct expenditure at this stage of the participation programme was given as £25 000 (Wenban-Smith, 1977) but an additional cost of 1.5 years of professional staff time was incurred (say, £7 500 at 1976 prices).

In addition to helping identify the preferred strategic themes the planners felt that views from the programme of public participation during phase two were also helpful in indicating the ways to achieve the objectives behind the 6 themes. That is, having identified a favoured element of a strategy (such as, growth in the inner areas) public comments were then further analysed to identify ways of achieving that objective. This approach was applied to 4 of the 6 chosen themes. For the 2 remaining themes, which had been included on technical/ political grounds (according to NRST recommendations or *laissez faire*), the means to achieve the desired outcome were chosen on the basis of professional evaluation.

In the event, the 5 outline strategies only picked up 32 policies from the large pool of possiblities thus, again on the basis of professional judgement, restricting strategic choice to one quarter of the policy options that had been originally identified. The selection of policies for inclusion in the strategies was assessed by a technical evaluation of land requirement, cost in terms of local authority capital financing and how far each

policy would go towards (or fall short of) resolving the main strategic problems in the county.

The documentation about this process of translating public responses into strategy choice and then into policy guidelines to achieve strategic objectives is sketchy. Our interview with the senior assistant on the structure plan team was not helpful in further explicating the procedure. When pressed this interviewee pleaded lack of time to elaborate and admitted to being unsure about the process because of not being directly involved. The suspicion that follows from this failure to expand on the written descriptions of the process is that, not only was a good deal of subjectivity and 'professional judgement' brought into play but that there was a degree of unease about the mismatch that the planners had created between their intentions and the reality of strategy building. Much of the documentation for structure planning work, especially descriptions of the planning process and the 'reasoned justification' which get written after the event are open to post -hoc rationalisation. This is not to criticise or denigrate the use or principle of professional judgement. However, there is an inherent professional coyness about the use of judgement and a tendency to wrap up the use of discretion and reason in a spurious package of scientistic explanation. It was only in the context of a face-to-face interview that the senior officer in the structure plan team admitted that judgements about political acceptability and values as well as professional assessments of policy effectiveness and feasibility came into play in translating broad aims into policy packages. Such frankness is unusual in official accounts of planning process (such as found in structure plan documentation) and indicates the value of participant observ_ation and depth interview as a source of information about the planning process.

The generation and initial assessment of the 5 outline strategies was complex (as this brief summary indicates). The technique of linear programming was used to bring together the various listings and preferences. Public opinion, official representations and technical appraisals became interlinked and integrated in the process. Although the themes were effectively publicised and the implications following from the themes were thoroughly identified, we suspect that few people outside the planning team were clear about the assumptions made and steps taken in the strategy generation process. Technical judgement played a significant part at many points in the process although the documentation stressed the importance of public opinion and consultation (TWCC, 1977).

Meetings and discussion groups were noticeably absent from the second stage of the public participation programme on Tyne and Wear. Although media coverage was vigorously promoted, further organised groups were placed on the participation register and further consultations held with public bodies.

A similar programme of public participation to that in phase two was followed on the publication of alternative strategies. A description of the alternatives (approx. 50 pages) was distributed to interested groups, statutory undertakers and the district councils (c. 1 000 print run at direct cost of £3 500). A booklet for delivery to households was produced along the lines of, 'What's in it for us?'. The title was "Take Your Pick" and the cost for printing and distribution came to £10 000. A follow up survey to the initial NOP survey was undertaken by sending the booklet directly to the 1 968 households who had provided successful interviews in the earlier survey. The alternative strategies stage was scheduled to take place from December 1976 until the autumn of 1977 (9 months) which at a rate of 1.5 staff time over this

period would represent approximately £5 600 (at 1976 prices).

Later documentation relating to the preparation of the Tyne and Wear Structure Plan contains fewer and fewer references to public opinion and preferences as elements of the decision space although consultations and representations from the district councils and other public bodies appear to have been a significant element in the review and evaluation process when alternative strategies were assessed and the preferred strategy was refined.

A report published in March 1978 entitled "Choosing the Strategy" presented the pros and cons of all the strategies and detailed the chosen strategy. The main aims of public involvement at this stage was to inform people about the intention to proceed with the preferred strategy. The public was told of the chosen strategy by newspaper advertisements and articles. 20 000 leaflets were distributed to the public and community groups. An information sheet and the report were also mailed to 280 interested people and 450 community groups. Six community groups responded.

Evaluation of the outline strategy stage shows that popular coverage was patchy. 1 017 respondents from the original NOP survey responded to the questionnaire in the booklet. 5 307 other questionnaires were returned from other households that had received copies of "Take Your Pick". At something over 1% of households replying at this stage the figures show some fall off of response compared to the earlier stages. Over 200 groups were sent the "Outline Strategies" document and the household booklet. A covering letter sought their involvement and requested replies. A further 250 organisations recieved the summary statements on outline strategies. Yet, only 23 groups sent in comments and 8 sent in the completed

questionnaire from the "Take Your Pick" booklet. A total of 31 group responses represents only 7% of the 450 groups contacted directly. Only 4 individual members of the public wrote to the council as a result of reading about or consulting the Outline Strategies material.

The county planners were of the opinion that the household booklet responses were biased by showing an over-representation of men, people in the 20-39 age band, employees in professional and managerial jobs and living North of the Tyne. The follow up to the NOP sample was, on the other hand, thought to give a representative cross section of the county population. The county planners took the view that taken together the two sets of data were complementary by giving a representative cross section of views alongside a sample of the comments of the organised groups that were sufficiently interested in planning matters to reply. Nevertheless the structure plan team expressed disappointment at the response and particularly the level of interest from voluntary groups and organisations. Their 'optimistic' reaction was to say that representatives of organisations may have felt that their views had already been presented in stage one.

Contemporary comment was somewhat critical of the approach to participation. The response format allowed to the public was

> ...straight-jacketed (sic) by a very closed form of questionnaire (all answers provided as pre-selected alternatives). This makes for a presentation strong on statistical tidiness but weak on meaning.
> (Osborn, 1978, 4)

Nevertheless there was no popular concensus on the preferred strategy and the county planners have been criticised for drawing qualitative and subjective conclusions from what appeared, on the surface, to be a highly rational and mechanistic process. Furthermore, without delving into the reasons for stated preferences the policy-maker is still left with uncertainties about

how best to achieve the preferred outcomes and whether the means justify the ends.

In an interview with a senior planning officer (July, 1977) we explored the structure plan team's approach to the participation programme. Overall responsibility had been given to a planning assistant who was responsible to a senior planning assistant (the respondent). Annual budgets for the programme were taken through a committee vote. The amounts spent on the programme were considered a matter of public controversy in the area. During the interview copies of local newspaper articles were produced which noted 'the agitation' of Conservative councillors who were opposed to the levels of expenditure being given to public participation. Labour members on the other hand were said to be 'fairly contented'. The interviewee mentioned that the chair of county planning committee was very involved and gave support to the work of the planning department. This had the effect of reassuring the majority party group in the face of criticism and the chair was able to take the Labour group along with him. The members' were said to take a pragmatic approach to the planning process and to participation by the public.

Political acceptability seemed to be a feature of this pragmatism. The report of survey was said, by the interviewee to be too "massive and impracticable" as a document for public consumption and unwieldy as a source of information for the planning process. Staff were being criticised for getting involved in highly esoteric and overambitious work on the structure plan. In the words of the interviewee "...people wanted to embark on analyses of the national economy". The backlash from this was seen in the narrow range of planning strategies included among the alternatives. This was said to be a deliberate stance whereby the strategies were devised with an eye to political feasibility. The political

context was recognised in this move towards realism and resulted in a fairly narrow definition of policy options. Even so, one of the strategies in the alternative options was still felt to have gone beyond what was politically feasible (the strategy identified as 'better jobs, concentration on the outer areas, on private transport and dispersal of new houses and employment centres'). One effect of a growing ethos of political pragmatism in the planning team was a congruence between the problems identified from local studies reported in the Report of Survey and the policies contained in the alternative strategies. The data in Report of Survey was ultimately based on the projection of existing trends and the key issues were said to have been derived from this work.

The intention was that public opinion and views expressed as a result of the report of survey would be taken into account when preparing the outline strategies. These views were said to have become the basis of a set of distinct themes (or "guiding spirits" as they were described in the internal document shortlisting the strategies).

The preferred strategy was drawn from the evaluation of the 5 outline strategies and from the consultations taken about the 'themes'. Evaluation was based on the capital costs of schemes supported by local authorities, resource availability in the construction industry, job creation, industrial land requirements (TWCC, 1978).

The draft structure plan was approved and published for consultation in November 1978. The public participation arrangements included

a booklet of 8 pages which was distributed to all homes in the County,
a mobile exhibition (in a PTE bus) which toured 86 venues in the County,
copies of the draft plan were sent free on request,

an information sheet and the booklet sent to all community groups and interested individuals on the participation register or sent on request, special meetings with community groups, publicity material made available at other public meetings.

450 000 booklets were distributed. 5 000 people passed through the exhibition. 17 articles were published in the local press. 1 070 copies of the full draft plan were given to individuals on request. 533 responses were recieved from the general public plus 2 petitions.

One hundred draft plans were sent to community groups. 85 groups subsequently sent in comments. 1 800 people attended the special meetings for community groups.

In summary, Tyne and Wear followed a strategic planning methodology which appears technically advanced yet combines public consultation and realism in use of resources in the development of evaluation of possible strategies. The methodology is problem-led and draws inspiration from AIDA insofar as it seeks to identify the compatability and independence of problems, policies and strategies. The approach was carried through with considerable professional confidence and public involvement was sought at key stages. However, there is an apparent discrepancy between the intentions for use of public comment in guiding key decisions and the descriptions of the process as it actually occurred. The reasons for the choices taken at some key points in the process remains unclear.

The programme of public participation was approached with confidence by the county planners and a good deal of effort was put into gathering public opinion. However, a major gap in the rationale behind the programme was in not seeking to generate close dialogue with voluntary organisations and the general public. Most of the programme was based on written response from the public and this could explain a fall-off in the level of

response in the later stages of the planning process. In addition, the detailed documentation of the planning process and explanations of how public opinion would be fed into the decision-making stages was opaque. Not only may this complexity have inhibited those individuals and organisations that requested the detailed documentation but the explanations of the procedures were misleading in suggesting a highly rationalistic methodology when, in fact, the planners were increasingly adopting a pragmatic approach to strategy formation based principally on resource availability.

The Tyne and Wear structure plan was submitted to the DOE in 1979 (a year later than the South Yorkshire plan) and suffered a similar fate to the Greater Manchester plan (also submitted at that time). A large number of modifications were required by the Secretary of State following the examination in public and the panel's report. By this stage the change of government and the growing disapproval by civil servants of the corporate approach created a vigorous central backlash against comprehensive strategic planning. The conclusion must be that despite earlier official DOE recommendations and advice about providing a broad policy base for structure plans, in practice social and economic criteria and policies were not strongly held and became increasingly unacceptable to central government.

Process and Participation in the Metropolitan Counties

Having detailed the planning process and participation programmes followed by the metropolitan counties we will attempt to identify similarities and differences between them. A number of previous studies have sought to compare and classify different approaches to the planning process employed in the English counties. Bristow (Cross & Bristow, 1983, 231) set out by asking the question of whether there was a common structure plan process and

although skirting around the answer does provide a broad negative. It is suggested that there are a variety of influences at play ranging from statutory obligations (which some counties such as Wiltshire were proposing to disregard as late as 1977), through to the context of national and regional policy and local values held by specific communities, and professional and political ideologies. Because of this disparate set of influences Bristow is forced back on cataloguing intra-authority differences on each rather than reaching a broader conclusion.

However, even without an elaborate analysis a knowledgeable observer of the strategic planning process in the 1970s would be aware of the differences that emerged between the shire counties and the metropolitan areas. For example, on the matter of plan content the shires were principally concerned with "the allocation and restraint of new development" while the dominant concern in the metropolitan plans "is a declining economic base and inadequate housing" (Booth & Jaffe, 1978, 446).

Another difference in terms of substance and content was between plans which introduced a broad range of social and economic policy issues and those which stressed land use and physical planning problems. The simple conclusion that a clear line could be drawn between shire and metropolitan counties with the latter going for more corporate and broadly based policies was not shown in practice. A number of shire county plans (Cambridgeshire, for example) fell prey to the Secretary of State's red pencil with a great many policies being proposed for modification after the examination in public because he felt they were not appropriate to structure planning. The irony of this central editing of social strategies and objectives is that much of the previous official advice about structure planning (in the

development plan manual, structure plan notes, departmental circulars and memoranda) supported the principle of relating structure plan policies to a broad range of local problems and issues.

Another major distinction in strategic planning approach that got a good deal of exposure in the technical press during the 1970s was the difference (linked in part with the debate and controversy over land-use based plans and broad corporate physical, social and economic plans) between comprehensive plan-making as against an incremental approach. The latter was most closely associated with East Sussex and the "annual up-dating method of structure planning" (Thorburn, 1975). The rationale behind the annual plan is that adopting a global approach conflicts with other demands placed on the planning system. Thorburn has indicated that the delays resulting from a systematic study of growth options by planners can cause blight and that the dynamic nature of modern society turns the provision of precise long term targets into a chimera. Rather than arguing for policies on the basis of first principles he suggests that assessment of the pros and cons of existing policies and a incremental process of step-wise improvement is more practicable. The annual process of planning also fits more closely with other established procedures in local authorities such as annual budget setting and performance review.

Brehény's analysis of structure plans focussed on methodology. He makes as a starting point the truism that the dominant focus on a rational comprehensive view of structure plan methodology in the sixties and early 1970s gave way to alternative approaches, which Breheny termed "post-rational". Accepting that the label could suggest that the later structure plan methods exhibited little or no rationality he argued that because the alternatives grew as a result of learning and

understanding some of the failures and limitations of the almost evangelical commitment to rational methods in the initial period that the term post-rationality serves a purpose in highlighting the contrast. His analysis suggests that a number of structure plans submitted for DOE approval in a window of time stretching from late 1975 to early 1979 exhibited broadly based experimentation in planning methods. Breheny proposed that this group of plans and planning authorities were looking for alternatives to the previous methodological orthodoxy. Candidates for inclusion under this label of "alternatives" are Humberside and East Sussex with an incremental approach to plan-making and Hertfordshire where a problem-solving, mixed methodology was adopted.

A difficulty with this categorisation of a wide range of "alternative" structure plan methodologies under one label is that they are very disparate indeed. For example, the county planning officer for Humberside has said about the approach in his department that they sought to deal with specific problems and were not interested in a comprehensive approach (Gill, 1978). The plan on Humberside contained only 6 issues which were only partially adressed with the intention of building in further issues in later reviews. Gill has said of their approach that they wished to "...ditch the illusion of rationality" (ibid.). On the other hand, Hertfordshire (also included as an "alternative") adopted an approach to structure plan making which was marked by a systematic and carefully differentiated series of stages in the planning process and produced 120 strategies as part of the generation and evaluation stages. The main difference between the planning process in Hertfordshire and earlier attempts to use 'rational' methods was a more catholic interlinking of various elements of policy development. Broadly based on the strategic choice approach the Hertfordshire planning process also identified a small number of key issues (for pragmatic

reasons) and proceeded to generate a large number of strategies.

All the metropolitan county planning authorities are placed under the third phase of structure plan methodologies in Breheny's scheme. This is identified as the "pragmatic/rational" stage. A less crucial role is given to systematic and technical assessments and greater attention is given to public discussion and political inputs to the plan.

The final stage in this periodisation of English structure planning is identified as "irrational". The counties that earn that title include local planning authorities that were reluctant to prepare a strategic plan. Wiltshire offers a good example. The authority pleaded lack of staff, few resources for preparing a strategic plan or for carrying it forward into implementation and no development plan scheme (even as an informal document) in prospect. In the end all of the reluctant strategic planning authorities succumbed to central government pressure and exhortations and produced documents. Frequently these were done quickly with minimum effort. A commom format was a section on local planning issues and a second section on the policies that the county was intending to use to meet these problems. The documents were opaque and a "reasoned justification" for the policies was not provided.

Simplifying the experience, methodology and preferred policies of over 60 structure plan authorities is likely to gloss over some important differences. Identifying the five metropolitan county councils as sharing a common methodology (the West Midlands review had not been submitted to DOE by April 1980, being the cut-off date for Breheny's analysis) indicates that this analysis is too coarse for our purposes. We have already indicated above that there were significant differences in the

approach and methodology of structure planning not only of degree but kind between the six conurbation counties. authorities. We have to adopt a finer level of analysis to draw a more differentiated conclusion about the structure planning process in the metropolitan counties.

A review on the detailed methodology used by a range of structure planning authorities provides a potential framework for considering differences among the metropolitan counties (Booth & Jaffe, 1978). Although the authors confined their consideration of methodology to the generation and evaluation stages this showed distinct differences between 20 authorities including Greater Manchester and Merseyside. However, the basis of the analysis of the plan generation and evaluation stages of the planning process is land use allocation and spatial forms of future developments, a matter of relatively peripheral interest for the metropolitan counties. Indeed, when categorising their case study authorities according to use of one of three approaches to generation of strategies (land supply, spatial design concepts and development potential) Booth and Jaffe are unable to include the two metropolitan counties because they do not conform.

We are therefore drawn towards making a listing from first principles of factors influencing strategic plan making and public participation in the metropolitan counties. All the authorities faced common legal and administrative regulations for structure planning. So, for example, all identified a set of key issues for inclusion in the structure plan and there was a good deal of congruence between the substantive issues identified as crucial (local economy and jobs, housing, transport, environment etc). Similarly, all faced a common set of statutory obligations including public participation. Although the specific nature of national and regional context and policies varied in the metropolitan counties,

given that the West Midlands is difficult to treat in this analysis because of the particular circumstances of plan preparation, some commonality in terms of the local economic context can be assumed for the other conurbation authorities.

The factors which begin to emerge as crucial to explaining differences in approach to strategic plan making in the metropolitan counties therefore appear as professional and political context and ideologies. The dominant political ideology in these authorities was linked to Labour party politics but this can cover a range of values, beliefs and intentions. Professional ideologies of planners are also disparate within a broad set of principles and conventions. Among these are the desire for careful management of land and other resources, for coordinated policy making, for environmental improvement, for democratic participation. Within these broad elements of ideology will be conventions about corporateness, flexibility, rationality (Solesbury, 1983, 2).

We have already recorded that Merseyside and the West Midlands were somewhat set apart for seperate reasons. The strategic approach on Merseyside has been called "maverick" in comparison to the other metropolitan counties because of the rapid identification of a single urban regeneration strategy at an early stage. It is tempting to observe that if the Merseyside planners were not anti-method they were certainly agnostic with respect to how the plan was put together. They appeared much more concerned to see something done to improve conditions in the county than be applauded by their professional peers for having followed a theoretically pure planning process. The public participation programme on Merseyside is also unusual in its expressed intention of fostering consultation rather than participation and in limiting consultation to "major

elites" as the plan making process proceeded. West Midlands planners were concerned to provide an integrative strategy as their principal task and in seeking to achieve this paid comparatively less attention to public consultation and participation than found in the other metropolitan counties. The strategic planning approach in West Midlands was highly confined and technical depending essentially on agreements reached in inter-authority meetings and detailed work by county planning officers with little recourse to public views or preferences. Despite the obvious differences in circumstances and approach we suggest that Merseyside and West Midlands planners shared a relatively high commitment to influencing key agencies by negotiation, a professional confidence in their own judgement who were nonetheless open to advice from politicians, an approach to consultation that saw informing and persuading influential local bodies as the principal task and who held a relatively low commitment to participation that extended beyond consultation and informing people of key stages and possibilities in the planning process.

West Yorkshire planners followed a planning process which drew a good deal of inspiration from the annual updating form of structure plan favoured by some shire counties. The officers emphasised speed in production of the plan and flexibility in format. The planners expressed the view that their approach was not constrained by key issues although in fact a series of 26 "problems" under headings such as, economy, housing and environment shows that they did so in all but name. Public contact was relatively extensive but the planners referred to their programme as consultation rather than participation. Thus we conclude that the West Yorkshire strategic planning approach was "hybrid" in drawing from the strategic choice approach and offering a number of themes for public consultation yet doing so within a framework of annual reports which was intended to retain

flexibility, emphasise process rather than plan and sustain relatively rapid progress to a written statement. The observation that West Yorkshire submitted their plan for approval over one year later than their neighbours in South Yorkshire, at the same time as Greater Manchester and only a little ahead of Tyne and Wear, may indicate that their approach had no advantage in speeding up the strategic planning process. The minimal influence of adverse public opinion on the strategy and the several references in our interviews to the engineering of public consent indicate a process that was heavily led by professional officers who were not strongly commited to participation and with which the politicians acquiesced more by default than intent.

Greater Manchester and Tyne and Wear county planning planning departments shared some affinities in strategic planning approach. Of the metropolitan counties they exhibited the strongest committment to following a highly rationalistic model based broadly around the strategic choice approach. If there is a difference between them Greater Manchester were more ready to adapt their approach (and admit to having done so) when they realised that the strategy generation process was throwing up some "unrealistic " alternatives. Tyne and Wear on the other hand maintained a public face of rationality despite the necessity of introducing professional judgement and subjectivity at several stages in the planning process. Both authorities showed a relatively limited commitment to public participation although again Tyne and Wear presented a public face that was at odds with the actuality of the extent to which public preferences were incorporated into strategy development. Both authorities saw disappointing public involvement which can be explained in terms of a failure to engage in a dialogue with the public. Impersonal forms of contact (questionnaires and reply paid response forms) were heavily used and the result was a fall off of public

interest over the course of the planning process. Public interest may also have been influenced by the complex and technical nature of much of the material available to the public whilst the policy of charging the public for all but the most basic documentation in Greater Manchester was a further disincentive to widespread participation. The overall impression therefore is of an officer led process in both Greater Manchester and Tyne and Wear where the underlying professional values were dominated by methodological issues rather than political or democratic concerns.

Pursuing this discussion a little further we might conclude that in South Yorkshire an unusual combination of high commitment to public participation alongside a professional desire to follow a systematic and rational planning process brought the officers into conflict with the politicians. The main consequence was a much stronger political lead and sensitivity to political values in the later stages of the planning process. In this respect the South Yorkshire experience of strategic planning differs from the process followed in any of the other metropolitan counties.

SECTION 5

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE 1973-1978

> A new market would be opened up for that part of the South Riding. The figures for tuberculosis, rickets and other infantile scourges...would be reduced. The children would have an elementary school of their own; but secondary school pupils could be divided...Fresh air, space and freedom could work wonders for them. Perhaps far-sighted industrialists could be persuaded to move their factories out of the grime and congestion of the city.
> "We've got to plan. We've got to build for the future," said Snaith. "We've got to justify our power." (Holtby, 1983, 77)

In this section the intention is to indicate the form and content of the plan-making process followed in the preparation of the first structure plan for South Yorkshire. The period embraced by this account covers the time from the inception of the new county to the submission of the plan and the subsequent Examination in Public. The account is principally concerned to present the various stages of the planning process. The fine technical detail of the work undertaken within the various stages is of less direct concern as we are interested in the policy-making process itself and how intentions and actuality did not always coincide, how pressures from the various participants interrelated and how conflicts of interest and power were resolved. The focus stems from the overall purpose of this work which is to consider the influence of public opinion and the public participation programme on the strategic policy-making process. The public participation programme and its place and contribution towards policy-making will be highlighted. This account of the overall policy-making process in South Yorkshire inevitably also touches upon the links between the county and other interested parties in the sub-region including district councils and other contiguous local authorities. These broader links are the subject of a more detailed analysis in a later section.

Starting Points

The practical context for strategic planning in the new county was initially complicated by the existence of a formal permission for the preparation of an 'urban' structure plan for the Doncaster area. In the period immediately after local government reorganisation the inheritance of previous work towards strategic planning was common for all the metropolitan county councils. The formal commencement order for a Doncaster structure plan had been given by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1973. Responsibility was vested in the (then) West Riding County Council with mechanisms for collaboration/ consultation with all the local authorities in the Doncaster area. This prior permission and the existence of a joint team working on the Doncaster plan did create complications for the new county, particularly at later stages of plan preparation. However, at the initial stages the existing position was accepted. In 1974 South Yorkshire County Council was formally given responsibilty for continuing the work towards a Doncaster plan. An early decision was to carry on with the 'urban' structure plan alongside the preparation of a strategic plan for the rest of the county area (the 'Three Districts plan', so called because it covered the areas of Sheffield, Barnsley and Rotherham).

From the outset a strong emphasis was given to public participation in preparing the South Yorkshire structure plan. From the political side the manifesto from the County Labour party prior to the elections in 1973 included a specific statement of intent.

> ...Democracy demands not only that decisions are made by elected authorities but that the authorities are at all times sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the people they represent. Labour will therefore make every effort to ensure meaningful participation by local communities in the

> formulation of any plans affecting the areas in which they live.(South Yorkshire County Labour Party, 1973, 5)

The overwhelming majority given to South Yorkshire's Labour candidates in May 1973 (the Labour party gaining 82 of the 100 seats - with seven seats uncontested) offered the opportunity to put these initial commitments into effect.

The county planning committee and the planning department threw effort into putting public participation on the agenda for the plan preparation process. The chair of planning committee was strongly committed to public participation and this registered strongly in preparation for structure plan work. A specialist post of 'public participation officer' was created and the position was filled relatively early in the build up of the staff establishment for the planning department. The first incumbent was in post by August 1973. The appointee was a young professional already working in Sheffield having been involved in developing the public participation elements of the joint Sheffield/ Rotherham Land Use Transportation Study (SRLUTS). He was a qualified planner with strong enthusiasm for increasing public involvement in plan-making. The officer was given a broad brief to develop a programme of public participation from a 'middle tier' position; a position which allowed a high degree of influence on decisions about the planning process. Other appointments to the newly forming structure planning team were young planners from other urban authorities who had experienced recent work in an environment of 'progressive planning'. For example, several appointees came from Merseyside where the joint Liverpool authorities had taken a lead in putting into operation an innovative approach to structure planning (CES/RTPI, 1973, 31). It is relevant to note that the reorganisation of local government did see an expansion of planning posts in general and created many opportunities for younger planners to gain rapid

elevation into senior posts and to positions of considerable influence. Where this promotion was into newly created authorities such as South Yorkshire County Council there was wide scope for the introduction of new ideas and ways of working in a context with no established pattern of departmental working, philosophy or approach to the planning process.

A flavour of the attitude among some of the structure plan team towards public participation can be judged from the internal documents which began to set out the framework for the planning process during 1973. In October 1973, the officer responsible for public participation began a working paper about setting up the programme by noting (under the heading of the overall aim of public participation) that

> ...(b)efore anybody suggests ...it may be necessary to carry out an abbreviated form of public participation exercise because of the time-scale under which the Structure Plan is going to be prepared, I think it needs to be emphasised that the general aim of public participation in South Yorkshire should extend far beyond the particular task of preparing a structure plan. (SYCC, 1973a, 1)

The theme of this paper (entitled 'Public Participation in South Yorkshire - Some Thoughts') is expanded to embrace the general aim of public participation which

> ...should surely be to heighten and increase the level of involvement of the people in South Yorkshire in all the activities carried out by the County and perhaps by the Districts as well; to make democracy, more democratic. (ibid.)

The main methods for doing this were seen as

> establishing a network of personal contacts with local groups,
> developing effective and "popular" means of communication with the general public,
> ensuring the cooperation of social, community and adult education workers,
> encouraging and helping local councillors develop their role as local representatives,
> developing a statistically sound sample for surveying public attitudes.

Already an emergent programme of public participation is being sketched out and it was a programme of ambitious proportions and intent. The author suggests that over time as personal contacts develop between the county planners and the public

> ...we shall almost certainly succeed in securing more and more public participation.(ibid.)

The paper considers the state of local democracy, noting the low turn-out at local elections and appears to regret that "...councillors perform(ing) their role as executives to the exclusion of their role as local representatives" (ibid.). The paper then suggests that local interest groups have grown in number and strength in order to represent local views; in effect to fill a gap left due to the neglect by councillors of their representative role. If this view of local democracy and its failings is accepted, the author goes on, then methods of public participation must be sought to

> involve the "silent majority",
> make members of the silent majority become members of the articulate minority, and
> involve the articulate minority.

In stating this broad agenda for local democracy the paper asks whether

> ...the ultimate aim of public participation is to convert the <u>silent</u> majority into the <u>articulate</u> minority (ibid., 2).

We find here two strong principles which were to be reflected in the evolving programme of public participation in South Yorkshire. Firstly, that public participation is an element of the democratic process and, secondly, that participation methods should be tailored to different groups and different needs. There is also an indication that the silent majority is seen as being the principal or ultimate target group for integration into the programme in South Yorkshire. The paper takes social surveys as the main way of approaching

the silent majority, whilst use of communication channels (media, exhibitions etc.) and education were considered appropriate methods for encouraging more people to become involved in representing local views through pressure group activity. Work in schools and colleges may be an element of "converting people into active members of the community". Both publicity and communication about planning matters have to be seen as sowing seeds of interest in local affairs which may have a long term rather than an immediate payoff in civic action and public service.

> ...Finally, there is the personal or 'missionary' approach whereby local authority staff (social and community workers or adult education tutors) can encourage people to become active in local issues. (ibid., 4)

One of the ways identified for encouraging the participation of the more articulate residents is seen as the use of part-time community workers to develop and maintain face to face contact with etablished groups.

In a discussion note circulated within the structure plan team in December 1973 the idea of a multi-method approach to the public participation programme was developed a stage further. The County Labour party manifesto and the interim findings of the Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning are used to support the initiation of a substantial programme. This paper (SYCC, 1973b, 1) notes the value of joint work with the district councils to help with strategic and local planning and proposes joint social surveys and joint approaches to the public.

An early statement of the preferred approach to plan making was the Project Report for the 3 Districts plan (SYCC, 1974a). The report was statutorily required by the Department of the Environment as a formal indication of how the work towards the structure plan was to be managed. It provided a yardstick against which

intention, progress and achievement could be measured by the Secretary of State and others.

The structure plan project report was in final draft by February 1974 and approved by planning committee later in the same month. A section on consultations and participation declared the intention to

> ...carry out a programme of public participation which goes beyond the(se) statutory requirements. (SYCC, 1974a, para.6.8)

In its final form the report was presented as a committee paper which was also available to other interested parties particularly organisations "central to the overall process" (ibid, preface). The project report was consequently circulated widely in the region particularly to district councils and other local authorities and a strong call was made in its pages for the involvement of a wide range of bodies in the preparation of the plan.

The project report contained a timetable of work and specific dates for the completion of the various stages as well as presenting an outline of the phases of work and the methods and activities that the county planners expected to undertake on the way to a final plan. The need for 'fluidity' in the planning process was mentioned as was the need for defined methods and procedures as an aid to good management of the process and a safeguard against uncertainty and change in future circumstances.

In terms of the planning process itself the project report indicated a general approach which would adopt 'proven methods of working' and the 'lessons learnt from elsewhere'. After early work on survey and forecasting to provide information on needs, opportunities and problems the structure plan team would concentrate on the generation of alternative plans.

The public participation programme was seen to be evolving into three main types of activity

> ...those aimed at collecting factual information about the behaviour and attitudes of the residents in the area, those aimed at giving publicity to key stages of the structure planning process and those aimed at involving interested members of the public in the planning process. (ibid., para.6.9)

On timetable, the report indicated an intention to submit the 3 Districts plan by the end of 1976; a period of less than 3 years for plan preparation. The report writers appeared to be confident that this was a sufficient period of time for the necessary work, given their references to 'streamlined working arrangements' and 'full cooperation from consultees in providing information and comments when required to do so' (ibid., 5). In order to achieve this schedule, reference is made to proven methods of working on strategic planning issues and use of the experience gained from prior strategic planning work in the country. (A summary of the proposed work programme that was contained in the Project Report is found in Appendix 1)

A number of key technical elements of importance in structure plan preparation were outlined. These included,

> an assessment of policy commitments,
> survey and forecasting work,
> definition of aims and objectives,
> plan generation and evaluation, monitoring and review.

An early indication of commitment to broad involvement of a range of participants in the planning process was the need for identification of existing plans and policies, the views of councillors and a review of public attitudes as a principal basis for deriving the aims and objectives of the plan. The report states that survey and forecasting work carried out in the early stages of the planning process would provide information on needs,

opportunities and problems which would become the foundation for the "...generation of alternative plans seeking different ways of overcoming the problems" (ibid., 18).

> ...The process of plan generation and evaluation will involve several stages of working from the generation of a number of alternative concepts to the adoption of a final preferred strategy of policies and proposals covering all the main areas of concern. (ibid.)

Evaluation procedures would assess the alternatives in terms of,

> effectiveness in meeting the objectives,
> distribution of benefits and costs between various sectors of the population,
> financial and real resource implications for private and public sectors,
> the 'robustness' of the plan in the face of of a range of possible future circumstances.

The plan preparation process was seen as falling into three main phases. The project report warned that Phase 1 (focussed on surveys and forecasts) was likely to be subject to constraints of initial staff shortages and the availability of information but it was anticipated that this phase would be completed by late summer 1974. Three inter-related components of this first phase were,

> determination of needs, opportunities and problems, setting aims/ objectives and defining the main issues,
> assessing the various technical approaches to plan generation and evaluation as a prelude to Phase 2.

Assessing local problems was to be developed from initial surveys and forecasts. Major strategic topics would be surveyed. Various forms of public participation and social survey work was envisaged and consultations were planned with public bodies to discover their policies and expected programmes. The role of the district councils was seen as important with a need for "close collaboration" in order to gather the necessary information.

The definition of aims and objectives was dependent on the determination of needs, opportunities and problems. As for the technical assessment of plan generation/ evaluation methods the project report notes that this would have to be well advanced by the end of Phase 1 "...so that the need for any models can be specified and such models calibrated and likely data requirements determined" (ibid., 22). At this stage a county wide transportation model was anticipated.

Phase 2 (predicted, in the project report, to fall between late summer 1974 and the end of 1975) would begin with the definition of broad policy choices. These choices would be derived from the definition of main issues, aims and objectives and from the Phase 1 studies on individual topics. A detailed evaluation of broad policy choices was not expected but the chosen broad policies would form the basis for more detailed definition of objectives and for plan generation. The major plan generation and evaluation stage would occur in Phase 2 leading to a shortlist of alternative strategies from which a favoured plan was to be developed. The evaluation of the policies would principally revolve around how far each strategy 'solved' the problems identified in Phase 1. It was also intended in Phase 2 to develop survey and forecasting work on 'secondary' issues, "in order that an assessment can be made of the strategic impact" of them prior to the final listing of plan alternatives. Part of the plan generation/ evaluation process was to consist of an analysis of transportation and accessibility aspects of the alternative strategic policies. A Garin/ Lowry model was proposed to allow assessment of population changes and other models were to be employed to evaluate different transport policies (including testing of the models used for the three land use/ transportation studies (LUTS) that had been previously undertaken in the sub-region

prior to local government reorganisation and the work derived from the county council's own county wide LUTS). Reports of survey were predicted to be available in Phase 2.

Early 1976 would see the start of Phase 3 when the favoured strategy was to be refined and an action plan on strategic priorities prepared. "A major consultation exercise and the most important part of the public participation programme" was to occur at this stage (ibid., 25). Detailed elaboration of proposals for parts of the county might be carried out at this time and checks made against resource availability and the local implications of strategic policies. It was expected that submission of the plan to the Secretary of State would be made by the end of 1976.

Not only was it intended to incorporate some element of public participation into each phase of the plan making process but a start was being made on matching the methods of public participation to stages in the planning process (the latter was seen, as we noted above from the project report, as being in three main phases - defining problems and setting aims; developing and refining policy choices; elaboration of preferred strategy).

A close resemblance between the broad identification of proposed activities where public views were sought in relation to the structure plan process in South Yorkshire and the general approach to participation programmes being evolved by the Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning (which was coordinated by Dr. Hampton of Sheffield University) is apparent at this early stage.

Echoes of the Skeffington Report and legislation are also to be seen in the statement that

> ...(t)he two main stages when interested members of the public can most usefully contribute to the preparation of the Structure Plan are during Phase I, when they can provide input to the definition of problems and objectives, and at the beginning of Phase III when they can consider the implications of alternative plans. (ibid., para.6.14)

Problem definition was considered incomplete without public views. In Phase 2 a process of providing information to the public was felt necessary in order to keep informants, groups and other consultees aware of the activities of the planning team. Phase 3 was when the planners saw the public as making their most significant and useful contribution when reacting to the alternative plans and policies.

More specifically, the elements of the public participation programme were being laid down in some detail by Spring 1974. A social survey was intended almost immediately during Phase I which would explore "...respondents' perceptions of the area's problems and learn about their behaviour and attitudes" (ibid., para 6.10). Publicity was needed at several key stages of the planning process. The involvement of interested groups and individuals was to be by means of a 'kit'

> ...providing relevant background information for a serious consideration of an area's problems and an adequate basis for preparing ideas and suggesting priorities. (ibid., para.6.12)

Adult education classes and work in schools were further techniques to be used for involving interested members of the public and the younger generation. Personal contact was identified as "...an essential condition for this type of involvement" so that a team of part-time community workers was envisaged as a way of offering "...help and encouragement .. to local groups", stimulating "...the formation of new groups", and running "...discussion groups with interested individuals, etc" (ibid., para.6.13).

An extensive programme of public involvement was also anticipated at Phase III.

> ...In the second of these two stages, meetings with all members of a group, as opposed to just its representatives will also be encouraged.(ibid.)

The report mentions that work with schools and colleges and adult education courses could take place at any time in the planning process. It also mentions the broad remit originally outlined by the participation officer.

> ...South Yorkshire County Council is intending to consult with the public on strategic policies and proposals as and when appropriate.(ibid.)

The project report was accepted at county planning committee on 18 February 1974 with instructions to proceed with the programme of public participation.

<u>Organisational Aspects of plan preparation: Phase 1.</u>

The internal organisation of the planning department and its links with 'external' bodies were anticipated in the project report. A 'control organisation' for direction of the Doncaster structure plan had been set up in November 1973 consisting of members and officers from the new county council and Doncaster District Council together with DOE Regional office representation. A similar type of arrangement was anticipated for the "3 Districts" structure plan although with seperate member and officer groupings. A sub-committee of the Joint Consultative Committee ((JCC) being the liaison body involving all 5 local authorities within the county) was introduced to deal with planning matters in general. The JCC was also the parent body to a number of other sub-committees where liaison on policy was necessary or where functions were shared by the two tiers (such as Highways). The JCC Planning Sub-Committee was to become the forum for detailed debate on the structure plans and on other county planning work. Membership of JCC consisted of 4 members from each of the five authorities

and was serviced by a joint secretariat drawn from the offices of the chief executives of the county council and Barnsley District Council. The terms of reference of the JCC were to consider any matter relating to the functions of the county council or the district councils which were of joint mutual concern.

The JCC Structure Plan Sub-Committee was to consist of two members from each of the constituent authorities and was to "...consider matters of mutual concern relating to the formulation of the Structure Plan and the related matters for the County of South Yorkshire". The chief executives of Barnsley MDC and South Yorkshire CC were also responsible for servicing the Sub-Committee. Members could be supported at the sub-committee by their technical officers.

At officer level, the Structure Plan Technical Committee was the principal formal meeting for officer discussion between the 5 authorities on strategic planning issues. This committee was initiated and serviced by the county council. It was chaired by the county planning officer and involved, inter alia, the county's chief executive, the county engineer, county treasurer and the director-general of the Passenger Transport Executive. The district councils were represented by the heads of the respective planning departments. The Department of the Environment were to be represented "...as advisers to the committee on a permanent basis" (ibid., 28). The function of the technical committee was "...that of considering the major documents which the department produces prior to their being taken to members".

Structure Plan Group, a further formal grouping dealing with technical matters relevant to the (3 Districts) structure plan, was an officers group internal to the county planning department. Structure Plan Group not only took responsiblity for debate about and the

direction of technical work but also coordinated all managerial decisions associated with the structure plan. This group also serviced Technical Committee. It consisted of professional officers of PO1 level and above. Additional technical input to the structure plan and other county planning matters was provided by Structure Plan Policy Group, a senior grouping which drew from all sections of the county planning department.

Several working parties (WP) were also anticipated by the Project Report with tasks related to specific aspects of the plan. These working parties were seen as fitting into the corporate planning processes of the county and the intention was that their scope would extend beyond county council responsibilities. For example, reference was made to "...topics where considerable executive responsibility lies beyond the County Council's control ... e.g. housing, employment, education, social and community facilities, pollution and recreation". Initially, these working parties were intended to be broad in their composition by drawing on both professional officers and technical grade staff as appropriate.

By midsummer 1974 eleven working parties had been agreed in principle by officers in the county planning department. They were identified as,

Employment,
Financial Resources,
Public Participation,
Housing,
Physical Resources and Environment,
Transportation,
Plan Generation and Evaluation,
Shopping,
Community Services,
Recreation and Leisure,
Public Utilities.

Up to 9 staff from the county council (with a majority from the structure plan team) formed the basis of each working party's membership. It was also intended that

the 4 district councils would send at least one officer to each working party and that the regional office of the DOE would be represented for appropriate topics. All, apart from the WPs on Plan Generation/ Evaluation and on Public Utilities, were in 'formal operation' by mid July 1974. However, after an initial period of sending staff to the WP meetings, the district councils complained that they were unable to afford the scarce staff time required to keep up their attendance. To overcome the breakdown in liaison caused by the absence of district council officers from the WPs a further working group was introduced later in 1974 (simply entitled Structure Plan) which involved 'middle management' from the planning teams of the 5 authorities. The purpose of this group was to "...provide the context for the Working Parties" (SYCC, 1974i, 1) with the working parties themselves becoming internal to the county council, that is, only consisting of county council employees. The (Structure Plan) group met on a monthly cycle or more frequently when necessary.

The approved establishment of the county planning department at the time of the project report was 47 professional and technical officers.1 Of this

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1 As part of our survey of the other metropolitan authorities in England and their structure planning work we asked respondents about the establishments in the respective county planning departments. In particular we were interested in 'professional' staff on career scale PO1 or above. Our inquiries were somewhat complicated by the way that some authorities advertised and appointed at AP5/PO1 and merged the top of the 'technical' career scale and the bottom of the 'professional' scale. Given this complication we placed staff on these combined scales within the 'professional' category and accepted that there is resulting imprecision and some lack of comparability between authorities as a result.

The findings show that in the initial period of plan preparation professional staff numbers were

24 in Greater Manchester(Policy & Structure Plan Group),
25 in Merseyside structure plan team,

establishment only 20 professional staff were in post by April 1974. It was anticipated that 40 professional planning staff would be on the payroll by late 1974. In the event the size of the department never reached this lower figure. For most of the period of plan preparation, 16 senior officers were employed specifically on structure plan work with approximately the same number on technical staff grades. In addition, the structure plan team was supplemented by a number of seconded staff (at PO grades) from other departments and planning department sections.

Phase 1 Work

The initial stage of planning work began largely as intended. By the late spring of 1974 a number of the working parties had met several times and the task of collecting information; setting up research studies,

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16 in Tyne and Wear (9 senior officers & 7 planning assistants) plus 5 technicians,
13/14 West Yorkshire,
30 in West Midlands.

A further complication in these figures is that some of the teams were supplemented by seconded staff from other departments. In particular, frequent secondements came from Transportation units within the councy councils.

South Yorkshire did, therefore, seem to be carrying a larger establishment in planning than the other metropolitan county councils.

Population figures (rounded to the nearest 100 000) in 1971 were

Greater Manchester	2.75 million	(0.115)
Merseyside	1.7 million	(0.074)
Tyne & Wear	1.2 million	(0.075)
West Yorkshire	2.1 million	(0.150)
West Midlands	2.7 million	(0.090)
South Yorkshire	1.3 million	(0.042)

Figures in brackets indicate the population (in millions) per professional planning officer. The figures show that in South Yorkshire one professional grade planner was 'responsible' for 42 000 people, whereas in West Yorks a planner was 'responsible' for 150 000 people (a proportionate difference of nearly 4 to 1).

collating existing data and so on had begun in earnest. At an early stage the Public Participation Working Party discussed the implementation of a public attitude survey, publicity measures and the involvement of community groups and organisations in the planning process. Population and Forecasting WP was reporting initial evidence of population increase using the cohort survival programme 'borrowed' from the West Riding county planners and more sophisticated forecasts were being pursued. Employment data were being worked up in order to analyse past and present trends and the current employment and labour position in particular employment sectors was being studied. The Physical Resources WP seemed to have developed rapport with district council staff and the group was undertaking a collective analysis of land commitments as well as preparing for an environment study to assess needs and problems in the county. Information was also being gathered on Green Belt, agriculture, despoiled land, surface mineral activities and open cast mining. An intention from this WP was to provide a development potential analysis (a simple seive map) by the end of Phase 1. Housing WP was trying to get information on current district council policies, had assessed various models of housing condition and housing markets and seemed satisfied with their suitability for providing inputs to the plan. A housing and environmental index was being designed as a consequence of this initial work with a view to later field work. Housing demand calculations were also being developed. The Financial Resources WP was looking at patterns of local authority expenditure in the county and studies of the regional economy were being planned. Transportation WP had got under way with a range of technical studies (setting up LUTS zones for the new county area and liaising with the Sheffield/ Rotherham LUTS which was still in operation at that time) and looking at car parking provision and standards, accident

data and central area traffic problems (SYCC, 1974, Structure Plan Progress Report No. 1).

The position on inter authority working therefore looked positive and in a healthy condition in the period shortly after the county council became fully responsible for structure planning work. By July 1974 the Shopping, Community Services and Recreation & Leisure Working Parties had begun meeting on a regular basis and each had prepared a brief for work needed and a timetable for its production. The Shopping WP was proposing to commission a consultant to study present and emerging retailing methods and a study of shopping behaviour among South Yorkshire households (SYCC, 1974, Structure Plan Progress Report No. 2).

Although Plan Generation and Evaluation WP only met informally (and with no District Council representation) the question of the appropriate methodology for the planning process was a central concern during Phase 1 and the decision was taken to discuss methods of plan preparation through the mechanism of a Methodology group within the structure plan team. This group was constituted in 1974. A number of papers on methods or aspects of plan preparation were produced between the summer and November 1974 (SYCC, 1974n). Most did not get beyond their original hand written form but their contents are indicative of the attention given to planning methodology by the structure plan team. Titles of the papers emanating from the Methods Group included 'The Nature of the Structure Plan' and 'The Function and Content of the First Submission Structure Plan'. In fact, three general papers on 'plan generation and evaluation' were produced in the Spring of 1974 involving contributions from at least five members of the structure plan team. Notable in these contributions were the frequent use of experience from previous Merseyside work which was used as a yardstick against which to measure

the planning process proposals for South Yorkshire. In the note on the nature of the structure plan the issues of scale, content and timetable were addressed. The value of the DOE Development Plan Manual (DOE, 1970) as a guide to the matter of scale was questioned given the reorganisation of local government which had narrowed the responsibilities of planning authorities (both metropolitan county councils and the district councils) whilst extending the nature, size and diversity of issues which the planning system was required to address. The Manual had envisaged that "...both counties and county boroughs could produce structure plans which included physical proposals for a well defined local area" (SYCC, 1974n, DN METHD 01, 1). These proposals were capable of showing local detail in considerable depth, either in the written statement or in the key diagram, insets to the key diagram or as Regulation 8 plans. The structure planning team in South Yorkshire, through Methods Group, believed that choice of level of detail was the key to resolving the nature of the structure plan. The methodology and the range of subject matter proposed in the Manual was acceptable to the team. However, they were less happy about some of the other advice from the DOE. Choice of level of detail was thought likely to influence the efficacy of the plan when produced, particularly with respect to local plan preparation and the division of functions between the two types of plan. The county planners were saying that the Manual was only suggesting two options, either a sub-regional plan or a county structure plan (without Regulation 8 plans) whereas they wanted more detailed ways of setting out a planning framework and so influencing local plans. The sub-regional plan was thought an unsatisfactory option because the South Yorkshire team believed it would not give sufficient detail on the location of development to allow them to carry out their 'strategic' duties. In addition, the rural county structure plan illustrated in the Manual was felt to underplay the planning issues in

large urban areas and the inevitable interest that a county council would have in the details of urban planning policies.

The main critique was that the Manual did not anticipate the planning context of the metropolitan areas (giving more emphasis to shires and smaller urban areas) and the particular planning issues in them given the particular two tier local government structure introduced in 1974. Adoption of Regulation 8 plans for the urban centres was felt to be a possible way out of the difficulty but the South Yorkshire team felt that this would add complications and load a more cumbersome set of documents and procedures onto an already complex policy and decision making structure. The methods group also anticipated the danger that Regulation 8 plans would become too detailed and not leave enough future flexibility to local planners at district council level. It was proposed therefore that all main decision areas (key issues) for the structure plan should be scrutinised in outline to help define the work that needed to be done in the county and the level of detail that was necessary for structure plan needs. At the same time a decision in principle was taken which would mean producing a structure plan with a sub-regional scale and character (that is, it would take up primary issues of demand and need in housing, employment, population and transport) but also giving a greater level of detail on secondary issues (such as recreation, environment, shopping) including statements on the location, phasing, nature, resources and implementation aspects of physical developments as well as offering development control guidelines to district councils. It was said in these papers from methods group that their favoured level of detail on location of proposed development should not be as specific as the examples given in the urban structure plan example in the Manual. However, the level of locational detail given for development in small

settlements in the rural county structure plan illustrated in the Manual "...would appear to be about right" (ibid., 6).

On the matters of content or breadth of the plan, early discussions within county hall had stressed that the structure plan should concentrate on policies rather than specific proposals. The latter were felt to be a matter for emphasis in local plans. However, the discussion in the methods group was moving (by late in 1974) towards the view that both elements of the development planning system (structure and local plans) should deal with policies and proposals. The important principle was felt to be maintenance of a spread of options for decision-making. Dilemmas had to be faced on whether the structure plan should make recommendations on physical planning policies which the county could implement or whether it was appropriate to include matters which were the responsibility of other public bodies or even dependent on the actions of the private or voluntary sectors. A further dilemma already being faced was whether the structure plan should cover or touch on matters which were only indirectly concerned with physical development such as public transport fare structure, socialisation of private rented housing, regional economic policy, educational and social service provisions and standards, wage levels in nationalised industries (where changes could be a factor in stimulating the local economy), housing subsidies, school leaving age and so on. Whilst it was appreciated that all of these and other 'indirect' questions could affect the future development and shape of the county it was also clear that to broaden the scope of the plan would increase the degree of political risk (insofar as the greater the number of policies in the plan the greater the likelihood of future political challenge) and could also increase the possibility of the plan failing to achieve any impact (because implementation of many of the

policies would be well beyond the direct influence of the county). An allied risk in proceeding with a broadly based structure plan was that public confidence and credibility in the plan could be lost because many more policies and proposals were at risk of becoming outdated or nullified by changing circumstances. A broader and more detailed plan was also more likely to offend as other bodies saw the plan attempting to commit or preempt their actions.

Timescale was seen by the methods group as the most important issue in deciding the nature of the first submission. With something under three years (from 1974) as the target for the completion of the plan it was felt that this limited time period could restrict <u>either</u> consideration of broader, sub-regional matters <u>or</u> more detailed and comprehensive proposals for specific areas in the county. The option of only considering primary issues and so giving only very broad consideration to (some) secondary topics was thought weak because it would mean failure to produce "...a sound and comprehensive strategy or programme of investment and would not provide an adequate framework for local plan-making activity". The group also argued that this option was also flawed "...since District Planning Authorities will wish to have firmer guidelines...for their own local plan-making activities".

These early contributions to the debate about methodology and the plan generation process recognised the complexity of the task facing the county planners. The debate had indicated that among the issues facing the team were,

> a wide range of existing 'plans' and policies (both public and private) affecting the plan area,
> problems not falling into neat topics such as housing, employment etc, but rather there being complex interrelations between topics,
> problems do not fall neatly into spatial scales, with some topics being aspatial yet having importance for the future of the county,

the division of planning functions between the two tiers of local government.

Consequently, it was argued that 'systems theory' was the appropriate conceptual basis for considering planning methods and approach to structure plan work because of the explicit treatment of interactions as the basis for articulating problems and defining areas of decision within a comprehensive and synoptic approach (SYCC, 1974n, DN METHD 02, 2). The idea of using an interaction matrix for 'decomposing' problems for decision was introduced into the methods debate within the structure plan team as early as March 1974. However, the impetus for this kind of approach was not suprising given that the DOE had suggested matrix methods of plan evaluation in its advice notes to structure plan authorities in 1972 (DOE, 1972, Advice Note 8/72).

It is particularly interesting that this line of development with respect to planning methodology in the county led to 'internal' criticism (by some members of the structure plan team) of the topic working party approach already underway as the main working arrangement for progressing Phase 1 work. It was said that the working parties had begun to consider specific topics in isolation and yet what was required was some mechanism to bring these inquiries into a synthesis (ibid., 3). The comment was to be the genesis of the integrative 'aspects groups' which were introduced at a later stage in the planning process.

In addition to internal disagreements with respect to the appropriate methodology and form of the structure plan there were also disagreements about more substantive issues which had implications for the planning process. One of the contributors to the discussions on plan generation observed that the limited 10 year time span for the projections and policies of the first structure plan, the expectation of limited growth in relation to

the scale of existing development, the size of existing commitments of land for development and the observation that some 'primary' policies (such as public transport fare structures) would be decided before the alternative plans were available for comment pointed towards "...a very simple approach" to plan generation (SYCC, 1974n, DN METHD 02, 11). The proposal made from this quarter was for an examination of existing commitments and proposed development schemes from various public bodies and local authorities with the county council taking on the role of coordinator. Conflicts of intention or likely outcome could be the basis for suggesting alternative planning strategies "...although it could be that the development of a single plan, rather than of alternatives for evaluation, would be more appropriate" (ibid.,12). This proposition was seen as a "holding operation" allowing for an early first submission. Given that the main pattern of development in the county up to 1986 was already in the pipeline, the idea of a simple first plan and planning process was potentially attractive. Proceeding in this way would have allowed the opportunity to carry on with more extensive inquiries and technical work in specific topic areas as the basis for monitoring and future review of the first plan and the establishment of a more comprehensive policy framework in later rounds of the planning process.

This latter proposal for an alternative approach to the plan generation process was much more pragmatic than the idealised approach being devised by others in the team. Given that work had already been started on specific topics by the working parties it was suggested that each of these groups might continue with their inquiries, leading towards a set of alternative policies for each main topic or key issue. The integration of these might take the form of "...their blending together to form alternative structure plan strategies...(which) would be a matter of skill and intuition" (ibid., 12).

Another proposal put into the discussions about appropriate plan making methods at this time was in favour of a cyclical process during Phase 2, that is, from the stage of initial broad integration of policies relating to the primary subjects through to the fine tuning of the preferred structure plan. Four cycles of work were proposed covering a period of 71 weeks (Fig. 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Proposed Stages in the Plan Generation Process: South Yorkshire Structure Plan March 1974

Cyclical process of 71 weeks involving 4 cycles whereby primary subject policies (housing etc.) are to be integrated

*alternative concepts	5 weeks
run generation models	8 weeks
complete broad scenarios	3 weeks
*form broad strategies	5 weeks
evaluate to give shortlist	6 weeks
elaborate by subject	13 weeks
*form alternatives	4 weeks
financial evaluation	12 weeks
*form preferred strategy	4 weeks
adjust and elaborate if req'd	11 weeks

Linked to this last proposal were suggestions for the use of techniques such as,

> Forester's Urban Dynamics model as an aid to writing scenarios for the future county,
> use of the Garin/ Lowry model as an aid to testing the impacts of changes such as pit closures, changes in the primary industrial base of the county and in the location of major employment centres,
> potential surface analysis of accessibility as an aid to testing the impact of such changes,
> shopping and transportation models to predict demand and effects (ibid., summarised from pps.14-15).

The author of this more 'purist' proposal warned against the dangers of moving too quickly from problem identification to policy. The failure to go through the intermediate stage of defining objectives on the basis of

problems could raise the danger of overlooking potential policy options. It was argued that a systematic procedure would identify all possible options. Defining objectives "...may throw up a whole list of possible solutions" unforeseen by the less systematic jump from problems to policies. The opposite danger of creating a methodological rod to beat the structure planners' back was also acknowledged by the comment that to cover the whole range of conceivable objectives (ascribed to some writers on the rational planning process, such as Batty and Chadwick) was probably unnecessary as well as time-consuming and that only objectives "relevant to South Yorkshire" would need to be identified or chosen. As part of the cyclical idea it was envisaged that in the later stages several 'runs' of the traffic and shopping models would need to be made in order to test the implications of different assumptions and policies. It was noted that this cyclical procedure was followed in the Notts-Derby study.

In summary, therefore, a diverse and potentially healthy debate was flowing within the county planning department during 1974 about the preferred approach to the plan generation process and the method/methodology to be followed. A number of positions were being taken across a spectrum from a 'purist' systems model which counselled a thorough, exhaustive, logical and rationalistic procedure by pointing out the dangers of short-cuts, to a pragmatic, opportunistic approach where it was argued that time and circumstances were against the county planners. While admitting the intrinsic value of a systematic model the pragmatists on the team were observing that they were coming cold to plan preparation in South Yorkshire and therefore had to take some short cuts. In between these two ends of a spectrum was the view that the way that the team had begun their work was partially flawed (because of a fragmented, topic based approach to research and study of the key issues) and

that a more integrated and comprehensive approach would reflect the systemic nature of planning problems, and hence, strategies for the future.

Paradoxically, references were being made from time to time in this debate to the experiences of strategic planning on Merseyside. Several officers taken on to the planning team in South Yorkshire had previously been employed in Liverpool and had first hand knowledge of the initial work towards a Merseyside structure plan. The paradox lies in the way that the strategic planning process that evolved in the newly formed Merseyside County Council grew closer to the 'pragmatic' approach after initial work (before local government reorganisation) had adopted a systematic, rationalist model. Aspects of the planning process that emerged in South Yorkshire which can be ascribed in part to the earlier experience of strategic planning included the insertion of a problem definition stage prior to the setting of objectives in the overall planning process, a concern to broaden the scope of the strategic plan to include a much wider set of policy concerns than dealing with the physical environment, and a concern to give attention to the social and distributional impacts of the plan. A further debt to the Merseyside experience that can be traced within the South Yorkshire approach was the decision to undertake a household interview survey at an early stage in the planning process. Worked examples drawn from Merseyside documentation were also to be found in ideas and papers fed into the methodological debate in South Yorkshire (for example, an interaction matrix introduced into a South Yorkshire Methods Working note (ibid., 20: SYCC, 1975s, TP METHD 02) was borrowed verbatim from the early Merseyside experience). The nub of the paradox is that whilst the South Yorkshire team were getting more deeply commited to a comprehensive and more systematic (and hence potentially more lengthy) planning process, the team on Merseyside had already

stepped back from that approach and were taking a more pragmatic procedure for plan generation.

Phase I Public Participation

Following the project report the next major official report on the participation programme was a substantial paper entitled "South Yorkshire's First Approach to the Public ..... and some Possible Next Steps" (SYCC, 1974d). The paper offers a synopsis of the initial programme and as the title suggests looks to the next stages. In setting the scene for the overall approach to public participation within the structure plan process the objectives of the programme are reiterated (although in slightly revised form). In order to meet the manifesto commitment to public participation in the formulation of the structure plan the paper draws attention to the 'democratic' objectives that were being adopted.

> ...(a) To ensure <u>early</u> involvement in the Structure Planning process so that members of the public have the opportunity to contribute in a positive manner to the development of the Structure Plan.
> (b) To achieve <u>representative</u> involvement so that the views of all sections of the community are given expression and not just those of an articulate minority.
> (c) To devise <u>meaningful</u> ways of involving a wide range of people in the preparation of a strategic plan.
> (d) To ensure that the public participation programme <u>supplements the role of the Councillors</u> and contributes to their greater involvement in the Structure Plan. (ibid. para. 3.1.2. 5)

In seeking to meet these objectives the hope is expressed for a structure plan process that will be

> <u>sensitive</u> to differing needs and requirements of ... the community,
> <u>honest</u> ... (about who benefits),
> <u>open</u> ... (with everyone kept informed),
> <u>educative</u> ... (allowing learning about the planning process and appreciation of conflicts of interest in policy-making),
> <u>democratic</u> ... (so that everyone has a chance to influence the resulting plan). (ibid. para. 3.1.4. summarised from p.6)

Stage I of the programme was identified as having the principal aim of identifying people's local problems after which the planners could interpret the strategic implications of the problems. The public participation programme had a number of elements.

Public Attitudes Survey

A survey organisation (Social and Community Planning Research) was commissioned to carry out a sample of public attitudes in South Yorkshire during the summer of 1974. The survey yielded 1 747 successful interviews from a sample of 2 300 addresses. The survey was professionally undertaken and administered. Initially, a small scale qualitative study was undertaken to give some pointers to local people's attitudes which could aid the production of the main questionnaire. The initial stage of the survey involved two discussion groups and a small number of semi-structured interviews. On the basis of the qualitative study the questionnaire was designed and piloted. The final stage of fieldwork was the household interviews themselves. Sample size was determined by the desire to disaggregate the results of the survey in order to provide sufficient respondents from population sub-groups such as the elderly. Other anticipated disaggregations of the survey data for detailed analysis were into different localities within the county and into households from different income bands. Sampling was on a multi-stage basis.

The intention of the survey was to cover a range of topics relating to living in South Yorkshire.

> ...It was decided not to limit these to issues with which the Structure Plan will be directly concerned, but to try to derive a more complete picture of how residents feel about living in South Yorkshire and the sorts of changes they would like to see made. The following aspects of life were included:
>
> (a) The local environment

(b) Housing
(c) Employment
(d) Education
(e) Recreation
(f) Shopping (local)
(g) Shopping (central)
(h) Public transport
(i) Private transport
(j) Health facilities.

(Courtenay & Field, 1975, 5)

The basic intention of the survey was to establish levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction within each topic and then to assess the priorities that respondents would apply across the range of topics.

A fairly complex schedule resulted from the exploratory work. In addition to the main survey (aimed at the head of household) any young person (aged between 16 and 24) in the sampled household was asked to fill out a specially formulated questionnaire. It was argued that young people had greatest propensity to migrate away from South Yorkshire. To stem that flow it was felt that the planners should identify the problems faced by young people and take their views into account.

The first tabulations from the survey were recieved in the county in the autumn of 1974 (Fieldwork had taken place between end of May and end of August 1974). However, the final report of the survey was not available until May 1975.

Kits

Concurrently with the public attitudes survey the council introduced the first Structure Plan Kit. The kit was directed at local groups, associations and organisations as well as interested individuals. The first kit was a loose leaf folder of materials related to environmental and planning issues which was intended to generate interest and raise questions about the local environment. The folder contained a number of sheets of newspaper

cuttings about local concerns to do with the environment as well as basic information about the new county council, about the structure plan, what it was, the area it covered, the likely timetable of plan preparation and so on. The key participative element of the kit were a number of sheets asking a series of questions about the local environment and living conditions with a view to getting a response from the groups about their priorities. The topics covered in the kit included housing, work, leisure and transport.

In paving the way for completion of the kits a listing of voluntary groups in the county area (excluding Doncaster which was treated seperately) was drawn up by the planning department and representatives from all known bodies were invited to one of a series of meetings around the county where the structure plan and planning process were explained. Also considered at the meetings were the purpose of public participation and how the planners wished groups to use and respond to the kit. The intention was that representatives would arrange meetings for their group members to discuss the environmental issues raised within the kit and send back their collective response. It was hoped that a group view would emerge on the nature and seriousness of environmental issues in their locality.

Over 600 groups were identified by means of lists held by the local authorities' library services, from umbrella organisations (such as Councils for Voluntary Service) and other local contacts. Eleven 'briefing meetings' were held in Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley. Representatives from nearly 300 groups attended one or other of the briefing meetings (48% of the groups invited) and all took away copies of the kit. With the addition of a number of self volunteered groups and the promptings of a team of part-time 'community workers' the

A STRUCTURE PLAN KIT

Help plan your future

County Planning Officer
South Yorkshire County Council

MAY 1974

final tally of groups taking copies of the first kit was 372.

Community Workers

The team of 4 part-time community workers was formed to help groups and organisations to set up their own meetings, fill in and return the kits. The rationale for this team was that the county planners believed that some groups might be intimidated by the task which faced them. Other groups contacted by the community workers included those unlikely to respond unless given a spur or example. The community workers took on the task of making contact with specific groups. Once they had made a positive contact their role was to help explain the function and purpose of the structure plan, suggest how the group might get involved through the kit exercise and help the group to present a collective response. The job of the community workers was therefore a combination of educating, facilitating, supporting, organising and mobilising the groups who were contacted. The planning department acted quickly to set up this scheme when it was appreciated that the take-up of the kits was showing a shortfall in the representation of some types of organisation and in groups from particular parts of the county. In particular, pensioner groups, residents associations and trade unions were underrepresented among those groups who had voluntarily attended one of the meetings. The structure plan team identified potential 'target' groups from the full list and each worker was asked to attempt to gain the involvement of 3 or 4 groups. As an experimental scheme only a handful of community workers were used. The planning department's intention was to use a larger team in subsequent stages if the community worker approach proved successful. Of 37 organisations contacted directly by the 4 workers thirteen groups were drawn into making a response to the kits.

Printed Word

In 1974 the county council had begun to distribute a free newspaper (on an occasional basis) within South Yorkshire. The second edition was entirely devoted to an explanation of the structure plan and distributed in May 1974. The newspaper included basic information about structure planning but also introduced the programme of public participation under a main headline of "Help Plan Your Future". 100 000 copies of the second edition of the paper were printed and distributed through public libraries, clinics, schools and other public places along with 350 posters which also publicised the newspaper and the participation programme.

Exhibition

A small exhibition consisting of photographs of typical environmental problems in the county was put together in the summer of 1974. The exhibition was displayed at the various meetings held to brief community organisations about the kit, at shows and public events in the county over that summer. However, the planners admit that they did not make a great deal of use of the exhibition because they were not convinced that it was an effective way of disseminating information about the structure planning process.

Publicity

Other publicity during Phase I of the planning process included material presented by the local daily/weekly press and local radio.

A subsidiary thrust of the Phase I programme was to specifically involve young people and councillors.

> Two types of people were considered as 'special cases' in the context of the public participation programme and accordingly a special approach was devised for them. The first was young people, whose views in the normal course of events would be unlikely to be obtained.. The second type of person was councillors ..it was felt very important to try and involve all councillors in putting forward their own views.
> (SYCC, 1974d, para.3.2.6., 9)

In addition to the supplementary questionnaire left with young adults in sample survey households, schools and colleges of further education were invited to take part in the first kit exercise by getting groups of students to discuss environmental matters and make a joint response.

Councillors were also invited to fill out the kit.

The Second Kit

A second kit was prepared as result of the initial kit exercise. The structure plan team felt that the response to the first kit had been successful and that they would benefit from further comment. One of the aims of the second kit was to maintain contact with groups and to show that views from the first kit had been taken seriously and considered in the planning process. The educational element of work with the kit was also considered important by the planners and it was felt that a second kit might consolidate public information and knowledge about the structure planning task. A further aim was to help the planners by sharpening up the identification of priorities for environmental action. All groups that had responded to the first kit were invited to take up the second kit by requesting copies of the second folder and/or help from a 'community worker'. Advertisments were placed in local papers asking any groups who wished to become involved for the first time to make contact with the council. The team of part-time community workers was expanded to 10 members. In

addition, over the winter of 1974/1975 thirteen adult education courses were started with the topic of the county structure plan as their subject and with the intention of using each of the classes as a 'random' group who could respond to the second kit.

The second kit was more focussed than the first. A principal intention was to get a more precise profile of public priorities for dealing with a range of local issues. Two main sections of the second kit were designed to gain specific information from the groups about their problems and policy choices respectively.

The main comments from the first kit were distilled to provide a list of eight or so statements of common problems under each planning topic (shopping, recreation, transport etc.). Groups were asked to ascribe a total 'budget' of 100 units between these problems after they had discussed the ranking amongst themselves. As a supplementary stage of this prioritisation of problems under each topic heading the groups were then asked to list the most important problem from among all the topics and then to go through a further constrained budget assessment to give a priority ranking of the most important problems of all. In this way the planners had both an indication of the most problematic issues within and between topic areas.

The second stage of the kit exercise was to offer groups a range of paired policy options relating to each topic and seek their preference. For example, with respect to employment, the choice offered was between the concentration of industry on large sites away from residential areas with long journeys to work for employees or in areas of high unemployment even if this meant bringing industry closer to housing.

A SECOND STRUCTURE PLAN KIT

HELP PLAN YOUR FUTURE

County Planning Officer
South Yorkshire County Council

November 74

The kit also had an up-date on what the planning department had been doing towards structure plan preparation. This included summaries of some of the findings from the various enquiries into conditions and problems in the County, and a stylised summary of stages in the planning process.

By autumn 1974 there were nearly 800 groups on the County register and 356 were provided with copies of the second kit. Over 200 replies were returned.

The Phase I public participation programme introduced a wide variety of techniques. There was a good deal of innovation and originality in the approach. In particular, the kits were seen as particularly unusual. The Linked Research Project team saw the South Yorkshire planners as "pioneers" in this kind of technique for collecting and disseminating information (Linked Project, 1976, Interim Paper no.11). At the RTPI Summer School of 1974 Dr. Hampton saw the county's participation programme as going further that in any other local authority and well beyond the statutory requirement.

Paradoxically, given the care that was put into devising the programme and the theoretical underpinning provided by the interim work of the Linked Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning the documentation about Phase I that was circulating in the planning department was sketchy about the purpose to which the information collected was to be put and how conflicts in preferences and opinions were to be resolved.

In the summary report on phase I participation some of the interim findings from the programme are recorded (SYCC, 1974d, 9-12) there is a short section on "Handling the Results of Phase I Public Participation". The basic requirement was identified as ensuring that officers and members in both county and district councils have an

opportunity to see the information and results of the various enquiries "...in as raw a form as possible" (ibid., 10). The report also proposes that "...some overall assessment of the significance and importance of all the views expressed must be made" (ibid., 10). At this stage, analysis of the results from the social survey had begun to establish marginals and initial tabulations. Tests of statistical significance or the use of 'cut-off points' were intended to provide a basis for acceptance/ rejection of results. The specification of suitable cut-offs was never defined. As a further outcome the working party also sought to ensure that all officers working directly on structure plan matters read and summarised public comments relevant to the substantive topic for which they were responsible and to feed the information into their work. It was also stated that "there should ideally be some procedure for exposing ...councillors to the public's views" (ibid., 12).

Open Days

The idea of the Open Days was evolved to bring councillors up to date on the planning process and also to use their pivotal roles as decision-makers to help define which of the responses from the public should be given credibility. The officers intended that councillors would identify priorities (from public responses) among the problems and broad policy extremes introduced in the Phase I public participation programme.

The first open day took place in October 1974. Each attending councillor was supplied with the information gathered from the public living in their electoral area and any information from the programme linked to their specific interests (based on committee responsibilities).

Two objectives for the first open day were clearly stated. Firstly, to initiate a dialogue so that members

did not feel left out of the structure plan process. Secondly, to begin the selection procedure by allowing councillors the opportunity to "...exercise their decision-making prerogative" (Darke, 1975, 12).

The planning department organised two full 'dress rehearsals' for the first open day by role-plays with officers acting as proxy councillors. A flavour of the officers' view of elected members emerged from these rehearsals. Introducing one of the previews a senior officer indicated that the object was to get away from the rubber-stamping of policies and from stone-walling by members in the face of professional advice. Role playing staff characterised members as belligerent and obstructive.

The first open day was held in two broadly identical sessions (morning and afternoon) in order to increase the opportunities for busy members to attend for at least some of the time. A number of small discussion groups were formed so that all participants had opportunities to speak and comment. The sessions began with members reading the kit replies from groups located within their wards. After this, a discussion was initiated with a chair (a councillor) and discussion group leader (an officer). Members had previously decided which of the three discussion groups they would attend (People, Homes and Jobs; Land, Environment and Transport; Recreation, Shopping and Community Facilities). The division of topics came directly from the sections in the first kit.

Comments from the participating members after the open day were generally favourable. The first objective of promoting dialogue between officers and members was met. The informal atmosphere was positively welcomed by many members and the results from the first kit exercise appeared to be a good basis for discussion.

However, the second objective intended from the meetings was less clearly achieved. If the officers were seeking a consensus they were disappointed. The councillors' views and priorities were equally as varied as those of the public. Indeed, the members did not find it easy to evaluate the comments of individual groups. In addition, a minority of members showed strong feelings against the principle of public participation and were either unwilling or unprepared to take part in the sifting and sorting task. They saw the kit replies as being the views of those members of the public having vested interests. Those councillors that strongly held to the view that the results must be biased did not discuss the substance of the kit replies at all and focussed all their remarks and comments on the programme of participation as a whole. Their principal comment was that the groups and group views were unrepresentative of the electorate as a whole.

However, other members felt that the kit replies were valuable and provided new insights into the range of opinion within their wards. Nevertheless, only rarely did a member take a specific opinion or problem identified in a group's response and add their personal validation or disagreement. Mostly, members fell back on their personal experience and on anecdotes from their constituency work. This seemed particularly to be the case on the topics of recreation and shopping. Thus, as a guide to narrowing down the range of opinion on problems and priorities gained from the publics' response to the kit the first open day proved to be of limited value.

Despite the good attendance (over 60 members out of 100) it was argued by some councillors that the open day was not an appropriate context for debating problems or priorities for the structure plan. Over one third of the

members did not attend and the meeting was rightly said to have no formal status as a decision-making forum.

The Use of Public Participation: Intentions and Reality (Phase 1)

The project report (February 1974) was relatively muted about the use to which any results from participation would be put. In the section on public participation there are some general comments about the use of information collected for establishing problems in particular areas of the county and that these could provide input into the aims and policies of the plan. Given the generalised nature of the project report this broad intent is unremarkable unless the underlying expectation by the planners was for a high degree of consensus to emerge from the public in different parts of South Yorkshire about the major problems in the county..

By the end of 1974 the county planning department was turning to face the detailed task of analysing the results from the initial Phase 1 public participation (SYCC, 1975o, DN PUB PT 05). The main message in the discussion note was that councillors must make the decisions about what importance should be attached to the results of the programme. The open day was intended to provide an informal setting where members and officers could meet to look at the public's views together and move towards identification of legitimate (and illegitimate views). The discussion note also considers more technical elements of analysis of the results. For example, analysis of variance was identified as an appropriate statistical technique for looking at the orders of priority given to different environmental issues by different groups and at the aggregated priorities of groups in different areas of the county. Other forms of aggregation were proposed in order to narrow the diversity of results. For example, the first

structure plan kit had asked groups to identify the most important problem they saw within their locality. The note proposed a frequency count of these results from the participating groups and an identification of the most serious problem. In the second kit the polarised choices of possible policies by different groups could be analysed by use of simple tests of significance and difference; chi square was proposed.

On the use to which results could be put the discussion note goes on to suggest that they could be fed into the forthcoming report on problems and issues in the county but the point is reiterated about councillors being the ultimate source of decision on what to take as important or not. However, the note also looks further forward;

> ...in practice the results are likely to be of more direct use in work on policy generation and evaluation - particularly at the stage(s) of defining objectives and evaluating the effects of alternative strategies for different sections of the Community. (ibid., 13)

At about this time the senior officer vested with organisation of the programme gave a paper to the Association of London Borough Planning Officers (SYCC, 1975o, DN PUB PT 04). The paper mentions that an interim conclusion from the Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning was that "...little use is actually made" of the results of public participation by officers and councillors. Three kinds of difficulty affecting use of results were identified.

Firstly, <u>practical</u> difficulties of how to handle all the information generated and how to ensure that all people concerned with making or helping to make policy are exposed to the information in its "raw forms".

Secondly, <u>technical</u> problems are mentioned. In particular the difficulty of assessing whether those

people who express views are representative of the public as a whole or, at least, some section of it.

Thirdly, mention is made of political difficulties over what importance to attach to different points of view and how to balance the publics' perceptions of current problems against planners' perceptions of possible future problems. (ibid., 3-4)

The paper goes on to expand on each of these types of difficulty and specifically mentions the common reaction or assumption that participating groups will tend predominantly to be drawn from the middle class. This assumption is challenged on the basis of South Yorkshire experience. The paper concludes by suggesting that the local authority planner's role is to highlight the range of public opinion or choice, the councillor's role is to resolve it.

By the summer of 1975 the county planning department had become immersed in the detailed work of using information from the participation programme in the planning process. A further discussion note on public participation indicated that work on recreation was where the information from the public had been most heavily used (SYCC, 1975o, DN PUB PT 07, 1). Mention is made of the way that information was used in:

> Phase 1 statements of Problems, Satisfactions and Opportunities,
> a report on leisure activities and social groups (which identified those groups most 'deprived' with respect to leisure),
> a series of graphs drawn to show those groups "wanting" and "participating" in different types of leisure activity by area and by socio-economic group,
> a series of graphs showing SEG and income characteristics for each of the 9 areas drawn up as a means of analysing the Public Attitude Survey,
> a table showing the results of the second kit responses by area. (ibid.)

However, the report also notes the need for 'harder' data and further information to contribute to the planning process. Having information about peoples perceived problems was inadequate for suggesting measures likely to improve their condition. The planners also saw a need to ask particular social groupings about their difficulties with specific matters, such as leisure. Public participation, it is suggested expands the policy makers' need for more detailed information. Although it is not explicitly stated the discussion note indicates that where there is an absence of other sources of information about a particular environmental need, then information from the public may be essential. It appears that the public participation results were most heavily used for developing recreation as a topic in the planning process because little other information was in the hands of the planners. Another 'insight' is provided into the differential reliance by the planners on the publics' responses for expanding work on particular topics. Recreation came low down in peoples' priorities when ranking all local environmental problems. Because it was a 'minor' issue for the public and given that provision of local recreational facilities was principally a district council responsibility the county planners gave the topic a low priority in their work programme and consequently did not feel the need to collect further information on recreational matters. In these circumstances the public participation results are more prominent in justification for statements about and policy development, particularly, on recreation.

The Key Issues document produced for consultation in June 1975 (SYCC, 1975c) systematically ran through the way that work was progressing on the 10 topics and mentions the use made of public participation results.

> Population and Employment; the results from the kits showing demand for part-time female employment and for alternative employment opportunities for men who

are unwilling/unsuitable for work in major basic industry. (3 lines of text about public responses)
Employment (identified as a separate topic from Population and Employment); response to the Public Attitude Survey and kits showed that people wanted improved job opportunities. (7 lines)
Housing; the kits indicated public demand for more single person accommodation. The PAS showed public reluctance to see a lowering of housing standards. (6 lines)
Housing and Employment; the PAS and kit results showed some contradictions over whether the length of peoples' current journey to work was too high or acceptable. (7 lines)
Financial Resources; the kit showed that people wanted more development and improvements to transport provision. In the PAS few people were prepared to see lower spending on public services when answering the 'trade off' questions. (5 lines)
Transport; mention is made of the high level of public interest in this topic as a justification for its inclusion. (7 lines)
Environment; air pollution (kits), effects of traffic on local environment (kits and PAS), concern about the environment of residential areas (all elements of participation programme), conservation (kits). (16 lines)
Leisure; underprovision (kits and PAS), dissatisfaction with present provision (kits), inadequate provision of major facilities (kits), high demand for cultural facilities (PAS). (16 lines)
Minerals; no mention of public views in justification for inclusion of the topic. (0 lines)
Shopping; no mention of public views in justification for inclusion of the topic. (0 lines)

In addition, the Key Issues document also includes a section which refers to 13 non-key issues noting that while these topics were mentioned by the public in the participation programme they "should more properly be considered in a local rather than strategic planning context".

At this relatively early stage in the planning process it is already becoming apparent that the publics' replies made during phase 1 of the participation programme is most pronounced where little or no other information was available. In addition, there is a broad (negative) correspondence between the 'importance' of the topic and the extent to which public opinion appears in the

rationale for inclusion of the topic as a key issue. Department of the Environment Circular 98/74 indicates that county councils should keep down the number of topics covered in their structure plans but mentions that "for most authorities the key issues will include" employment, housing, and the transportation system. The circular goes on to indicate that other topics or key issues may be more contingently important depending on the circumstances of each particular authority. The count of the number of printed lines (in the Key Issues document) where reference is made to public opinion/public participation programme findings (gives a simple measure of the importance of public participation results for defining/justifying that issue). As an example of how other data could begin to squeeze out public opinion, the shopping topic was being developed principally by a computer model as an aid to charting trends and future patterns of shopping behaviour in the county.

In the county planning department's evaluation and report on the whole of the stage 1 public participation programme (SYCC, 1975q, TP PUB PT 10) the use made of the information gained is explicitly addressed. The planners' analysis of the overall application and utility of public views and opinions to the planning process are under four headings. Analysis, documentation and discussion of these four areas are said to have been the main elements of work for the public participation team during phase II of the planning process.

stage 1 results (principally from PAS, 1st kit) are said to have been a major source of information in Phase 1 work for the plan. The report on Problems, Satisfactions and Opportunities is mentioned as an example.
stage 2 results (second kit) were used to evaluate the Broad Policy Options.
In the Land Potential Study carried out by the planners public comment and opinion were used to give weightings to different factors affecting the development potential of an area.

The views of local organisations were said to have helped develop and evaluate the Fine Policy Options (which referred to the Broad Policy Options applied to small spatial areas).

The report also summarises each of the main public participation techniques used during phase I of the planning process and notes the use made and utility of the results from each.

Slippage

The project report had anticipated completion of Phase 1 work by late summer 1974. In October 1974 the chief planner in charge of structure plan preparation reported that "...(a)s Phase 1 approaches its end, one of the major activities has been the consideration of an appropriate form of organisation for Phase 2" (SYCC, 1974, SP Progress Report No. 3, 1). The main substantive outcome from Phase 1 was to be a statement on "problems, satisfactions and opportunities" (the PSO report was a direct replacement of the needs, problems and opportunities paper identified in the project report). By the late summer of 1974 the working parties were preparing a series of topic-based statements which were to be welded into a comprehensive document in time for presentation (in draft) to Technical Committee at its first meeting in November. The draft was identified by the county planning officer "...as one of the bases for drawing up issues" (SYCC, 1974, Minutes of Technical Committee No.1, 3).

During the first meeting of Technical Committee, comment from the district councils openly showed their concern at the drift of the structure planning process, particularly at the depth of detail being pursued on what they saw as matters of local importance and hence of district council responsibility. The district council representatives also commented that public response was being over-emphasised in the county's planning approach. The county

planners intention was that the report on problems, satisfactions and opportunities would be used to prepare an 'issues document' which would set out the main policy matters to be addressed in the first structure plan. In the late summer of 1974 the planning team in the county were also expecting the PSO report to be completed by the end of the year and to use it to mark the transition from Phase 1 into Phase 2 work. This timetable was not achieved.

Phase II of the Planning Process

The later stages of Phase I public participation programme overlapped with the beginnings of Phase II technical work in the planning process.

County planning committee did not receive the PSO report until March 1975. The delay was principally due to the team's wish to incorporate into the report the results of the public participation programme carried through as part of Phase 1 work. However, results were not available from the second kit replies until mid-1975. An additional problem for the timetable and for the incorporation of public opinion and information on public attitudes into the planning process was that the full results of the household interview survey did not appear until May 1975. Given the members and officers commitment to public participation and the planners wish to include this material in the PSO report the latter could not be finalised until much later than had been expected at the outset of the planning process.

Other aspects of the Phase 1 work programme were also causing delay. For example, in late 1974 the information available to the Employment and Population WP was felt to be thin due to holdups in getting information about migration out of various secondary data bases. The Public Utilities WP only met for the first time towards the end of 1974 and the data base for this topic was said

to be "particularly poor" even in late March 1975 (SYCC, 1975, SP Progress Report no.4, 3).

A brave face was put on the slippage of by a statement that

> ...(t)he tight Stucture Plan timetable demands that, at various stages, work largely dependent on a prior activity begins before that prior activity is completed. This was the situation around the end of Phase 1, when the early stages of Phase 2 work had to be commenced while certain work on Phase 1 still remained to be completed. The last few months, therefore, have seen considerable progress with a number of projects most of which are either of a Phase 1 character (and will therefore amplify some of the work...) or are depth studies in a number of fields dsigned to take further the work on particular topics dealt with in Phase 1 (ibid, 2-3)

In effect, the team leaders were implicitly accepting the notion of overlapping cycles of work. However, managing the team to work simultaneously on overlapping tasks was more difficult.

Consolidation of some Phase 1 topic work carried on well into 1975. An internal review of progress in March 1975 showed several areas of slippage. These included work on,

a) land potential analysis: initial predicted completion July 1974,
b) recreation study: demand for facilities by population group and distribution of open space/ facilities - still in progress at March 1975,
c) employment forecasts and migration assumptions: initial predicted completion by the end of April 1974,
d) depth studies of steel and engineering industries: initial predicted completion by mid April 1974,
e) depth study of housing demand: initial predicted completion - July 1974,
f) shopping survey and model: survey of 400 households completed; initial results predicted -

> June 1974; initial predicted date when model ready for testing - November 1974.
> (ibid., summarised from p.3)

Thus, there was considerable 'spillover' from Phase 1 into Phase 2 due to a large number of over-runs. Some of the technical work of data collection and model-building was taking much longer than expected and was ambitious in nature. Justification for this elaboration was given during discussions within structure plan group when it was argued that the nature of the structure plan would depend very substantially upon the definition of key issues. The chief planner (Structure Plan) wrote that "... the issues do not constitute a work programme and it is generally accepted that the process of structure planning involves elements which are not included in the Plan itself (although they will be referred to in the supporting information)" (ibid., 4).

Behind these comments may lie a 'hidden agenda' which relates to pressure from the DOE on structure plan authorities. DOE Circular 98/74 was a clear effort by central government to get county authorities to speed up structure plan preparation. Where the Development Plan Manual had counselled a comprehensive approach to structure plans the circular was encouraging attention to a limited number of 'key issues'. There could also have been a broader rationale behind the circular which was growing doubt about the necessity for elaborate structure plans in the face of slower growth in the economy. Whatever the reason the pressure for speed in plan

production from the centre was tangible and was to become more insistent. Some county authorities responded to the advice by curtailing their work programmes. South Yorkshire did so in word but in deed continued to pursue a comprehensive approach to the content of the emerging plan and to the planning process.

The circular also gave ammunition to the local district councils who were already deeply concerned at the depth to which the county planning team were probing on a wide range of policy matters. Where the county inquiries were in 'legitimate' topics the DC's were muted but where the inquiries covered policy areas which were the principal responsibility of the districts they became increasingly critical and unresponsive to the county's desire for amassing extensive bodies of information (much of which was held by the DCs) and the wish for close collaboration on structure plan preparation.

At Technical Committee of November 1974 during the discussion of Phase 2 arrangements the Principal Planner at DOE Regional Office and the district council representatives touched on the key issues and level of detail in the plan. The DOE comment was to make "...a general plea for simplicity and...that the range and depth of the Structure Plan should be conditioned by the availability of staff resources to carry out the work involved for submission in a reasonable period" (SYCC, 1974, Minutes of Technical Committee no.1, 1).

The definition of key issues began in earnest in January 1975. Five drafts of a key issues paper were prepared between January and May 1975. Although mainly derived from Phase 1 work already completed, further information and technical input to "issue definition" was being made right through the period. The new material included the results from the public attitudes survey and public participation programme which were finally published during this time. The fourth draft of the key issues paper was taken to Technical Committee in April 1975 and a fifth draft to an open day for councillors in early May.

In fact, in April and May 1975 two further open days were held. The first of these concerned county activity on development control. May 1975 open day dealt with structure plan matters. The morning sesion was devoted to key issues with the afternoon given over to discussion of the latest results from the public participation programme. The format for both sessions was much the same as for the previous open day on participation except that a summary document of all the elements of the Phase I programme was produced for the after-lunch debate. Overall findings from all the public participation elements was also prepared. The question that officers again put to councillors was about which aspects of the public's response should be accepted as input to the plan.

Unlike the first open day on participation only summary statements on public comment was made available to councillors. After an introduction by the chair of planning committee the afternoon meeting broke into five discussion groups. Observation of the discussion groups showed considerable variation in the approach being taken by the individual discussion group leaders (being officers in the planning department). Less preparation and pre-briefing by the planning officers meant that some staff dominated the discussions and talked down to councillors. One discussion group leader made remarks on three or four principal concerns arising from the public comments and threw open a lively discussion. In another group the officer gave a long, rambling, unstructured yet partial resume of recent findings from the participation programme and left little time for councillor debate.

Members reactions to the second round of open days were equally as variable as they had been in 1974. The group of councillors who were offered plenty of time for debate immediately launched into a criticism of the public participation programme _per se_ and criticised the officers intention to use public comments as the basis for identifying priorities in the plan. The group that saw half the time allocated for discussion soaked up by a monologue from the officer asked how they were to be expected to assimilate so much information and implicitly

criticised the complexity of the structure planning process.

The outcome from the second structure plan open day was no more helpful than the first in giving a political focus and direction to the structure plan team.

The importance of the key issues paper went beyond identification of the 10 topics to be given prominence in the structure plan. The way that the paper was processed through consultation and approval was seen as a model way of working (SYCC, 1975, Structure Plan Progress Report, no.6, 2). "...Following a lengthy period of officer dialogue" (ibid.,) the sequence for making decisions on major structure plan reports in the future would be presentation to Technical Committee, followed by discussion at a councillor open day. Major reports would then go to JCC structure plan sub-committee and on to county planning committee for approval as appropriate for formal consultation. At this stage the district councils and other bodies would be asked for definitive comments. This procedure had been agreed because the district council planners liaising with county planning department had begun to express concern that they were being asked to respond informally to more and more material from the structure plan team. The status of the material varied from preliminary drafts of technical papers to finalised versions of major policy statements. The DC officers involved indicated that they felt 'exposed' by this

process (where their "off-the-cuff" comments could be seen to commit their local authorities to courses of action, proposals or policies which had not been seen or discussed by the elected members). However, the formalisation of liaison in this way meant that the intention of taking soundings from officers as a means to speeding up the passage of decision-making was blocked.

As an example of the time lag that this 'model' procedure built in to the planning process, comments from formal consultation on the key issues paper from three of the district councils (Sheffield MDC had not at that time submitted its comments) were not taken to county planning committee until September 1975 (four and a half months after the councillors' open day on the paper).

Tidying up the Phase 1 work continued through much of 1975. From June 1975 onwards individual topic reports were taken through county planning committee as they were finalised. The key issues report (SYCC, 1975c) was a transitional paper insofar as it logically marked the start of Phase 2 of structure plan preparation.

Phase 2 Working Arrangements

Towards the end of 1974 Plan Generation and Evaluation Working Party produced a substantial paper about Phase 2 working arrangements and a review / evaluation of Phase 1 working. The latter (SYCC, 1974, DN METHD 07, 8)

concentrated on technical work in Phase 1 and the outputs from the working parties. The review included criticism of the blanket requests for information made by county officers to the district councils. The DCs themselves had been saying for some time that they were unable to cope with the levels of workload implied by these requests. What is more, the appetite that the county planners were showing for detailed information did nothing to still fears from the districts that the structure planners were operating at a high level of detail within a plan which was going to be very wide in scope. Overlaps in the coverage of the working parties was noted in the internal review and this was said to have contributed to delay and inefficiency. The expected work output was not clearly differentiated in the briefs given to the working parties which had added to delay and confusion for the district council officers. The relative autonomy of the WPs also led to difficulties in coordinating the overall timing and programming of Phase 1 work. A clear managerial problem had been identified and the Phase 2 proposals were intended to deal with this.

The proposals were intended to ensure

> ...that management and technical decisions will be made at the right levels (and that the two do not become confused), that the approach to technical working will become more informal than in Phase 1, and that an integrated (rather than subject-oriented) process will be followed during the policy generation and evaluation stage. (SYCC, 1974i, 1)

The report went on to affirm the "...importance of political judgement" within the planning process. DOE circular 98/74 was (mildly) criticised for not showing awareness of the complex political position within the metropolitan county areas as a prelude to noting that different metropolitan counties have adopted widely different approaches to the planning process "...which they believe meet the requirements of their areas (ibid, 3). The spirit of the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act was invoked in support of the county's approach, particularly, in its avowed intent to overcome the failings of the 1947 system of development plans. Specifically, the need was stated for metropolitan structure planners to shun an "end-state, land-use approach" and to produce plans flexible enough to be able to accomodate rapid social and economic change. The outcome was to seek a strategic planning process that would be "continuous and open-ended". It was proposed that the county council aim to prepare a structure plan which solved current problems whilst also developing "...a continuous process of planning capable of both producing that plan and monitoring and reviewing its relevance and efficacy over time" (ibid., 5). Structure planning was felt to comprise two elements, the process and the plan, the latter dependent on the former, and that

> ...in order to produce, implement and review (the plan), a wider range of participants and considerations must be encompassed than the ultimate contents might suggest. The Plan itself, as submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment, may well be concise, but the process

> which produces and justifies the policies contained in it must clearly incorporate economic and social aspects as well as physical ones, and further, must continue to do so in a two tier system of management" (ibid.).

None of this is original. The dichotomies facing the planning team (plan vs.process, physical land-use vs. comprehensive socio-economic policy) were familiar currency in the strategic planning debates of the time. What is significant in the reaffirmation of a broad policy-making approach in the South Yorkshire context is the clear statement of the intention to continue on a tack which had already created difficulties. The end product of those difficulties was already seen in the delay in plan preparation. Another of the effects was continued friction with district councils and other actors in the policy process because of the demanding rigour and expectations of the county planning team.

This statement of policy-making intent also portrays the plan as the product of the process and suggests that its quality will be dependent upon the standard and coverage of the preparatory technical work. It may be indicative of the methodological focus and resolve of the senior staff that every time process is mentioned in the report it was capitalised. An extended planning process is foreseen by the references to a cyclical form of working inspired by the work of Boyce, Day and MacDonald (1970). Applied to strategic planning this approach

> ...denotes a continuing development and evaluation of policies, coupled with a willingness to revise those policies in a climate of increasing knowledge

> about their ability to solve the problems they are addressing, and indeed a willingness to review the status of the problems themselves. This is one aspect of the 'learning' process, with which cyclic processes are concerned. (SYCC, 1974i, 10)

Acknowledgement is given to the conflicts of interest that are likely where proposals to change complex entities are being considered.

> ...The various Structure Plan policies and proposals will obviously favour some groups at the expense of others, and it may be that one objective of these policies should be to discriminate positively in favour of those with the greatest problems or who have not been favoured in this way in the past. (ibid., 10)

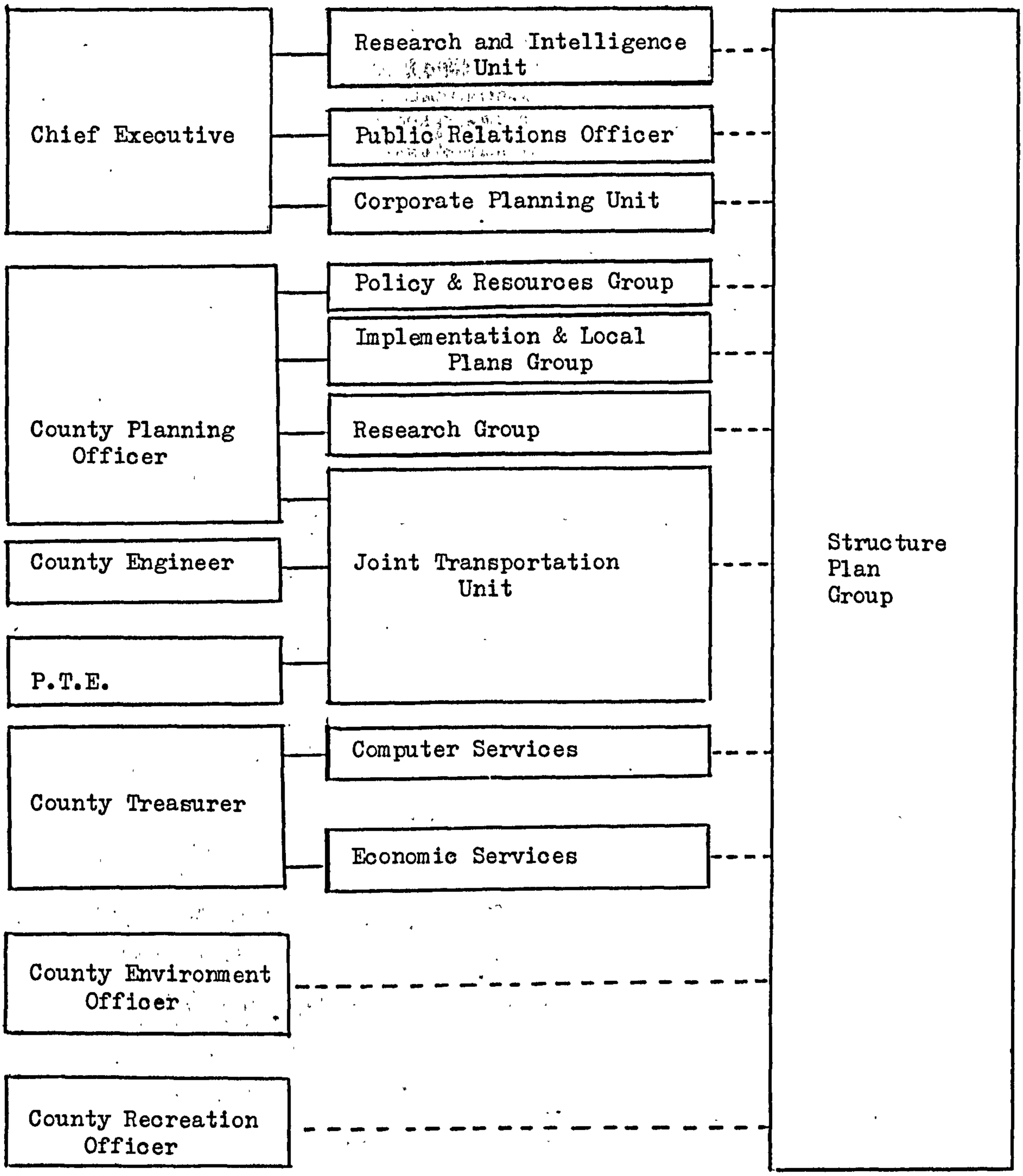
Dialogue and communication between the parties responsible for elements of policy in the metropolitan county is also crucial to successful policy-making.

> ...(O)nly by continuous communication with those involved can policies be developed which have a chance of acceptance and success. (ibid., 11)

The paper also points out that even where policy generation is recognised as a political process the use of techniques should be employed wherever and however possible in order to show the consequences of political choice. The planning process becomes

> ...an inherently creative activity with no proven formal rules or frameworks within which to work and is concerned with putting together the often conflicting choices contained in the various elements which constitute public policy planning. While there are techniques available to assist in understanding those choices and elements, the process is emphatically not a mechanical/ mathematical one, involving as it does an application of value judgements to the promotion of some ideas and rejection of others. (ibid., 12)

Main Internal Working Arrangements within the County Council for Structure Plan Purposes



Source:

Structure Plan Project Report: Feb.1974

Management Structure for a Continuing Planning Process

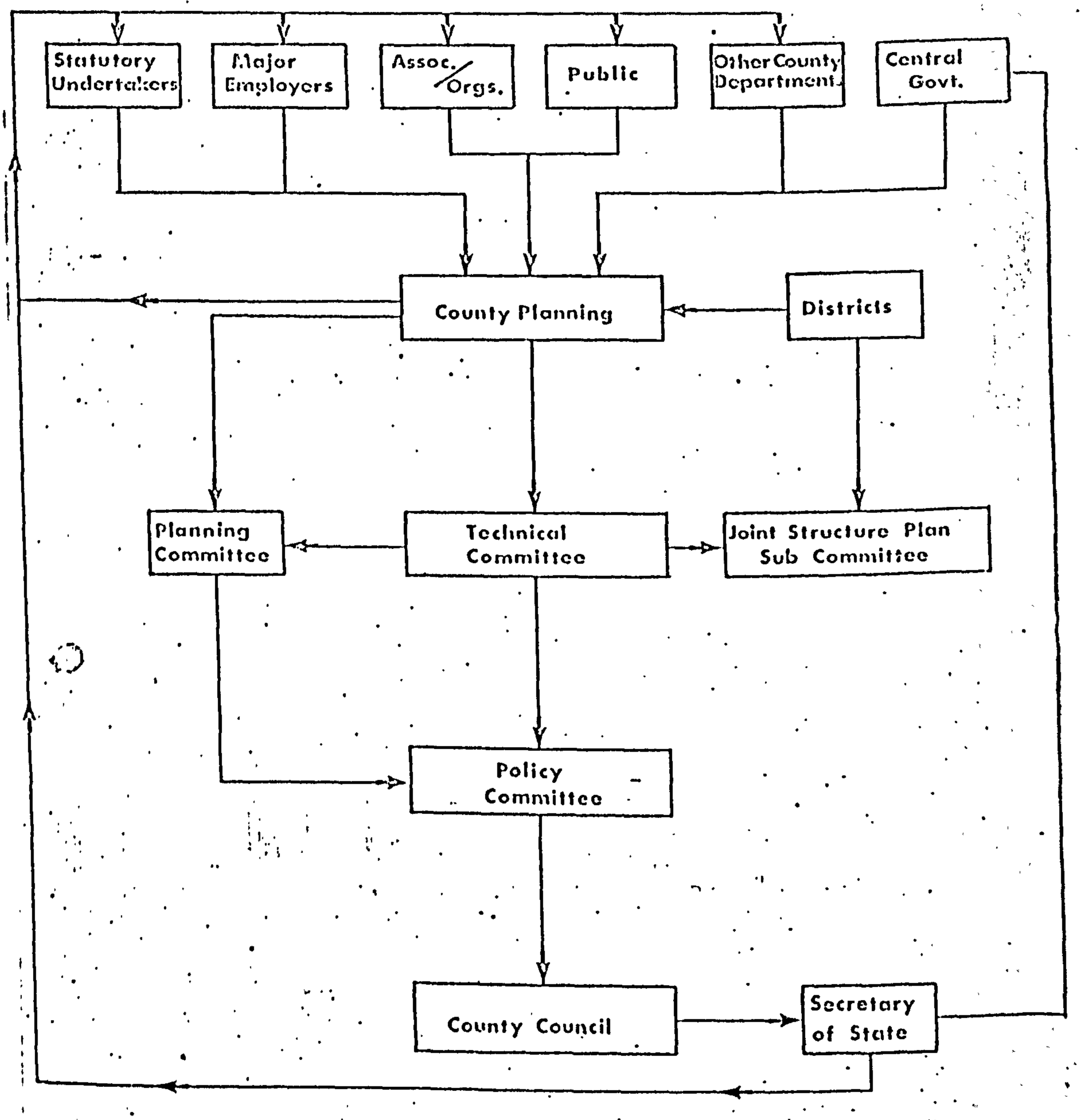


Fig 5.2. Management structure phase II

Involvement of a wide range of participants is essential in the "value-laden process of problem identification, issue analysis and policy formulation". The local authority committee system is seen as incapable of supporting the extended dialogue necessary for this kind of participation and involvement in the policy process so alternative mechanisms are required, particularly in order to involve elected members. Mention is made of special 'kits' to tap individual councillors views, open day debates and seminars.

The proposed management structure for Phase 2 work was unremarkable (fig. 5.2). The internal structuring of the structure plan team was to evolve into a clearly defined management group (Core Group) and a small number of working groups (Aspects Groups and Common Task Groups).

Apart from becoming the coordinating and management body for the structure plan team, core group was also to exercise an integrative role, having the brief to interlink the various elements of structure plan work. Core group was charged with the task of making "decisions on methodology and content" of the planning process, vet reports and to establish and execute "a continuing, informal dialogue with the politicians". The county planning officer saw this group as playing a key role in policy-building.

The 'lower tier' working groups were of two kinds.

Aspects groups were to take on responsibility for

> ...(a) the generation of alternative policies in response to whatever approaches are adopted, and (b) the evaluation of each other's policy components. (ibid., 18)

Three apects groups (AG) were formed; Economic AG, Social AG and Physical/ Environmental AG. Each aspect group would cover the full range of structure plan topics or key issues (housing, employment, recreation, etc.) but, respectively, from the point of view of social, economic or physical impact. For example in relation to employment, EAG considered the industrial categories of major employment growth in the county; SAG studied problems of female employment whilst P/EAG looked at industrial location patterns. Common policy packages could be developed but with varying assessments of impact and viability.

Common Task Groups were set up with responsibility for technical work common to all three Aspects Groups. Five CTGs were defined at the outset of Phase 2 work (Methods, Public Participation, Modelling and Simulation, Transport and Doncaster). The CTGs were given "across-the-board" responsibility for developing techniques and marshalling the information to be used by aspects groups. Membership of AGs and CTGs was overlapping so that professional staff in the structure plan team would get a broader understanding of the work done and approach being taken

to the planning process rather than remaining blinkered within a narrow work remit.

Aspects groups were comprised of senior staff at "fourth tier and PO level". District council staff involvement was invited at "an informal level" (implying that involvement would fall outside the agreed formal channels for consultation). The CTGs had a broader membership from within the structure plan team including technical officers and more junior planning staff (again with an open invitation to participation by DC officers).

(A fuller summary of the organisational arrangements for preparation of the structure plan is contained in Appendix 2, which also discusses the relationship between county planning department management and the overall corporate management structure.)

The aspects groups began to translate the Problems, Satisfactions and Opportunities report from Phase 1 (SYCC, 1975b) into issues from which objectives could be developed.

Key Issues

It was noted earlier that the Key Issues report was in 4th draft by the time of Technical Committee meeting in April 1975 and was revised in time for a councillors open day in May.

The discussion at Technical Committee was extensive but generally receptive. There was some concern from the district council representatives about the level of detail. On car parking provision (covered as part of the key issue on transport policy) it was noted that if the county council took their inquiries too far they could "tread on the toes" of the district planners. The county planning officer assured the meeting that the key issues were not intended to usurp the role of local planners by setting specific standards for planning policies (SYCC, 1975, Minutes of Technical Committee no.2, 2). By this time however, the DCs were growing even more concerned about the question of the demarcation. The first stages of the public participation programme had contributed to this concern as had the extensive requests for information on a myriad range of matters (including social service provision, housing policy and education). The public participation programme was treated with concern particularly because the household survey had included questions about a broad range of environmental matters and public responses had naturally included comment about very local facilities, such as, play areas and neighbourhood parks, refuse collection and other district council responsibilities. Such comments are inevitable given a series of open-ended questions but they were seen by district council members and staff as drawing the council planning department into a review of matters which were not its legitimate business and at a

level of detail which was thought inappropriate. Similarly, results from the 'kits' was considered suspect by the district planners.

At the JCC structure plan sub-committee in February 1975 the county planning officer reported structure plan progress. Comment from the district council representatives again raised the question of demarcation. Three main points were made

> the public participation programme raised the question of responsibility for particular services and planning tasks in the two tier system,
> the first 'kit' was said to be too localised in focus,
> transportation should not dominate the structure plan.

The open day on key issues was principally intended to gain councillor comment on the matters raised by the public during Phase 1 participation and to focus on the main issues and topics for the structure plan. All county councillors were invited but attendance was not high. Many of the more influential and powerful county councillors were absent. Nevertheless, those who did attend gave a positive report back to county planning committee on 19 May. On the other hand, the non-attenders asked whether open days were not "...replacing member's" in their traditional role of decision-makers by officers decision-making (project notes on County Planning Committee, 19/5/1975). A number of mildly critical comments were made by councillors about the public participation programme as well as the open day.

The key issues report was discussed in some detail in planning committee and a number of minor amendments made.

At the Technical Committee in June 1975 stronger concern was voiced by the district council representatives about the scope of the structure plan and the level of detail that was being pursued. Housing policy was emerging as a particular bone of contention. Doubts were raised over the request for information on housing land allocations down to a fine spatial scale. The county planning officer responded to this concern by commenting that distribution of housing within the county was a matter that should be picked up in the structure plan and this level of information was needed for technical analysis. For the county planners part they grumbled at the time being taken by the district councils to come up with information on their existing planning policies and commitments. Pressure of work in the planning departments of the district councils was given as a reason for the slow turn round of such requests. However, a more truthful reflection of the growing disaffection came from the Director of Planning and Design for Sheffield MDC who indicated that his authority was "unwilling" to submit their policies for analysis by the county. The discussions in technical committee were beginning frequently to reflect a sourness in the relationship between county and district officers.

Nevertheless, there was not a unanimous attitude towards the county planning process from the district planning officers. The Director of Planning for Rotherham DC felt that he was "prepared to seek the assistance of my fellow Chief Officers...in order to meet the County's request" for information (SYCC, 1975, Minutes of Technical Committee No. 3, 3). The reason given for this apparent moderation had followed his reading of the draft "Statement of Existing Policies" which, in his view, showed the value of a broad review of DC policies.

From Spring 1975, further objections were being raised by senior offficers in the district councils about the overlapping of cycles of structure plan work. Alongside the draft report on key issues which was out for initial officer consultations an early draft of the report on existing planning policies in the county was also circulating. The chief officer from Sheffield took the view that as the key issues report had not been formally presented to his councillors for observations there was little point in debating the existing policies paper or any later papers from the county planners until the key issues paper had been approved, He also proposed that the county planners stop work on building policy options until all the "background" papers had been through consultation. The comment made was the "...(y)ou will get nothing from our lot on existing policies while the key issues paper is floating around" (project notes on Technical Committee no.3).

Barnsley DC agreed to try to submit information on existing policies as requested by the county planners with the qualification that the information was not necessarily comprehensive, up-to-date nor binding. In particular, it was said that housing policies were fluid given recent changes in legislation and government advice. The Doncaster representative indicated that he would have to refer the request for information on existing policies to his Chief Executive before commiting the authority. At the end of this discussion the DOE representative expressed concern at the failure by the district councils to respond positively to what was felt to be a straightforward request for a summary of existing policies.

Phase II Public Participation

The tempo of contact with the public on structure plan matters slowed down considerably after the second 'kit' exercise. The team began a holding operation to try to sustain the public interest that they hoped had been engendered during the Phase I programme. One of the principal means to keep contact was a free periodical devoted almost exclusively to planning and environmental matters in the county. "Contact" magazine (SYCC, 1975a) was a joint venture between the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment. It was focussed on county council activities and information which went

beyond the structure planning process to include news about environmental policy, communal clean-ups and the like. News on planning matters in the district councils was also included. The magazine was normally about 16 pages in length and was described as being for "local organisations, educational institutions and interested individuals". The first issue was distributed in the autumn of 1975 and a 10th and final issue was published in Spring 1979.

The original intention was a quarterly edition of "Contact"

> ...to tell people about the progress...(the County Council)...is making, about some of the difficulties it is facing and about some of the ways in which the public can make a contribution to solving the problems of South Yorkshire. (SYCC, 1975a, editorial, 2)

Although other matters were covered the ten issues contained a good deal of information about the structure plan. The first edition contained a main feature on what the planners had been doing with the results from the second structure plan kit. Contact No.2 (SYCC, 1976a) had an article on progress with plan preparation which included details of some of the policy options being considered. Issue 5 coincided with the launch of the draft structure plan and included a timetable of meetings and exhibitions as well as a summary of the draft plan and opportunities for the public to comment on the strategy.

10 000 copies of the first "Contact" were printed with a 12 000 print-run for subsequent editions. A run of 15 000 was made for the issue dealing with the draft structure plan. The distribution list included the file of community groups and voluntary organisations used for kit distribution, schools and other local authority educational establishments, libraries, other government bodies, councillors, the media and a listing of interested individuals that had been built up in the planning department. Print runs were costed at £1 000 direct charges (1975/76 prices) and a total of 4 months professional officer time per issue.

The magazine offered any interested reader the opportunity to recieve copies of structure plan reports and documents (such as the summary document on the public response to the Phase I participation programme). After the publication of the third edition the editors had recieved 120 requests for the report on Phase I participation and about an equal number of requests were made for other structure plan documentation. One hundred "Freepost" returns were recieved after the publication of the draft structure plan summary in Issue 5 of "Contact".

Nevertheless, public participation during Phase II work on the structure plan was limited.

In a survey (towards the end of the planning process for the first plan) of 33 community organisations who had

taken part in the public participation exercise we found that 19 (58%) had found "Contact" useful, 6 (27%) groups did not find it helpful or useful and the rest gave mixed reactions. The main positive responses indicated that their group had been informed about environmental issues as a result of the magazine. However, we found varied practice over what had happened to the magazine when mailed out to groups. Groups received several copies of each issue and in some cases an issue was pinned to the group noticeboard (and probably got scant attention). In other cases the copies were passed around to interested persons within the organisation.

Broad Policy Options

Broad Policy Options (BPOs) were being considered by the officers in structure plan team over the Spring and Summer of 1975. The working parties had been disbanded by this time and each issue had become the principal responsibility of a mid level planner. These 'issue-men' worked largely autonomously on the task of developing options. A draft set of working notes on each key issue/ topic was brought together by early July. Each key issue (including the subsidiary issues identified in the key issues paper) was approached in terms of a number of 'options'. Although 10 key issues had emerged from the exercise to pin down the scope of the future structure plan, an additional 32 policy questions relating to subsidiary or 'sub-key' issues were also included in the

work of defining areas of decision for the plan. The focus of policy development work at this stage was to produce a range of options for each issue (although in some cases only two options were identified on another issue 8 possible courses of action were listed).

Looking at an example, work on Issue 1 (population and migration) was led by an objective to reduce out-migration from the county. The objective had been raised and supported by elected members who wished to stem the flow of younger and better educated people from the area. Two broad options were identified. It was proposed that reductions in the out-migration could be stemmed by greater diversity in jobs, improvements to the local environment and better/ greater choice of housing. It was argued that the county might also wish to minimise the costs of providing the new housing and services needed for a more stable population. The first BPO for Issue 1 proposed the spatial concentration of new development to minimise future pressure on services and transport facilities. This was called the 'robust' option because it was a minimum cost option. Option 2 was to widen the choice of locations for future growth in the county in order to give a range (variety) of places to live and hence to increase the attractiveness of the county to potentially footloose residents (the maximum choice option).

All the BPOs for the key issues and sub-issues were to be evaluated in terms of three sets of impacts or consequences. These were

planning implications,
fiscal implications,
organisational implications.

Among the perceived planning implications of the 'robust' option for key issue 1 were the need to maintain a high level of control over new land allocations for future development and continued efforts to concentrate growth into areas where land preparation and services were already commited. On the other hand, the 'maximum choice' option would require the release of a wide range of sites for development and an over-allocation of land for potential development so that developers could have more choice of where to build. The corollary of this was much looser land-use control compared to option 1. The fiscal implications were likely to be less for option 1 because of a more 'compact' form of future development in the county. The organisational implications would favour option 2 because local authorities would need to be less vigilant about policing planning applications.

An important procedural issue which began to come to the fore at this stage in the planning process was the team's treatment of prescriptive or 'advocative' policy statements. Seeking a broad framework within which the policies of a range of bodies (public and private) over which the co-ordinating authority has no direct control creates a problem. For actions and functions over which

the county council could exercise control, policy-making was (relatively) straightforward. On the other hand where the county council wished to see other bodies follow a particular line of policy-making all it believed it could do was to advocate a policy line and attempt to persuade other decision-makers of the validity of its position. The question of the value of prescriptive and/or advocative policy statements is made more acute where the framework within which policy is being proposed is widely drawn. Having chosen to treat the South Yorkshire structure plan as a broadly based document the county council planners felt that they were inexorably being drawn towards inclusion of a potentially large number of advocative policies. There are further consequences for the policy process which flow from the initial decision to undertake a broadly based structure plan, such as the necessity to consider the implications of policy options on a wide range of other bodies, to involve them in the consultative process and so on. This can only increase the workload on the planning authority and introduce further potential for delay in the planning process.

There was internal and external pressure for completion of the broad policy option stage by midsummer 1975, with the senior staff in the structure plan team seeking finalisation in May or June at the latest. A preliminary compilation of BPO work was carried out in early July and a month was proposed for developing and refining the

options. Mid August was set as the point at which dialogue on the BPOs with the district councils and other bodies would begin. This period of refinement was when the Aspects Groups and CTGs were to come into their own. Information, comment and criticism from a broader perspective was intended with the groups offering their views on the economic, social and transportation implications of the key issue options. Information on likely public reaction and preferences were also to be fed in to the commentary on the basis of the results of earlier public participation. The AGs and CTGs were also required to develop a view on the whole 'package' of BPOs from the perspective of the respective assessment groups (economic, social aspects etc.) and then to "send out a missionary to sell their views to each issues man" (SYCC, 1975u). This stage of evaluation and consistency-checking was felt essential to achieving overall balance and coherence as the individual elements of work were brought together.

The tightening timetable was intended to allow papers on BPOs to be presented for discussion at the September meeting of Technical Committee and an open day for councillors in the same month. A further Technical Committee was timetabled for October when revisions from these two September meetings would have been incorporated into the refined policy framework. A final version could then presented for formal decision at the November

meeting of JCC structure plan sub-committee and at the relevant county council committees.

The county planning team did get the initial broad policy options paper together for August. A working meeting was held with the principal district council planning officers who were heading up structure plan liaison and several subsidiary meetings (all held in August despite this being a notoriously difficult time to maintain progress on local authority business). The outcome was a revised paper. In particular, the transport and shopping issues/ options were substantially adapted as a result of these meetings.

Despite this progress a number of factors were against the original timetable for completion of the structure plan. Apart from the hiccups in getting information and full cooperation from the district councils there was the backlog of lost time on internal structure plan work. At this time (mid 1975) late 1977 was seen by the management group as the likely date for completion of the plan because of delays in Phase 1 and the continuing slippage on technical work. Linked to the slippage was the complication of having two structure plans in the course of preparation within the department. The senior planners were increasingly irritated by the complications caused by having two pieces of work going on simultaneously. There was some duplication and waste because of the maintenance of two seperate teams.

Redeployment of staff within an integrated team working towards a single, county-wide plan was expected to lead to some improvement in completion date. The 'cost' was not to produce a Doncaster structure plan. At its July 1975 meeting county planning committee accepted the recommendation of the county planning officer to merge the plans. Strong objections to this decision were made at the JCC structure plan sub-committee on the following day. In a thinly veiled reference to the perceived lack of cooperation by the DCs the county council chief executive said that the original timetable for structure plan preparation was dependent on "no delays" and that the need to merge the plans was a consequence of slippage. The chief executive also noted that part of the reason for slippage was the decision to include a full range of key issues in the first structure plan; an implied criticism of the county planning department (from within the authority) for seeking a comprehensive set of strategies from the outset. It should be said that meetings of Functional Group (the county's inter-departmental officer meeting on the structure plan) had been critical of the expansion of key issues and the elaborate work programme over late 1974 and 1975.

At mid-1975 the revised timetable (following the amalgamation of structure plan work within the county) sought to complete the BPO stage by the end of that year, with the hope for agreement on fine policy options by late Spring 1976, a draft structure plan to be available

by midsummer and public participation on the strategies over the winter of 1976-1977. Formal presentation to the DOE was expected in August 1977 and submission of the full document to DOE late in that year.

However, the internal management team (Core Group) was also indicating in summer 1975 that they wished to introduce a further element into the structure plan process by developing a set of interim policies on a number of key issues (Green Belt, Shopping etc.). This was both a form of insurance policy insofar as it was intended to act as guidance on strategic planning matters in the absence of either an interim or completed structure plan and also a portent of the county planners concern that the programme was unlikely to be achieved. This move might also be interpreted in a more devious way and seen as continued determination within structure plan team to maintain an influence over major planning matters in the districts given the team's perceptions of the DCs efforts to distance the structure plan from local planning matters. The interim policy paper was produced by early 1976.

JCC structure plan sub-committee of July 1975 was particularly tense. The district councils presented a concerted and sustained pressure on the county planning representatives for reconsideration of its proposed date for submission of the plan. The main points were

a. the timetable for structure plan preparation was already too long,

b. the form of the structure plan that was being prepared was the major cause of delay,
c. the documentation being produced in preparation of the plan was too complex,
d. the 'drip-feed' approach to building the plan was too time-consuming and confusing to the District Councils,
e. the distinction between the broad and fine policy options was not understood and having two stages was thought unnecessary,
f. member involvement in considering important papers was 'too late',
g. public participation was too elaborate and the coverage was not relevant to the structure plan,
h. the machinery for consultation with the District Councils was too elaborate but not enough time was allowed for responses to complex and extensive paperwork. (Project notes on JCC (Structure Plan) sub-committee), 15 July 1975)

The county planners came away from this meeting feeling particularly battered and demoralised. Yet they were also becoming more attuned to the rhythm of their own work programme and to the demands of the consultation and committee cycles. There was also a growing (some might argue belated) awareness of the political nature of the policy-making process among some of the team.

The final BPO paper was presented at county planning committee in November 1975 (SYCC, 1975g). The paper summarised member's views on the options and reported back from the September open day when the options had been discussed. The final paper had not only drawn together a great deal of technical work by the planners but had been through a number of drafts and amendments involving the chief executive's office. The chief executive had taken the view that early drafts of the paper were too closely associated with the party political position of the controlling Labour group on the

council. The planners for their part argued that they had been given parameters by the planning committee to consolidate councillor's views on key issues and to work within those limits to provide a set of options which would recieve a favourable political response from the ruling party. The chief executive sought to "tone down" the references to party political viewpoint. Towards the end of a succession of drafts and redrafts which shuttled between the planning and chief executives departments the chair of county planning committee was called in to progress the paper. Nevertheless, in its final version the BPO paper did not contain any references to the County Labour Party manifesto of 1973 which had been excised on direction from the CEO. Anything that was not approved formally within the committees and workings of the county council was considered by the CEO to be beyond the remit and legitimacy of the local authority and therefore open to challenge. Even comments made by councillors at open days was circumscribed by the qualification that these events were 'informal' and therefore not binding commitments. Failure to incorporate comments made by councillors at open day was particularly resented by the county planning team who saw these as part of the consultation and policy-making processes. They argued that open days were open to all members irrespective of party affiliation. From our observations this was the case. County council members from opposition parties did attend the open days although

with Labour holding 80% of the seats between 1973 and 1977 they were heavily outnumbered.

A compromise was reached by the chair of planning committee preparing a paper under his name which went to planning committee as a "political" interpretation of the broad policies (SYCC, 1975h).

It is unclear whether during this period the CEO was looking forward to future scrutiny by the DOE and other bodies of the structure plan and its back up documentation or whether he was picking up a growing discontent about the planning process from within County Hall. Some evidence of the latter did emerge at the November meeting of county planning committee. Planning committee members were beginning openly to reflect criticism of the extended nature of the planning process which had already been voiced by the district councils and some influential county Labour Group members.

Public Transport Options

The BPO paper was substantial. It extended to 160 pages and covered all technical work on the key issues and the 32 subsidiary issues that had been undertaken during 1975. As we noted above under each issue a set of options was identified giving significantly different policy perspectives but ostensibly within the broad objectives for the environmental future of South

Yorkshire which had been agreed by the county council. A relevant comment had been made by one of the district council planners at a meeting to look at early drafts of the BPOs. The comment had been that there seemed to be an explicit effort on the part of the county staff to provide a number of options under each topic or issue (the average number of options for each issue was 3) as if this had been a self-imposed requirement within the systematic planning process that was being followed. A consequence was that some options appeared to have been "contrived". An example was a frequent incorporation of options intended to deal with future growth. The DC planner making this comment observed that

> ...we are in a situation of decline. This is a theoretical option which the surveys do not justify. (project notes of Districts meeting 21/8/75.)

The exhaustive and, possibly, contrived nature of policy development became the focus of discontent about the strategic planning process for county councillors. The specific issue was the section of the BPO paper dealing with transport policy.

A number of specialist staff had contributed to the transportation policy options including the Transport Common Task Group drawing on officers across a spectrum of county departments. By August this group had isolated 3 main options. These were

> a. public transport provision and enhancement focussed on the existing main centres of population (the option which was closest to the then current pattern of public transport operation),

b. flexible inter-urban transport (intended to speed up existing inter-urban travel and hence allowing broader accessibility to centres of employment and widening job choice for a broader spectrum of the local population),
c. high speed inter-urban public transport (which would further expand job choice and shopping opportunities to South Yorkshire's population).

Work had proceeded to identify the specific consequences of each option. The intimate relationship between transport provision and the location of activities and facilities was acknowledged in the differential consequences of concentrated urban development and dispersal of population centres. The latter was considered likely to be more expensive, if not uneconomic, from the point of view of public transport provision. The planners therefore argued that if a future pattern of dispersed settlement was followed economic logic would propose a reduced level of public transport investment along with enhanced public spending on car parking provision in the main urban centres and more investment in road building and improvements. The planners also questioned the political commitment to a highly subsidised public transport system in South Yorkshire and to an improvement to the level of local bus services within the context of limited investment and lack of an overall strategy of public transport. High subsidies to public transport were feasible and did not create budgetary strain in the short term, that is, whilst major investment was unnecessary (such as using the existing stock of public service vehicles). However, the planners were arguing that at some point in time new

buses would be needed and higher levels of service to meet rising demand would raise costs in terms of extra maintenance costs on existing vehicles, with more staff, equipment etc. The officers were thus drawn into a discussion of the financial consequences of improved and extended public transport services with some implied criticism of the "open-ended" commitment to high levels of fare subsidy for which South Yorkshire County Council had become (internationally) known.

The political commitment to cheap fares (and eventually free public transport) had been written into the first Labour Party manifesto for the new county which had stated that if elected the Labour councillors would

> ...provide...free public transport for the elderly, the handicapped and the disabled as an immediate objective, This would be regarded as a first step towards the ultimate provision of free public transport for all. (SYCLP, 1973, 3)

Given that fare subsidy was possible through use of the annual Transport Supplementary Grant from central government (which was made available for support to a range of transportation schemes, including new road building and road improvements) one effect of the county's policy was to require reduced spending on capital schemes unless more local monies were raised (principally through the Rate Fund). It was the long term implications of these equations that were exercising the planners as they looked at public transport options in mid 1975.

At the open day discussion in September 1975 officers raised these concerns and what they saw as the long term dilemmas for the authorities' finances. Eight options were taken into the discussion at open day under key issue 6 (transport provision). These spanned a spectrum from "Free Public Transport" to "No Fare Concessions/ Maximum Investment" (the latter explicitly accepting market pricing on public transport). In two seperate sessions devoted to this key issue a total of 11 councillors (that is, 11% of the council) discussed the range of options and unanimously rejected the "No Concessions" proposal.

The report back from this open day was made by the county planning officer at the October meeting of planning committeee. He reported that a statement on cheap fares and the intention to move over time to free public transport had been made jointly by the county council and the passenger transport executive. The statement had been formally approved by full county council meeting at its October meeting. The chair of planning committee also noted that there was a desire within the majority group on council to

> ...see a fully integrated, high service level, public transport system which is free to users. (SYCC, 1975h, 4)

The option referring to no concessions was recommended for deletion from the BPO report. Yet the matter was not to end there.

At November planning committee the chair of highways committee stated that the BPO document was deficient in not making explicit reference to free public transport in the county as a policy commitment. Exception was taken to a phrase in the BPO report which noted that public opinion "comes down in favour of improvements" (to public transport services) even if this meant raising fares. This comment is supplemented by the observation that the main problems that the public faced with respect to public transport were infrequent buses and lack of service on some favoured routes. The level of fares was not seen by the public as a primary issue. The technical report supporting the option work on public transport added that there was remarkably little adverse reaction to the findings of the Sheffield/ Rotherham LUTS which argued that

> ...improvements to public transport services are a better use of available funds than general subsidy of fares - and this despite the fact that the study team made it very clear that their proposals involved a 40% increase in real fares. (SYCC, 1975f, para. 6.18)

The technical concerns raised by the planning team were not accepted by some members of planning committee in their November debate. The chair of highways committee reaffirmed the viewpoint that cheap or free public transport would benefit all in the county. The chair of recreation and culture committee raised as a matter of principle whether public participation and consultation was not setting a dangerous precedent. A familiar observation was reiterated to the effect that open days

were not appropriate venues for decision-making as they had no formal status within local government. Consequently, it was said, they should not be used to pre-empt or undermine other official debates and discussions. Reasons were given for non attendance by councillors at the open days (such as, other committments, their unofficial status). Despite reassurances from the county planning officer the point was pressed home with the comment that "Open Days can have a significant influence on decisions". The planning committee moved on with other business with the parting comment that the planning officers should "bring research on hard facts...not opinions, into the reports" (project notes on county planning committee, 10 November 1975).

Clearly, tails were up among the politicians as political power and pride were thought to be in danger of being trodden underfoot. The matter continued to rankle. The discussion in Labour Group before the December county council meeting was reported to have been 'heated'. The widening appreciation among the senior politicians that the technical work on transport policy could be questioning a major manifesto committment meant that some members 'raised Cain'. The leadership was so annoyed that they used the local press to publicise their concern. The Morning Telegraph of 15 December carried an item headlined 'County row over decision-making' which included critical comment from the Leader of the county council and from the chair of the passenger transport

executive. The newspaper reporter saw this as an attack by the Labour.Group on the county planning department and on the public participation programme. Sir Ron Ironmonger (as majority group leader) is quoted as saying that the structure plan would undermine the power of elected councillors and that it was dishonest to consult the public on matters which had already been decided by members. He was saying that the politicians believed that they had been compromised by the planning process. The article reports Ironmonger as saying

> ...If this is the case we might as well pack up as a policy-making body...There is no point in discussing discarded objectives. We want people to be involved and interested in what we do, but they must go through the electoral machinery ... What is the point of asking the public to comment on options that do not exist? We have said we shall work towards free transport and there is no going back. (Morning Telegraph, 15 December 1975)

The chair of planning committee is reported as replying that the county council had a legal obligation to study all possible options and that central government could veto any recommendations which they felt incomplete or unjustified. However, the issue was obviously beyond the point of negotiation having brought the council leadership to go public. Councillors are well aware of the effects of press publicity and often have a close, if often cautious, relationship with reporters (Dearlove, 1972; Murphy, 1976). Generally they will shy away from open controversy in favour of negotiated agreements; particularly when this involves people or processes which they will continue to have involvement. This matter could have been dealt with internally so the publicity

was signalling a broader agenda. The press was used to publicise the discontent beyond the rooms and corridors of county hall. The intended targets of that message could have the public in the county, the district councils or the rank and file staff of the county council. By going public all of these groups were made aware of deep divisions. The message was clear, it was to show that the leadership of the majority group were in charge of decision-making.

A less obvious message was growing concern about the slippage in structure plan timetable. By late 1975 the second county council elections were 18 months away. The leadership was beginning to see the possibility of going to the hustings with continuing uncertainty about the nature and form of the strategic plan. Labour had gained a large majority in the first election, in part because a large number of seats were uncontested. To face the second elections with the opposition baiting the majority group with the charge of slow progress on structure plan preparation was a threat to sitting councillors. The old saw that a day in politics can be a long time may over-exaggerate the time horizons of the local councillor but the prospect of a strategic planning process stretching over four years or more was beginning to rankle.

There was a further factor feeding this antagonism towards the structure planning process. The scope of the plan was wide and several county council committees were

finding that their policy functions were being scrutinised and linked with strategic planning work. South Yorkshire had subdivided responsibilities and functions rather more finely than had other metropolitan county councils. There were seperate committees for recreation and culture, environment, highways and transport, all with tasks which overlapped with the concerns of the planning committee. At the forefront of the vocal concerns about the pre-emption of decisions about policy by the strategic planning process were the chairs of these committees. Not only were they increasingly aware of the planning team carrying out intensive work on policies that fell within their committee remit but the planners had already undertaken and were anticipating further public consultation and participation on these matters.

In effect, an uneasy alliance was forming which combined opposition from the majority groups on the district councils with the members of some of the key committees in the county council against a strategic planning process which they saw as cramping their room for manouevre on policy matters.

Councillor Intervention in the Public Participation Programme

By the winter of 1975, members of the structure plan team were discussing future public participation on Phase III

of the planning process. A discussion note produced by the Working Group on Public Participation was proposing alternative ways of introducing the alternative strategies to the public and getting expresssions of preference.

> ...It has always been assumed that Stage 3 of the public participation would involve getting the public's reaction to the Draft Structure Plan and the other alternative strategies considered. (SYCC, 1975o, DN PUB PT 10, 1; and also SYCC, 1975j)

Another possibility was seen as asking the public

> ...to choose from a number of alternatives (without stating which the Council thinks is best). (SYCC, 1975o, 1)

The paper went on to argue that the first approach could be supported because it more neatly fitted the requirements of the legislation, would be quicker to administer, might reduce blight because there would be less scope for misunderstanding and rumour and would be more honest and provocative. It was said that offering a range of alternatives with a clear statement of the council's favoured strategy would be more honest and therefore likely get a reaction and response from people.

The paper goes on to argue that this reasoning is weak. The legal requirement was seen as ambiguous, the point about the first approach being quicker to administer is thought only likely to obtain if there were no objections or amendments to the draft plan. It was also said that rather than be a spur to response the publication of a favoured strategy alongside other options might still generate reaction as people took the view that the

decision was already made and that they objected to being faced with a fait accompli.

On the other hand a number of advantages were adduced for allowing the public to make a choice from an undifferentiated set of alternative strategies. The positive reasons given included

> a more positive role for the public,
> better for public relations,
> greater potency for public comment when it came to making a choice,
> more realistic for the timetable,
> allowing more 'diplomatic' consultations with the district councils over the preferred strategy.

The paper concluded with a note of caution saying that although giving the public the chance to choose between alternative strategies was preferable

> ...the Chief Executive and some members may...oppose it precisely for this reason - it is giving the public too much of a say in the formulation of policy. (ibid, para.6)

The gauntlet is thrown down with the comment that

> ...essentially what the debate...comes down to (timetable and other arguments apart) is how seriously does the County Council take public participation. (ibid, para.7)

Ironically this internal statement from the officers in the structure plan team appeared almost simultaneously with the public press statement from the Labour Group leadership about the same issues.

The officer with special responsibility for public participation indicated that the reaction by councillors at this time was partly because members were beginning to

appreciate that the programme of participation and the structure plan itself was going beyond matters that they percieved as central to the plan (personal communication, 13/1/1976).

Nevertheless, the public participation programme was not considered to be a main cause for slippage in timetable. The county planning officer had rejected the proposition that the programme was a factor making for delay in plan preparation (JCC, Structure Plan Sub-Committee, 15 July 1975). His comments at this meeting were to the effect that county councillors had demanded a full programme of public participation and in any case this was now a statutory requirement. The cause of greatest delay in plan preparation was identified as the poor flow of information (requested by the county planners) from the district councils.

A further discussion note from the Working Party on Public Participation early in the New Year of 1976 extended the arguments for maintaining the programme of public participation as originally envisaged (SYCC, 1976g).

The county planning department held a seminar for planning staff in February 1976 on the theme of "Public Participation on Alternative Strategies". Participants came from three other metropolitan county council structure plan teams, from Cleveland County Council, the

Universities of Liverpool and Sheffield, the DOE (Leeds & London) and from 2 social survey organisations. The discussion note produced by the South Yorkshire planners (ibid.) was presented in the morning. In the afternoon the organisation that had undertaken the original public attitudes survey in South Yorkshire (Social and Community Planning Research) presented a paper on techniques for presenting and gaining comment on structure plan draft strategies. The SCPR paper defined 4 possible techniques for public participation at the alternative strategies stage (sample surveys, community panels, citizen advisory groups and community design centres). The discussion did not reach any consensus among the participants on the preferred technique to employ in South Yorkshire at draft plan stage. Much familiar ground was covered in the comments (about the democratic objectives of participation, the value and limitations of sample surveys, etc). There was some focus on the community panel technique which was described as

> ...creating opinion by a series of discussions in which group members are gradually exposed to new information. (ibid.)

The county planning department later recommended that this be the principal method of getting reaction to the alternative strategies.

> ...Discussion Groups, rather than Household Interviews, are the best way of learning about attitudes to policies. (SYCC, 1976i)

A paper on the next stage of public participation was taken to the inter-authority meeting on the structure

plan (JCC (Structure Plan Sub-Committee)) mentioned a range of techniques for plumbing pulic opinion including social surveys and discussion group methods. The note recommended a combined survey/ discussion group package given that the funds for an extensive stage of public participation had been voted in the county planning committee budget for 1976/1977. A resolution was passed at the meeting

> ...that consultation with local organisations be favoured rather than the carrying out of a further public attitude survey, and that approval be given to the suggestion that a series of discussion groups be organised, comprised of small samples of people, each group meeting a number of times to hear about the policies in the draft Structure Plan, and to discuss them in depth. (SYCC, 1976, Minutes of JCC Structure Plan Sub-Committee, 29 April 1976)

The county politicians believed that a broad programme of participation at Phase III could create a similar position to that in previous stages when public opinion did not match the members political objectives.

The planners were still pressing for something akin to the originally defined Phase III public participation programme. The April discussion note defined a three pronged approach.

> (1) Kits/ Community Workers/ Adult Education courses aimed at local organisations and interested individuals,
> (2) Public Attitudes Survey to obtain views of a sample of the general public,
> (3) General Publicity...
> (SYCC, 1976c, DN PUB PT 16)

As late as June 29th the chief planner in charge of the structure plan team felt that this programme would be

acceptable to members despite the evidence of disenchantment and opposition by key county councillors.

At a meeting of the senior county and district council planning staff he said that

> ...we have made a recommendation (for Phase III public participation programme) framed in a realistic way...(we)...expect members to agree. (project notes of meeting no.19, 29/6/1976)

This optimism was misplaced. The county councillors accepted only that a publicity exercise be mounted to meet the statutory requirement. Under strong pressure from the chair of planning committee and the senior officers in the planning department a small scale community panel scheme was approved. Councillors were in general against the latter, arguing that they did not accept the technique and were against spending money on further innovations in public participation.

Partly as a result of growing political reaction the senior planner who had been in charge of the public participation programme resigned in mid 1976. A principal reason for his departure was the apparent volte face of the councillors from the original commitment. (project notes of interview, 1976)

County planning committee in July confirmed the members antipathy to the programme as originally evolved. The principal arguments against public participation were that those who were interested to participate did not represent the general mass of the people in the county

and those who did not want to participate should be left alone. (project notes on county planning committee, 19 July 1976)

The county planning officer presented a report with recommendations

> ...(a) the objectives of the participation programme should be (i) to supply Member's with information about the public's attitudes to policies, (ii) to obtain representative information which truly reflects the public's attitudes, (iii) to ensure Members have adequate opportunity to digest and discuss this information and to demonstrate to the Secretary of State how they have taken it into account.
>
> (b) active steps should be taken to seek the public's attitudes to policies rejected by the County Council during the Structure Plan process.
>
> (c) in general the public should be asked questions about the assumptions and ideas leading to the draft Structure Plan as well as being asked whether they agree or disagree with policies and proposals in the draft plan.
>
> (d) the participation programme should consist of (i) a direct approach to a sample of the general public through a series of discussion groups (with each group meeting a number of times), (ii) a direct approach to local organisations through the medium of 'Contact' and supplemented by a team of part-time community workers, (iii) various publicity exercises as outlined. [authors note - including exhibitions, public meetings, adult education courses and special editions of County news sheets (Contact and County News)]
> (SYCC, 1976i, para.6)

The CPO introduced the report by noting that the council had not yet reached its statutory commitments with respect to public participation on the structure plan adding

> ...but I hope that the earlier stages have been in accordance with your wishes. (project notes on county planning committee, 19 July 1976)

The chair immediately moved

> ...on political grounds that items 6b and 6c in the county planning officer's report be not approved. The county council has taken some firm lines on policy and these are included in the 23 core policies which have been developed in the light of previous public participation. To ask the public again about these matters would not be useful when we could not allow them to be taken into account. (ibid)

A major contribution to the discussion came from the chair of the passenger transport executive (who became Leader of the county council in 1977).

> ...I recall that a few months ago we had a full discussion of the public participation programme and the form that it might take. We said then that South Yorkshire had set a standard higher than the rest of the country, so we might consider lowering that standard after the first period. Despite the Act, frankly, I think the amount of participation and how it is done is within our discretion. We can go overboard - spending money and employing staff - but in view of the economic situation we should go on low key - go for the minimum under the statutes. This means slowing down on public participation so we should not replace or appoint further staff. We should not go ahead at the pace of the initial period. If all the recommendations of the county planning officer are accepted that will mean a standard of work which will require a man to be employed.
>
> I suggest an amendment of 6d - because that is an ambitious programme. The suggestion is for the public participation progamme to consist of a direct approach to groups via 'Contact' and 'County News' and leave it at that. Those who are interested will reply and those who are not will not reply. It falls in line with the Act. (ibid.)

The deputy chair of the PTE in seconding said

> ...We have done a good job on the first stages but at the end of it all its not been successful. I would prefer to get across to a wide spectrum, organised groups have communications with the county anyway - they can send and see memos and reports. It is a sensible decision to use 'Contact' in a time of stringency. Mr. Thomson [author note: the county planning officer] and his staff have lots to do anyway. (ibid)

The amendment was opposed by the (only) Liberal councillor. In his view

> ...public participation is not something that we should do by statute. The groups have enjoyed the public participation programme. It will be a slippery slope if we cut the programme. I had hoped that a continuing programme would carry on into the future. A hundred years from now the keynote of this county could be the approach we take to the public. (ibid.)

The chair of Sheffield City Council's planning committee (also an elected member of the county council) responded

> ...Participation was heard of long before Councillor Butler [the Liberal] was born. The present environment of finance and priorities means that the suggestion is sensible. We don't want to be ferreting about - people having to be pushed. If you do push people you get comments based on that. People are not motivated, but the groups are highly motivated so that you have to take their views with a pinch of salt. Public participation is useful but it was run by groups that we did not know in the early stages of participation. (ibid.)

The CPO asked if the amendment which seemed to exclude the involvement of individuals meant that public meetings about the plan were rejected. The proposer's response was largely negative

> ...but not have meetings for the sake of it. Do the minimum necessary - not go overboard. With public participation you can go daft, do nothing or be sensible. (ibid.)

The amendment was passed.

County planning staff reflecting on the member's rejection of a broad programme of public participation at alternative strategies and draft plan stages believed that they may have placed too much credence on the 1973 County Labour Party manifesto and on the early enthusiasm

for public participation shown by the chair of planning committee. From the first open day meeting there was evidence that not all county councillors shared that support. The "undue sensitivity" and "overprotective role" of the chief executive was also mentioned in relation to officer-member relations and structure planning matters. The draft of the CPO report to planning committee on the programme of public participation for draft plan had gone back and forth several times between the planning department and the chief executive before a version was agreed (in similar fashion to the Broad Policy Options paper in 1975).

After several months of persistence and struggle the Leader finally caved in and gave agreement that there could be a number of randomly selected groups drawn from different parts of the county. The groups would be led by staff from Social and Community Planning Research, the policy research organisation that had won the contract for the public attitude survey in Phase 1, at a cost of £10 000 for 8 groups meeting 3 or 4 times to learn about the draft plan and to give their views on its policies and content. This professional officers 'ambush' on what had been a severe and high level political veto on even the truncated public participation programme for draft plan stage (which was put in place after the confrontations of Christmas 1975) was carefully laid. I was told in interview (26 January 1977) by a senior member of the county planning department that the

official minutes of the county planning committee of 5 July 1976 were written in a way to play down the critical statements made by the chair and deputy chair of the PTE and the chair of Sheffield MDC planning committee.

Speeding up the Planning Process

The principal outcome of these events was strong pressure on the structure plan team to speed up plan preparation. The revised timetable which had been in place from earlier in 1975 was overturned. Nevertheless, in seeking to accelerate the work programme it was not thought possible to adapt the nature of the plan preparation process. Despite the efforts of the district councils to get the county planners to adopt a more limited planning process and to reduce the scope of the plan there was agreement (at least from county planning staff) that this was inadvisable. They argued that the form of structure plans was laid down by the statutes and in government advice. The team was already heavily commited to a comprehensive and systematic approach in terms of the amount of data already collected, in the organisation of the team, by the completed stages of work and the expectations of interested parties. On the former point the Chief Executive had previously noted (at the July meeting of the JCC Structure Plan Sub-Committee) that the Hereford and Worcestershire Structure Plan had only been adopted with reluctance by the Secretary of State. In that example the DOE had expressed concern that a number of the issues included in the plan had not been addressed in sufficient depth or detail.

By the winter of 1975 slippage on the timetable proposed in the original Project Report was considerable. The work programme was nearly 12 months behind schedule. The Project Report had proposed that the 'policy sets' (that is, the partly integrated sets of policies which could form the larger building blocks of structure plan strategy) would be complete by mid 1975. In reality, the task of bringing individual policies together was only begining in late 1975 and this process was to last well into 1976.

The most significant outcome from the 'events' of late 1975 when the majority group Leader had publicly criticised the planning process was the demand from the Labour Group that a structure plan be available before the elections of May 1977. The implication of this for the work programme was that the more detailed elaboration of the individual policy options (fine policy stage), formation of policy sets, testing and evaluation of these, presentation of initial structure plan strategies and the determination of the preferred strategy had to be completed within a year. In fact, the technical work being proposed for this 12 month period corresponded closely to the time originally allocated for all these stages of work in the Project Report. The timetable requirement was nevertheless a cause of some concern to the team of planners, not least because of their experience in keeping to schedule over the initial stages. Added to this was concern that the morale of the team had taken a battering during the run up to Christmas 1975 and the closer scrutiny of their work which had been a result of the councillors' outcry. The key councillors (Labour Group executive) had made it clear that they were going to keep a much keener eye on the work of the team. As one senior planner noted, "we are finding the Chief Executive quite difficult at the moment and the members keep referring things to Labour Group" (project notes of meeting of Met. Counties Structure Planning Group, 28 January 1976). Not only were officers in the team rattled by the critical comments from the leadership but back-benchers on planning committee were less confident about taking decisions without upward reference. A limited hiatus was also caused by the Leader's intention to prepare a set of guidelines on policies for the structure plan. The team feared possible discrepancies that could appear between the direction of their technical work, public opinion and the policy preferences of the inner caucus of Labour Group.

The tighter timetable also meant exacerbating the difficulties over consultation already being experienced due to the overlapping of stages in the planning process. Stages in the planning process which had earlier been seen as discrete or part of a sequential development of policy were having to proceed in parallel. For example, within the revised work programme the Technical Audits (county offficer meetings to evaluate the logic and content of the detailed (fine) options/ policies) were begun in March 1976 and work continued through until August, whilst work on Initial Strategies was begun in April and carried through into September. Logic suggests that these are sequential programme elements. In effect, initial strategies were beginning to take shape alongside and at the same time as work was continuing on the choice of and reasoned justification for individual policies. Structure plan strategies were being sketched out whilst decisions were still being made about the specific and detailed policies to be incorporated into them. Overlapping stages of a planning process may not appear unreasonable within cyclic schemes of decision-making. However, despite the proposal made by Methods Group that a cyclical scheme be adopted, for several of the planners in the structure plan team and for consultees this way of working seemed illogical and anathema.

Comments from the structure plan team at this time were critical of elected members and their understanding of the planning process that had been followed.

> ...Members have not really, apart from one or two, attempted to understand the process we are going through. We are in highly charged territory at the moment with the members. The structure plan has taken a hammering led by Thwaites [author note; chair of PTE and later to become Leader]. Sir Ron and other high-ups have taken a greater interest... have got the message that the structure plan is a document that the Party must get interested in; so we are waiting for offerings from aloft. They may come up with a different view of what they want from the structure plan than the view that we have been

selling them. (project notes of Structure Plan Core group meeting, 9 February 1976)

Another member of the team said that

> ...Sir Ron may come up with the structure plan. All this has blown up because we are criticising part of the election platform; free public transport. (ibid.)

A few days later a range of similar views from different officers surfaced during a discussion about the fine policy options.

> ...there are political problems as to what members will be prepared to see or will not see...
>
> It is in early March that we should decide whether one sector should have more resources. Finance is crucial to the structure plan but it is tending to get lost.
>
> What we are likely to get is in terms of political diktat. Our theoretical approach is not likely to mean much. We have not much to play around with in practice. The Structure Plan will do what members say.
>
> We are hoping to get from Sir Ron's paper, a set of guidelines for the Structure Plan. He has gone away to think and has realised what a thorny problem he's got. (ibid.)

Fine Policy Options

Four steps were originally defined for the stage of developing fine policy options and detailed elaboration of policies.

Firstly, the broad policy options were to be developed further, which included building in a spatial element. That is, the BPOs were to be considered in relation to specific areas in the county to assess the feasibility of applying those particular policies in different parts of South Yorkshire. At this stage in the planning process a distinction was developed between core policies and strategy policies. The former were identified as policies or means to achieve structure plan objectives

which were thought essential, and thus common, to all strategies. Strategy policies, on the other hand, were identified as policies which would only be tenable if implemented as part of a specific bundle of policies. Whether strategy policies ended up as part of the final plan was dependent on the overall strategic thrust. The first stage of fine policy development proceeded largely as intended and was completed relatively quickly by March 1976.

Step 2 in the elaboration of policies was to be the grouping of policies and detailed options into three policy sets. The 3 sets were decided after debate in the team and consisted of a 'jobs' set, an 'environment' set and a 'home' or housing set. The shorthand title of each set gives an indication of the way that bundles of policies were integrated depending on whether it appeared likely to promote either a job-, an environmental protection- or a housing-led strategy.

The building of policy sets was described in more detail in a paper produced in April 1976.

> The nine key issues were combined into three groups of closely related issues as follows:-
> Policy Group A: Population/ Housing, Employment, and Transport.
> Policy Group B: Shopping, Population/ Housing, Transport, and Environment.
> Policy group C: Environment, Recreation and Surface Minerals.
>
> As can be seen, crucial issues with particularly wide inter-linkages (population/ housing, transport, and environment) fall within more than one of these groups. (SYCC, 1976k, 3)

In the revised timetable it was intended that this stage would be completed by late February 1976. As with the first stage in the policy elaboration process, stage 2 went largely according to plan, although with some time slippage. A summary paper on Policy Sets was taken to Policy Sub-Committee A (Labour Group executive) in mid-

April. Detailed papers about the policy sets went to county council committees during late April and May, after being given the go-ahead from Labour Group.

The third step in policy elaboration was to subject the fine policies and the policy sets to review and evaluation. The fine policies and the reasoning behind them as well as the policy sets were to be the subject of Technical Audits involving a broad range of county council staff (including officers from most other departments and other sections of the county planning department). It was suggested that officers from the planning sections of the district councils be invited to the Audits but the invitation was never made on the assumption that it would have been rebuffed. It was originally intended that evaluation be focussed on the financial implications of the policy sets and their social and economic impacts on local people.

In the event the county planning team never managed to completely follow their initial proposals on the various stages in building-up initial strategies. A casualty of the truncated time scale was the evaluation of the policy sets. Technical Audits were underway on fine policies by late March 1976. The Audits continued into the middle of August. These meetings were costly of officer time with over 20 audits being held over the period. Meetings normally lasted half a day and involved between 4 and 7 senior staff. Not taking account of the supplementary work (of preparatory work, writing up notes, drafting the reasoned justifications for the Initial Strategies paper) a crude total of 50 staff-days of time were expended on evaluation of the amended BPOs. The structure plan team decided that to immediately embark on a similar round of audits for the policy sets would have undermined the timetable, would have led to some duplication of effort and would probably not have gained the support and

involvement of the senior officers from other departments (who were already pointing out the "costs" involved).

The final stage of policy elaboration was to be the integration and assembly of the policy sets into the initial strategies.

Various papers produced during 1975 and 1976 refer to these stages of policy elaboration and integration. Justification of the elaboration of the BPOs was made in terms of it being

> ...a necessary stage given that statements of policy alternatives at the BPO stage were too crude for the Structure Plan (SYCC, 1975m, 81)

The broad policy options were felt to be "conceptual, sometimes extreme, alternatives" whereas after their elaboration through the first stages of fine policy development the individual policies were said to be "more practicable" (ibid.). In looking back over the preparation of the elaborated policies and the production of policy sets the team suggested that it was necessary to have

> ...an intermediate step to bridge the large 'gap' between having 'seperate' policies for each key issue and having integrated policy packages for all key issues. (ibid.)

The production of policy sets was described thus

> ...technical work has proceeded by developing the policies which make up the options [author note: the broad policy options] to a greater level of detail (excluding, of course, those rejected at the 'broad options' stage), by investigating their suitability for different parts of the County, and, more recently, by beginning to integrate the policies for different key issues. (SYCC, 1976k, 3)

In the winter of 1975-1976 the structure plan team were uncertain about how many strategies were likely to develop from the policy elaboration work but the expectation was that more than one overall planning framework would emerge from the technical work. Despite

the strictures that had been raised towards the end of 1975 about the public participation and consultation processes the team still expected (during the fine policy development phase) that a strong political commitment to these remained intact and that a major stage of public involvement would occur after initial strategies had been identified.

Initial Strategies

Once the policy sets had been developed (a stage which it was said "passes very rapidly" (ibid, p.4) elements of these (and various common policies) were grouped further into overall strategies for the county.

At this stage in the planning process there was a further reorganisation of the county planning department to create 3 temporary working groups. Methods Group recommended (SYCC, 1976e, DN METHD 26) a Strategy Group, to be made up of the 'issue-men'. An Assessment Group was to sit alongside the Strategy Group, composed of a broader constituency from within the department (that is, officers who had responsibilities linked to the structure plan but who had not played a continuous part in key issue and policy development). The function of this group was to provide a critical sounding board for checking out the logic, consistency and credibility of the evolving strategies. Specific tasks identified for Assessment Group were to look back at the problems identified during Phase 1 of the planning process and particularly to consider how far the emerging strategies related to responses from the public during public participation. Arbitration of any difficulties between Strategy and Assessment Groups was to be the main task of the third temporary grouping; Supervisory Group. The latter was composed of senior staff in the department including the assistant chief planner and the leader of the structure plan team.

The restructuring of the team signalled a change of working method. A number of principles felt to be relevant to this stage of the planning process (ibid.). Firstly, it was proposed that the team "eschew the use of theoretical constructs as a framework for developing strategies". The thinking behind this statement appears to be a invocation not to return to first principles but rather to continue the systematic build up towards strategies through the step by step progression already adopted. A second principle was that in order for strategy building to be carried through rapidly, the fewer the number of people involved the better. The qualification to this was that Supervisory Group should have the power of veto over the strategy building work as a check on 'rogue' strategies and would act as arbiter between Strategy Group and Assessment Group should irresolvable conflict occur. Finally, it was felt necessary for breaks or pauses to be built into the strategy-building process in order for cross checking and dialogue between staff for justification of progress and rethinking if need be.

Integration of policies into strategies was to be achieved in a similar manner to that used to build policy sets, that is, assessment was to be made of the compatibilities between individual policies and groups of policies whilst confirming the objectives, broad policy commitments and principles already established. The time available for building the initial strategies was extremely limited. At the first meeting of the newly formed Strategy Group on 29 April 1976, the assistant chief planner in charge of structure plan preparation said "...we start building general strategies tomorrow afternoon with a target of completion by mid-May". Thus began a frenetic period with members of Strategy Group working to the limit of their physical and mental capacity in order to stay on timetable.

Strategy Group were somewhat overawed by the task they faced and appealed to Assessment group to be positive in their response to strategy building. Essentially the group was looking for compatabilities between different policies so that a coherent and linked package of policies resulted. The process might be visualised as attempting to create an overlay of matrices where each of the policy sets is juxtaposed with every other (Diagram 5.3). As we have seen earlier the policy sets were built up from individual policy areas (housing, environment, transport, etc.). By using the matrix layout it was (theoretically) possible to systematically check the compatability of each policy area against others. Compatabilities/ incompatabilities can also be checked across matrices (as the diagram implies).

Strategy Group said that this use of matrices was similar to the approach taken by most other structure planning teams and was adapted from the AIDA technique. They also believed that use of the approach needed to be "fairly free and flexible" and that they expected their first efforts would be crude; "the matrix will provide building blocks and allow us to say that the sets are roughly compatible. Then we can sort out the detail" (project notes from Joint Strategy and Assessment Groups meeting, 29 April 1976). There was some disagreement within the team about the disaggregation within the matrices which meant considering the interaction of policies ("why did we do the policy sets at all?" (ibid.)). For example, one alternative way of proceeding would have been to have started with a possible strategy which could then be checked against individual policies and objectives for compatability, consistency and coherence.

The burden of work over the first week of strategy building fell to two senior planners who were most closely aware of the whole range of prior input into the

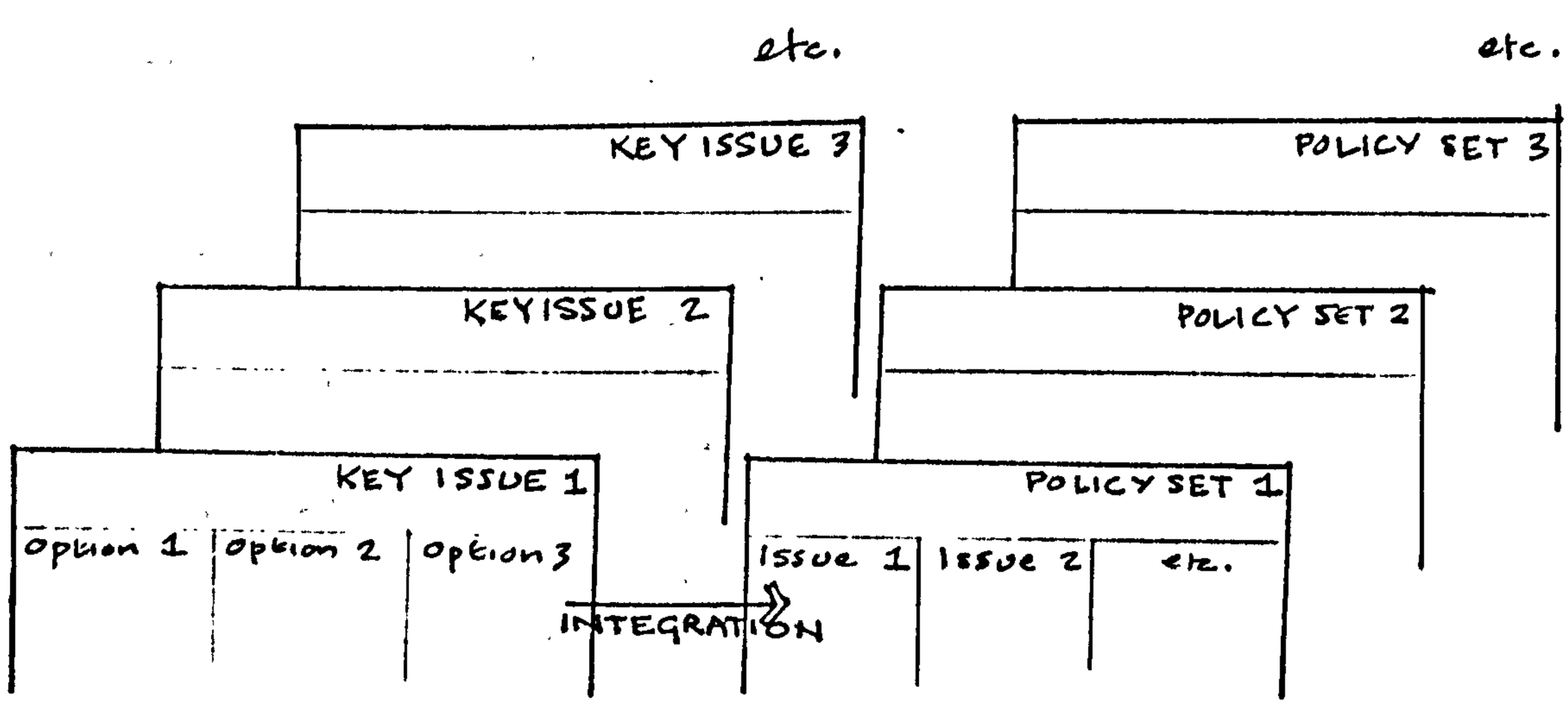


Fig 5.3 Matrices of key issues, policy options and policy sets.
(derived from Fig 12 SYCC TP METHD 04: Generation of Policy Sets)

production of fine policies and the policy sets. A central role was played by the assistant chief planner in charge of the structure plan team. He was said by his colleagues to be the only person in the department who had any kind of overall view of the gamut of policy development and hence was most capable of seeing the linkages and teasing out the implications of integrating the specific policies. The other pivotal officer in the Strategy Group had a good deal of previous experience of the task of building strategies having worked on the Notts-Derby study, who was well acquainted with AIDA and other OR techniques and had co-authored a book reviewing sub-regional planning studies.

Observing the way that the group operated in that first week it was noticeable, firstly, how much effort was put into the task. Officers were working flat out ("with five minutes for lunch"). Secondly, the group was obviously on top of the material that they were working with insofar as they were able to move with considerable agility from consideration of the detail of individual policies to an understanding of the overall shape of strategies. The first week of strategy building ended with the assistant chief planner (Structure Plan) taking everything home in order to have a "first stab" at the disentangling the matrices.

On 3rd May the Strategy Group requested a meeting with Assessment Group. They were seeking help with developing their approach to strategy building. The ACP who was heading up the Strategy Group expressed their growing uncertainty about the value of the matrix technique. They had begun to see it "not as an evaluation process" but as a way of highlighting "themes which follow from the interaction of policy and show conflicts in resource allocation" (project notes on Joint Strategy and Assessment Group meeting, 3 May 1976). In an effort to move forward and spark ideas, members of Assessment Group

suggested a number of areas of incompatability (such as the desire to promote jobs and protection of the Green Belt). The general reaction of Assessment Group members at the meeting was disappointment at the slow progress that the other group were making. Comments were made about the problems of timing. Delay would result in an important stage in the overall process being too rushed and constrained. On the latter point there was still some regret that particular topics were not open for debate (cheap fares policy was specifically mentioned). Reporting the meeting to Supervisory group the ACP (Structure Plan) said that he felt the joint meeting had achieved little.

> At no stage did we look likely to get answers to the questions we raised. The (Assessment) group seemed to be mainly interested in the sorts of questions that the district councils and the Examination in Public are likely to raise. Not the specific questions but the <u>types</u> of question. What we want to know is how the policies in strategies relate to problems. I expected a progression from problem and sources of problems to strategy - and then to how strategies relate to existing policies. (project notes on Supervisory Group, 4 May 1976)

Strategy Group pressed on over the next couple of days. Their concern was continually about the limited amount of time available and the potentially restricted technical analysis that they could offer because of this limitation. One of the group said that they could begin to see some broad differences between strategies built on different premises but that given the time constraint they would probably have to broadly indicate those differences and fill out the detailed implications later. Following this contribution it was proposed that

> ...we should go for as extreme a range of strategies as possible. (ibid.)

The response from another officer was that the strategies that they were likely to bring forward

> ...will not be very extreme because the policies and the policy sets are not extreme... They may be

somewhat stylised because of the way in which the policies and sets were vetted and set up. (ibid.)

Yet again the lack of time was bemoaned

> ...This is the most important bit of the work so far and yet there is not time...only four days to do it...(yet) we have had 2 months to look at the sets and the interactions between policies at that stage. (ibid.)

Strategy Group then set out to extend the discussion on policy set interactions by considering the effects of composite policies on particular areas of the County. The division of the county into 41 policy zones was used for this exercise. During the first morning of considering the area impact of composite policies, four policy zones were covered in four hours. The group had scheduled themselves to have run through all the zones by the end of the following day. At the speed of treating one zone per hour there was still 37 hours of work ahead at lunchtime on day 1. Apart from the emerging unreality of that schedule there were other worries.

Strategy Group themselves saw dangers in the way that a small body of 4 or 5 were beginning to hold the key to the structure plan by their privileged grasp of the full gamut of information and past work. They were concerned that they might overlook key elements of work. This was why they were reassured by the involvement of the other groups as an insurance against going too far adrift. One member of Strategy Group said that

> ...the conservatives of Strategy Group are...pitted against the sharpness of the people in Assessment Group...and this is probably the best way round. (ibid.)

Supervisory Group met to discuss timetable and progress later on 4th May. Among the percieved difficulties were the way that some current commitments were blocking strategy development and that the strategy-building process was losing some of the detail that had been built

into policy options at the stage of elaboration of the broad policy options.

The former issue was illustrated by the desire to open up some parts of the county for economic development and growth. In particular, the Dearne valley (which carried a burden of decline and dereliction from the run-down of coal mining) was a favoured target for strategic action. Infrastructure improvement could open up the area to new industry but the committment to cheap fares was thought likely to inhibit the provision of capital funds for road building. A specific example of the loss of the detail that had emerged from earlier work on policies as a result of this rapid strategy-building period emerged in strategy development. It was specifically suggested that the previous work on 'spatialisation' of fine policies (that is, the consideration of the impact of policy options on particular areas or zones of the county) was being lost because the strategy-building process was being carried out so quickly and, as a result, an 'aspatial' approach was re-emerging. (project notes on Supervisory Group, 4 May 1976)

Fundamental questions about the form and content of the structure plan were still on the agenda at this late stage. Uncertainties over the approach to strategy-building continued. Assessment Group felt constrained by its brief of offering advice and criticism and began to develop its own 'radical' strategy. This had evolved after the group had begun to look at the relationship between the problems initially identified early in the planning process and the strategies which were being built by Strategy Group. Assessment Group saw that the strategies emerging from the careful assembly of elements out of the thorough technical work undertaken by the team over the previous months was unlikely to address some of the fundamental issues raised by the public and councillors durimg public participation and consultation

right at the outset. The ACP who chaired Assessment Group therefore decided that they should play a more active role. The group had 'brainstormed' a strategy which they felt would help the most deprived groups and areas in the county. A portent of this 'distributive' orientation is found in the discussion at Assessment Group meeting of 7th May. The chair had noted that the County's cheap fares policy could be justified principally on social grounds.

> ...Why does the County Council want more public transport rather than private? It is for social reasons. The policy will benefit lower income groups - and give them a better standard of living... The logic may be wrong but that is the reason for doing it..we should get these ideas across. (project notes on Assessment Group, 7 May 1976)

The decision by Assessment Group to look for a strategy which could distribute benefits differentially to the poorer groups in the county came jointly from the officer in charge of the public participation programme and an officer who had previously worked on the Merseyside structure plan. Assessment Group felt that the 'social groups emphasis' was one of the major elements of the political approach of county Labour Group and believed that the emphasis had not been developed to the full in the professional work leading up to the development of initial strategies. In self-vindication, it was said by Strategy Group that the emphasis on distributional effects of strategies would emerge during the evaluation stage of strategy building.

A draft paper on initial strategies was distributed to chief officers and other professionals in county hall on Friday 21 May. Functional Group (the 3rd/ 4th tier officer body linked into the County's corporate planning system which was 'shadowing' plan preparation and the work of the planning department) was able to give initial reactions. The first draft came in for strong criticism.

There was concern at the lack of careful justification of the strategies.

> ...As it stands it could have come out of a planning school after an hour. (project notes on Functional Group, 27 May 1976)

The timescale was such that a redraft was already under way and the chair of planning committee was preparing a 'political summary'.

At another Functional Group meeting in July 1976 the redrafted initial strategies paper (including evaluation work) was discussed along with consideration of the next stages of the planning process. It was intended that the choice of preferred strategy and the draft structure plan would follow a more rigorous evaluation of the initial strategies. A prominent issue at this meeting was "how to take the politicians along". The tightness of the timetable required rapid feedback from councillors but also meant that full consultation could be difficult and this was soon ruled out. There was some discussion about how to involve a small body of members in discussion on the initial strategies. It was proposed (from officers from the Chief Executive's office) that the small group of key Labour councillors (Policy Sub-Committee A - effectively the Labour Group Executive) should play this role (ibid.).

Senior planning officers were keen that key councillors should be involved on a frequent basis during the stages leading to firming up a commitment to a draft plan. Other senior staff in the county did not believe that busy members would accept that kind of time commitment. A balance needed to be sought between involving a few members who might be prepared to give time and the possible backlash from other councillors who felt left out if the circle was drawn too tightly.

Many critical comments were flying about at this time. The July meeting ofFunctional Group was picking holes in the planners methodology; comments about the evaluation were particularly harsh.

> You are always making assumptions. It's like Grimm's Fairy Tales..
> (project notes from Functional Group, 6 July 1976)

An appendix to the Initial Strategies paper included a listing of objectives for the structure plan which had not been explicitly presented before. The planning department was criticised for not having presented them prior to this stage. In fact, the planning team had always intended that objectives be defined fairly late in the planning process. Representatives of the team did note at various meetings in the summer of 1976 that objectives for the structure plan had been developed on the basis of the definition of problems, survey work, forecasting, key issues definition and other early work in the department. "There are no new thoughts". However, there was some suspicion from outwith the planning department about the reasons why the objectives were only made explicit at this late stage and some critics were arguing that no great store could be placed on them. Concern was also expressed about the interpretation of public opinion which was proposed as part of the evaluation of the strategies.

The three initial strategies that were in final draft by early June consisted of

> ...a)...to locate and concentrate effort and investment to achieve the greatest benefits for the County as a whole...The growth of housing, industry and shops would...(be)...encouraged in areas likely to be attractive for such development, but in rural areas the environment would...(be)...strictly conserved.
>
> b) This strategy, while offering attractive locations for new industry, (seeks)...also to maintain the maximum use of the development of houses, roads, shops, etc. throughout the County. It (proposes) special environmental and transport

improvements to stem the decline of the most deprived areas.

c) This strategy (aims) to achieve the maximum social benefit from the allocation of resources, by concentrating on the areas and groups which appeared to be in greatest need.
(SYCC, 1977e, 120-123)

The initial strategies were discussed in member and officer meetings through June and July 1976. The document was taken through the main county council committees during this period. Planning committee (12th July) had a full presentation of the strategies from the county planning officer, the chief planner (Structure Plan) and the assistant chief planner who headed the Strategy Group. The chief planner said that

> ...in putting together the strategies (as packages of policies which fit reasonably well together) we have worked from the policies and policy options previously agreed. The whole thing has got to hang together. Realistic alternatives are superimposed on the core policies which are where we do not see a great deal of realistic choice. I see the core policies as going into the draft structure plan. (project notes on County Planning committee, 12 July 1976)

The CPO added that

> ...what is already county policy and what is gathered from views in committee should lead to policies which are acceptable to the county council.. We have had quite a number of comments back particularly from chief officers in the county, especially the Treasurer (ibid.)

However, a member of planning committee who was chair of another main committee was not happy with the consultation procedures.

> ...It is very difficult to comment on this document ...for example, on the type of industry which might be considerd acceptable. We should pick this up. What criteria have been used to determine the types of industry? We as members should decide the criteria not some officers. Members should be involved in consultation. (ibid.)

Another member added

> ...If I went up to the county planning officer and wanted re-wording in the document would it come to a meeting? No, it would not. Why should the Treasurer's department have that privilege? I am supposed to be the senior. (ibid.)

In the discussion on core policies more information was requested on average incomes, on land availability in Sheffield (greater spare land being the basis for choice of Sheffield as a regional employment centre) and how to control mineral extraction.

The discussion of the initial strategies was mainly for information on particular issues. The chair summed up by proposing that the officers continue to work on the 3 strategies. He added

> ...I have enjoyed the morning as being one of the few occasions on which we have thought about planning as such. (ibid.)

In fact, the meeting had been quiet. There was a feeling of 'let the officers get on with it'. There were also some notable absentees, namely powerful members of Policy Committee and two councillors closely involved with passenger transport matters left on other business almost a soon as the meeting started.

Passenger Transport committee discussed the initial strategies document on 14th July. The planning officers introduced the report for 20 minutes. There was 10 minutes of discussion, mainly factual question and answer. From our observations only about 2 councillors had the document in front of them.

At Recreation, Culture and Health committee on the next day the (by now) familiar routine of introduction by the CPO and other officers led into discussion. A parting shot from the CPO was to say that if the document was "rubbish, then tell us". One member immediately replied in the affirmative but his later questions indicated a close reading of the report. The chair was keen to press

on with the agenda against the complaint from one councillor who felt that important matters were being given short shrift. There were other comments about the report being "hot air" and "too much sociology - I call it kid-ology". Several councillors took part in the 20 minute debate as did the chief recreation officer but others councillors appeared uninterested and when the chair asked for approval of the report and work continue there was one *soto voce* comment of, "big deal!".

Policy committee decided not to take the report to the July meeting. The council leader and chief executive had "pencilled it into the agenda" but later decided that as it had been seen by both the Labour and Opposition groups at the policy Sub-committees and by most service committees there was little point in taking it.

When the JCC Structure Plan Sub-Committee tabled the report on 16 July the debate took over 2 hours. Most comments were about the demarcation between strategic and local plan matters and about district council autonomy. Housing was a major part of the debate. There were also expressed concerns about the haste being imposed by the county's timetable for consultation. The district council representatives saw the JCC meeting as an opportunity to ask questions but not for serious debate, that was to be left to their respective Planning committees.

Environment committee met on 21st July. Before the meeting a Labour back-bencher admitted in conversation that he was still confused by the document despite having read it several times. This councillor (who had also been at planning committee earlier in the month) said that it was "almost a waste of time given that the plan was likely to be overtaken by events , with the financial climate dictating the future". The discussion was short and dominated by the chair who reminded the CPO of the

committee's policies on the environment, particularly on promotion of small local sites for recreation and environmental treatment.

Highways committee was more animated. The chair opened discussion by noting that two of the strategies indicated a retreat from some of the priorities of the committee (specifically a link road in Doncaster and the Sheffield-Mosborough Parkway). The final resolution from the committee was to retain these in the final plan.

In general, however, the predominant impression was that the majority of county councillors were not particularly interested in the document and 'nodded it' through their committees. There could be a number of reasons for this apparent lethargy. All plausible explanations point ultimately towards the idea that either the document was not significant and was unlikely to change conditions in the county or that other forms of decision-making were likely to over-ride the plan. As the initial strategies paper the key decisions and debates about the plan were most likely to take place in the future when a preferred strategy was presented. The closer involvement of Labour Group executive in preparation of the initial strategies report could also have meant that back-benchers were prepared to leave the vetting of the document to the small caucus of powerful committee chairs.

Other comments at this stage were pertinent. A letter from the Principal Planner at the DOE Regional Office at Leeds (3/8/1976) to the CPO raised the question of the strategy aimed at helping the more deprived areas of the county. While recognising the need to help people living in areas of environmental deprivation and low incomes" he took the view that it was not in the best interests of the county or the region "if scarce resources were to be so concentrated in such areas that the opportunity to reap the economic and social benefits of such development

in more promising areas were lost" (DOE, Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Office, 1976). The letter went on to raise some specific concerns on finance (the need to face up to likely future financial constraints), industrial land (release of large new sites was considered unwise as it could impair the regions industrial strategy), cheap fares ("unlikely to be acceptable to the government"), environmental policies ("without the cooperation of the Districts" many of these policies "cannot suceed and it was apparent at..(recent meeting)..that their cooperation was not yet assured" (ibid.)).

District council comment on the initial strategies was predictably cool. At working meetings with district council planning officers in late May there was already early comment to the effect that not enough thought had gone into the strategies, nor was the justification for strategies apparent. First reactions to the third strategy were negative. "It's too interventionist... based on no facts...(we) object to it both in principle and in terms of its justification...We don't want intervention on the first Structure Plan" (project notes on General Meeting with Districts Planning departments, 29 June 1975). The general feeling was that the third strategy was unacceptable. A more enigmatic comment was that to introduce it "at the present time" would be unfortunate for local government. The latter comment could have indicated that to continue with such a strategy would mean a public disagreement between the county and the district councils or a broader concern on the same theme that public argument between officers and members would bring town planning and even local government into disrepute.

Considered comments were returned by September. The JCC Structure Plan Sub-Committee in early September had to be reconvened a week later than anticipated because of failure to complete all the discussion on core policies

and initial strategies in the time available. Many comments were common between all 4 district councils although Rotherham's comments were generally less harsh than those from the other three authorities. Nonetheless, Rotherham considered a number of core policies to be unacceptable. These were principally linked to housing and industrial land allocations and to recreation and open space policies. The reason for objection was that these policies impinged on local plan responsibilities, were not strategic matters, were too restrictive and were felt to contradict other elements of county council policy. Rotherham considered the third strategy to be most acceptable and strategy 1 least favoured.

Doncaster MDC felt the strategies to be too detailed for structure planning and cut across DC responsibilities. The strategies were felt to run a risk of pre-empting the scope of local plans. Advocacy policies were felt to be unnecessary. The differences between the strategies were felt to have been contrived and artificial. Their recommendation for spatial division of the county for policy purposes was for three broad areas rather than the 41 zones actually adopted by the county planners. All core policies were criticised or qualifications were made about them.

Sheffield MDC offered a fundamental critique. They saw shortcomings in the use of the PSO report as a basis for defining issues, they criticised the failure of the county to adapt the key issues after consultation and they objected to the level of detail to which the county were working. They rejected the statement that the core policies were where "no realistic policy choices exist" and they wished to see pragmatic, prescriptive policies and abandonment of advocative policies. They also raised concern about the level of detail and the small size of the 'policy zones' used to assess impacts and define

planning action. They condemned, *inter alia*, the lack of financial restraint being exhibited in the strategies, possible pre-emption of central government funds which would otherwise go to the DCs and the way that many policies went beyond strategic concerns. They sought a structure plan which could act as "a combined corporate, financial, land-use plan for all local authorities in South Yorkshire" (SYCC, 1976n). Core policies were generally acceptable apart from objections to those covering recreation and shopping which were not considered to be key issues for the first structure plan. A compromise between strategies 1 and 2 was the Sheffield MDC preference.

Barnsley MDC said that the strategies were "far too detailed for structure plan purposes and represent unnecessary duplication of work" and that the county council was attempting to work to a level where detailed information was not yet available. The detail and scope of the strategies were being pursued against government advice and could pre-empt central resources being made available. They also criticised the length of time taken to reach the stage of presenting initial strategies. The plan "could have a severe and unwarranted effect on the Borough's functions", covered too many issues including recreation and shopping which were felt not to be 'key'. They applauded the 'demotion' of housing from the list of key issues. Barnsley council felt that the level of detail being followed could mean the identification of specific areas of land for development or treatment which they believed was exactly what the new development planning system was designed to overcome. They also believed that local plan priorities could only be established after a thorough assessment and understanding of local needs. The county council was clearly not considered capable of fulfilling that task nor did the Barnsley council consider it legitimate that it should try. A more realistic stance was felt essential over

financial resources. They did not accept the advocative policy principle. The core policies, cheap fares and all environmental and shopping policies were considered unacceptable nor were any of the three initial strategies considered as satisfactory in the form presented.

At the September JCC SP Sub-Committee and at county planning committee of 13th September the county planning officer reported that he could not agree with the general comments from Barnsley and Doncaster as they

> ...appear to be based on a conception of structure planning completely at variance with that adopted by this authority to date.(project notes of county planning committee, 13 September 1976)

He also took the view that the DOE Regional Office was generally happy with the South Yorkshire planning process whilst having "certain policy reservations".

In late September, Supervisory Group began an intensive period of work to synthesise the team's work on initial strategies, consultees comments and the views of key county councillors into a draft structure plan.

Preparing the Draft Strategy

Supervisory Group was composed of 5 senior officers including the chief planner in charge of the Structure Plan section, two assistant chief planners from the structure plan team, two other ACPs, one with responsibilities for transportation aspects of the plan and the other from the Policy and Resources section of the county planning department. These officers were interviewed in October, 1976 in order to gain an insight into the workings of the group as it played a crucial role in putting the draft structure plan together.

A week was set aside for the Supervisory Group (abbreviated to Super Group by less senior staff) to pull the previous work on strategies and the comments from committees and consultees into a draft strategy. The time available was 20-25 September, 1976. The group met on two occasions during the previous week (16 and 17th) in order to develop its approach and workstyle for the intensive week that was to come. In these two preliminary days they admitted to not having a predetermined view on how they were to achieve a synthesis. Several false starts were made on a method on the previous Thursday and Friday and this uncertainty seems to have pervaded the whole department. From accounts from other staff the period was sheathed in speculation and rumour about what was going on in the room set aside for the Super Group pre-meeting. A poem was composed by young turks in the structure plan team and an air of expectancy about what might emerge from this crucial stage was widespread. The gravid atmosphere was not suprising since this was the culmination of an enormous amount of work and effort and given the increasingly critical tone taken by members towards the planning process and the plan there was a great deal at stake.

On Friday the 17th Super Group began to get into a stride. Attempts to take population isssues and housing as the base from which to build the strategy seems to have been unproductive but when employment issues were considered this proved to be a better start point. One officer said that it became clear that employment policies dictated the rest of the strategy so they emerged as the most fruitful initial basis for plan building. There was obvious and widespread relief when it seemed that the group was getting underway on the Friday.

The group worked around a table in a seminar format with a free and, by all accounts, often heated discussion. The arguments must have fed the departmental rumour about a 'madhouse' atmosphere of Super Group and some felt that the vigour of the arguments were out of proportion with the issues. One interviewee said that although the discussion was animated for most of the time, at some stages people were 'nearly dancing on the tables'. Another participant said that the discussions were somewhat disorganised and unstructured.

The format which developed was to start with individual key issues and their associated policies and to consider the relationships between members' views, technical evaluations and other information. The group worked with the junior staff who had dealt with specific key issues. Several officers from Policy and Resources section of the department were also invited in from time to time to advise on on the local impacts of policy. Two officers from the Treasurers department and the planning officer in charge of public participation were also called in occasionally to advise on costings and public opinion respectively. Advisers were invited in singly and there were never more than two or three advisers in with Super Group at any one time. This also provoked departmental comment and speculation, being seen as a tactic of

'divide and conquer'. However, from the point of view of senior staff, the group had very little time to prepare recommendations and it was thought that a smaller group would be able to reach decisions more quickly.

Members of the group were asked about the information being used to develop a strategy. The procedure was to bring together the outcome of a series of evaluations of policies although at least one interviewee mentioned that no one was too sure about how to do this at the outset. Part of the purpose of the meetings/discussions during the week was to consider and seek resolution of conflicts and inconsistencies between proposed policies.

The several strands or streams of evaluation work being fed into the deliberations were

a) assessments of the local impact of policies in 70-80 local planning areas within the county,
b) the results of an 'effectiveness evaluation' which had been developed to assess whether policies would achieve overall objectives,
c) public costings of the implementation of policies (broken down into county and district costs),
d) extent to which proposed policies conflicted with/ confirmed existing policies,
e) comments and representations from consultees after publication of initial strategies,
f) consideration of the effects of policies on different social groups which had been prepared with reference to the social area analysis in the county.

There were also a series of late comments from within the county council itself which were considered in strategy development. However, the exercise was not simply an additive process. One officer said that it was the "subjective appraisal of the conclusion drawn from the five or six strands". Another said that, "some new policies emerged; we were actually making new ones". The synthetic and creative nature of the discussions was stressed by the senior officers, one of whom said that "it was...a question of radical change".

Standing above any of these indivdual elements of evaluation was a ranked list of objectives for the structure plan. This list had been produced before the 20th september and came from a specially convened group of senior Labour members. The idea of a senior members group to give rapid feedback and advice to the structure plan team had been launched by the planning department (raised in Functional Group on 6/7/1976) as a way of testing the political water and insuring against abortive work by officers at this late stage in plan preparation.

The senior members group concerned with the plan consisted of the Leader, Sir Ron Ironmonger, the chair of planning committee and another senior Labour politician. They met about five times (from mid-July; about once a fortnight) before the September closeting of Super Group. Two other senior Labour members were drawn into the caucus at its later meetings being the chairs of Passenger Transport and Highways committees. The main outcome of the meetings was the ranking of the 24 objectives in order of importance. However, opinions seemed to differ on the effectiveness and value of the senior members group. Although it was said that the members group had ranked the objectives without officer help, in interview two officers believed that the listing was "really Sir Ron's". Other officer comment indicated that Super Group had prepared its own list and that this was seen by the senior members group and adopted with little alteration. The main difficulty for the officers was getting a rapid response. "It takes several days to get the group together". The meetings were also formal in style with only the CPO and the chief planner (Structure Plan) in attendance from the department so that interchange was not with the staff most closely involved with the day-to-day work.

Apart from confirming the ranked list of objectives the senior members group did give some direction about

policy. Emphasis was given to stemming the out migration of population and employment objectives were placed top of the list. Other policies such as environmental work were by implication given less importance. The emphasis on job creation was accompanied by the councillors' wish that jobs be taken to people rather than allowing industry to choose its own locations.

In consequence the favoured strategy was closest to the third of the initial options. Members favoured helping the deprived population of the county; an objective which coincided with the idea of taking jobs to the poorly served areas. The catch phrase of helping the 'have-nots' was coined to represent this aim. One of the senior planners mentioned that he recalled first hearing this phrase in the senior members group, possibly from Ironmonger. The officers also recalled that the senior members were reluctant to give their priorities and were not pressed to do so in the special meetings with them. Judgement was apparently being reserved. The members were asked, for example, to make a choice between more buses or more road building to accomodate cars. The reply was in the vein of "everything has high priority and nothing has low priority". The same reponse was made later when the members were asked to choose between priorities for environmental improvement.

Super Group found the ranked list of objectives was of paramount importance in their deliberations: "you could say that we have the strategy we have, because members ranked the objectives in the way they did". Given the list, the senior officers worked by considering the effectiveness evaluation and the local impact of policies as the basis of preliminary decisions. Later in the week the factors which were fed in to the consideration of the final set of policies were costs, existing policies and the representations from consultees.

The effectiveness evaluation had been carried out over the period from late July through September. A score had been given to each policy drawn from the initial strategies. Scoring was on the basis of how far the policy helped to attain each of the 24 objectives. A matrix of each policy (grouped into strategy bundles) against the objectives was prepared for each of the five forecasting areas into which the county area had been divided (15 matrices were available in total). There was some criticism of the effectiveness evaluation. The reasoning behind the scores given to policies (on a 0-10 scale) was not directly available for Supervisory Group and in some cases the group had to ask for this extra information from the more junior staff who had carried out the scoring. A major criticism of the evaluation stage and the utility of the results was that most policies gained similar scores so that the exercise was of limited value as a basis for differentiating policies and their contribution to the overall strategy. There seemed some consensus within Super Group that the consequences of implementation of a policy was the most important element of technical information impinging on the ultimate decision.

The working method by Super Group was to read off the score from the evaluation matrices, the implementation consequences would be given and then the discussion was opened up. Each member of the structure plan group spoke to their key issues or aspects for which they were responsible.

Most differences of opinion seem to have been resolved within the group. An example of where recourse was made to 'higher authority' was over Green Belt policy. The issue of whether a loose but widespread policy of restricting development in rural areas should be introduced or a firmer and stricter control over more restricted areas of countryside had been raised in

earlier policy development work (although not resolved). In the Supervisory Group meetings disagreement concerned implementation of development control policies. The difficulty was rural land in the urban fringe which, it was felt, could not be redefined in the structure plan. Some senior officers felt that there should be firm control over all rural land, with no differentiation of white land compared to others who said that the planners should have some flexibility in the urban fringe so that green wedges could be called, say, 'urban parks' rather than Green Belt. A morning was spent on just this debate and the group agreed to differ. The CPO was asked to arbitrate. Further areas of disagreement were in the words of one Super Group member, "administrative rather than conceptual". Two of these disputes were around differences over the likely efficacy of proposing a restriction on planning permissions in areas where many permissions were still current, and differences over definition of 'needs' within a distributional approach to the plan. However, another senior officer said that "one of the biggest rows was about the concept of priority area - particularly concerning the reactions from those parts of the county not included (eg. Sheffield)". Resolution of this difficulty was postponed by asking two of the ACPs to take another look at the boundaries of the priority areas.

Two officers mentioned that the elected members had been given relevant information from the public participation programme when they ranked objectives and it was inferred that the publics' views had been incorporated when preparing the officers' ranking to place before senior members. Comments about the influence of public comment on the choice of policies ranged from "not a major influence and not mentioned during the week" to saying that "public comment was mentioned quite a lot - X (the officer responsible for the programme of public participation) was brought in".

A more general quesion about the overall influence of public participation on the structure plan also exposed a range of opinion from Super Group respondents. One officer felt that public opinion had been of major influence ("Is there anything else?") whilst a colleague said "there are no problems that would not have been identified without the public participation programme". The latter comment was later qualified by the officer saying that issues raised by the public had been mentioned by other consultees and contributors. Other Super Group respondents felt that some policies were heavily influenced by public comments while other and different policies had emerged with little reference to community views. In the case of one particular policy, it had been adopted in the face of a contrary thrust of public opinion. Three officers said that public comment had been given a great deal of emphasis in the work of the department but this was said in a way that indicated they felt too much store had been placed on participation. 1

During the summer of 1976 it appeared to the researcher that officers were becoming increasingly concerned about the approaching examination in public. It was apparent that the need to offer reasoned justification in public for policies and strategy was in officer's minds. It also appears that several policies were rejected by Super Group because they felt that some of the background information required as justification was not available. For example, recreational policy on sports centres was abandoned because the justification was based on public comments yet crucial information on the capacity of existing centres and on the facilities open to the public

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1 There were strong denials that officers were disillusioned or sceptical of the participation element of the planning process when, at a later stage, a transcript of a paper about the work of Supervisory Group and the project interviews collected in October 1976 was shown to interviewees.

on a joint use basis in schools was not available. Recreation policy was one aspect of the policy work in the structure plan which was substantially built on public representations and comments. In the Super Group debates this was seen as an unacceptable weakness because any proposals would remain 'unsubstantiated'. One officer said that "if we were doubtful about justification of a policy, it was excluded unless it was essential to the overall strategy". This approach was reflected in responses by two other officers in Super Group.

All the main participants in Super Group felt that the week had gone well and that they were not too pressed for time, especially as the week progressed (some had felt pressured at the outset). The group did work well into the evening on four of the days, continuing in debate up to 8.30 or 9 p.m., sometimes with the more junior advisers in attendance. Some elements of the evolving strategy were dealt with very quickly. For example, although Green Belt policy created a sticking point (as noted above), the rest of the environmental policies were dealt with in an afternoon session. Our evidence was that the early part of the week was spent solely on employment policies and that coverage of other key areas of policy and objectives were dealt with more rapidly on an accelerating time scale as choices were more and more pre-empted by the earlier decisions. It was said that "the work got easier later in the week". On Friday, 25th September Super Group split down into smaller sub groups. Two ACPs defined the job priority areas. The chief planner and another ACP incorporated the comments from consultees into the largely completed strategy. The other ACP (from Policy and Resources section) checked the evolved strategy against existing policies for consistency. The group reconvened to discuss costs and that task had to be carried over into Monday the 28th. The chief planner took the week's work home at the

weekend in order to prepare a first draft listing of the policies to go into the favoured strategy. These were to be given a further vetting by members and officers. The week beginning 28th September was spent on further work towards the draft strategy. One ACP worked up the transportation policies during the 'second' week of strategy building. He wished for more time and also felt constrained by the timescale of the process at this stage.

Once the draft strategy was broadly agreed by Super Group meetings were held almost immediately with other chief officers in the county, with senior members, with Policy Advisory Sub-Committee (Labour Group Executive) and then with full Labour Group on 11th October. The report then returned to senior members steering group for 'final' adjustments. By mid October the listing of favoured policies had gone through two revisions. The chief planner at that time expressed satisfaction that they had a final version, although in fact the listing went through a total of 6 later revisions. This was the basis for the draft 'Written Statement'.

Supervisory Group felt satisfied with the progress they had made on a short space of time. On the other hand, they also agreed that given more time the implications of policies could have been further and more thoroughly explored. There was a strong view that members had got what they wanted from the draft strategy but that some professional principles had been abandoned for the sake of the timetable. Nevertheless, the group felt that the 'employment' emphasis was 'right' even if there was some doubts about the means to get jobs created in the county. Some of the background work leading up to the strategy was thought suspect. Another senior officer in Super Group felt that the strategy was right in principle but was probably not "politically feasible" in the climate of county-district relations and financial restraint on

government spending as a whole. Two others had stronger reservations. They said that the strategy had internal inconsistencies which they had been forced to accept through lack of time. Specifically, there were doubts about the 'needs' approach to the strategy. One comment (from the ACP brought in to Super Group from a different section of the county planning department) was more cynical. He felt that given the gaps in the justification of their interventionist strategy, the department could have devised a plan to help the deprived parts of South Yorkshire on April 1st 1974.

EMPLOYMENT

**The County is too dependent on the coal and steel industries. This means that there is insufficient variety of job opportunities.*

**The loss of jobs in the coal and steel industries has led to severe and persistent unemployment in some parts of the County.*

**In the past there have been too few suitable sites and buildings for industrial expansion.*

**Women who wish to go out to work are hampered by the lack of suitable jobs and by inadequate child-care facilities.*

The Structure Plan's employment policies aim to increase the number and variety of jobs by encouraging established firms to expand and by attracting new firms into the County especially those with good long-term growth prospects.

Although suitable industrial sites will be made available throughout the County, special efforts will be made to attract jobs to the Job Priority Areas - where employment problems are worst. These areas, covering the Dearne towns, Rotherham, Thorne and Dinnington are shown on the diagram on the back page.

As part of the special measures designed to help the Job Priority Areas, the County Council will - in appropriate cases - buy and service industrial sites and provide mortgages for firms wishing to develop on local authority owned land. This should encourage the private sector to invest in industrial and commercial ventures in these areas in particular. The government will also be encouraged to build more advance factory units and to provide relocation grants and more retraining facilities to help the industrial regeneration of these areas.

To assist those unable to travel far to work - women with family commitments perhaps - the County Council will promote suitable job opportunities locally. It will also encourage greater provision of child-care facilities to help working mothers.

SHOPPING

**Small shopping centres tend to be losing trade to the main centres and some are already declining.*

**Pressure for the development of large supermarkets outside existing centres is also a threat to the survival of local shopping facilities.*

Therefore, the plan aims to improve the existing standard of shopping facilities in the County and to ensure that shops are easy to reach.

All existing centres will be allowed to grow to some extent and positive steps will be taken to rejuvenate the smaller shopping centres. As part of this policy, large supermarkets outside existing centres will be strongly discouraged and the following improvements are proposed for certain smaller centres

- better bus services
- more car parking space
- environmental improvements (such as pedestrianisation)

RECREATION

**In certain urban areas in South Yorkshire there is a shortage of open space for parks, playing fields or playgrounds.*

**There is also a very limited amount of money available for spending on projects to improve recreation provision.*

Efforts and resources will therefore be concentrated on schemes which encourage the maximum use of existing recreation facilities - be they urban or rural, indoor or outdoor. The fuller use of school buildings and playing fields is one example of this.

Also preference will be given to schemes which provide more open space in built-up-areas - especially in the Environment Priority Areas. (See the map on the back page).

To help people who rely on public transport, any new recreation facilities such as country parks, golf courses and sports halls will be sited only where they are, or can easily be, well-served by public transport.

Where facilities are to be provided in the countryside, preference will be given to relatively inexpensive projects such as picnic sites and the aim will be to open up attractive countryside areas near to the urban areas so that people do not have to travel too far to them.

TRANSPORT

**Access to jobs, shops and recreation facilities by public transport is inadequate in many parts of the County.*

**If bus fares were allowed to rise as elsewhere in the country, the level of car use would increase, causing more congestion, and those without access to a car would be even more restricted.*

**Traffic congestion in the four main centres of the County has been getting worse.*

The County Council's policy of maintaining cheap fares will be helpful to those who are dependent on public transport - especially for travelling to work. There will be no increase in bus fares up to 1986 and efforts will be made to subsidise some local rail services. By so doing, it is anticipated that it will become increasingly attractive to make journeys by public transport rather than by private car, thereby reducing the problems of congestion particularly in central areas.

The public transport services themselves will also be improved and extended where necessary - especially to help people get to the main centres of employment. Express buses and rail services will provide fast, cheap, long-distance travel.

Other transport improvements, including road building and traffic management schemes are also aimed at improving the efficiency of public transport services. For example, bus priority measures should speed up the buses.

As peak-period traffic is the primary cause of congestion in the main centres, the County Council will encourage employers and the education authorities to stagger work and school hours, thus spreading the journeys over a longer period. This would be a cheaper way of making better use of road space and would, by reducing congestion, improve the reliability and punctuality of public transport.

ENVIRONMENT

**Derelict land and air and water pollution, the legacy of South Yorkshire's industrial past, detract greatly from the environment of the county.*

**Traffic causes many environmental problems and these are particularly severe in shopping and housing areas.*

** Attractive areas of town and countryside need to be protected from pressures for development.*

Efforts to improve the environment through land reclamation, the reduction of pollution and the provision of more open space will mainly be concentrated in the Environment Priority Areas where such problems are most severe. These are shown on the diagram on the back page. But the highest priority for investment in improvements will be where Environment and Job Priority Areas overlap, because prospects for attracting industry appear to be related to the appearance of an area.

Throughout the County, the emphasis will be on small-scale improvement schemes close to where people live. These are relatively cheap and may be carried out by voluntary groups. The County Council will continue to encourage and assist these voluntary tasks and also any efforts by industrial firms to improve the appearance of their local environment.

Protection and conservation of the existing attractive features of the County is equally important. The Draft Structure Plan therefore proposes that there should be severe restrictions on development in most rural areas - land classified as green belt, Areas of countryside value and areas of natural history interest.

Quarrying and opencast coalmining are among the most damaging activities in the countryside and these workings will be permitted only where the operator agrees to keep such problems as noise and dust to a minimum, and to restore the land after extraction has finished. The location of these activities will be controlled to conserve the environment.

Where possible, the County Council will encourage the use of canals and railways rather than roads, for the transport of large quantities of bulky materials (such as minerals). Restrictions will be imposed on heavy goods vehicles on roads where they create environmental problems or safety hazards.

HOUSING

**Many people move out of the County in search of better housing.*

**In some areas there are not enough opportunities for people to buy or rent houses within their existing community.*

To encourage more people to stay in South Yorkshire, the Draft Structure Plan proposes that most new housing not already committed should be built in attractive areas accessible to jobs and the four main centres.

In Doncaster, most new housing will be at Kirk Sandall, Edenthorpe and Bessacarr; in Barnsley, to the north-east and north-west of the town; in Rotherham, at Thorpe Hesley, Bramley, Wickersley and Aston-cum-Aughton; and in Sheffield over 50% of demand will be met within the existing built-up area and most of the rest at Mosborough.

The plan will also allow small allocations of housing land throughout the County to meet local need.

Confirming the Draft Strategy

The revised timetable had required the draft strategy to be available for printing by the end of November allowing 6 weeks for typesetting. Because it was possible for changes to be incorporated during this period it was agreed that the 5 local authorities in the county meet in this period to discuss the draft. A meeting of JCC Structure Plan Sub-Committee was arranged for mid December. At the meeting the chair indicated that of the county council committees only the policy committee executive had seen the final version. He expressed satisfaction that the timetable was on course due "to an enormous amount of work and overtime .. carried by the senior staff". It was intended that county councillors would have seen the document by mid January (it would be placed on the full council meeting agenda) and that statutory public participation and formal consultation would begin by mid February. Submission was intended by mid summer 1977. The discussion at JCC Structure Plan sub-committee began with a resume of the process thus far by the county planning officer followed by a summary of the policies included in the draft plan. The discussion reflected the continuing disagreement that the district councils had with the proposals. A Sheffield councillor said "you put up the policies and we will shoot them down". One of the chief planning officers from a district said

> ...this is a very restrictive document. A structure plan should offer a prospect of the future. How to use the assets of the area to the best advantage.. speak to the attractions. Is the position in the County as serious as it appears here? (project notes of JCC SP Sub-Committee, 14 December 1976)

This theme (referring to the intention to direct resources to the Dearne Valley area and other deprived districts within the county) and the DCs opposition to it was sustained, particularly by Sheffield MDC

representatives. It was argued that the draft plan was principally a development control framework, a restrictive statement. Another councillor remarked that he understood that "some academics say that structure planning should be scrapped" 2 and referred to a submitted structure plan which he believed had been written on one side of paper (Oxfordshire). The CPO summed up at the end of the discussion indicating that the many points of clarification that had been raised required further officer level meetings. The chair said that they would "take on board" many of the points made.

A lengthy confrontation took place at the county council meeting on 26 January 1977 between the Labour majority and a vocal opposition group. An amendment was moved by the opposition to the effect that the structure plan was an overlong justification for the cheap fares policy on public transport and that there was litle point in continuing the policy in the face of inflation and the need for curbs on public spending. It was also proposed that the structure plan should not have taken all the time and effort that had been involved to produce such an openly political document. The structure plan was condemned as political dogma which would create additional financial burdens in the county and for which there was no hope of popular support.

In speaking to the amendment the Leader of the Conservative Group said that the planning officers had been put under pressure by Labour politicians, and that despite the guidelines from central government (PESC reports on the need for public expenditure restraint) the plan had been produced in a form which would require considerable expenditure. The plan was

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2 The Professor of Town and Regional Planning at Sheffield University, J.R.James had gone on record as a critic of structure planning, due in part to his dislike of the computer based techniques and technologies employed and the public participation requirement which he felt was unnecessary.

> ...a peice of party dogma, master-minded by one man in pursuit of the free fares policy at a time when the policy is being buried at sea. (project notes of county planning committee, 26 January 1977)

He went on to criticise the amount of staff time that had gone into preparing the plan

> ...which is being attacked by the district councils and on political grounds.. In any case the county is in the hands of central governemt. Yorkshire is already an intermediate area. (ibid.)

It was implied that if the plan was being used to urge central government to provide more resources to South Yorkshire the lack of success on free fares should have been salutary. Much of the plan was said by the opposition to be common knowledge, such as the overdependence of the local economy on two industrial sectors and it did not require much effort by the planners to show that. Some of the plan was said to be "plain ridiculous". The opposition Leader went on to say that the plan was

> ...the most political statement in the history of the county council and purposely so. The structure plan will be burnt when we gain control at the next election. (ibid.)

The seconder of the opposition amendment gave more of the same, including the observation that the content of the plan could be summarised in one sentence, namely

> ...any plans for the future of South Yorkshire will be subject to free bus fares and restrictive parking. (ibid.)

Among the numerous criticisms was the note that the public participation programme had been a 'charade' whereby anything that the majority group Leader disagreed with was ignored.

> The emphasis in the plan is on the 'have-nots'. Why not consider the 'haves' for a change and give something to them? (ibid.)

The latter provoked the only Liberal councillor (Francis Butler) to interject, saying that the planning process had been too academic, too complicated for councillors and the public. He did object, however, to the idea that the plan should help the privileged as proposed by the Conservative opposition.

> ...How dare you say that the structure plan should be for the 'haves'. If that was Tory policy I would prefer to see a larger Labour Group. (ibid.)

His objection to the fares policy was that it applied to "all and sundry" including those who could afford to pay.

The Labour response was also long on hyperbole. The deputy leader of Labour group regretted that no constructive recommendation had come forward. The chair of planning committee was appalled at the level of ignorance about structure planning shown by the opposition. In closing the debate Labour group leader congratulated the planning officers for their efforts on the quality of the written statement and for their efforts in gaining public participation in the planning process.

After this stylised discussion with its sprinklings of rhetoric and disingenuous comment the draft plan entered into the statutorily required stage of public consultation and participation.

During this period a number of interviews were held with county planning staff and others as part of the research study. County officers showed a good deal of dissatisfaction with the final stages of plan preparation and several were critical of the draft written statement. The way that the final plan was put together had meant that none of the more junior staff, who had carried out most of the detailed policy work, were involved in the process from October to Christmas 1976. Some felt that the final plan was "very poor apart from the employment

section" which was described as "accomplished". A main difficulty was that there was

> ...no real consideration of resources. Members have been given their head and the implications of particular policies have not been spelt out. (project interview transcripts, 1977)

An example of this was thought to be the (politically derived) suggestion that rate support be given on industrial premises to attract new employers to the county. This was an idea that had been floated within the planning department, was taken up by the chair of planning and then by the Labour group. The idea was incorporated into the written statement but there had been professional consideration of how the council could give such support. The officers also said that the hiatus on transport expenditure had never been resolved and policies on fare support and highway schemes had been written into the plan when it was unlikely that resources would be available for either policy.

Participation on the Draft Plan

The period between mid February and late April 1977 was taken up with the truncated programme of participation on the draft plan. Full versions of the draft (a 142 page document) and three volumes of the report of survey (totalling 311 pages and several maps and diagrams) were made available.

A special edition of 'Contact' was produced (15 000 print run), along with a 2 000 word summary leaflet (70 000 print run). A special supplement was placed in the main local newspaper circulating in South Yorkshire. 'Contact' and the newspaper supplement had comment forms which could be returned (Freepost) to county hall.

A number of public (25) and private (23) meetings were held around the county area. A tape-slide presentation was produced for showing at the meetings as well as a short videotape.

There was some local radio and other media coverage including advertisements about the public meetings in local newsapers. Regional TV gave some coverage (the author appeared with the chair of county planning committee on a tea-time regional magazine programme about the draft plan).

Posters were printed and displayed in public buildings. An exhibition was displayed in the 4 city centres (for a three week period) and a 'mobile' exhibition in a caravan was taken to a total of 39 sites in the county (average time on a site was 1.5 days).

The outcome of the Phase III programme was not impressive from the point of view of public contact and interest raised. Only 105 returns were made on the Freepost comment forms placed in 'Contact' magazine. This

represents 0.7% of the copies distributed. Average attendance at the public meetings was 30 persons (although the range of attendance was wide - 3 people attended at Maltby, 160 at Dore a suburb of Sheffield). Where groups had requested a private meeting to learn about the draft plan the attendance was marginally better at an average of 37 persons (ranging from 8 to 120).

The county council published figures for attendance at the 'mobile' exhibition which was serviced by county planning staff. An average of 27 visitors per day was recorded in the caravan with attendance ranging from the extremes of 1 person to over 80.

The 'static' exhibitions were placed in busy central areas (inside W.H.Smith's central area shops in Sheffield and Barnsley, the Arndale covered centre in Doncaster and the foyer of the new Arts Centre/ Library in Rotherham) but numbers browsing among the panels were not recorded. A 'guesstimate' of 50 000 people passing within the vicinity of the exhibitions over the three week period was made by the planning department. Forty-five comment forms were returned from the newspaper supplements and fifty-two from the exhibitions/ meetings.

The overall picture is therefore of about 200 comment forms returned, about 1 600 people attended special meetings, about 1 400 people went through the caravan exhibition and an indeterminate number spent time looking at the central area exhibitions. The extent of newspaper and leaflet readership is notoriously difficult to measure. One view has suggested that the local newspaper is seen by a very high proportion of households (80%) and that tea-time TV gets peak viewing.

Despite the resolution from county planning committee of 5th July 1976 the county planning department fought hard to implement the community panels. The chair of planning

committee was enlisted to help achieve some movement of the resolution. Over a period of 3 months in the late summer of 1976 an agreement was reached to go ahead. The chair of planning commented at the time about the struggle to persuade his colleagues which meant fighting hard and was likely to mean a degree of scepticism from his fellow members. He admitted to his own uncertainty about the value of the panels. A senior planner noted that "after three months struggle the Leader finally gave agreement" (personal communication, 1977).

Eight community panels were set up early in 1977. They were organised in different parts of the county. Eighty four people were involved as members. The panels were chosen on a quota basis to give a spread of socio-economic characteristics. Four factors were used to determine the make-up of the panels (sex, age, working status and place of residence). Four panels were mixed sex and the the other four were single sex (two x male, two x female). The principle of the panels was that a group would meet over a number of weekly meetings in order to allow the digestion of the complex issues and topics within the plan. The first meeting of a panel was a free discussion ranging over the issues that the participants felt proper to structure planning. At this point few of the people in the panels were aware of the proposals in the draft plan (apart from fares policy which was a common media story). At the second panel meetings held a week later participants had had an opportunity to see the draft plan leaflet. They were also given a copy of 'Contact' with a summary of the proposals. The tape/slide presentation was shown at the beginning of the second meeting. Together these various inputs of information about the draft strategy became the framework for the remaining meetings of the panel. County planning staff were available at the second and third meetings to answer questions and give further information as necessary. The second and third meetings

went into considerable detail about the policies and proposals. A final session (of two groups of eight people each) was held with two representatives from each local panel.

An attendance allowance of £2 per meeting was paid to each participant. Transport was provided for those needing it and refreshments given. The three main weekly sessions took between five or six hours in total.

A 'moderator' who was employed by the research organisation was in attendance at each of the panel meetings and comments were recorded.

A full report of the community panels was presented in July 1977 (some months after the close of the period for receipt of representations on the draft plan. The main points of substance from the panels were included with other public comments in the full statement of consultations (Hedges & Stowell, 1977).

Comment from the panels indicated approval for the general strategy and principles of the draft structure plan. The only principle which was not fully accepted was that of encouraging people to stay in South Yorkshire. Most panellists did not feel that out-migration was a serious issue. It was argued, on the contrary, that migration was functionally important for the county. The principles that were agreed included

working together to solve the County's problems.
making the best use of existing resources.
endorsing the priority area approach to employment and environmental improvement.

<u>The Participation Statement</u>

Over 700 comments were extracted from the various methods of getting a public response to the draft strategy. The bulk of these concerned transportation policies (nearly

450 seperate comments). Minerals extraction and shopping policies each attracted about 100 comments respectively.

Comments from other consultees were extensive. Over 500 seperate comments were recieved from local authorities whilst national government bodies/ agencies and bodies representing conservation/ recreation interests made around 100 comments.

The list of consultees who responded at draft plan stage totalled 124. This included 22 local authorities, 23 central government Departments or agencies, 5 Health Authorities, 13 statutory undertakers, 8 offices of nationalised industries (principally NCB), 10 transport bodies, 14 conservation/ recreation interests, 26 trade, commercial and industrial interests and 3 other bodies.

Reclassifying these responses in terms of the distinction between major elites, minor elites and the public in general (Hampton, 1977) gives 650 comments from government or quasi-government bodies, 200 from established private interests, and 800 comments from the general public.

A further simple analysis provides a cross cutting perspective. For example, within the 450 comments on transportation policy those representations referring to the fare support policy are split almost equally between support and criticism.

> ...Out of 234 members of the public who mentioned this policy specifically in their comments 46% agreed with it, 12% had reservations and 42% disagreed. 18 people mentioned cost as a reservation. (SYCC, 1978d)

A stronger measure of power and influence than mere numbers is the criterion of whether comments led to change in policy between the draft plan and the written statement which was submitted to the Secretary of State.

We found that the proportion of comments from different types of consultee which led to changes in the direction of their criticisms were

79% of the DOE comments,
56% of the comments from the 4 district councils,
21% of comments from the public.

This distribution bears some similarity to that shown by an analysis of contributions and influence at the examination in public of the structure plan (see chapter 6).

From now on . .

all major planning activities in South Yorkshire will be guided by the County Council's Structure Plan which has just been sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment for his approval. In one way or another, between now and 1986, the Plan will affect us all.

It will form the basis for decisions about the development of new industry, housing, shops, roads and public transport services. Environmental improvements, quarrying and the development of sports and countryside recreation facilities will be influenced by the Structure Plan policies, too.

This plan only sets down broad guidelines. It will be the job of Local Plans to work out the detailed implications of the Structure Plan for individual areas. These Local Plans will mainly be prepared by the four District Councils of South Yorkshire and will provide more detailed information about planning proposals in your local area.

Work on the Structure Plan began in 1974 by identifying the County's main problems and determining the priorities for solving them. The views of the general public and local groups were taken into account at this stage. Different strategies and policies for the future were then examined and the draft Structure Plan was published in February last year.

After two months of public meetings and exhibitions, nearly 2,500 comments were made on the Plan. The revised Structure Plan, summarised here, incorporates changes resulting from people's comments and also from new information and changed circumstances. The public's involvement in the Plan and the changes that have resulted from this are described in the Participation Statement (see back page).

Changes

Of the many recent changes to the Plan, here, briefly, are the most significant. See inside for more details.

Transport

- a new policy to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- a new policy attempting to limit the nuisance caused by lorries (e.g. overnight parking in housing areas).
- Sheffield-Manchester motorway postponed indefinitely. But smaller improvements such as Stocksbridge/Penistone by-pass scheme supported.
- cheap fares policy removed from Structure Plan but fares containment remains a policy of the County Council.

Environment

- Darton and Staincross added to list of areas selected for special treatment as Environment Priority Areas.
- Hatfield excluded from Stainforth/Hatfield Environment Priority Area as it was considered to have less severe problems.
- a new policy to ensure that the creation of further derelict land is kept to a minimum.
- a new policy to ensure that effluent from new housing development will not increase river pollution.
- a new policy to protect farmland - especially the most productive - from development.

Shopping

- a strengthening of the policy against the development of large supermarkets outside existing shopping centres.

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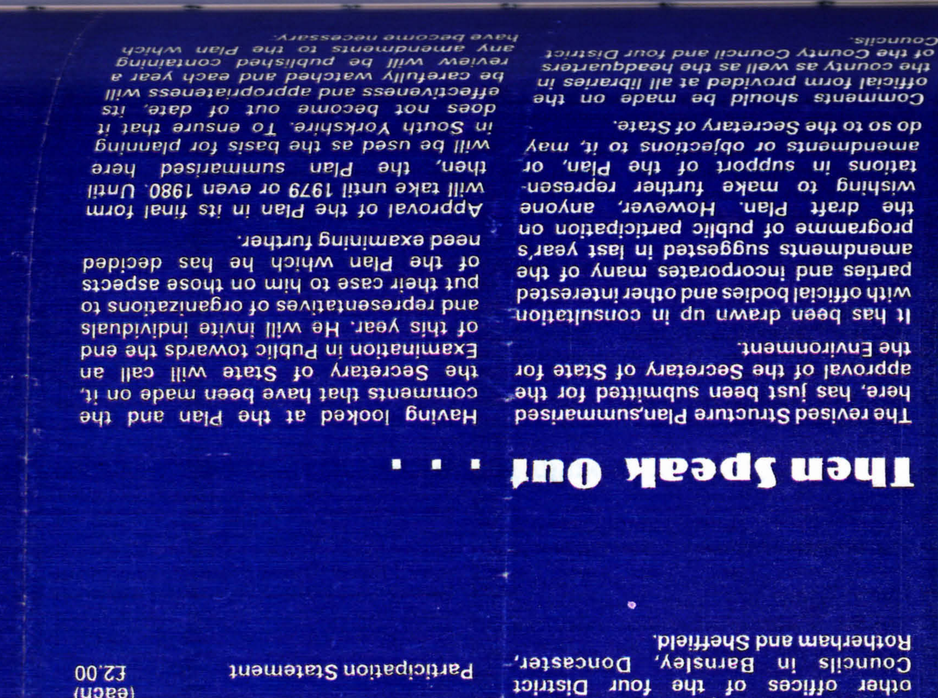
South Yorkshire's Priority Areas



Job Priority Areas

a Hoyland-Wombwell
b Bolton
c Goldthorpe
d Thurnscoe
e Mexborough
f Conisbrough
g Thorne
h Stainforth-Hatfield
j Inner urban area of Rotherham
k Rawmarsh
l Swinton-Wath
m Dinnington

Environment Priority Areas

1 Barnsley East
2 Bolton upon Dearne
3 Darton-Staincross
4 Goldthorpe
5 Grimethorpe
6 Thurnscoe
7 Wombwell
8 Adwick
9 Askern
10 Bentley
11 Conisbrough-Mexborough
12 New Edlington
13 Stainforth
14 Catcliffe-Orgreave-Treeton
15 Dinnington
16 Rawmarsh
17 Rotherham
18 Swinton
19 Wath
20 Darnall
21 Sheffield Inner Areas
22 Lower Don Valley

Find More Out . . .

This leaflet can give you only a brief summary of the Structure Plan's proposals. For a better understanding of the plan, it is important to look at the Structure Plan Written Statement.

This 150 page document sets out all the policies in detail and their aims and implications are fully explained. It is supported by four Reports of Survey and a Participation Statement.

Copies of all these documents are available for inspection at County Hall, Barnsley, at all libraries in the county and at the headquarters and some other offices of the four District Councils in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield.

Then Speak Out . . .

The revised Structure Plan,summarised here, has just been submitted for the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment.

It has been drawn up in consultation with official bodies and other interested parties and incorporates many of the amendments suggested in last year's programme of public participation on the draft Plan. However, anyone wishing to make further representations in support of the Plan, or amendments or objections to it, may do so to the Secretary of State.

Comments should be made on the official form provided at all libraries in the county as well as the headquarters of the County Council and four District Councils.

Having looked at the Plan and the comments that have been made on it, the Secretary of State will call an Examination in Public towards the end of this year. He will invite individuals and representatives of organizations to put their case to him on those aspects of the Plan which he has decided need examining further.

Approval of the Plan in its final form will take until 1979 or even 1980. Until then, the Plan summarised here will be used as the basis for planning in South Yorkshire. To ensure that it does not become out of date, its effectiveness and appropriateness will be carefully watched and each year a review will be published containing any amendments to the Plan which have become necessary.

South Yorkshire Structure Plan

It's Here !

If you have any difficulty finding the documents, or if you wish to buy them, please contact Len Battle, County Planning Department, Freepost (BY 158), County Hall, Barnsley, S70 2TN or ring Barnsley 86141 (ext. 647).

No stamp is needed for your order but please send a cheque for the correct amount made payable to South Yorkshire County Council. Prices are as follows:

Written Statement	£2.00
Report of Survey Vol. 1	£0.50
Reports of Survey Vols. 2, 3 & 4	£2.00
Participation Statement	£2.00 (each)

The Structure Plan strategy has been based on the principle that everyone should work together to make the County a better place to live, especially by helping the people and areas in greatest need and making the best use of the limited resources available at the moment.

The Plan contains 99 policies designed to fulfil this strategy. These are summarised under the seven main topic headings below.

TRANSPORT

Problems:

In the older industrial areas away from the motorway network many roads used for transporting goods and raw materials are inadequate to serve the needs of industry.

Many people would like to see improvements in the frequency, punctuality and reliability of public transport services, especially those serving workplaces, shops and recreation facilities.

In many shopping and housing areas, heavy traffic is causing hazards and environmental problems. These are especially severe on routes frequently used by lorries.

Traffic congestion in the four main centres of the county continues to hinder public transport.

The convenience of pedestrians and cyclists has sometimes been overlooked in meeting the requirements of the motorist.

Policies:

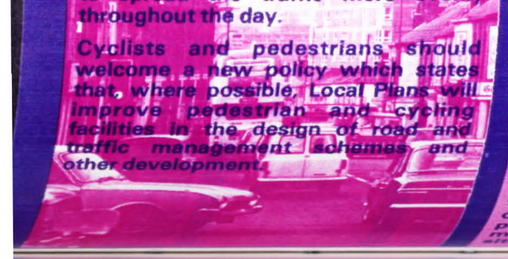
Top priority for investment will be in transport schemes which will make the county, and especially the Job Priority Areas, more attractive to industrialists and therefore increase employment. The improvement of the A628 trunk road and the construction of a Stocksbridge/Penistone by-pass come under this heading, as do schemes which would encourage greater use of railways and canals for the transport of bulky goods. (e.g. current proposals for improving the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation).

The improvement of public transport services will be next in importance. Extra buses, extended services, bus priority measures and subsidised bus and train fares should all bring advantages, especially to the majority of people in the county - those without a car.

Other transport schemes will aim to improve road safety and reduce environmental problems, for example by taking traffic away from shopping and housing areas. The County Council intends to introduce controls on lorries where they cause problems. It is hoped eventually to impose a compulsory system of lorry routes to divert them away from the most sensitive areas.

Rush-hour congestion in the major centres may be relieved in three ways. Limitations on long-stay parking in Sheffield and private parking spaces (e.g. attached to office blocks) in all four main centres, together with improvements to public transport, should encourage more people to leave their cars at home for the journey to work. And employers and education authorities will be encouraged to introduce flexible or staggered hours to spread the traffic more evenly throughout the day.

Cyclists and pedestrians should welcome a new policy which states that, where possible, Local Plans will improve pedestrian and cycling facilities in the design of road and traffic management schemes and other development.



SHOPPING

Problems:

Many small shopping centres are losing trade to the main centres and large new superstores. This is causing problems for those who need to shop near their homes.

Policies:

While allowing all existing centres to grow to some extent, and encouraging the development of a new shopping centre at Mosborough, the Plan pays special attention to the standard of shopping facilities in the smaller centres. It is proposed that Local Plans should consider the following improvements to district and small town centres

- diverting traffic away from shopping centres
- providing more car parking space for shoppers
- improving the environment (by pedestrianisation for example)
- improving bus services.

Although the Plan cannot directly help the individual shopkeeper - especially outside shopping centres - it does indirectly tackle the local shopping problem from a second angle; large supermarkets outside existing centres will not be permitted where they would reduce trade in existing centres, could be built in a neighbouring centre, or would not be easily accessible to those without a car. Nor will they be permitted where they would cause traffic congestion.

EMPLOYMENT

Problems:

South Yorkshire's dependence on employment in coal and steel means that there is a limited choice of jobs for most people.

Several parts of South Yorkshire suffer from persistently high levels of unemployment. By 1986 there could be a shortage of about 33,000 jobs in the county.

Many vacant industrial sites are badly located and not very attractive to industrialists. Existing industrial buildings are often obsolete or unsuitable for future development.

Mothers who need or choose to work are often hampered by a shortage of suitable jobs and inadequate child-care facilities.

Policies:

The Structure Plan's employment policies aim to increase the number and variety of jobs in South Yorkshire by encouraging existing firms to expand and by attracting new industry and commerce into the area.

New industrial sites will be concentrated in the Job Priority Areas (see map overleaf) where employment problems are worst and most persistent.

To help stimulate job growth in the Job Priority Areas, the County Council will consider a number of schemes, such as buying and servicing industrial sites in certain areas and providing mortgages or preferential renting or leasing arrangements.

Existing small firms will be encouraged to expand and new enterprises, inside and outside the Job Priority Areas, may be assisted under an experimental scheme to provide small, cheap factory units - either 'nursery units' of under 250 sq. metres or improved formerly obsolescent buildings.

The government will be encouraged to build more advance factory units in Job Priority Areas and to provide more grants and retraining facilities. Office employment will be welcomed in all four major towns, especially Sheffield which it is hoped will emerge as a regional centre to accommodate more offices moving from London.

For those wanting jobs but unable to travel far to work - women with family commitments perhaps - the Local Plans produced by the District Councils will make provision for small industrial sites locally.

POPULATION & HOUSING

Problems

Many people have been leaving the county in search of housing and jobs.

In several areas, people cannot buy or rent houses within their existing communities or near to their work.

Policies:

There are already many sites in South Yorkshire with planning permission for housing and, although they may not be in the areas of greatest demand, they will largely determine the location of most new housing over the next ten years.

On the basis of existing planning permissions and local authority housing programmes, most new housing will be to the north-east and north-west of Barnsley; at Thorpe Hesley and Bramley -Wickersley in Rotherham; and in Sheffield, over 50% of demand will be met within the existing built-up area and most of the rest at Mosborough. In Doncaster Borough, new allocations of land are needed for housing. Most of these will be at Kirk Sandall-Edenthorpe and to the south of the town. Wherever new allocations of housing land are to be made the policy is to make them in attractive areas and accessible to jobs to encourage more people to stay in the county.

In addition, small amounts of housing land will be made available in all parts of the county, to meet the needs of local people wanting to stay in their own area.

The detailed distribution of housing will be determined in the District Councils' Local Plans.

RECREATION

Problems:

In certain urban areas, there is a lack of open space for parks, playing fields and playgrounds.

There is very little money for new recreation projects yet demand for indoor sports facilities, golf courses and better provision for countryside recreation is growing.

Those dependent on public transport often have difficulty reaching the recreation facilities that do exist.

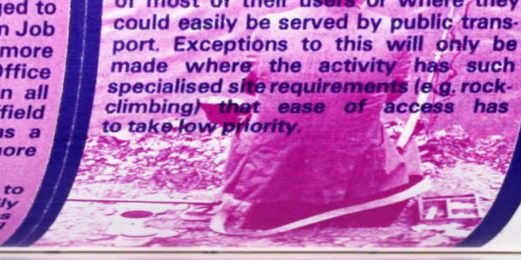
Policies:

The efforts and resources of the local authorities will be concentrated on schemes which encourage the fullest use of recreation facilities - be they urban or rural, indoor or outdoor. For example, by allowing the community to use facilities attached to schools and other institutions where appropriate.

Priority will also be given to providing more sports and play facilities in built-up areas, especially in the Environment Priority Areas. (See map overleaf.)

In the countryside, the emphasis will be on low-key, inexpensive schemes such as picnic sites, and the sign-posting of public footpaths. The aim will be to open up attractive countryside areas near to the towns so that people do not have to travel too far to them. The same will normally apply to the siting of new golf courses.

To help those without use of a car, new recreational facilities will be provided only within walking distance of most of their users or where they could easily be served by public transport. Exceptions to this will only be made where the activity has such specialised site requirements (e.g. rock-climbing) that ease of access has to take low priority.



ENVIRONMENT

Problems:

Derelict land and air and water pollution, the legacy of South Yorkshire's industrial past, are the major environmental problems of the county.

In addition, there are many small untidy pockets of land in nearly all parts of South Yorkshire.

Valuable farmland and the most attractive and interesting areas of town and countryside need to be protected from damage and unsuitable development.

Policies:

Throughout the county, the emphasis will be on small-scale environmental improvement schemes close to people's homes. These are relatively cheap and some may be carried out by voluntary groups. The County Council will continue to encourage and help in these voluntary tasks and also to work with industrial firms trying to improve the appearance of their local environment.

Larger schemes - land reclamation, the reduction of industrial air pollution and water pollution generally and the provision of more open space - will mainly be concentrated in the Environment Priority Areas where problems are most severe (these are shown on the diagram overleaf). In the belief that a better environment would attract industrialists to the area, the highest priority for investment will be where Environment and Job Priority Areas overlap.

To avoid creating more environmental problems for the future, no new housing or industry will be allowed to develop where it would add to air or water pollution, and the creation of further derelict land will be kept to a minimum.

It is also important that the attractive features of the county should be protected. There will therefore be severe restrictions on development in most rural areas and especially in the green belt. Areas of County Landscape Value and areas of natural and scientific interest. Rather than using 'greenfield sites' for development, Local Plans will encourage the use of vacant or derelict sites which have been reclaimed. Finally where the use of farmland is unavoidable the Plan says that land of the highest agricultural value should be protected from development.

SURFACE MINERALS

Problems:

Quarrystone and opencast minerals often occur in the most attractive areas of the county but their extraction and transport create a variety of problems including noise, dust, fumes and visual damage.

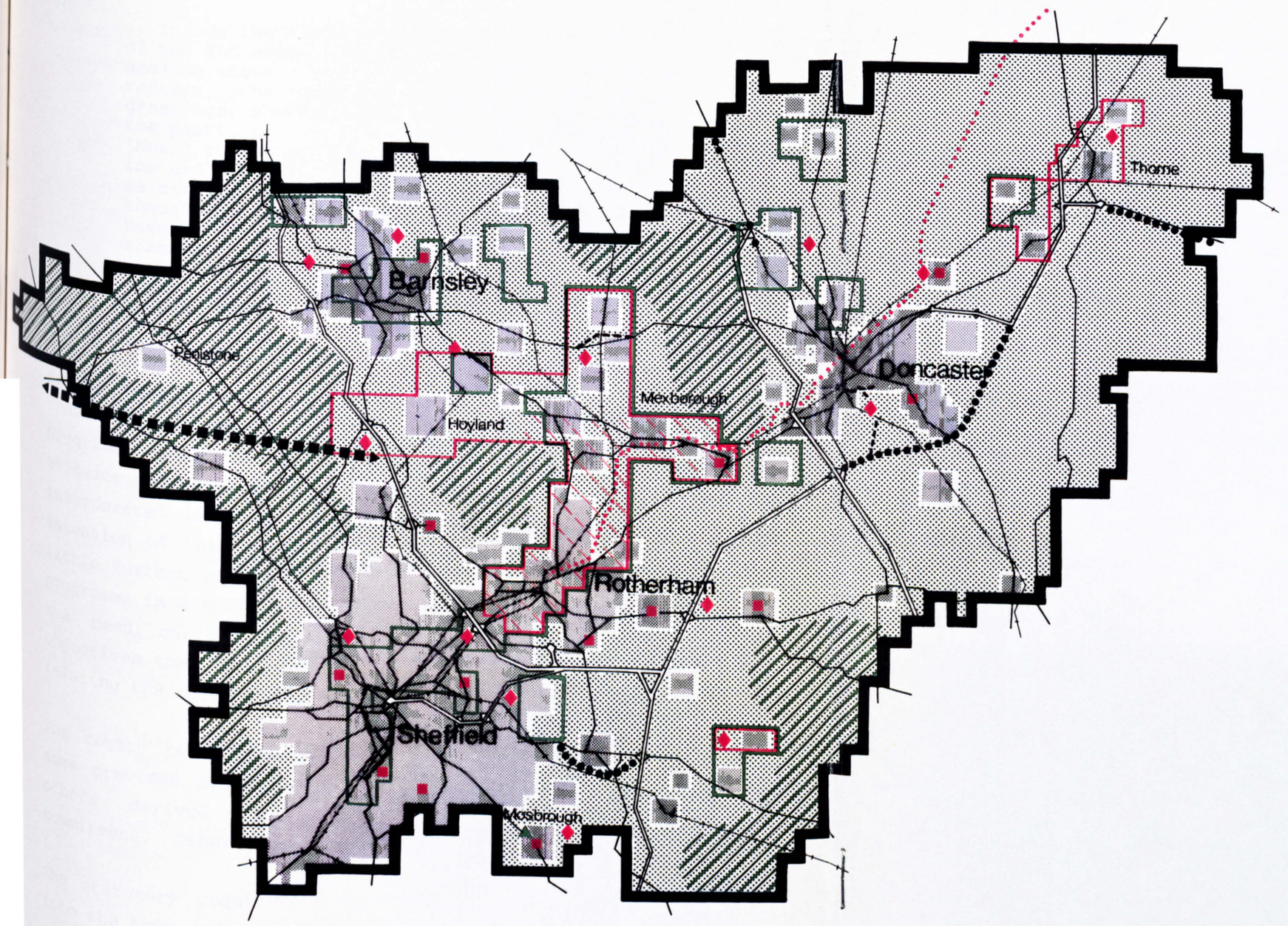
Nevertheless, national needs for minerals must be met.

Policies:

All applications for quarrying will be carefully considered in relation to their likely effect on agriculture, the environment and transport. Where possible, new permissions will be restricted to suitable extensions of existing areas, and will not be granted in areas of landscape or agricultural value.

Where workings are permitted, the operator must screen the site and take measures to keep dust, fumes and noise to a minimum. He must also guarantee that, when extraction has finished, the land will be restored to a suitable after-use (usually agriculture). Where feasible, waste and colliery shale will be used as fill material during restoration.

South Yorkshire's Future



Existing urban areas.

Main areas of new housing development.

Job Priority Areas.

Job Priority Areas where local authorities will acquire and service industrial sites to correct deficiencies in industrial land.

Major industrial and warehousing sites.

Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation.

Environment Priority Areas.

Areas of County Landscape Value.

Structure Plan Green Belt.

New Shopping Centre (at Mosbrough)

Existing limited access roads.

Other existing major roads.

Proposed County Council road schemes.

DTp road schemes assumed to be constructed by 1986.

Stocksbridge/Penistone By-Pass.

Railways.

This is a simplified version of the Structure Plan Key Diagram and gives a general indication of the areas within which the Structure Plan policies are to take effect.

> ...Inside the rough wooden building a score or so of men and women huddled on benches round a black smoking stove. Oil lamps hung from the rafters...She recognised every one. She had greetings; she had jokes. She refused to mount the platform.
> "Now," she said, "I'm going to suggest that instead of moving forward,...you all go and get as close to the stove as possible...It's not as though this was a formal meeting. Anything...I have to say can be said as well sitting as standing, can't it?"
> ...Her presence had the effect of turning a formal meeting into a party...She never had any use for forms or ceremonies. (Holtby, 1983, 146-147)

Having described the programme in South Yorkshire, considered the response, looked at the 'politics' of the programme and how it evolved and, broadly, how the evidence gained through public participation was used and incorporated (or not) into the structure plan it is the intention of this section of the thesis to stand back a little further and assess and evaluate the success of the programme in a more overall sense. The way in which this has been carried out has been by considering the objectives that the county council set out to achieve and relating the objectives to performance.

The county council itself had a number of objectives, some provided by the controlling group on the council, others derived by officers from that political commitment. Other objectives may be identified.

The statutory requirement of public participation built into the town and country planning Acts provides a set of 'external' objectives in the sense that the local authority was required to meet them in order to gain the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment. Every structure plan authority was required to prepare a Participation Statement which identified the steps taken

to meet the specific clauses in the Acts relating to public participation.

Further objectives for public participation in planning may be applied such as those derived from more general and academic studies of citizen involvement in town planning. Perhaps the most thorough and relevant set of objectives in this broader sense are those identified by the Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning (Hampton, 1977). What also makes particularly pertinent the general objectives defined by the Linked Research Project is that over the period from 1973 to 1978 there were professional links between the county planning department in South Yorkshire and members of the team. In part, the council's objectives for public participation in planning were distilled from the work of the Linked Research Project.

Hampton wrote in 1977 that within the system of structure planning in Britain which had introduced public participation through legislation there are:

> ...two major objectives which may be served...First, the planning process may be improved by the dispersal and collection of information which both adds to the data available to the planners and enables the local authority to canvass support for the concept of planning to meet certain community needs...
> Secondly, public participation may enhance citizenship by encouraging individuals or groups to play a more active part in the discussion and determination of public policy. (ibid., 29-30)

Out of these two objectives Hampton and colleagues went on to develop and study subsidiary objectives or operational aims, namely, that public participation programmes may be concerned with dispersing information; collecting information; and promoting interaction between the planning authority and the public.

Official statements of the objectives of the public participation programme in South Yorkshire have been

described earlier as part of the narrative on the planning process in the county between 1973 and 1978. We reproduce those statements in tabular form in order to identify the changing emphasis and representation of those objectives during the period (fig. 5.4).

FIG. 5.4 Aims and Objectives of the Public Participation Programme, South Yorkshire County Council 1973-1978

Manifesto

...Democracy demands not only that decisions are made by elected authorities but that the authorities are at all times sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the people they represent. Labour will therefore make every effort to ensure meaningful participation by local communities in the formulation of any plans affecting the areas in which they live. (SYCLP, 1973, 5)

Phase 1

early involvement
representative involvement
meaningful involvement
supplement the role of the councillor

Effect on Planning Process

sensitivity to needs of different sections of community
honesty
open
educative
democratic

identify local problems and satisfactions

Programme Aims

wide variety of techniques including kits, public attitudes survey, publicity and work with councillors and young people

Phase 2

Main

supplement local democracy by giving information to councillors

Supplementary

find local problems
explain planning process
develop citizenship

Programme Aims

mainly publicity and maintenance of peoples'interest via 'Contact' and limited dialogue with groups

Draft Plan

Main

get information on public attitudes to draft plan

Supplementary

gain representative information
provide opportunities for members to digest & discuss these
get public attitudes to policies rejected by county

show assumptions and ideas behind draft plan

Programme Aims (in reality much reduced from planners'intentions)
discussion groups
local group opinion via 'Contact' & community workers
publicity

It can be seen that as ideas developed the objectives of Phase I of the South Yorkshire programme began to correspond more closely with the general objectives identified by the Linked Research Project.

On the basis of the diagram we may draw some conclusions.

An overall conclusion is that the different actors involved in the preparation of the South Yorkshire structure plan appeared to show broad agreement over programme objectives. When it came to explicating the underlying meaning of the terms and objectives in practice then fundamental differences emerged. Valuable sources of evidence in the discussion that follows are the interviews carried out by the author with samples of county councillors and professionals in the county council between 1975 and 1976.

A sample of county councillors was interviewed during the autumn and winter of 1976 using stratified, random sampling. Sixty two members were selected and 53 successful interviews obtained. The sample was roughly split on a 50-50 basis in terms of membership of planning committee. Twenty two of the sample were classified as 'influentials' insofar as they held prominent positions in the county council (that is, committee chairs or deputy chairs or members of policy committee). About half of the Labour and Conservative members were selected (with 43 and 6 interviewees respectively) but we 'over-represented' Independents (by selecting 4 out of the 6

sitting members) and included the sole Liberal councillor.

Among the various topics in the survey we included public participation in planning. We were interested to find if there was support for public participation and we asked members to elaborate on the purpose they felt was served by involving the public in discussions about local environmental problems and policy.

A questionnaire survey was also carried out with a sample of planning officers between August and December 1975. Sixteen professionals directly concerned with structure planning in the county were chosen. The interviewees were the county planning officer, all members of the structure plan team above PO1 grade and a planning officer from another section of the county planning department who played an important role in developing and implementing the programme of public participation (because of his previous experience of similar work on Merseyside). All officers who were approached agreed to take part in the survey. The restriction to senior planning staff was based on the assumption that this group would have a comprehensive grasp of the planning process, the intentions behind the participation programme and would have been major parties in its definition and implementation.

A third peice of survey work undertaken during the plan-making period was of a sample of voluntary organisations and community groups in South Yorkshire during the summer of 1977. The survey represents a modest "follow-up" to the survey by Hampton and Beale (1977) which had looked at the involvement of groups in the participation programme in the early stages. We chose a sample to include groups that had been contacted in the earlier study but also added further groups. Specifically, the latter included groups from the Doncaster area (which had

not been included in the Hampton and Beale study because at the time of their fieldwork the Doncaster urban structure plan was still being pursued). We were given access to the original sample frame and sampling procedures, including the original listing of all known groups in the county. The follow-up was a more limited exercise because of lack of resources for a large interview programme although we wished to ensure a degree of validity to the results. The decision was made to take 14 groups from Hampton and Beale's stage 1 sample and 14 from their stage 2 sample. A further 9 groups were chosen from the council's list of groups in the Doncaster area. Given the small size of the sample we adopted a simple sampling fraction approach rather than the more complex sampling procedure used by Hampton and Beale (which classified groups by type/interest and previous involvement in the programme). Thus a total of 37 groups were identified and approached. Thirty three successful interviews were obtained. The only obvious "bias" in the responses was the large number of refusals from Doncaster groups; only 4 of the nine selected groups agreed to be interviewed. This is not suprising given that the structure planning process in Doncaster must have been particularly confusing and galling for groups who found the whole basis of the process was adapted at mid-point. We received a number of letters from the contacted Doncaster groups which showed not only a lack of interest in talking to us but also a lack of knowledge of the structure planning process and of understanding about why we would want to talk to them (it is worth adding that the participation programme on the first stages of the Doncaster plan was less extensive and innovative than the Three Districts plan). Following the model from Hampton and Beale the group secretary was contacted and, usually, we met an officer from the group rather than a larger selection of members. However, this was the case with some "interviews" where we attended a full meeting of the group and administered our questions.

We take the three principal groupings of members, officers and the public (represented by our community groups sample) for the following analysis of different interpretations of the public participation programme. Further details of the three surveys are included in Appendix 3.

Purposes

A lead was given for the public participation programme by the county Labour Party in their manifesto (South Yorkshire County Labour Party, 1973). The specific statements about public participation in planning in the manifesto refer to elected members remaining "sensitive" to public needs and ensuring "meaningful participation". Professional officers took direction from these comments in defining the participation programme and its place within the planning process. In the project report for the structure plan an over-arching "democratic" purpose is identified by the officers (SYCC, 1973c). At stage 2 of the structure planning process, a further statement of purpose is identified in official documentation which refers to "supplementing the system of local democracy" (SYCC, 1975q, TP PUB PT 10).

The interpretation of these terms and phrases becomes the crux of any assessment of whether these purposes were met by the programme of public participation in the county. However, rather than embark on a debate on semantics it is possible to make an assessment of what the actors meant by the use of these terms by considering their actions and statements.

From the point of view of the majority Labour Group the expressed preference for social surveys ("work on the knocker") as producing information that they considered to be representative of public opinion became apparent at

the first open day in 1974. At that time it was also clear that many councillors were cautious about the views of organised groups believing that they were unrepresentative of the majority of people in the county and tending to represent those with particular "axes to grind". The events of late 1975 when the Leader of Labour Group publicly castigated the planning team and criticised the public participation process indicates that despite the manifesto statements these politicians held strongly to a representative model of local democracy. The manifesto signalled an ambiguous committment towards participatory democracy and greater power sharing in local government.

The majority of councillors in our survey declared themselves in favour of the principle of public participation in planning. Only four members (7.6% of the sample) were definitely against public involvement in planning with a further 6 admitting to mixed feelings. Six councillors gave very enthusiastic and positive replies to the question. Thus, a large proportion (43 councillors or 70%) were broadly in favour. Fourteen of these gave some qualifications to their replies.

Conservative councillors in the sample were more negative towards public involvement. One was definitely against (joining the three Labour members who were opposed) but all the other 5 Conservatives added critical comment to their otherwise general support for the idea.

When we compared the views of planning committee members with those of the rest of the sample (not on planning committee) we found little difference in the distribution of attitudes (table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1 Councillors' Attitudes towards Public Participation in Planning (in general) x Committee Membership
(percentages computed by column)

	Planning	Other
very positive	3 (11.5%)	3 (11%)
positive	10 (38.5%)	10 (37%)
positive (with some negative comments)	8 (31%)	9 (33%)
mixed feelings	3 (11.5%)	3 (11%)
negative	2 (8%)	2 (7%)

However, comparing the comments according to the committee membership of respondents shows planning committee members with a wider range of opinion towards public participation in planning than either policy committee members or the committee chairs/vice-chairs (table 5.2).

TABLE 5.2 Councillors' Attitudes towards Public Participation in Planning in General x Planning Committee/Influentials
(percentages computed by column)

	Planning	Policy	Chairs	All
very positive	3 (11.5%)	1 (7%)	1 (8%)	6 (11%)
positive (43%)	10(38.5%)	7 (50%)	4 (33%)	23
positive (but some negative comment) (26.5%)	8 (31%)	6 (43%)	5 (42%)	14
mixed feelings	3 (11.5%)		2 (17%)	6 (11%)
negative (7.5%)	2 (8%)			4

It would appear therefore that the more influential members of the county council were less likely to be negative towards the principle of public involvement in planning than back-benchers.

We also asked what the councillors felt to be the purpose of public participation in structure planning. The question was identical to that asked by Hampton and Walker in their study of respondents on Teeside (Linked Project, 1975, IRP4).

This leaflet is **your** introduction to the **Draft Structure Plan** which contains the **County Council's** proposals for the solution of the major planning problems of **South Yorkshire.**

Look inside and read what the **Draft Structure Plan** suggests for

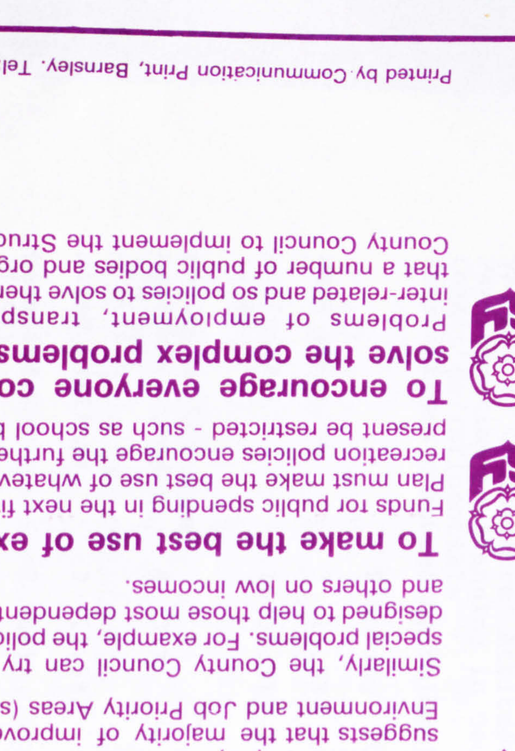
*Reducing the numbers of unemployed
*Helping the older, run-down urban areas.
*Increasing the role played by public transport.
*Locating new houses, shops and recreation facilities in the County.

Read it and let the **County Planning Officer** know whether or not you agree with the way in which the limited resources have been allocated.

Visit your local exhibition and public meeting or ring Len Bartle on Barnsley 86141 (Ext. 647) to find out more about the plan.

Send your comments to
County Planning Officer,
FREEPOST BY158
County Hall,
BARNSLEY, S70 2TN
to reach him by 4th April 1977. No stamp is necessary.

This is your opportunity to influence the contents of the **Draft Structure Plan** before it is sent to the Secretary of State for his approval.



STRUCTURE PLAN PRIORITY AREAS

Main towns

Environment Priority Areas

Job Priority Areas

An introduction...

DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Background

In 1974 and 1975 the general public, local groups and organisations gave their views on the main problems in the County and their priorities for solving them.

Since that time, a number of possible strategies, aimed at solving South Yorkshire's problems have been examined.

Strategy 1 aimed to concentrate new housing, industry and other development in areas which had the greatest potential for growth and had proved attractive in the past.

Strategy 2 aimed to concentrate new industrial development in the same areas as option 1 but to provide major transport improvements so that people would be able to obtain jobs without moving house.

Strategy 3 aimed to rejuvenate the areas of worst unemployment and worst environment by improving job opportunities and trying to solve other major problems.

In all cases, the amount of change that could be brought about by the Structure Plan was limited by a number of factors. There are insufficient resources to do everything and considerable areas are already committed for development by previous planning policies.

The Draft Plan described in this leaflet was developed from a combination of the three strategies, with the emphasis on Strategy 3.

What is behind the plan?

The Structure Plan is based on four fundamental principles

To encourage people to stay in South Yorkshire

The County Council feels that if there were a greater number and variety of jobs and more attractive places to live in the County, people would be less likely to move elsewhere.

To give as much help as possible to the people and areas in greatest need

Some parts of the County have distinctly worse problems than others - especially in terms of unemployment and environmental quality. For this reason, the Plan suggests that the majority of improvements should be concentrated in certain Environment and Job Priority Areas (see map on back of leaflet).

Similarly, the County Council can try to help certain social groups which have special problems. For example, the policy of maintaining cheap bus fares is primarily designed to help those most dependent on public transport - the young, the elderly and others on low incomes.

To make the best use of existing resources

Funds for public spending in the next five years are likely to be very limited. So the Plan must make the best use of whatever is available at the moment. For example, recreation policies encourage the further use of existing facilities whose use may at present be restricted - such as school buildings and playing fields.

To encourage everyone concerned to work together to solve the complex problems of the County

Problems of employment, transport, environment and housing are all inter-related and so policies to solve them must be closely co-ordinated. This means that a number of public bodies and organisations need to work together with the County Council to implement the Structure Plan.

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The majority mentioned only one purpose. Most of this group (19 members or 36%) felt that the raising of public interest was the principal reason for promoting public participation. On the other hand only one councillor saw public participation solely as a way of providing information to the public. However, twenty councillors (38% of the sample) saw more than one purpose being served by public involvement. Twelve members of these saw one purpose of participation as the gathering of information by local government.

Even when 'multi codes' are included the resulting distribution still gave prominence to the raising of public interest in local government as the dominant purpose of public participation (table 5.3).

TABLE 5.3 Purpose of Public Participation in Planning (Councillors)

Purpose of public particip'n in structure planning	Number of mentions	% of who mention
provide information for policy-making	27 (36%)	52%
provide information to the public	14 (19%)	27%
raise general interest in government	34 (45%)	65%

Policy committee and planning committee members were more likely than the rest of the sample to mention the raising of public interest in local government in response to this question about the purpose of public involvement (table 5.4).

TABLE 5.4 Purpose of Public Participation in Planning (Councillors) x Planning/ Policy Committee by Others

Purpose of partic'n in structure planning	Policy	Planning	Other

provide information for policy-making (39%)	6 (29%)	11 (28%)	21
provide information to the public (19%)	4 (19%)	8 (20%)	10
raise general interest in government (43%)	11 (52%)	20 (51%)	23

Thus, backbenchers and councillors not on policy or planning committees were more likely to raise the instrumental purpose of participation as providing information for local government and the planning process.

The councillors talked freely during interviews about participation and the public and so provided a great deal of supplementary comment. Four councillors felt that public participation was more appropriate for small scale or local matters and a further two councillors felt that participation was more important in rural areas.

Six councillors were spontaneously critical of the programme in South Yorkshire. Four members raised what was to become a familiar comment in our contacts with county councillors saying that public participation tended to produce views that were unrepresentative of general public opinion. A further three members believed that public participation on strategic matters was unlikely to be useful. In toto, therefore, it seemed that 13 councillors (25% of the sample) took the view that citizen involvement in planning was more appropriate at local plan level.

We asked what councillors felt was intended by the County Labour Party manifesto pledge of "meaningful participation by local communities in the formulation of any plans in the areas in which they live". It was not surprising to find that five of the Conservative

councillors were sceptical and cynical about the statement.

> ...A good vote-catching gimmick.
> ...An election gimmick.

Three Labour councillors specifically mentioned that public participation could be a means to get public support for policies already decided by the council. Other comments indicated that the idea of leadership by elected representatives was strongly grounded. The manifesto commitment was

> ...helping the representatives to make decisions.
> ...informing the public of decisions.
> ...getting at broad opinion.

Counting these and similar sentiments led to the conclusion that 28 members (53%) appeared to hold to a model of representative democracy. An inference to be drawn is that most of the sample saw the value of public participation as helping and supporting the councillor to act as leader of the decision process.

However, there were 12 councillors (23%) who appeared to give a more sweeping meaning to the commitment to public participation in planning for South Yorkshire. They implied that public views should be the major basis for policy-making. Two members said specifically that community involvement should define policy. Among these 12 councillors three were members of policy committee, suggesting that such views were not restricted to backbenchers.

Given the ambitious nature of public participation in South Yorkshire we asked if elected members intended a comprehensive programme to be introduced. Most (42 positive replies) said that it was intended, yet only six councillors made general comparisons with other authorities. The latter said that South Yorkshire was a special case and required extensive public consultation

because of the poor condition of the area, industrial dereliction and run-down environment. Nine councillors believed that the intention behind public participation was <u>not</u> based on comparison with other areas. They believed that the motivation came from strong conviction and principle.

> ...We operated independently without considering other county councils. We have done what we thought was needed.

Many councillors who indicated that there was an positive intention to follow an extensive programme of public participation also indicated that they were committed to the manifesto promise, wished to see a wide spread of public opinion being sought and would to go "as far as we need to".

We also found that the sample of planning officers was favourably disposed towards the principle of public participation in planning with 11 officers saying that they felt strongly supportive, although there were some qualifications. The main provisos were against unrealistically raising public expectations of influence over policy, that it was easier to get the views of the 'articulate', that the public were often unclear about their needs, and caution was expressed over the difficulties of directly using public comment in the policy process.

One respondent felt that public participation was a temporary phenomenon in local government whilst the role of the councillor was being rethought (he saw the necessity for full-time councillors in the future). On the other hand, one professional felt that the future could see the growth of popular democracy (implying a weakening of the representative system). A third opinion was that public participation would become a regular feature of local government in the future.

Thus, behind the majority support for public participation in principle there was a range of different assumed models and meanings.

We asked why the planners thought such a comprehensive programme of public participation had been introduced. Six mentioned the political commitment of elected members. Six other planners mentioned the commitment of the planning department and the profession (four implied that the officers were the true leaders in pushing for the programme). Five comments mentioned the strong personal support of the county planning officer and three of his staff saw his role as a key to the extensive programme. Three officers mentioned the support of the chair of county planning committee as a key factor.

However, the responses indicated that it was not all plain sailing. One planner said that the Department of Administration was sceptical about introducing the programme from the start but that the enthusiasm of some elected members with planning department backing counted for a great deal in overcoming that potential obstacle. The creation of a specialist post for management of public participation was mentioned by six respondents as a way of maintaining the momentum for the programme. These respondents added that the enthusiasm of the appointed officer with experience in citizen involvement in policy making and ideas about how the programme could be progressed plus a rational, thought through programme carefully integrated into the planning process meant that confidence was built up at an early stage. There was an edge of resentment in one reply which noted that the early appointment of the participation specialist before many other middle tier officers were in post meant that it was relatively easy for early resource bids to be made. The public participation budget was said to be "tied up" and allocated before some planners began work in the department. This respondent felt that if all

claims for resources related to structure plan preparation had been considered together then the programme would have been squeezed. The early decision on the programme also meant that commitment was gelled before some of the other major structure plan authorities had considered their public involvement strategies and if the decision had been taken with the benefit of comparative information again it was said that the programme in South Yorkshire could have been less extensive.

It would seem therefore that although the county Labour Party manifesto played an obvious part in defining a commitment there were other factors including the enthusiasms of a number of key personnel which moulded the shape and scale of the programme in the initial stages. The understanding and rapport between the county planning committee chair and his chief officer was mentioned as another factor which in itself helped in defining the appointment of the participation officer at a relatively high level of seniority. The professionals in the department of planning pressed the chair and CPO for a high level appointment knowing that a junior position could be 'ridden over' too easily by other staff.

The question on the purpose served by public participation in planning was very fully answered by the officer sample. Many spoke at length in reply. Several officers made a tripartite distinction between participation as a source of information for policy-making, as a means of informing the public of policy and ideas and as a contribution to local democracy. Given the explicit recognition and adoption of these distinctions in technical reports about the programme this was unremarkable. What is worthy of comment is that the majority of the sample (10 officers) stressed that the main purpose of the programme was to gather

information of use to the county council in preparing the structure plan. Only four planners mentioned the contribution that the programme could make in providing information to the public. Nevertheless, seven respondents mentioned that public participation could enhance local democracy and for three planners this was the only justification they mentioned.

Looking further at the latter responses there were noticeable differences in emphasis and rationale. One officer said that the democratic function was important because he doubted the public could provide information that the planners did not already have. Another saw participation as an adjunct to elected representation and a third said that participation was needed to show councillors that the public was more intelligent than members usually were prepared to acknowledge.

One officer explicitly rejected the political value of participation and saw the principle as purely instrumental by contributing to rational policy-making.

However, we enter a note of caution because similar responses could cover different interpretations. For example, saying that public participation was 'for the exchange of information' could be seen to have an informative and/or an educational component. We scrutinised the full range of each respondent's comments on the interview record and concluded that only two officers in the sample were explicitly committed to a more popular form of democracy. The majority of professionals in this study saw the value of public participation as strengthening representative democracy and helping legitimise the planning and policy process.

Several officers said that the different elements of the programme served different purposes. While the newspaper and publicity material was not thought useful in the

planning process they said that these elements were helpful in keeping the public involved in the plan and its progress.

One of the most significant findings from our surveys of members and officers was the difference between the two groups on the purpose of public participation in planning (Darke, 1981). Bringing together the responses shows that, whilst most councillors see public participation as principally useful in raising public interest in local government, the majority of professionals see participation by the public as directly useful in providing information for the planning process (table 5.5). A chi-square test found that the difference was significant at the 0.02 level (that is, there is only a one in fifty probability that the distribution could occur by chance).

TABLE 5.5 Purpose served by Public Participation in Planning x Councillors and Officers compared (number of mentions)

Councillors (n=53)	Purpose served by Public Particip'n in Planning	Planners (n=16)
27	provide information for policy-making	14
14	provide information to the public	6
34	raise general interest in government	3

(mentions total to more than n because of "multi-codes")

Five planners saw the public as parochial and therefore emphasised the educative role of public participation. Others said that the flow of knowledge was not one way.

Other purposes for the public participation programme were mentioned by respondents within the council in addition to those raised by interview responses or openly identified in official and internal documentation.

In terms of the origins of the South Yorkshire approach to participation five councillors referred specifically to officers in the planning department as playing a crucial role in supporting and pressing for the programme. Two of these were critical of the professionals.

> ...Empire building by the planning department.
> ...Purely on the instigation of the planning department.

Such comments could be seen as undermining the 'democratic' purpose of local government by easing out the councillor.

In contrast to these minority views, there were other members who saw the programme as a safeguard against <u>too much</u> officer influence over policy.

> ...Public participation is a way of bolstering opinions over and against officers and the Secretary of State.
> ...There was a general feeling that the bureaucrat(s) w(ere) making decisions without reference to the people who were employing them.

Our small sample of organised groups in South Yorkshire was not asked questions on the broad purpose of public participation. After piloting the schedule for this survey it was decided that respondents had difficulty in responding to the question and to include it in the survey was unlikely to provide a useable response.

<u>Subsidiary Objectives of the South Yorkshire Programme</u>

We have identified the subsidiary objectives of the programme at stage 1 as meeting statutory requirements, delivering early participation of the public, providing representative involvement, offering meaningful ways of reaching citizens, supplementing the role of councillors and helping to identify the public's local problems and satisfactions.

The first of these subsidiary aims was difficult to assess at Phase 1 alone. However, given that the Secretary of State did not raise any queries over the programme at the time of official submission of the plan in 1977 suggests that this aim (in this prosaic sense) was met. It is also straightforward to assert that the second aim of early public involvement was achieved. Similarly, the survey of households was, by definition, representative as this was the basis of sampling. Assessing whether meaningful ways of involving the public were offered by the programme requires both identification of subjective views from key actors and quantitative analysis of the overall response. Supplementing the role of councillors is an aim that is more difficult to evaluate given that any assessment depends on the meaning attributed to the objective. Taking a simple approach would mean assuming that any information or help given to members in resolving policy questions or in acting on behalf of constituents adds to their ability to make wise decisions. Finally, the programme did provide a considerable amount of information on people's local problems and satisfactions. Whether it was used in contributing to the policy process is a different question which was only implied in the subsidiary aims of the programme.

We can elaborate our preliminary conclusions on whether the subsidiary aims of the programme were met by considering further results from the councillor and officer surveys.

Only one councillor made the most obvious response to the question about why the programme was set up which was to say that it was a legal requirement. A further 4 councillors took the view that the statutory requirement was <u>not</u> a serious or major consideration for the county council.

When asked why such an ambitious programme came about when a less extensive programme would have met the statutory requirement, 28 members (53%) gave what we have described as a 'principled reason'. Either this took the form of a statement of belief in the idea of public participation per se or public participation was seen as a necessary part of the policy process. Councillors answered that they had

> ...a moral obligation.
> ...we are here to satisfy the public.
> ...the public have a right to make a decision as much as a councillor.

Of these twenty seven members, seven (including three Conservatives) said that the programme was introduced in order to meet the manifesto promise. This does raise the issue of whether this reply can be taken to represent a 'principled reason' but we would argue that given that the original manifesto pledge was itself based on a strongly stated view then to seek to honour that principle is itself a matter of integrity. The fact that opposition councillors mentioned it as a reason for the programme does not undermine this rationale. The Conservative councillors were, however, critical of the 'excess' of the programme even if they recognised it as a manifesto commitment by their opposition peers.

A main source of criticism (measured by frequency of comment) made by councillors about the programme was that the public views were unrepresentative. The results of participation were seen as dominated by the special pleading of pressure groups or the ideas of the better-educated in the county (eight councillors or 15% of the sample) explicitly made this kind of comment. Four councillors felt that the programme was too complicated for the ordinary person to understand. A further 4 members felt that it was too expensive. A yet further four representatives believed that public interest in participation was low to start with and was declining as

time went by. On the positive side, six members felt that the programme had been of value, three more said that a balanced set of views had resulted and two councillors spontaneously noted that the programme had not held up the planning process.

The comments on the unrepresentative nature of the public comments and the dominance of pressure groups are worth pursuing a little further. Overall, we found that 32 councillors (60% of the sample) made this kind of comment at one time or another in the interview. Of these, only six could be said to be unconcerned with the issue; the matter being noted as something of concern to their colleagues. Hence 26 councillors (half the sample) were of the view that opinions from the programme were biased in some way and were not representative. By implication, half the sample questioned the use of information from the programme to guide policy-making on behalf of the general public.

The main concern with the work with local groups was the belief that they delivered unrepresentative information. One councillor referred to the interest groups that completed the kit response forms were the "lunatic fringe", while another said that the public were ill-informed.

Not all councillors believed the response from groups was suspect. Some said that groups could produce responsible and considered comment. The kit

> ...enabled people to get together. When you get people in groups it is hard to get more interest shown.

Officers did not explicitly raise the issue of whether public comment was representative or not.

We have taken the satisfaction with the programme by members and officers as a measure of whether they

believed the involvement of the public in the programme was 'meaningful'.

Councillors were asked their opinions of the participation programme as it had developed. A noticeable hardening of opinion was found when comparing members views on the specific package and comments on the original broad intent (table 5.6).

TABLE 5.6 Councillors Attitudes to Public Participation in Planning

	in general	in South Yorkshire programme
positive	29 (55%)	17 (32%)
positive (with qualifications)	20 (37.5%)	18 (34%)
negative	4 (7.5%)	18 (34%)

Only 17 members (32%) were (unequivocally) positive towards the South Yorkshire programme at the time when they were interviewed. A further 18 councillors were positive but with qualifications and/or criticisms. Eighteen elected representatives were negative about the programme. That is, one third of the sample had some criticisms and a further third were unable to say anything positive.

First hand experience with the specific range of techniques and outcomes in South Yorkshire appears to have created a negative trend in affect among the councillors. However there is an expected (if weak) correlation between general and specific attitudes to public participation in planning (table 5.7).

TABLE 5.7 Councillors Attitudes to Public Participation: In General x South Yorkshire Programme

Attitude (general)	Attitude (South Yorkshire) positive	negative
positive	31	12

indifferent or negative	4	6

(chi-square test indicates less than a 1-in-10 probability that the distribution could occur by chance)

Several planners noted the problems of public participation at the spatial level of the county and in deciding strategic policy (and might, therefore, be said to believe participation at this scale was not 'meaningful').

> ...Public participation is difficult at the structure plan level. The proportion of people who can contribute at the structure plan scale is very limited.
> ...The public respond to something concrete...People say things they do not see the implication of. For example, they say that they are prepared to accept longer journeys...(without thinking of the cost).
> ...At local plan level a lot more can be done to actually involve people.
> ...Information at structure plan level is very limited.
> ...Difficulties in knowing what to do with the information.
> ...As a forum for collecting views it was not acceptable, the nature of the views was very local.

Given the general agreement within the department that a successful Phase 1 programme had been concluded a few months before the interviews these responses suggest a level of scepticism and deep-seated opinions. One of the interesting findings from the analysis of Phase 1 programme was that the public <u>were</u> able and prepared to consider wider spatial and longer term issues. Many of the group responses to the kits, for example, showed that people were prepared to forego immediate benefits in order to safeguard the future or enhance long term prospects for the quality of life in the county.

Not all officers held to the common view on the difficulties of getting public interest and participation at the strategic plan level. One officer admitted to scepticism at the outset but at the time of the interview was more open-minded about the appropriate scale for

public participation in planning. We did not find any significant difference between the views of the more senior staff and their more junior colleagues in relation to their support for the principle of public involvement in planning. However, as we note elsewhere the average age of the professionals in the department was low and this could equate with greater contact with the ideas and practice of public participation in planning education and professional life.

Also relating to the aim of 'meaningful' participation, we asked if our respondents felt that the programme had been too ambitious, about right or could have gone further. Twenty councillors believed that the county had over-egged the programme while only four said they felt it had not been ambitious enough. The largest proportion (22 members or 42%) said that the scale of the programme was about right. Three councillors mentioned the scaled-down intentions for public participation in the later stages of the planning process which had been agreed by members in 1976 as being more satisfactory than the original scheme. All the Conservative councillors we interviewed condemned the programme as being too ambitious.

Not all the critical comments from members were about the scale (although our use of the term 'ambitious' might have been leading) of the programme. Some interpreted the question to include the form, content and perceptions of participants. For example, comments included

> ...to the ordinary layman it may seem too ambitious.
> ...too academically ambitious.
> ...trying to get at something which is not there.

Five other councillors gave more pragmatic replies. One respondent said that in a new and heterogeneous county there was little first hand information about the area.

> ...We needed to know so much ourselves.

Other comments were more earthy.

> ...Self aggrandisement!
> ...It would look better on paper.

Such criticism came mainly from Conservative councillors (table 5.8).

TABLE 5.8 Councillors Stated Reasons for Introduction of the South Yorkshire Public Participation Programme.

	Reasons for introducing	
	Publicity/ gimmick	Other reason
Conservative/Liberal	6	1
Labour/Independent	4	42

(Fisher's exact probability test showed p = 0.00002, or only a 1-in-10 000 probability that the distribution could occur by chance)

Few members were deeply critical of the programme. Thirteen councillors (25%) did not mention any shortcomings while 21 (40%) had some criticisms but nothing major. A few wanted additional elements added. Only five councillors indicated that the programme was unnecessary or a waste of time.

Although most criticisms were not as damning as this there were lots of minor critical comments ranging from the general views about unrepresentative public opinion from groups to very specific complaints about community workers or the late start on work with school pupils.

On the other hand with 34 members (64% of the sample) giving support or only making small criticisms of the programme it would seem that there was a fair measure of support.

This finding of general satisfaction with the programme was confirmed when we asked whether the councillors would agree to the same kind of programme being followed again with the benefit of hindsight and experience. Thirty

four said that they would accept a similar programme or agree to a more ambitious scheme with 9 councillors suggesting future additions or improvements. Seventeen members (32%) said that with hindsight they would have wished to see a less elaborate programme. Among these were six influentials, that is, nearly one third of the 'influentials' in the sample. Eight (out of the ten) opposition party members wished for a less extensive programme.

When answering later questions about the programme of participation some members were careful to distinguish between the specific techniques which had raised public interest and involvement from techniques where the results were treated with greater confidence by councillors by being more representative of broad public opinion. For many councillors the sample survey gave the most representative results but members also took the view that the kits generated a lot of interest from groups.

We asked members which of the techniques employed did they consider had been the most useful. Strongest support was given to the kits (18 members). A further 6 members gave support to the kits although with some criticism as well. Taken together this shows that nearly half the sample had something positive to say about the kits. Many of the members who were favourably inclined towards the kits seem to have seen the kit being used by a group or groups or had themselves participated in its use at ward party meetings. This first hand experience appears to have left a positive impression. In disaggregating the results we found that planning committee members were more likely to be favourable towards the kits than other councillors (table 5.9).

TABLE 5.9 Councillors Attitudes towards the South Yorkshire Kit Technique

	Planning Committee	Not Planning
positive to kits	16	19
negative to kits	3	6

(Fisher's exact probability test, p = 0.0079, shows only 1-in-100 probability that distribution could have occured by chance)

A majority of the planners were positive about the approach to participation taken by the county council. Nine officers praised the programme and another four said that it should have gone further. However, there was some equivocation. Four planners had reservations about what had transpired. Two would not wish to see any greater level of work on getting at public opinion. Two others felt that some parts of the programme, specifically the adult education classes and the use of part-time community workers, had gone too far.

> ...We've gone too far with the courses. We should not sell ourselves too cheap.

Both of these respondents added that the elected member was the final arbiter on policy matters and they showed some reaction to the amount of work and resources being tied up in the programme.

Of the four planners who felt that the programme had not gone far enough, two were critical of the time gap between contacts with the public during phase 1 and 2 (which ended in early 1975) and the likely next major element of the programme which was anticipated in early 1976. They anticipated a negative public reaction or loss of goodwill as a result of the long period without meaningful contact with the county. The other two planners wished for more information from the public (via the survey or the kits) to give more refined conclusions about policy preferences and options.

Hence, although the balance of attitude among officers was generally favourable towards the programme of public

participation in South Yorkshire the range of reaction and opinion in the structure plan team was wide. The range is illustrated by two comments.

> ...Very adventurous and very effective.
> ...It is interesting to see how it has failed.

A check on whether the programme had supplemented the role of the councillor was provided by asking members if they had seen the replies from the public. Only two members admitted to not having read some of the responses from the Phase 1 and 2 programme. A majority recalled the officers' reports on the public's views (37 members or 70%). However, only 22 members (41.5%) indicated that this exposure to public opinion had affected their attitudes to planning problems in the county and half of these were only slightly influenced. It would seem, therefore, on the basis of self report that only a quarter of the sample admitted to a significant change in their perception of issues and policies as a result of the programme.

Two somewhat unexpected findings from the analysis of the survey results came to light. Firstly, a higher proportion of members who felt that public opinion should be given prominence in policy making had not read the official summaries of public comments (table 5.10).

TABLE 5.10 Councillors Views on Use of Publics' Replies in Policy-Making x Reading of Replies/Reports

	Public replies important	Members views final
Has read replies/reports	6	21
Not read replies/reports	8	9

$p > 0.05$ (only a 1-in-20 probability that distribution could occur by chance)

Secondly, those who had read the reports of public response to the public participation programme were more likely to believe that the role of the councillor was to

use personal judgement in coming to policy decisions (table 5.11).

TABLE 5.11 Councillors Views on their Role in Policy-Making x Reading of Replies/Reports

	Read replies/ reports	Not read replies/reports
C'llr should be mouthpeice	8	8
C'llr should use own judgement	18	5

p > 0.10 (only a 1-in-10 probability that distribution could have occured by chance)

In terms of previous analyses of differing orientations by councillors to their role in public affairs the distinction above could be seen as between 'delegates' and 'trustees'. The finding suggests that trustees are more conscientious in taking account of the range of opinion and comment available to them than are delegates.

Councillors who were openly critical of the kits were positive about the social survey. Nine members showed strong positive support for the PAS and two others were quite positive (in toto, representing 20% of the sample).

Only a few members mentioned the county newspapers or commercial press features, exhibitions or public meetings as being useful techniques, which may reflect the modest role they played in the total programme. Two councillors were critical of the newspaper coverage in general, particularly because of the poor return of the self-completion slips.

Exhibitions were never prominent in the programme and less emphasis was given to visual displays over time. Members of planning committee were more likely than the sample as a whole to show positive support for exhibitions.

The distribution of responses from members relating to the different programme elements is set out below (table 5.12).

TABLE 5.12 Councillors Attitudes towards Elements of Phase 1/2 Participation Programme

	positive	cool support	negative
Kits	18	6	3
PAS	9	2	
Exhibitions	3	3	
Newspapers	3	5	3
Public Meetings		3	
All techniques	2		4

(includes multiple responses, that is, number of entries > n)

Further qualifications were made about specific elements of the programme. Two planners doubted that much of the information collected would be usable in the planning process. Another felt that the public attitudes survey was premature, which was another way of saying that its utility was limited.

> ...If the method of structure planning had been set out in more detail we would have asked different questions. With hindsight the public participation programme was too much ahead.

Another professional felt that the kits had been over emphasised in the programme and seemed to echo the views of some councillors who wanted greater emphasis on the comments from the general public.

The interviews carried out with 33 groups and organisations in the county in 1977 yielded a limited amount of information. Probably the most useful data were the attitudes towards the public participation programme which is taken here to express whether the programme was seen as meaningful.

The results from the groups survey show that 6 (18%) groups (or, strictly, the contemporary representatives of the groups) believed the programme to have been effective, helpful or a good idea. Three other group responses (9%) gave qualified support to the programme. A majority of group responses were negative about the programme. Six group representatives said that the programme was confusing or that the public was not interested. A further 9 groups (27%) felt that it had not been of much value and a further 8 groups (24%) believed that no notice would be taken of public opinion. The latter three sets of responses represent 70% of the sample we studied which is an severe indictment of the programme. In qualifying these results we would emphasise that,

> many of the respondents (in 1977) had not been involved in Phase 1 participation,
> there had been a substantial period of time when very little had been heard from the council by these groups (during Phase 2 of the planning process),
> there had been a public criticism of the programme by county councillors late in 1975 which may have stuck in the minds of group officers.

Representatives of groups based in Doncaster and of groups that had not responded to mailings and efforts to make contact by the local authority were particularly likely to give confused responses to our questions. The positive comments and qualified support for the participation programme came from groups that had been involved at some stage. We found a weak statistical relationship (but given all the qualifications about this data we do not feel it useful to reproduce the tabulation) between previous participation and making positive comments about the programme. "Middle class" groups and those groups where there had been continuity of membership and officers were more likely to make positive comments about the programme.

Comments that were culled from the survey were,

...it petered out.
...fine at the start.
...too long a gap after the kits.

Perhaps more critical in terms of the aims and objectives of the programme were groups' comments that reflected cynicism and scepticism about the motives behind the participation programme. Particularly worrisome were comments that showed that some groups believed the council would not listen to group views and the local authority would do what they wanted unaffected by public opinion.

With respect to the aim of supplementing the role of the councillor as a consequence of the participation programme questions about open days were included in the schedules for members and officers. To recap, four open days were held to inform councillors about the planning process and the particiaption programme between October 1974 and October 1975. They were discontinued after that time. The reasons for abandoning this 'technique' were never fully made clear. We assumed it was due, in part, to the general desire among members to speed up the planning process, the absence of influential members from these meetings and a centralisation of decision-making power within Labour Group.

Forty members in the sample of councillors indicated that they had attended at least one open day. In fact, from the record 43 members sampled had done so, which could indicte that for at least three councillors it had not been a memorable experience. Thirteen councillors had only attended on one occasion (out of 26 in the council as a whole). On the other hand, only 6 members attended all four events (out of 10 as a whole, that is 10%).

Two councillors said that they had gained nothing from the open day they attended. A further seven said "very little". Together these respondents represent a quarter

of the sample. However, the majority of the sample were positive about the meetings. Six members indicated that they found it useful to hear the views of other councillors and a further 6 said that they had gained an insight into issues in other parts of the county. Only one member spontaneously mentioned that the open day was an opportunity to hear more about officers' views on planning issues.

Criticisms of open days were varied. Two members seem to have attended with the principal intention of being critical of the participation programme. Another councillor objected to the chairs of discussion groups going "...out to impress". He added that the strongest members exerted themselves and "...officers did not exert enough control". One mentioned that the meetings were too well organised being

> ...cut and dried. We were there to make it nice and happy.

It could be that the councillors who were most positive towards open days were those most receptive to new ideas and to public participation and, therefore, the events simply catered for them and 'converted' very few councillors who held strong views about power and representative democracy. An indication is provided by looking at the relationship between positive evaluation of the meetings and openness towards public views on planning issues (table 5.13).

TABLE 5.13 Councillors Attitudes to Open Days x Openness to Public Views on Planning Issues

	Public's views affected your attitude to planning problems	
	yes	no
gained little/nothing from Open Day	2	5
positive benefit from Open Day	15	10

p = 0.035 (or only a 1-in-20 probability that teh distribution could have occured by chance)

There was little difference in the relative proportion of 'influentials' and back-benchers in terms of attendance, at least, at one open day, although it should be added that (apart from the chair and deputy of planning committee) only three committee chairs attended at all. The chair of council attended only one event. Conservatives and the other minority group members were less likely to attend than majority group.

Twenty nine members said they would like to see more such events (irrespective of whether they had attended or not). A further ten members echoed this view but with some criticism of the open days as organised. Their view was that the events were too leisurely and unstructured. Cost was also in the mind of some critics who siad that they could get into discussion with officers at any time. Conservative members were strongly of this view.

Almost inevitably, there were the contrary opinions. Four councillors praised the informality of the meetings, the absence of the press and the opportunity to consider some issues in more depth than was normally the case.

From the officer side of the council there was overwhelming support for the open day idea. Only one of the professionals we interrviewed saw them as unsuccessful. Another found them "depressing" (for showing members lack of understanding of planning issues) but nevertheless found the contact with members useful. Seven officers felt that the first open day was more successful than the second.

> ...my group was a disaster.
> ...not much progress beyond the first open day; the same views...partly the officers' fault; groups were not run in the right way.
> ...The first was OK. The second needed to be tightened up.

> ...first was more successful. The second was difficult because of planning jargon.
> ...the second one was not sharply enough focussed.

Not all the interviewed officers had attended the third open day but those that had felt that it was better structured and organised because there were very specific topics to discuss.

On the main value of open days, five officers welcomed the opportunity to hear councillors views and meet members on an informal footing.

> ...it's the only time I get to meet councillors.
> ...tremendous differences in attitude between members and officers, we need to meet three or four times a year to remind us of this.

Three officers saw open days as a way of presenting policy options to members in order to get reactions; to act as a sounding board or as "...an insurance so that they have OK'ed every move".

> ...I was able to convince some members about what we were trying to achieve.

Four officers felt that the open days had failed to create an effective dialogue.

> ...as a contribution to policy-making some groups did not achieve much.
> ...I survived it...but there was too much lobbying.
> ...councillors are best on their own patch.

The county planning officer was ambivalent about the idea of a more open dialogue between members and officers.

> ...The first open day I welcomed with open arms...but if you had let me loose 15 years ago I would have been a menace. Now I have second thoughts...I wonder what officers say to members informally...we could wreck the officer-member relationship. We were close to it when some officers queried the free public transport idea.

Three officers felt the dialogue was stunted because the most powerful members did not attend but another felt this criticism was misplaced.

> ...they are aimed at representativeness and local knowledge rather than power. They are not intended as a sounding board for Labour party policy.

Accolades and criticism from some members of the role of chairs of discussion groups were echoed by the planners.

> ...X is well thought of and therefore other members joined his group...high level discussion.
> ...The chairman insisted on debating the issues - even though the group was small and indifferent to the topic - I let him get on with it.

Other officers did not place the blame for their perception of the failure of discussion on the members.

> ...partly the officers' fault that groups were not run in the right way.
> ...the first open day entailed a lot of preparation - heavy on resources. Less time was spent on preparation of the later ones.

The size and composition of discussion groups was thought important by 4 officers. Smaller groups were felt to have worked best. Success was also thought related to pitching the debate at councillors' interests and concerns.

> ...there were informed views on the local areas they represent...best on their own patch.
> ...our group lost out because of the size and limited interest in the topic.
> ...the last open day was good because there were specific things to talk about.
> ...attenders do value it...but they see it as a way of influencing decision-making, which they do not have in Labour group.

Seven officers would like to see more informal and off-the-cuff contact with members. Two others felt that they had judged the level of contact about right with only occasional open days. Only one professional said that he would not like more informal contact with members. Another was ambivalent on this matter but the rest felt some level of formality needed to be maintained.

> ...I don't think contacts should be completely informal. Some structured relationship is necessary.

...I don't want them walking into the office...have to have something formalised, something to talk about...(but) more informal than committee.
...something is still missing - we need informal political reaction without open days. There ought to be a more informal level, say, six members invited in for discussion; but the system creates difficulties.
...(could) gather together councillors for an area to give a seminar, say, when spatialising policies, or go and talk to councillors about their area, say, on housing problems...(could have) individual contact but it's time-consuming for the councillors...There are practical difficulties here. Also there might be problems for the chairmen of committees. I've changed my mind (on open days).. We are not dealing with the correct level of information to be able to help councillors.

Four officers gave unqualified support to the idea to extend the open day format. Another said that a meeting every two months would be appropriate. Four more professionals in the structure plan team felt three or four open days a year was about right.

...(otherwise) members might get fed up in re-treading the same ground.
...It would not get us further. The structure plan grinds slowly. If there were more frequent meetings there would not be that much to discuss.

Suggestions were made for improvements.

...we now need something more specific, aimed at the influentials. Members enjoy open days but as a guide to policy development they do not give a true picture. Outside the committee there is a role for informal meetings with members, but with the "power house".
...There could be some political evaluation (of technical work) by the chairman every month.
...as they are now, too much time is involved. More influential councillors should come...interesting to have a meeting where councillors talk about their area and do preparation and officers go along. What do they think the structure plan should do? They should give their ideas, such as, an industrial estate at Dodworth. The issues are too abstract for them.
...work towards familiarity with members so that spontaneous contact can arise. It would be nice to be rung up by a member. In Y (former authority), we would meet in the pub at lunchtime.

These comments from officers reflect a variety of opinion on open days and, by inference, on the aim of supplementing the role of the councillor within the public participation programme in South Yorkshire. There is a strong wish to involve members in more informal and instrumental ways in the detailed work of policy development. The more senior staff were ambivalent towards, if not opposed to, too casual a relationship between members and officers fearing infelicity in comments and information from less experienced (cautious!) staff. Such comments reflect concerns raised in the recent Widdicombe inquiry (Widdicombe, 1986). The experience of open days points to the requirement of involving influential members in any enhanced member-officer contact and of the difficulties of overcoming the tradition and momentum of the committee system and past member-officer relations.

Operational requirements

The principal operational requirement identified for the public participation programme was to contribute towards the planning process. Specifically, the intent was that the process would be more sensitive, honest, open, educative and would allow the planners to interpret public opinion in terms of the strategic implications.

Twenty four councillors (45%) said that public opinion had been quite or very important in policy-making. Fourteen (26%) felt public comment had been of little value while ten (19%) said views of the public had been of no importance in policy-making. Six councillors did not know if public opinions had been influential, including two members of planning committee. One of these said that it was too early to tell.

Councillors sitting on planning committee were more likely to believe that public comments were an important

influence on policy. Policy committee members were clear that the public had little effect on policy-making (table 5.14).

TABLE 5.14 Councillors Views on Importance of Public Comment on Policy-Making

Importance of public views on Policy-Making	Policy (not Pln'g)	Planning	Rest of Sample
Important	1 (17%)	15 (58%)	10 (48%)
Not Important	5 (83%)	9 (35%)	7 (33%)
Did not Know		2 (8%)	4 (19%)

(Fisher's exact Probability test showed that there was only a 1-in-40 probability that the distribution could occur by chance)

Members on planning committee were marginally more likely to feel that at least <u>one</u> element of the programme was useful in policy-making (table 5.15). Only two councillors said that they considered <u>all</u> elements of the programme to be useful in the policy process.

TABLE 5.15 Councillors Views on whether Elements of the Public Participation Programme had been Useful in Policy-Making

	Planning Committee	Not Planning Committee
No element of the Programme was Useful for Plan-Making	2	4
At least one Element of the Programme was Useful...	14	13

p = 0.0864 (probability of less than 1 in 10 that the distribution could occur by chance)

On the other hand, six councillors saw <u>little</u> value of any part of the programme for policy-making. A further 4 members saw no useful outcome. In all, five members saw no direct utility for the planning process from the programme. Altogether about a third of the sample

believed that the programme had made very little contribution to policy-making.

In looking again at the responses on the utility of public responses for the policy process it seemed to us that some councillors were answering the question about the value of the various elements of the programme in a quite sophisticated way. One or two councillors said they had difficulty in assessing the utility of the various techniques for policy-making because the results were not necessarily directly fed into the policy process.

Eight councillors were adamant that they had the final say on policy matters and believed that the results of public consultation had not influenced members' decisions.

> ...(The) danger is that pressure group (views would) lead to an unbalanced structure plan.

Five councillors saw little difference between their own views and those of the public and consequently seemed unconcerned about the matters of principle implied in these questions.

Given the reduced scope (compared to original intentions) of the public participation programme at alternative strategies stage we asked why that decision had come about. The main response was that planning committee had already gone a long way to defining policies and alternatives within the accelerated timetable and to go backwards would be retrograde. In fact, 21 (40%) councillors said that decisions on the preferred plan had already been made and the future programme was decided on that knowledge.

Nine councillors saw the narrowed time scale as a reason for backtracking on previous programme intentions. Ten councillors felt that experience in the earlier stages

had convinced them that the public would better cope with a single plan than with a range of options. Only one member felt (without prompting) that the public might resent not having the opportunity to review several strategies and react to the apparent backtrack on a prior commitment.

Some members seemed to feel that the change of intention had been led by the professionals in the planning department. Three councillors felt the change was to help the administration of the planning process at a time when the officers were hard pressed and did not want to unravel a complex range of public comment. One representative believed that the planning department had requested the change of heart.

On the whole the councillors did not expect much public reaction to the changed programme. Seventeen councillors believed that there would be no outcry. Some said that the public were confused, bored or lacked interest in the plan and the extended planning process. However, 16 members (30%) saw the potential for minor reaction and the same number thought that the special interest groups would feel aggrieved. Thus up to two thirds of the sample expected some negative response from the public but there was the implication that this would come from a small and representative grouping and could therefore be disregarded. Three members said the revised programme was a broken promise and two of these respondents were indignant at the change. Overall, only four councillors expected a strong public reaction to the change of heart.

A cross check question asked if members had changed their attitude towards public participation in planning since 1974. About half the sample said they had not (26 or 49%). Of the other half of our interviewees 13 had become more enthused and 14 had become more sceptical and critical. Of those who had changed their attitudes

towards public participation three said this was only slight. Paradoxically (in relation to the finding noted earlier about a higher proportion of influentials who supported a reduced programme at draft plan stage) a higher proportion of influentials compared to backbenchers said that they had become more enthusiastic towards public participation since 1974.

Not suprisingly, the planners had more to say than councillors about the utility of public participation in the planning process. Some officers said the public comment was of general value in strategic plan-making, being

> ...a reminder of the variety of opinion. At the end of the day (it) means plans are sensitive to different views.
> ...(We have) got to know what the public are thinking. Otherwise we will substitute our own values.
> ...The value output is fundamental.

The latter comments came from relatively junior staff.

Asking about the utility of public comment in the planning process itself allowed a check on the value of different elements of the participation programme. Five respondents said without prompting that the PAS was the most useful source for departmental work on policies. A further planner did so after a prompt ("Have you used the public participation replies in your work?). Four respondents mentioned both the attitude survey and the kits as the most useful elements while further two planners felt the kits were the most useful source of information. Three officers were clear in stating that the kits provided information which was difficult to interpret and the emphasis on the views of established groups was felt to be limiting. One planner found the PAS results gave confusing results.

Four planners felt that meetings with the public were useful for sustaining the adrenalin.

> ...It was useful to have to go to meetings and therefore to sort (one's) ideas out.
> ...(The kit was) excellent as a participation tool; meeting the people.

Offering a point of contact with the public seemed particularly appreciated by the more junior staff and reminds us that the utility of a public participation programme cannot simply be measured by or confined to the quantitative information that results.

One of the main contributions of the PAS was the statistical portrait of the county population that resulted. This was mentioned as being of value by four planners.

> ...There was none (statistical data) for the South Yorkshire area, because it did not exist before 1974, therefore (the PAS) gives us a picture of the county; what it is like.
> ...The area breakdown was useful; differences showed up throughout the county...helped (me) to get to know the county.

This kind of comment might have been expected from these newcomers to the area but a senior planner had this to say.

> ...Having been in the area for a long time I had views on the problems; beliefs which were not altogether borne out by the attitude survey.

So it would appear that the PAS had a number of uses; providing a data base, a source of orientation and familiarisation for newcomers and a check on long standing beliefs for those who knew the area from the past. On the last point several planners indicated that they were surprised at the prominence and importance that the public gave to some issues.

> ...The emphasis on 'non-essentials'; for example recreation, was the most interesting aspect of the replies. I had expected concern with major matters

> but it seemed that most people were satisfied with these.

A related question to that on the utility of information from the programme was whether the public replies had affected planner's personal perception of the problems in the county. Seven officers said that the information had been a strong influence on their own perspective with a further six saying that their notions of the main issues were not radically different from those of the public but that there were matters of emphasis and elaboration which were pointed up by the public response.

The ordering of public priorities which the public had given to planning topics surprised at least five officers. Comments on some of the environmental issues and on traffic and transportation were specifically mentioned as being unexpected. Another type of response from the respondents was that the programme added some of the detail to their knowledge of public concerns.

> ...They put flesh on the bones.
> ...highlighted particular problems in particular areas.

One direct example of the utility of the replies from the public was the case of a respondent who was involved in a major public inquiry resulting from an appeal by a developer against refusal of planning permission for housing in a rural corner of the county. The officer was able to use the public replies from this area in preparing a position statement.

> ...useful in formulating my views on the scheme. I was able to read the residents replies about the area. They reinforced my views.

One officer was frank in saying that he had learnt little from the information derived from the programme. The replies had not fundamentally altered his views on the problems of the county.

> ...because the first kit dealt with local problems, not at the structure plan level. The second kit

> showed that groups were concerned with fashionable conservationist ideas. Only five replies were received from the Dearne Valley... very confused about the attitude survey.

Another said

> ...I've only lived and worked here for a year and I don't have views myself on planning problems. I always try to be open-minded about problems. I have no preconceptions so there is no conflict with the public's view.

We asked about the value of the programme in developing the key issues for inclusion in the plan. It is not surprising to find that the recreation issue was included because of the importance it registered in the public response (against the expectation of many planners in the county). Four officers specifically mentioned the effect of public participation on this inclusion. Shopping was also mentioned as a topic where the public response had been useful in the face of a lack of other data to inform the claim for or against inclusion as a key issue (three mentions). Five planners also said that the public response was important as a general yardstick against which to determine the key issues for inclusion. However, all were junior staff and the more senior planners seemed more selective and even sceptical that the public's views had influenced issue definition. The reports from Phase 1 of the structure plan team's work were mentioned as important in issue definition. For example, out of that technical work the rationale for population, migration and employment, industrial structure and road construction as key issues was derived rather than from public comment. In any case there was a paucity of public opinion on these matters.

Several officers felt that public opinion would be more valuable in the later stages of plan preparation particularly when policy options were being assessed.

> ...More useful later on when policy is being developed in detail.

> ...We tried to use it where relevant but lots of stuff was at a level of detail which was not appropriate.
> ...Public participation will be used in generating options and evaluating.
> ...more direct effect on policy options.

There was some evidence that the stage of definition of key issues had been a source of fundamental conflict on the approach to be adopted towards utilisation of public comment. Some officers working at the translation of various streams of information and comment into key issues (the so-called 'issue men') appeared to be disgruntled and disturbed when asked to recall this period.

> ...There was no simple relationship between the public's replies and the key issues. We had a list of problems from the public participation programme which were sifted into issues. The issues as I wrote them were not as they turned out in final form.
> ...In practice, each draft (of the key issues report) was more emasculated. The issues I proposed were entirely based on public participation replies because this was our only source of information but in the final form of the draft they got lost.
> ...The issues started fairly specific but they got waffled up; generalised. The (public's) replies did have an effect at an early stage but it is not so obvious now.

Being pressed on the reason for this change of emphasis in the rationale and definition of key issues during the period it was said that as the reports from junior staff went upwards through the team the 'caution' of the senior officers became more intrusive. In particular one 'issue man' said that there was sensitivity with respect to his topic because the district council and the county council held joint responsibilities and the level of detail at which the structure plan should address the issue was in dispute. He felt that the key issue was 'toned down' as a consequence from the strength by which it was held by public opinion. The change was to

> ...try to reduce the amount of argument.

His view was that the county planning department should not have watered down its principles and that the county-district conflict should have been brought more fully into the open.

As a general conclusion, therefore, it can be said that public opinion and information on the public's expressed problems and needs became less influential as the planning process progressed. We may also conclude that matters of sensitivity to public views, honesty, and the openness of the planning process were diluted during the timetable of plan preparation. The educative value of the planning process and whether it was democratic are more contestable dimensions of assessment given that they require, inter alia, a longer term evaluation, a perspective from each of the range of actors involved and are beset by definitional pitfalls. Members and officers in South Yorkshire learnt from the plan-making experience but some of those lessons are cautionary exemplars of being clear about intentions and purposes themselves.

Purposes, Subsidiary Objectives and Operational Matters

Another perspective on the 'success' of the participation programme can be gained by determining whether those who have experienced a wide-ranging approach to the public at first hand would wish to see it repeated.

When we asked about the future scope for participation in the policy process in South Yorkshire two members launched on wide ranging perorations. One of these councillors made a spontaneous critique of local government reorganisation saying that a county council should never have been created for South Yorkshire. Echoing some of this criticism of reorganisation the other strongly rejected structure plans.

> ...They sterilise development...things change...(structure plans) take too long to prepare. The (South Yorkshire) structure plan should be more

simple and we should not have fragmented planning between the districts and the county council.

As might have been expected the councillors who were critical of the public participation programme up to the date of the survey were more likely to want less public participation in planning in future (table 5.16). Also those who made general rather than specific criticisms of the programme expected it to fade in importance after the examination in public (table 5.17).

TABLE 5.16 Councillors Attitude to Past Programme x Preference for Programme in Future

Percieved Shortcomings in Past Programme	Preference for Public Part'n in Future: Want Less	About Same/ More
None or Minor	3	22
Major	4	8

p = 0.014 (only a 1-in-100 probability that the distribution could occur by chance)

TABLE 5.17 Councillors Criticisms of Phase 1/2 Programme x Preference for Programme in Future

Criticisms of PP Programme Phase 1/2	Preference for Public Part'n in Future: Want Less	About Same/ More
General Critique	6	8
Specific Critique		8

p = 0.04 (only a 1-in-20 probability that the distribution could occur by chance)

Nineteen councillors said that the extensive programme of public participation in South Yorkshire would have implications for public interest in the examination in public. Eight felt that public interest in the examination would be higher than experienced elsewhere because peoples' interest would have been enhanced by earlier participation. Twenty members felt that the previous programme would have no influence on public interest in the examination and four felt that it could be reduced because the public had already had their say.

Fourteen councillors believed that public interest in the examination would be confined to pressure groups and three expected the examination to be dominated by technical issues and professional staff.

The Participation Programme: Technical Evaluation

Having assessed the aims, objectives and operational requirements of the programme a further task is to consider the various techniques used by the county council.

The Public Attitudes Survey

The survey was considered by the officers to have been one of the most important and valuable activities in the programme particularly during stages 1 and 2 (SYCC, 1975q, TP PUB PT 10, 23). Its representative basis because of random sampling was commended by members and officers alike and given the relatively large sample size the survey was the basic data source on the attitudes of the general public within the county on a wide range of environmental and planning issues. However, the county planners expressed some regret that the results had not been more widely used, for example, by the district councils (ibid.).

The special questionnaire for the 16-24 age group was felt to have been a good idea but the mechanics of its administration (being left with sampled households for the PAS where people of that age band were found) did not yield a good responses and the results were considered to be unsound and so of limited use.

The Structure Plan Kits

The kit technique was used on two occasions. Firstly, in summer 1974 to get as wide a range of groups in the "Three Districts" area to describe the problems and satisfactions that their members experienced in different aspects of their lives. A second kit was used in a similar fashion in the winter of 1974/75. It built from the findings of the first kit by asking groups to

identify priorities between the environmental problems most frequently mentioned in the previous exercise by means of a constrained budget allocation. In a further section of the second kit polarised policy choices were presented and groups asked to identify their preferred alternatives.

Associated with the kits were a team of part-time community workers (used for both kits) and adult education classes (in association with the second kit).

The first kit was introduced by inviting one or two representatives from a list of 600 organisations in the county to one of 11 meetings held in differen locations. The meetings explained the principles and reasons for the kit and invited representatives to take them away for discussion by their organistion. Just under 50% of the groups attended the meetings and a further 83 groups were given kits after the meetings. Of the 372 groups/organisations that recieved a kit, 163 (43%) replied.

A pilot team of four community workers was established to help those groups that did not feel they had the organisational skills, technical expertise or interest to take part on their own initiative. A total of 37 groups were contacted by the community workers at stage one of the kit exercise and 13 succesful responses obtained.

The second kit was sent to all of those groups that had responded to the first kit (162) and a further 634 groups were invited by letter to participate. A further 194 groups asked for the kits as a response to the letter. In total, therefore, 356 groups recieved the second kit and 215 replied. Councillors were invited to reply and officers in the planning department also filled in the kit.

A number of adult education classes around the county completed the second kit either as an adjunct to an established class or as a special planning education programme. Generally, six sessions were held with one or two spent on background information given by planning officers followed by four sessions with AE tutor using reports accompanying the kit (three were produced on; details of current planning work, a summary of the first stage participation programme, and a description of some of the first stag results from the PAS and the kit). These classes were subsidised by the council being free to attenders. A follow-up series of AE classes took place in autumn 1975 with progress on the structure plan as the focus.

The community worker team was expanded for the second kit exercise with ten discussion leaders. Forty six groups were contacted and 23 successful responses gained. The initial AE courses were held at 11 centres with a total of 133 on the registers (class sizes ranged from 4 to 28). The second stage AE classes were less successful with only five courses established and three failing due to waning support.

Experience from administering the kits showed that an average of 11 members per group helped in preparing a response to the first kit. In total, the 162 organisations claimed to rtwepresent 28 000 members although this figure has to be treated with some caution. For example, Transport 2 000 claimed a membership of 8 000 but that included local branches of the railway trades unions as affiliates. The geographical spread of the groups was broadly congruent with population size (46% of response from Sheffield, 32% from Barnsley and 22% from Rotherham indicating, relatively, a high response from Barnsley and a low response from Sheffield). However, within the broad coverage there were a number of smaller areas with poor response

(particularly the Dearne Valley areas and SE Sheffield). Similarly, coverage by group type was patchy with relatively good responses from transport, civic and action groups together with parish councils whilst poor response came from community welfare, youth and consumer groups and a particularly low rate of return from residents/community associations, constituency political parties and trades unions. The community worker team at first kit stage found that trades unions were particularly difficult to involve even though they were identified for approach along with community associations, old people's and council tenants groups.

As a part of the Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning a study was made of the administration and response to the first kit (Hampton & Beale, 1977). The study showed that of the 28 groups interviewed by the rearchers and making a response many groups made only partial use of the kit. In particular, those groups that had made little use of the kit were aided by a community worker suggesting that the workers were often used as a proxy or alternative for the kit itself. Eleven of the 19 groups that had systematically used the kit appointed a spokesperson to lead in preparing the response (often the person that had attended the council's presentation meeting). A fewer number of groups followed the council's suggestion of breaking down into small discussion groups to consider particular topics in the kit. Nevertheless, the majority of groups were felt by the Linked Project study team and the county planners to have spent considerable time and effort in preparing a response. In the council's own analysis, 12% of groups made a "bald" or basic response, 24% provided evidence of deeper discussion of the issues and 64% offered a "...reasonably comprehensive explanation of the points they made" (SYCC, 1975q, TP PUB PT 10, 30).

Groups were asked what they had thought about the first kit as part of their overall response. Fourteen percent said their interest was not great, 58% said "great" and 28% "very great". Some criticisms were recorded. Twelve percent of groups found the kit too complicated, 5% said it was too simple, 5% said it was too long and 8% found it unstructured. The overall conclusion from this response is that even with groups that are motivated enough to become involved in a quite elaborate and time-consuming exercise there is a need to tailor the material to the levels of knowledge, understanding, interest and ability of the group itself. The community workers confirmed (from feedback) that the first kit was too complex in terms of language, lay-out and instructions for groups not experienced in making formal responses to official surveys (ibid., 31).

The Linked Project team interviewed a total of 45 groups including 17 that had not responded, although they had recieved a copy of the kit. The first impression of the kit was of incomprehensibility and this was a factor in not proceeding with a reponse. A number of detailed comments of the design of the kit were made (ibid., 32-33).

The second kit was piloted on the secretaries of 6 organisations in an attempt to identify shortcomings in comprehension and design. Efforts were made to involve groups that had been under-represented in first kit responses, particularly by expansion of the community worker team. The response to the second kit was more closely matched with population idstribution (54% of replies came from the Sheffield district, 25% from Barnsley and 21% from Rotherham). The Dearne Valley response were still low. Western Sheffield and the rural areas west of Barnsley and south of Rotherham showed high response rates. In terms of types of organisation, political groups, women's organisations and parish

councils showed high response rates while the lowest relative response came from youth groups and schools, trades unions and pensioner organisations.

The Linked Project study confirmed some of the findings from assessment of the first kit. Those groups that departed furthest from the 'model' application of the kit were where a community worker was involved. A record sheet was attached to the kit and showed that most groups (116) did convene special meetings to discuss the kit and prepare a response. Other methods of completing a response were by asking individuals to prepare a response which was then integrated by a meeting or group leader (33 groups), sub-group meetings (23 groups) and discussion at a number of meetings (28 groups). An overall assessment mirrored the earlier evaluation which identified the kit exercise as being too lengthy and complex for certain groups, particularly those unfamiliar with making formal or written responses to external requests. About a quarter of the responding groups felt the content of the exercise was of little or no interest to them. On the other hand, 22% of responding groups indicated "very great interest" in the subject.

Specific criticisms of the second kit were that the polarised policy options "too narrow" and "unrealistic". A section of the kit which sought to show some of the complications of making planning decisions by means of a series of cartoons also recieved a high level of criticism as not being useful (about half the responding groups in the Linked Project study did not find this section useful).

Technical problems faced by the planning team with respect to the second kit were interpreting the constrained budget ranking. The weighting system could be interpreted either as a way of allocating financial resources to a problem or an indicator of the relative

weight that people give to the problem (irrespective of cost of treating the problem). The upshot of this difficulty is that the planners were unsure of how the public had treated the budget although it was assumed that the latter interpretation was put onto this element of the exercise by the majority of groups. A further technical problem identified with the constrained budget exercise is whether allocations make an assumption of ratio scaling (for example, 20 points is twice 10 points) or absolute scaling (where a zero score indicates that a problem is of no significance to the respondent). What this meant for the planners and their possible use of the second kit responses was that they were unable to

> ...demonstrate whether a particular problem (say the top problem) was considered significantly more important than another problem (say the second top problem) - and this meant the data, although quantitative, was still difficult to handle. (ibid., 56)

The most significant critical issue for the kits is that the results were recognised as "unrepresentative" and this weighed heavily on the value of the response, particularly from members. The planners recognised that the results of the second kit exercise were difficult to use, not least because of the timing. By the time that the responses had been collated and reported the document on problems, satisfactions and opportunities (SYCC, 1975b) had been published and the key issues defined (SYCC, 1975c). The policy options section of the second kit also proved less useful than anticipated at the outset given that the polarised questions "...resulted in very clear-cut answers to somewhat over-simplified options" (SYCC, 1975q, TP PUB PT 10, 58). The sequencing of the policy generation process and public participation becomes critical if such techniques are to provide inputs to the policy process. A classic chicken-and-egg dilemma faces the planner. To create meaningful policy options for public comment means that the policy generation process must be well advanced yet they (and their

political mentors) are unlikely to wish for a standstill in technical work at midpoint in policy generation for public comments to be gathered. Nevertheless, the planners were optimistic about the future use of the second kit replies at the evaluation stage of the policy process, that is, when policy options had been firmed up and were being assessed in order to identify the preferred strategies for the plan.

The planners admitted that among the main lessons with respect to the kit technique were that

(1) More thought is required before the exercise takes place about the use to be made of the results.

(2) A balance has to be struck between stimulating discussion within local groups and providing a framework for the response which will allow for systematic analysis. More pilotting of Kits may help this balance to be better achieved.

(3) A hierarchy of approaches to groups is required in order to allow for differing levels of ability and interest.

(4) A Kit will never be a substitute for personal contact between groups and planners. Part-time community-workers often acted as a replacement to te Kit but they must be fully briefed about planning and the local area in which they are working. The community-workers procedure for making initial contact with groups is critical in terms of their subsequent success.

(5) On average groups spent a considerable amount of their time in replying to the Kits. More groups replied to the Second Kit than the first one. There is evidence that, given the right techniques, participation will increase over time. (ibid., 62-63)

Publicity

Use of free newspapers and other publicity was never given a high priority in the programme. Checks by the planning department showed that many outlets for publicity material (public libraries, bus stations, schools, rates offices) often showed a poor distribution

record, either not having recieved the material or failing to display it. An overall conclusion is that printed publicity is not an effective way of getting information across to the public unless carefully managed and controlled. An even more obvious conclusion is that even when reply paid slips are included in newspapers and leaflets very few people respond publicity is ineffective as a way of learning about the public's views on policy matters.

CONTACT Magazine

On the other hand the targetting of CONTACT to organised groups was generally felt to have been effective and the public response to the magazine was seen as favourable. The council commissioned a professional assessment of the first 2 issues of CONTACT from a technical consultancy service which concluded that it was an "excellent publication".

Work in Schools

Schools were invited to complete the kits, offered resource materials, sent issue of CONTACT, offered planning "games" to play and were involved in some modest survey projects. Twenty one secondary schools replied to the kit and many schools sought supplementary materials and information. However, there was little feedback and although the planning department prepared a number of special resource folders (on recreation, transport and environment) they were not well used. Two survey projects (on recreation activities and lorry parking in residential areas) were devised, but again raised only a limited response. The games were more popular (with 50 requests from schools by mid-1975). The department's assessment of schools work was that for a relatively small outlay of resources (by use of junior staff and low direct costs) great educational benefit can accrue.

Councillor Involvement

Only 21 councillors replied to the first kit and at stage 2 the response reduced to 18 (plus three district councillors). The open days were seen by the planning department as a major element in gaining councillor involvement in the planning process. Their internal assessment indicated some confidence in having met the objectives of informing members of different aspects of planning, involving members in the planning process, making officers' aware of members beliefs and providing a less formal forum for discussing matters of planning policy. Secondary aims such as involving non-planning committee members and district councillors were not felt to have been as effectively met.

After the events of late 1975/1976 the participation programme was cut back from the original intentions ofthe project report and early schemes devised by the officer in charge. The series of public meetings and exhibition arranged to publicise the draft plan were conventional and experience from them add little to technical knowledge. The one technique which was slipped in to the programme of participation (or more strictly we might refer to programme of consultation) at draft plan stage were the community panels.

Community panels

The eight panels chosen by quota-sampling methods were set up around the county to give a spatial spread to the response. The discussion groups met in early 1977 and the results and attendance were considered good. Although the panels were small the purpose of allowing people from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to reach "mature and considered viewpoints" on the draft plan and planning proposals was felt to have been

achieved. It was not intended that precise statistical evidence of public opinion would result and, in some ways, the implementation of the panels appeared to owe as much to the tenacity and ability of the planners in circumventing members' wishes as to providing a valid public assessment of the draft strategy. Being more benign we could observe that South Yorkshire planning department maintained its record of innovation in participation techniques by allowing the county to be a test-bed for the community panel method. Hedges & Stowell (1977) do little more than summarise the discussions at the panel meetings and offer no overall evaluation of the value of the tchnique within the planning process. Our understanding is that the report was not a significant factor in determining or confirming any of the structure plan policies. The potential of the technique would appear to lie in allowing a randomly selected group of people the opportunity to spend time in learning about the proposals and discussing the issues amongst themselves on the way to developing a point of view which was considered rather than 'off-the-cuff'. Given the numbers involved in the community panels in South Yorkshire the technique was never likely (or intended) to produce statistically generalisable information.

Overall technical assessment

Hampton has provided a schema for public participation which may be adapted for evaluation (Hampton, 1977). Public participation programmes can be subjected to a threefold claasification under techniques concerned with dispersing information; secondly, those concerned with collecting information; and thirdly, those concerned with promoting interaction betwen the planning authority and the public (ibid., 30). The classification may be related as subsidiary objectives to the two major objectives of public participation, namely, improving the

planning process by the collection and dispersal of information, and the enhancement of citizenship by encouraging groups to play a more active part in discussion and definition of policy (ibid., 29-30). Each of the subsidiary objectives can be further developed by considering the substance and breadth of public involvement. Putting this another way is to ask 'what' and 'who' questions under each heading of dispersal of information, gathering information and interaction between planning authority and the public.

We have plotted each of the three stages of public participation in South Yorkshire (Fig 5.5) on a matrix of techniques against subsidiary objectives (following Hampton).

The 'models' that are exposed are as follows.

Stage 1 Elements

(a) dispersing information about the planning process to the general public.
(b) gathering information about public problems and satisfactions from the general public, minor elites and councillors (major elites).
(c) encouraging interaction between the planning authority and the general public (1st kit/community workers).

Stage 2 Elements

(a) dispersing information about policy issues to minor elites and the general public (young people).
(b) gathering information about priorities and policy preferences from general public (adult classes), minor elites (2nd kit) and major elites (councillors).
(c) encouraging interaction between the planning authority and the general public (community workers, pub talks, planning 'games' with young people).

Stage 3 Elements

(a) dispersing information on council's preferred plan to major elites (technical documentation), minor elites (private meetings), general public (public meetings, exhibitions, publicity).
(b) gathering information on responses to council's preferred plan from major elites (official consultation).
(c) promoting interaction between the planning authority and the general public (community panels).

	DISPERSAL OF INFORMATION			GATHERING OF INFORMATION			PROMOTING DIALOGUE		
	major elites	minor elites	general public	major elites	minor elites	general public	major elites	minor elites	general public
STAGE 1									
Public Attitudes Survey		△				○			
First Kit		△			○			△	
Community Workers			○					△	
Publicity	△			○			△		
Councillors (kits / open Day)									
STAGE 2									
Second Kit		△			○			△	
Community Workers		△			○			△	
Councillors : kit	△			○			△		
Open Days	△			○			△		
Adult Education			△			○			△
'Contact' magazine		○			△				
Work with Young People / schools			○			△			○
Pub Talks.			△			△			○
STAGE 3 (Draft Plan)									
Consultations	△			○					
Public Meetings		○				△			
Private Meetings			○					△	
Exhibition			○						
Publicity			○						
Community Panels									○
Specialist Reports (Report of Survey etc)	○								

○ = major use

△ = relevant

FIG 5.5. Participation Techniques used in South Yorkshire related to objectives of public participation

(after Hampton, 1977)

Consultation and Public Participation in South Yorkshire Structure Plan 1974-1978

Work Phase	Technique	Nos. Involved	Notes
PHASE ONE (predicted to end in late summer 1974. Actual completion early summer 1975)	Public Attitudes Survey (P.A.S)	1750 households	Random sample survey undertaken by a social research organisation
	First Structure Plan Kit:	c.150 groups (c.1500 people directly involved)	A "loose leaf" folder aimed to stimulate response on broad planning issues aimed at voluntary organisations
	Community Workers	13 groups (c.130 people)	Used to stimulate response to the Kit from "reluctant" and non-responding groups
	Publicity: Newspapers Exhibition	83 questionnaire replies	A number of publicity techniques were tried in Phase 1, including a four page newspaper on the Structure Plan produced by the County. A supplement to local papers included a self-response questionnaire. A County magazine "Contact" was introduced
	For Young People: Questionnaire		A separate questionnaire for 16-24 year olds was included in the P.A.S.
	Work with schools		A programme of visits to schools was introduced to gain young people's views on the County and planning issues
	Councillors:		
	1st Kit	21 replies	County Councillors were invited to respond to the "kits"
	Open Days	52 attended (1974) 25 (plus 5 District councillors - May 1975)	Open Days were held to encourage informal discussion of Structure Plan issues between members and officers. The first Open Day considered the public's replies to the First Kit. The second attempted to get councillors to suggest the key issues and policy emphases for the Structure Plan
	2nd Kit	28 replies	
	2nd Kit:	c.195 groups (c.2000 people directly involved.)	The second kit tried to assess people's priorities by offering a constrained budget to groups when deciding between possible Structure Plan policies
	Community Workers	23 groups	The CW team was expanded and tried to gain responses from social and Trade Union groups who were under-represented in first kit responses
	Adult Education	11 groups replied to Kit	
PHASE TWO (predicted to end late 1975. Actual completion late 1976)	Councillors Open Day	40 attended (plus 7 District councillors)	The third Open Day discussed broad policy options for the Structure Plan in September 1975
	Magazine	12000 produced	The County magazine "Contact" was intended to maintain interest in planning and environmental matters and was sent to organisations which had taken part in Phase I public participation programme and other interested bodies as well as being available in libraries, etc.

	Young people: Schools work		Work with schools continued including using a "game" about environmental priorities devised by the County Council
	Pub talks		During this phase some of the Structure Plan team got out into local pubs and generated informal discussions on planning issues
PHASE THREE (predicted to end late 1976. Actual sub-mission of SP late 1977)	Consultations	c.80 bodies	Consultations which had been initiated and sustained throughout the planning process was a major element at the final stage. About 150 bodies were consulted about the draft Structure Plan and their views considered before preparation of the Written Statement
	Public meetings 25 held	c.750 people	Meetings were held all over the County. A tape-slide presentation on the Draft Structure Plan was supported by handbills, a special edition of the County magazine (including questionnaire). A local County Councillor chaired the meeting supported by Planners
	Private meetings 23 held	c.850 people	Organisations requesting a meeting on the Draft Structure Plan were given a presentation similar to the public meetings
	Exhibitions: Static	Estimate of 50,000 people shopped in vicinity of exhibition	Exhibitions in the four main shopping centres for a three week period manned by County Council personnel
	Mobile	C.1400	Caravan exhibitions including a video tape film of the Draft Structure Plan policies were mounted in 42 locations in the County for a period of one or two days per location
	Publicity: Meetings/ exhibitions Supplement in Morning Telegraph Posters (2400) Handbills (170,000) Introduction to the SP (70,000) "Contact" (15,000)	c.30 entries in local papers 45 returns from questionnaire 105 completed questionnaires	A massive publicity campaign was set up to raise interest in the public meetings and exhibitions. Extra efforts were made after poor attendance at the initial meetings. Average attendance at meetings was under 35 people. Average number of visitors to caravan exhibition was under 30 per exhibition/day. About 200 people responded to the newspaper/magazine questionnaires
	Community Panels	84 people	Group discussions with a panel of people chosen to represent the spread of socio-economic characteristics in the County. Eight panels were chosen to represent different parts of the County. Each panel met four times (participants were paid a small fee for attendance) in order to build up an understanding of SP issues. The final meetings were intended to gather informed reactions to the Draft Structure Plan

Presenting the elements of the programme in this way confirms what may already be apparent. Whereas in stage 1 and 2 the model of the participation programme might be labelled as 'pluralistic', in stage 3 a radical change of emphasis is shown when the programme had become 'elitist'. The latter label particularly applies if we recognise that the community panels were slipped in to the programme almost by subterfuge, were never intended (because of their marginal status) to influence the planning process and involved a very small number of people.

Our overall conclusion on the technical content of the programme is that it developed and introduced a number of innovative techniques but can be criticised for failing to anticipate fully how the information would or could be fed into the planning process. The programme also faced a serious hiatus insofar as the aim to raise public interest and involvement in the structure planning process at an early stage meant that during the extended phase II of that process very little public participation took place with a consequent undermining of the links and public goodwill raised in stage 1. The most serious critique, however, from this analysis is that a major disjunction occured in the programme when the pluralistic model adopted in stage 1 and 2 gave way to a minimalist or elitist model at draft plan stage. While the planners implied that this disjunction was not of their making, in their strong wish and desire to pursue a model planning process and participation programme they proved to be too single-minded and failed to take their political masters along with them.

The Costs of the Programme in South Yorkshire

Among the most common criticisms of public participation in policy-making are delay and cost. No systematic records of the costs of public participation in strategic planning are generally available for comparative work. However, South Yorkshire County Council kept fairly comprehensive records of the costs of Phase I of their public participation programme and by searching other documentation it has been possible to provide a broad picture of the costs. There is also some patchy information from other metropolitan county planning authorities.

In discussing the costs of public participation in planning Bruton has noted that

> ...costs can be viewed in one of two ways - as comprising either the direct costs incurred by the authority in conducting its participation programme, or the direct and indirect costs to the community in general, including costs to the authority, those other public and private participants, and the opportunity and other intangible costs resulting from, for example, delay in plan preparation and implementation. (Bruton, 1981, 164)

We have been unable to obtain figures for the full indirect costs of participation in the broad terms that Bruton indicates although the South Yorkshire planners did include a measure of the officer time spent on some elements of their initial programme. These costs (direct payments and officer time) are as shown in figure 5.6. They should be interpreted with some care. In the first place the costs are in prices charged at the time incurred (indexing has not been applied). Also, the staff time budget is approximate. The time of the county planning officer is not included nor that of councillor's or senior staff time in commenting and supervising the structure plan team with respect to the participation programme. Nor is the time spent by district council members and staff included (for example, in discussing the programme in Joint Coordinating Committee (Structure Plan Sub-Committee), in Technical Committee or in

the Structure Plan Public Participation Working Party). Similarly, administrative staff time has not been included.

FIG. 5.6 Costs of Public Participation Programme in South Yorkshire (£)

	Staff time months	Direct Costs
<u>Stage 1</u>		
First kit	senior 5 junior 5	969
Public Attitudes Survey	senior 8 junior 2.5	16 000
Publicity	senior 1.5 junior 1.5	940
Involvement of Young People	senior 0.75 junior 2	40
Councillor Involvement	senior 1.25 junior 0.5	0
TOTAL STAGE 1	senior 16.5 junior 11.5	17 949
[that is	5 495 2 162]	<u>25 606</u>
<u>Stage 2</u>		
Second Kit	senior 8 junior 12	1 864
Publicity Contact magazine	*1 senior 1.5 *2 junior 12	3 079
School involvement	senior 1 junior 8	300
Councillor involvement	senior 10.5 junior 8	0
TOTAL STAGE 2	senior 21 junior 40	5 264
[that is	6 993 7 520]	<u>19 777</u>
<u>Doncaster</u>		
Kit	senior 2 junior 5	1 115
Leaflets	senior 5 junior 7	1 000
Exhibition	senior 2 junior 5	500
TOTAL DONCASTER	senior 9 junior 17	2 615
[that is	2 997 3 196	<u>8 808</u>

Further costs prior to Stage 3	(notified by CPO)	9 405
Stage 3		
Community Panels		10 000
Other costs	6 300	10 000
TOTAL STAGE 3		26 300
TOTAL		89 896

*1 The direct costs of stage 2 publicity were paid or out of the general publicity budget. Articles and press releases were prepared by the county council public relations office so indirect costs were not borne by the planning department. Costs for County News (the general, free newspaper was given at about £3 500 (in early 1976).
*2 The costs of 'Contact' magazine were shared with the county environment committee. Full time and costs shown here.

The total direct costs (over a period of about 18 months) for Stage 1 public participation were £19 949 in revenue expenditure with 46.5 senior staff months plus 68.5 junior staff months of time. The latter were computed on the basis of £333 and £188 per month respectively (1974 salary levels) to give monetary equivalents. The split between direct and indirect costs falls as 70/30 overall but when the particular elements of the programme are costed the proportions vary from 6/94 for the work with young people in schools (which took a great deal of staff time) to 55/45 for publicity. The largest 'direct cost' in the South Yorkshire phase 1 participation programme was the public attitude survey where an external organisation undertook the bulk of the work for a contract price. The survey costs fell as 84/16 direct costs to indirect (given that some internal staff time was expended on negotiations with the market research organisation). On the other hand, and as might be expected the kit exercise was relatively expensive of staff time with a 28/72 split on direct to indirect costs. Stage 2 costs were £5 264 (direct costs) and £14 513 (indirect costs).

Other information on costs from South Yorkshire includes the costings on the Doncaster structure plan, stages 1 and 2, where alongside direct costs of £2 615 there were indirect costs of 9 senior staff months and 17 junior staff months of time. Applying the same assumptions on staff salaries that was applied to stage 1 of the three districts plan gives an overall direct to indirect cost split of 48/52. The kit exercises in Doncaster showed a split of 27/73 direct to indirect costs.

Even with fairly gross assumptions these overall figures for the South Yorkshire participation programme at stage 1 and 2 (with direct and indirect costs added together) represent a very tiny fraction of the overall county council budget at the time (considerably less than 0.01% of the annual budget). Taking the analysis in another way we could say that for a population of 1.25 million people in the county Phase 1 public participation cost 2 pence per head in direct costs and less than 1 minute of staff time per head of population (a total of about 4.5 pence per person in the county for stage 1 & 2 participation).

It could be argued that taking the total population as divisor in calculations about the per capita costs of public participation programmes is invalid and that a more realistic approach would be to take the numbers of the public who had some direct contact with the programme (in terms of answering questionnaires, filling in kits, walking around exhibitions, reading Contact, hearing about the plan on the radio etc.) as the "beneficiaries" and hence a more acceptable divisor. The problem with attempting to follow this line of approach is that whilst we know, for example, the number of households that completed the Public Attitudes Survey and we know the number of groups that filled up the kits in South Yorkshire we know very little about the numbers of individuals who took an active part in the completing the kits, or who visited an exhibition, read a

newspaper article or listened to the radio at the times when broadcasts on the plan were being made.

A further disadvantage of this analysis is that we do not have systematically recorded information on the public participation programme costs at the later, draft plan stage or for the examination in public (although the latter is not strictly 'public participation' being part of the government's procedures for assessing the plan). The reason for not having this information is due to the resignation of the officer originally appointed to manage the programme, and the lower profile given to participation after 1975.

However, we do have some broad information on the stated costs of the programme up to the point when the decision not to hold public participation on alternative strategies was made. The county planning officer reported to committee on the 5th July 1976 that the original intention was to spend £47 000 on the programme of public participation plus "some other costs". Given the decision from the members not to follow the original intention of participation on alternative strategies the overall figure "...was down to £35 000 or £36 000 plus staff expenses". He noted that all county planning staff would be drawn into the process at draft plan stage for "...a period of weeks". We have assumed that this figure includes the direct and indirect costs of stage 1 and 2 participation but only includes the direct costs incurred subsequently. Thus, a further £9 400 of direct costs appear to have been incurred between the ending of stages 1 and 2 and the middle of 1976. The figure inevitably suffers from not being indexed to a common baseline.

We noted earlier (in describing the planning and participation process in South Yorkshire) that after the resistance of some key politicians to the proposal to set up a number of 'community panels' at draft plan stage a decision was taken through county planning committee in late

1976 to carry on with this project and £10 000 was agreed as the contract price in employing Social and Community Planning Research. Thus the total of direct costs and indirect costs in stage 1 and 2 plus the direct costs in later phases did eventually reach the figure originally agreed for the programme.

The indirect costs of participation programmes are not insignificant and the throwaway comment from the county planning officer of "some other costs" being associated with direct costs may be a simplification. We noted above that in relation to phase 1 participation in South Yorkshire the (partial) indirect costs were 30% of direct charges.

Applying this proportion of oncost to the direct costs at draft plan stage gives £6 300 indirect costs (on top of the £20 000 direct costs).

Therefore, the total programme in South Yorkshire would add up to around £90 000 within the assumptions made. The most shaky of these assumptions is that the proportion of overall costs attributable to indirect costs remains constant throughout any particular participation programme. We have already shown that the ratio varies according to the nature of the technique of partcipation employed. It is likely that the proportion of total costs due to staff time is greater at draft plan stage than at earlier stages when a good deal of time is spent by staff in public meetings.

An example of the way in which extensive face-to-face consultation and public meetings can lead to high costs is shown in Bruton's analysis of local planning in Warwickshire. In costing public participation in 2 local plans Bruton notes that the costs were significantly different. Whereas officer time accounted for 50% of costs for the Southtown local plan (involving news sheets, a small and cheaply produced plan, few public meetings) the proportionate costs of 70% due to officer time on

participation in the Lapworth plan was largely due to a larger number of meetings and formal adoption (which meant greater time commitment for officers).

If we make a sweeping assumption that the proportion of indirect costs to direct costs in an overall programme of public participation which includes considerable interaction with groups and members of the public is 50/50 and apply this assumption to South Yorkshire we can get a crude estimate of costs. Firstly, we have the county planners' own computation of stage 1 and 2 participation, including Doncaster (£25 828). If we apply the 50/50 assumption (direct to indirect costs) we reach a figure of £51 656. Secondly, if we apply the same assumption to the direct costs incurred in the laterstages of phase 2 we get £18 800. Finally, the £20 000 direct costs for the final stages of public participation on the whole county plan can be doubled (on the 50/50 principle). This gives a very broad estimate of the costs of public participation in South Yorkshire of about £110 000. The figure is likely to be an underestimate because of not taking account of the costs and time given by other groups including councillors, senior supervisory staff and councillors. However, we present it as a 'ball-park' figure which can indicate the costs of a relatively extensive programme. On this estimate the costs per head of population in South Yorkshire over the first structure plan period was less than 9p. The cost per household of the programme on these estimates of costs was 23p.

Calculating the costs of the programme in terms of 'successful' responses from the public provides a measure of the relative merits of different techniques. The public attitudes survey provided 1749 succesful interviews at a 'full' cost of £19 134, a cost per succesful interview of £10.94. The structure plan kit exercise resulted in 217 group responses to the second kit for a 'full' outlay of £3 574, a unit cost of £16.48. The community panel work at draft structure plan stage drew in (about) 80 people for a

cost of £10 000 (contract price) plus, say, £1 500 (15%) staff time in the authority, the unit price being £143.75.

Other information on the costs of public participation in strategic planning is sparse. There is some data on costs from the other metropolitan counties. On Tyne and Wear, phase 1 public participation is recorded as costing £25 000 direct charges and 1.5 years of staff time. If we again apply a staff time charge derived from the South Yorkshire data this suggests that staff time acounted for approximately 30% of the costs of phase 1 participation in Tyne and Wear (£7 500). The 70/30 split of costs is used here because this phase of Tyne and Wear county council's planning participation programme was based on large print runs of publicity leaflets and an 'off the shelf' public attitude survey from a commercial organisation.

Public attitude surveys commissioned from commercial organisations showed no great variationin cost at this time. In Greater Manchester a survey of 2 500 cost £17 600 (direct charges) in 1974/75. In South Yorkshire the PAS cost £16 000 (direct charges) with an estimated officer costs of £3 134 (1974/75). These charges indicate a cost per successful interview of around £10 per household (1975 prices).

Greater Manchester included a full breakdown of direct costs in their participation statement. A total direct cost of £83 658 is indicated. The biggest items are the commissioned survey, a free newspaper drop to every household, the costs of main reports and a large leaflet distribution (such as the draft written statement). The major disadvantage of these figures are that they cover a 4 year time span without indexing of costs. However, a free newspaper (in 1974) cost about 2p per copy and a second run (in 1975) cost about 1p. The latter was cheaper principally because it was distributed through exhibitions and central locations such as libraries. The draft written statement

cost £7 753 for 3 000 copies (in 1978), that is, about £2 50 each.

Accepting the obvious limitations we can further analyse the Greater Manchester data. If we add a notional indirect cost of 50% the overall 'real' costs of the programme were around £160 000. Given a population of 2.7 million in 1974 the direct costs per head of the programme were 6p (12p including 50% indirect costs). Costs per household were about 14p (28p direct and indirect costs). However, if we accept that costs should be 'charged' on the basis of responses from the public the amounts rise dramatically. For example, we have already seen that the cost of a successful interview in the public attitudes survey was around £10 (doubled if we add a standardised percentage for indirect costs). One hundred and twenty responses were recieved from the report of survey stage at a direct cost of £12 830 (giving a direct cost of £107 per response or £214 based on direct and indirect costs). Using the same basic arithmetic (and assumptions) the responses at alternative strategy stage cost £32 per response (£64) and £42 (£84) per response at draft written statement stage.

Getting a booklet to every household in a metropolitan area can be a expensive. The first booklet to all households in Tyne and Wear cost £10 500 (422 000 households) and yielded 9 400 reply paid questionnaires. If we assume an indirect cost of 50% then each completed questionnaire (bringing a tangible response and 'benefit' to the planners) cost the authority approximately £2.50 (at 1975 prices). Such a calculation assumes that reading the booklet yet not making a formal response had no measurable benefit to the planners or to the recieving households (and therefore all the costs of non-response is 'borne' by the authority) whereas some educational benefit is likely to accrue even if it is only the knowledge that the structure plan process is continuing. Among the metropolitan authorities Greater Manchester (in particular) and Tyne and Wear (to a lesser degree) are

critical of the value of publicity material and exhibitions as elements of public participation programmes. In the Greater Manchester Participation Statement the authors note that they had little response to the leaflets and special newspapers and exhibitions were dropped at the alternative strategies stage because "...the response rate was very low" (GMC, 1979, 103). Tyne and Wear in an internal paper on phase 2 participation note that the "...use of posters and leaflets does not initiate public response related to the time, money, and effort required" (Tyne & Wear CC, 1976, 6). In the Tyne and Wear Participation Statement the planners note that any assessment of general publicity aimed at the public at large (posters, leaflets, media coverage) "...was obviously impossible without expensive and large scale surveys" (TWCC, 1979c).

The only other metropolitan county council where some costings were published was West Yorkshire. The costs of printing 3 000 copies of the full second annual statement (a 96 page A4 document with card covers printed in black with some colour overlay and card chapter dividers) and 18 000 summary booklets (18 page black print with brown overprinting to give diagrams and photographs) was £6 000 plus £250 distribution costs. That is a printing and distribution cost of about 1p per page. Thus, the full annual statement cost 96p per unit (or about £2 with indirect costs assumed at 50%). Nearly 800 responses were recieved as a result of the second annual statement giving a cost of £7.80 (£15.60) per response.

The overall conclusions to be drawn on the costs of public participation cannot be definitive on the basis of this evidence. Too many assumptions have been made. However, the little evidence that we have shows that overall costs can be very small in terms of cost per person within a large metropolitan area even when the programme is ambitious and goes beyond the statutory minimum. When we compute the costs per public response then the unit costs can appear

substantial. It is particularly interesting to find that public attitude surveys offer the cheapest unit cost per response in providing information from the public which was found to be useful in the planning process.

Lack of any direct indication of coverage or explicit feedback can be disconcerting to planners and politicians. The outcome can be a decision either to drop or play down the production of widely distributed printed information (as in Greater Manchester and Tyne and Wear respectively).

Other evidence shows that politicians tend to prefer sample surveys as a source of information for the planning process, largely because they see this as providing a representative perspective on local issues. The work that planners did with organised groups was frequently criticised by local politicians for spending too much energy and resources on people with axes to grind. The most expensive elements of public participation programmes on the basis the evidence offered here are 'educational' techniques such as the community panels tried out in South Yorkshire. Apart from being the most costly technique in terms of output this was also the least acceptable to (these) local councillors.

SECTION 6

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY-MAKING IN NATIONAL CONTEXT

> ...But when I came to consider local government, I began to see how it was in essence the first-line defence thrown up by the community against our common enemies - poverty, sickness, ignorance, mental deragement and social maladjustment. The battle is not faultlessly conducted, nor are the motives of those who take part in it righteous or disinterested. But the war is, I believe, worth fighting, and this corporate action is at least based upon recognition of one fundamental truth about human nature - we are not only single individuals, each face to face with eternity and our separate spirits; we are members one of another. (Holtby, 1983, 5-6)

We now seek to broaden the focus to explicitly address the question of policy-making within the British system of government. There are a number of layers to any broader analysis that might be undertaken. The South Yorkshire County Council operated in an environment or context which included a large number of interested and involved parties, each with views on what policies were appropriate to or required of the structure plan. We have already identified many of these 'actors' and some of their concerns. Among the most powerful of these actors were the other government bodies including the metropolitan district councils and central government.

What will be attempted in this section is to consider the structure planning process in South Yorkshire from the perspective of relations between levels or tiers of government. The section complements the earlier view of the structure planning process from the point of view of the public in the county.

Analysis of the preparation of a structure plan as a particular example of policy-making is made especially difficult not only because of the number of involved

parties but also because the structure plan is a package of policies rather than a 'single' policy.

Additionally, as a policy-making process strategic planning extends over a long time period. The views and approaches of key parties can change during the policy-making process as a result of secular changes in the economic and political context. The 1970s was a period of considerable upheaval in Britain with the signs of economic difficulties in the early years of the decade followed by a deepening recession. Many aspirations had necessarily to be relinquished as belts were tightened.

There are other reasons for not treating the structure planning process as a typical example of local policy-making. For example, the scale of the geographic area covered by the plan increases the possibility of 'special' circumstances having to be taken into account. Thus the policies within the plan may not be wholly consistent or coherent and the policy process may be more protracted than is normally the case in local government.

A further reason for caution when presenting structure planning as an archetypal example of the policy-making process is that long term priorities are involved which can mean that the conflicts are more critical to the involved parties and thus more deeply contested.

As new units of local government the metropolitan counties faced a period of adjustment and 'teething problems' in working out internal procedures and approaches to policy-making. This led to the relative neglect of the broader context of governmental relations, particularly in the early days.

These qualifications should warn against too facile an acceptance of metropolitan structure planning as a typical example of policy making across the various

levels of the state in Britain. The analysis can serve to illustrate and, hopefully, illuminate aspects of the policy process in general and even act as an extreme example against which to compare general conceptual and theoretical frameworks. However, a principal purpose in describing and analysing the wider context of strategic planning in South Yorkshire in the 1970s is to show and explain the outcomes from the policy process.

Concepts, theories and frameworks in the study of public policy and policy-making across levels of the state.

Among the variety of previous approaches to public policy-making some researchers have adopted a 'black-box' format whereby the principal units of analysis have been the inputs and outputs of the process with little attention paid to the internal dynamics or processes within the policy-making organisation. By inputs is meant the demands, views and objectives of key actors (such as public opinion, the statements and aims of elected members or the professional values held by paid officials). Outputs from the policy process are represented by outcomes (such as policy impacts, distributional effects and the nature of policy as implemented). The disadvantage of the black box approach is that the give and take of consultation, negotiation, bargaining and the (open or covert) exercise of power between policy-makers are opaque and any mismatch between intentions and outcomes has to be reconstructed in a post hoc rationalisation or explanation.

The 'black box' model has been used principally in comparative studies of policy outcomes where large data sets are scrutinised (Boaden, 1971; Sharpe & Newton, 1984). For example, official data on population characteristics (age profile, socio-economic status,

household structure) are used as measures of demand or 'input' and local authority spending on particular services is taken as the measure of 'output' or policy outcome in order to consider whether intervening variables such as the political composition of councils affects expenditure on particular services. The existence of large data sets allows such research to be undertaken. However, an inherent problem with this research approach is the absence of a detailed description or understanding of how and why policy outcomes came to pass. For this reason we consider the approach unsuitable for the study of structure planning where policy outcomes are much less 'concrete' than other examples of local policy process. Policies in a structure plan frequently offer guidance to other bodies rather than proposing direct action by the county council. The effects of structure plan policies are manifested over an extended time period and are therefore subject to greater external influence and learning feedback than is the case with, say, street cleaning. In any case the value of an inside view of local policy-making (such as the case study presented here) is to illuminate and explain the interactions between actors which cannot be achieved by adopting a black box approach.

However, looking inside the black box brings complications. As well as considering concrete policy outcomes (such as expenditure) the researcher immediately has to include intentions, expectations and aspirations into the analysis. While outcomes may be the most tangible manifestations of policy the intentions of key policy-makers can effect how the outcomes evolve and emerge. The recent interest in implementation theory has alerted researchers and students of policy-making to the idea of policy making as a sequence over time and to the ways in which intentions can be moulded by both practical difficulties and more manipulative tactics into policy

forms which vary in their effects and impacts from the original objectives. Simple representations of the policy process which propose that elected representatives make policy and paid officials implement their paymasters' intentions (Maud, 1967) or draw a strict line between policy making and implementation are over simple and can be exposed by looking 'inside' the policy process.

Nor can a policy be treated as homogenous in meaning or effect. What counts as policy will depend on who the observer is and where they stand within the policy process. The elected representative may consider the political party manifesto as the basis of policy. The senior official in government may consider the decisions of Cabinet or programme committee as policy where broad intentions have been translated into bureaucratic rules and procedures. The clerical officer may see those rules and procedures as policy which defines the administrative space for discretion and control. Following this line of analysis Barrett and Hill (1986; 35-36) have proposed a distinction between intentions, decisions, programmes and procedures which echoes Levin's earlier efforts to define the beginning of the policy-making sequence (1972).

Analysis of the policy process becomes even more complex (but perhaps more like reality) if organisations are not characterised as holistic entities but contain within them a variety of interests which may or may not be united around common organisational or task related goals. Thus, in terms of a single local authority there can be quite profound differences of values, perceptions and interests. Among the most commonly studied of these are divisions between the views of elected representatives and of professional officers. The 'vertical' division of local authorities into service departments and committees responsible for particular

functions can also be a major source of divisions in goals and values within the authority as a whole.

Equally, a policy decision over which a group of actors within government may reach a concensus as a result of debate and analysis of the possible options for action will not be seen in the same light by a member of the public who has not had the benefit of those technical debates.

Even restricting the analysis of policy to outcomes (that is, to the implementation end of the policy sequence) does not avoid the need to differentiate between forms of policy. The term policy can apply, say, to building a new branch library (which requires a relatively restricted and finite set of tasks and actions by a relatively small number of people in order to achieve a clear outcome at one point in time), to maintaining a low level of voids in council housing (which requires putting in place a set of tasks and procedures to be applied and monitored within a single department of local government until an acceptable target level is reached) through to reducing the out-migration of young people from an area (which requires a relatively complex and diffuse set of policies and practices to be continuously pursued probably involving a number of local and central government departments in order to see progress towards the goal). The latter is more likely to be the form of structure planning policy than either of the other examples.

Making decisions about the administrative and bureaucratic tasks required to achieve broader policy objectives is likely to be less contentious for actors in the policy process than debate about the policy objectives themselves. It could be said that the closer the policy debate is to fundamental political values or objectives the more contentious and acrimonious the

discussion. Barrett and Hill speculate on whether conflict between parties to the policy process is more likely where innovations in policy are concerned and where changes are being made to existing and established practices. We could add that conflict may be more likely in periods when new and (relatively) powerful institutions are introduced within established intergovernmental settings. The point of making these observations is that the metropolitan county councils were not only (in the mid 1970s) newcomers on the scene but, also, they were charged (and took upon themselves) to consider long term and 'innovatory' futures for the areas they represented.

Extending of the idea of policy, and hence the analysis of policy making, to include objectives, intentions and actions and differentiating the idea of the policy process to include the numerous steps in the sequence of putting intentions into practice creates further complexity for the researcher. However, the value of treating policy and policy-making respectively as a complex concept and process is that it overcomes the limitations of the 'black box' approach, it goes beyond the simple assumption of consensus within the policy process (which can follow from adopting the 'black box approach), it offers the potential for explanation rather than statistical correlation but, most crucially, it confronts the question of power.

Some authors have stressed the distinction between policy-making as leading to zero sum or positive sum outcomes. If participants see policy-making as an all or nothing affair then the outcome of interaction will be more important with respect to valued goals and conflict more likely. In a zero sum situation the most powerful group or organisation is likely to overrule opposition and less powerful participants. Bargaining and negotiation may be characteristic of the policy process

where power is shared, where the parties have an interest in resolving an issue and where the implementation of policy is dependent on the resources or agreement of more than one party. For example, Dunshire has seen

> ...bargaining as a specific, and... positive sum, trading activity within his overall definition of influence processes - persuasion, bargaining and recourse to power ... These three activities being essentially interconnected in the process of deriving strategies and tactics to achieve influence. (Barrett & Hill, 1986, p.47)

Participants in inter-organisational policy-making may, therefore, see bargaining as a way of gaining power and influence (say, by setting precedents) as well as using the power they already have.

Bargaining models of the policy-making process can embody further key concepts in addition to power, such as exchange and dependence. Exchange theories may be more appropriate where parties are mutually interdependent and share important interests, goals and values. Some give-and-take may be inevitable if a favoured outcome is to be achieved. The degree of goal consensus among corporate bodies may be critical to the conceptual approach used in studying/ explaining interorganisational policy-making. Known disagreements about goals is more likely to result in relations/ interactions being seen as a zero-sum activity - "...a struggle for influence, control or self-determination" (ibid.).

Behind these formulations of policy-making interactions as exchange lies a functionalist perspective which is most appropriate in the context of economic market behaviour involving commercial organisations motivated by relatively homogenous goals such as profits and market advantage. Adapting the concept of bargaining to policy-making in the public sector may be more appropriate where the 'struggle' for influence occurs in a context of common party political ideologies and goals. Relatively

narrow motives of self interest and power are not absent from political or public life but these parochial concerns usually exist alongside more idealistic goals concerning social change and development. Thus, both zero sum and positive sum outcomes may be entailed in policy bargaining and negotiation in the public sector. Public bodies may be prepared to negotiate on how commonly held goals might be achieved (positive sum) yet be reluctant to give any ground in the struggle for political power (zero sum).

Applying the concept of bargaining to central-local government relations is more problematic than inter-authority relations in local government. The formal position (one hesitates to say the constitutional position in the absence of a written constitution relating to state power in the UK) is that local government is subordinate to central government. Local authorities come into existence as a result of legislation passed in Parliament and local councils are broadly restricted in what they can do by a framework of law.

Some models of relationships between separate bodies and levels of government appear to recognise this uneven distribution of power and the external influences on local decision-makers. For example, Hinings lists 'extrinsic constraints' and 'system constraints' as two of six topics necessary in the analysis of policy-making in inter-organisational settings (the other analytical categories are; structure, patterns of interaction, values and interests of participants, distribution of power and the strategies employed). The value of this listing is its combination of formal, structural characteristics alongside informal and more qualitative measures of the broad environment of decision-making.

It has been suggested that conflict and debate between bodies involved in state policy-making is likely to be more intense where the policy under discussion or review is more radical, innovative, extensive in scope, impact and spatial effect, pursues redistributive objectives and is more directive than advisory.

The value of these models and conceptual distinctions are that they offer possibilities for guiding the systematic study of intergovernmental relationships.

A framework for analysis of government policy-making in Britain.

The recent and extensive work on central-local government relationships which derives from the major research programme undertaken under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council (now the Economic and Social Research Council since the government decided in the 1980s that social inquiry was not a science) provides the most fertile source of ideas and frameworks for analysis of inter-relations and policy-making and has extended the ideas and approaches summarised above.

Past formulations have ranged from the view that local authoritites have almost no autonomy and discretion in their actions and are merely the agents of the centre to views which emphasise the relative independence of local councils. More circumspect analysts have talked of central-local partnership.

A framework for guiding the SSRC research was devised by Rhodes (1979) and has subsequently been refined in the light of application and development. The underlying basis for the framework was the concept of interdependence although the inequality in the central-

local government relationship has been accepted in revised versions.

Page offered a critique of the original formulation saying that "...interdependence does not mean equality or even near equality" (Page, 1982 quoted in Rhodes, 1986, 4). Page prefers to see interdependent relationships as almost always assymetrical with one party taking a lead and in particular circumstances exercising "unilateral leadership". Leadership may be exercised in any number of ways, the most important in the context of intergovernment relationships being persuasion, inducements or hegemonic leadership (alternatively referred to as structuring the rules). The similarity between this discussion and the debate about power is striking (for example, Lukes, 1974) and it is a relatively short step to extend Page's analysis to include the notion of "three dimensions of power" incorporated by Lukes or to the idea of subordinate participants in the intergovernmental nexus being structurally blinkered in their perception of possible courses of action open to them.

The extent to which participants accept their subordination or not or adopt particular patterns of influence or power becomes a matter for investigation. As Rhodes observes even if the assymetrical basis of structural power is accepted "it is still necessary to explain how that power is exercised differentially between policy areas; the existence of compliance in the absence of central legislation; and changes in the predisposition to exercise that power over time" (Rhodes, 1986, 5).

Rhodes (1986a & b) studied the 'national world of local government' but his contextual framework can be adapted for the purposes of considering policy-making within the structure plan process. He distinguished the micro-, meso- and macro-levels of contact within the state corresponding to the relations within local authorities, between local authorities and between central and local government. This work has developed from earlier studies of central-local relations which offered a model of 'power dependence' in public sector policy-making. Three concepts were emphasised in the model. They were *power dependence* itself, *policy communities* and *intervention*.

Power dependence refers to the interdependent nature of government bodies and their relationships within the British system.

The concept of policy communities follows from this interlocking of levels of government by referring to a complex of organisations linked together by resource dependencies but also distinguished by discontinuities or breaks in power which allows degrees of autonomy and discretion in policy-making at different levels of the state.

Intervention is a characteristic of central-local relations where the ultimate sanctions are coercion, legal pressure and even outright abolition within the repertoire of ways by which central government may exercise power over local government.

Each of these three concepts is elaborated further.

Within the broad framework of local public sector policy-making, *power dependence* may be mapped by reference to 5 propositions.

1. Any organisation is <u>dependent</u> on other organisations for <u>resources</u>.

2. In order to achieve their goals organisations have to exchange resources.

3. Decision making within organisations is constrained by other organisations but the dominant coalition retains some discretion. The appreciative system of the dominant coalition influences which relationships are seen as a problem and which resources will be sought.

4. The dominant coalition employs strategies within known rules of the game to regulate the process of exchange.

5. Variations in the degree of discretion are a product of the goals and the relative power potential in the interacting organisations. This relative power potential is a product of the resources of each organisation, of rules of the game and the process of exchange between organisations. (Rhodes, 1986, p.17)

Five types of resources are considered paramount in relations between tiers of government (especially central-local relations in the UK) where power dependency exists. These are;

authority (of which legislation and legal sanctions may be the most potent forms),
finance,
political legitimacy,
information, and
organisational resources.

With respect to the concept of *policy community* the key characteristics are:

1 *functional interests*: links in the organisational network may be based on the service interests - that is, departments - in central and local government;
2 *extensive membership:* encompassing a variety of 'private' interest groups - most notably the 'technoratic' professions and trade unions - and quasi-government/ quasi-non-governmental organisations, as well as public interest groups;
3 *vertical interdependence:* that is, a non-executant role for central departments which are dependent, therefore, on other organisations/groups for the implementation of policies for which, none the less, they have service delivery responsibilities; and
4 *compartmentalized horizontal structure:* extensive internal organisational span focused on the 'lead' central department coupled with rigid horizontal articulation of policy-making; that is, the network

> is insulated from, and often in conflict with, other policy communities. (ibid., 22-23)

Policy communities are said (by definition) to be relatively stable, have continuity of membership and maintain a relatively closed decision process. Indeed, Rhodes indicates that they are invariably closed to the public which indicates that participants are decision-takers rather than simply groups with potential to influence policy.

Application of the metaphor of policy community to British government and policy-making is thought, by Rhodes, to be inappropriate and potentially risky partly because of several other competing metaphors which have become popular with recent writers in policy studies. These include *sectoralisation, issue networks* and *corporatism.* In reviewing these Rhodes considers that the concept of policy network has advantages. One principal advantage of the idea of policy network is that in contrast to competing conceptual schemes, particularly corporatism, it does not incorporate predetermined conceptions of relations between participants in the policy process into the definition. In this sense the notion of policy community is much less 'leading' and rigid. In contrast, the idea of issue network suggests a loose and shifting coalition of organisations and bodies which is too unstructured to offer a valid representation of the British policy process. Equally, the idea of sectors within government is a truism and offers little help in trying to develop explanations and deeper understanding of complex relationships and policy making.

Richardson and Jordan (1979) who have employed the idea of policy communities share some ground rules with Rhodes. They stress the fragmentation of policy spheres in British government and the relative closure of policy communities to unrecognised groups or the general public. They also observe that consultation within the policy

community may take a number of forms (tripartism, group coalition or sub- government and clientilism) and that different rules of the game may obtain under differing circumstances (conflict avoidance, secrecy). They also feel that understanding the policy community, its practices of co-option and consensual bargaining is likely to offer a better account of policy-making and policy outcomes than examination of party political stances, party manifestoes or parliamentary influence.

The concept of policy community may be more robust in its capacity to accept a number of different patterns of inter-organisational linkage (or interest intermediation) than the alternative models (such as corporatism which specifies a particular form of policy-making between elites from three main types of participating group). This is not to imply that the concept of policy community is universally applicable in British policy studies. Central government is capable of the raw exercise of power and this has become something of a characteristic of the Thatcher government in its handling with some policy issues, particularly in recent dealings with local government and the trade unions.

The observation that policy-making in different sectors of government may exhibit different styles or forms of dialogue, action and interaction suggests further dimensions of analysis within different policy communities. In comparing different policy areas it has been suggested that there are a number of interlinked dimensions of analysis. These include identification of; the dominant styles or philosophies of decision-making, consultation and interaction with other members of the policy community; policy content (it is likely to be limiting to restrict analysis to process alone as the author has stressed elsewhere; Darke, 1982); levels of integration in different policy communities; the circumstances under which clear and coherent policy

making does not occur. That is, important elements of elaboration of the concept of policy community are likely to be, inter alia, exploration of central departmental style and policy content, the variety of policy systems and the effect of such differences on policy outcomes.

The latter observation carries the discussion on to the concept of *intervention*. Where central government has the ultimate power and sanction in a unitary system it also has a choice of strategy in policy-making which involves more than one level of government. Thus, some issues and policy fields can be placed out of bounds where central government considers them beyond discussion and negotiation. Similarly, different policy-making styles may be adopted or favoured in different spheres. An open 'participatory' style of policy-making may be accepted in spheres where the outcome is not crucial to the dominant ideology or national development but heavy steer and intervention may be the norm where the issues are considered symbolically important or strategically central to government thinking and policy. Governments of different party political persuasions may lean in one direction more than another. For example, it is a truism that government since 1979 has become more centralised and more interventionist than previously, particularly with respect to local government. Dissent and reaction from local authorities who saw themselves previously as 'partners' in state policy-making has been met with harsh rejection. Much primary legislation directly affecting local government has been introduced in the 1980s with less consultation than has normally been the case in the past. In Rhodes' assessment, government intervention in central-local relations has moved from 'bargaining' in the period before 1974 (the relevance of this year being that it marked the developing oil price crisis when world prices increased by four to five times the previous figure and consequently led to a deepening economic recession) to 'incorporation' in the brief period from

1974 to 1978 and 'direction' from 1979 to 1984. Unilateral action by central government can have a price and the increase in litigation (what Loughlin (1986) has called the increased juridification of central-local relations), conflict and risk-avoidance strategies on the part of local authorities has been the consequence of the more interventionist line taken by the Thatcher government. Rather than 'partnership' the dominant ethos in central-local relations over the past decade has become directive ('top-down') from the central government side and secretive from the local government side as the more resourceful local authorities seek out loopholes by which they seek to follow their own policy agendas.

Ranson and Walsh have offered an alternative but broadly similar periodisation of the post war experience of central-local relations and 'styles' of interaction (1985). They propose that the *paternalism* of the welfare state settlement (1943-1955) gave way to a more *participatory* mode of decision-making (1956-1969). *Elite determination* (some would call this corporatism) characterised the period from 1970 to 1979 followed by the *individualism* of the Thatcher years.

Apparent differences between these two periodisations may be more a matter of terminology than of substance. Potentially the most controversial or discrepant comparison is the characterisation of the early years of the Thatcher government as *individualism* (Ranson & Walsh) in contrast to *direction* (Rhodes, 1986b, 36). We have some misgivings about the former idea which could imply that Mrs Thatcher's government had no overall policy agenda or the conceptualisation may seem to mix political values with styles of policy-making. Nevertheless, the contrast (individualism - direction) serves to highlight a paradox of a government committed to free market principles (which does stress freedom for the individual entrepreneur or consumer to choose their course of

action) yet has been strongly interventionist in seeking to roll back the welfare state and open up opportunities for the market or private sector. The latter has been achieved with strong state controls and direction as well as legislation to by-pass local authority involvement in economic development where this is thought by the government to impede its intentions (such as the introduction of centrally appointed Urban Development Corporations in Labour controlled inner city areas).

Cochrane has offered a further periodisation of central-local government relationships with the period from 1965 to 1975 being identified as a a decade of 'modernisation', the ten years from 1975 to the mid eighties as an era of 'centralisation' and the period since 1986 as characterised by the 'fragmentation' of central government policy towards local authorities (1989).

This review of 'periods' in central-local government relations in Britain serves to underline the point that such links and interactions do not occur in a changeless context and warns that in studying a specific period we should take account of the more general environment. Specifically, for the years when the South Yorkshire structure plan was being assembled the period has been seen variously as characterised by 'incorporation', 'elite determination' or 'modernisation' merging into 'centralisation'. The consensus would seem to be that from 1973 to 1980 there was a corporatist and centralising trend in central government's approach to policy-making.

In contrast to the discussions of the local state in the 1970s a recent discussion of the economics and politics of place as part of the ESRC research programme on the "changing urban and regional system in the UK" (Harloe, Pickvance & Urry, 1990) has adapted Rhodes in seeking to

explain why local economic policies differ between localities despite the apparent centralisation of power and policy-making in the 1980s. Three organising principles of conditions, resources and strategies are felt to provide an explanatory nexus for understanding local variation in policy. Conditions are the circumstances largely external to any given locality within which policies are formulated and implemented (and are subdivided into economic, political and cultural). Resources are the means available to government and decision makers within a locality (and are divided for analytical purposes into historical, geographical, financial, organisational and degree of legitimacy given to public bodies). Finally, strategies refers to policies employed locally to achieve local objectives (strategies are said to vary on a number of dimensions including sources of finance, form, sphere, direction). These latter concepts refer to measures of policy which are intended to allow comparisons between local areas and regions (respectively public/private partnership; emphasis on economic, social or environmental policy; growth, stasis or decline). The analysis is of interest because it develops the somewhat suprising assertion (in the context of the 1980s) that local decision makers retain some autonomy of action in a period of apparent centralisation of political power and homogenisation of local cultures.

Application of the framework to structure planning in South Yorkshire.

Out of the preceding discussion we offer a diagram of a framework considered approporiate for analysis of relationships between the tiers of government in South Yorkshire with respect to structure plan preparation and adoption in the 1970s. (Fig. 6.1)

POWER DEPENDENCE

	MICRO-LEVEL (officer / member)	MESO-LEVEL (SYCC / MDCs)	MACRO-LEVEL (SYCC / DoE)
RESOURCES	• technical skills • professional network • time • local knowledge • political legitimacy • sanction over staffing & budgets	• staff & budget for strategic planning • Highways & other MCC functions • local and specific (eg housing) information • agreement over structure plan policies etc.	• local knowledge • technical work • final approval/ sanctions on structure plan policy
APPRECIATIVE SYSTEM	• rational planning • public interest • (participatory democracy or citizenship) • professionalism • representative democracy • social justice redistribution • retention of party control	• social justice/ redistribution • 'have-nots' & 'worst-first' (later) • local (MDC) autonomy • 'steering the market'	• State intervention • advocacy • trend planning • market • national structure plan coverage
STRATEGIES USED TO ACHIEVE POLICY AIMS	• rational planning process • systematic analysis → synthesis • political power & commitment	• need for 'completeness' & professional competence (early) • Strategic function (later) • 'unified front' against County • argument of County exceeding powers	• rationality • officer-led negotiations • 'upper case/ lower case policies • precedents (circulars/advice Regional Policy) • Final veto
STRATEGIES USED TO REGULATE EXCHANGE	• documentation/ rational argument • Open Days (later in process) • Senior steering group • use of formal committee	• 'all in this together' (early) • legal position & precedent (later) • minimal cooperation • procrastination & sequential approval of stages	• reasoned justification • technical documentation • (early) advice and mild admonition • (later) use of CIP to undermine policies → veto → changes
DISCRETION OVER POLICY-MAKING	• considerable (early) • at the margins (later) • considerable (later)	• attempt to agree policies/approach (early) • use of discretion (later) • little (over main SP policies)	• considerable (over written statement) • more marginal (over approved plan) • little (over planning process) • considerable (over approved plan)

FIGURE 6.1 Framework for considering 'power dependence' and organisational interaction: South Yorkshire (after Rhoder (1986))

A main feature of the framework is the distinction between levels of interaction and influence on policy, including the relations within the county council itself (the micro-level), between the county council and the four metropolitan councils (the meso-level) and the relationship between the county council and central government (the macro-level). The relationships at each of these levels are analysed in terms of power dependence, which in turn is considered under the topics of resources, the appreciative system of key parties, strategies to achieve policy aims and the tactics of approaching the policy making process, and finally the limits and potential for the use of discretion. The framework may be made more realistic by taking 'snapshots' of the policy process at different points in time but for reasons of simplicity and comprehension I have chosen to summarise temporal changes within the one diagram.

It may seem tautologous to identify the nexus of county council, metropolitan district councils and the Department of the Environment as central to policy-making for the South Yorkshire structure plan. The point in doing so is that we believe this metaphor (of a framework of power dependence within a interlocking system of levels of government) is more apt than the other main contending frameworks. There was relatively little sustained empirical research on the later period of structure plan preparation, particularly work which went beyond a technical orientation to adopt a policy studies or political economy approach (for example, Cross & Bristow, 1983 is largely descriptive). The omission is somewhat suprising given the powerful influence of structuralist and political economy approaches to urban studies in the later 1970s. Particularly influential was the work of the French school of urban research led by Manuel Castells who, among other things, suggested that

urban planning was the archetypal profession working within the state to oil the wheels of capitalist accumulation albeit through support for the provision of services of collective consumption.

Studies which acknowledged this broader theoretical perspective and which have specifically included analysis of structure planning includes research by Blowers (1980), Pickvance (1982), Flynn (1983) and Ambrose (1986). The principal conclusions of all these studies were that structure planners changed little and that structure plans have had little impact on the localities for which they were prepared.

From his research on the Bedfordshire strategic planning process Blowers concludes that "...the power to shape a structure plan and to control its implementation by those responsible for producing it would appear to be very limited" (ibid., 177). He labelled the process of plan preparation as an exercise in the 'politics of consensus' and that in order to "...avoid partisanship and to achieve long term objectives it became vulnerable to short-term incremental decisions..." (ibid, p 178). Existing constraints and procedures circumscribed the planning process and given that the implementation of the policies in the plan were under the control of a variety of other governmental, public and private bodies Bedfordshire County Council could do little more than seek agreement and attempt to secure policy changes at the margins. "The final plan presumed a consensus had been found either by general agreement, or by flexible policies that avoided antagonising specific interests, or by ignoring or playing down certain issues altogether" (ibid).

Pickvance in a brief review of post-war town planning also concludes of the period after the 1968 Act that the strategic planning system has done little to change the

underlying economic trends. "...(I)t is the largely unrestricted operation of market forces (in land, property, finance, etc.) which has been the prime determinant of urban development..." (Pickvance, 1982, p 81).

Ambrose has used this statement to argue that the strategic planning process in Britain has been 'trend planning', "...a complicated way of incorporating in plans a pattern of land development that would have occured in much the same way anyway." (Ambrose, 1986, 61).

In his detailed analysis of strategic planning in Kent from a broad political studies perspective, Flynn has indicated that assembling the structure plan was achieved by a process of cooptation whereby industrial and commercial organisations were consulted and involved in plan preparation. He believes that incorporation was directly linked to the local authority's political commitment to growth and wealth creation and hence there was a strong desire by the planners to gain the confidence of key investors. Like any process of consultation and incorporation the outcome was double edged in that the intention was not only to help achieve the objectives of the plan but also to enhance its credibility and gain 'external' endorsement.

The approach taken in these studies draws from the theories of corporatism and neo-Marxist theories of power and the state. The former is most clearly seen in Flynn's work which refers to the county council "...acting as a bureaucratic and political mediator..." of the interests and demands of local industry and commerce. Similarly, the low level of political interest generated in the plan from other local authorities in and around Bedfordshire is put down, in part, to the acceptance of business values and market logic which underpin the economic policies of the structure plan.

The implication being that the local state is a knowing party to, indeed an engineer of, this consensus which in turn suggests that the state is a "shell" for capitalism (Jessop, 1978).

The South Yorkshire case study provides a contrast to these studies and their conclusions. Rather than consensus we have already shown conflicts of interest between elected representatives and planners <u>within</u> the county council. We have also indicated that the metropolitan district councils were, in differing degrees, opposed to the planning process, key issues and policies in the plan as it developed. Nor was thus opposition confined to the scope of the structure plan and the techniques employed by the county planners but also extended to criticism of the substance of major policies. That is, district council opposition was not simply a demarcation dispute on the level of detail of strategic policies but the districts seriously questioned the wisdom of many county planning policies. In assessing theoretical frameworks for helping explain the South Yorkshire example of structure plan preparation and development we were therefore drawn away from consensus approaches or explanations which rely on placing all local state action into a procrustean bed. Corporatism, by definition, assumes that the three main blocks of state, capitalists and workers are monolithic with respect to values, goals and interests while much neo-marxist political economy and state theory has often coped inadequately with the notion that the state has (some) independence from dominant capitalist interests and can exercise discretion and choice with respect to policy.

The framework adopted (and adapted) here is capable of accepting internal dissent and differences in values among key actors within the state. This is not to say that power is distributed equally between different

levels of the state and that on policy matters of importance there will not be confrontation. However, those are considered here to be matters of empirical inquiry rather than being defined out of the analytical frame.

The national context of policy-making - South Yorkshire 1974-1979.

The background to local politics in South Yorkshire and the reorganisation of local government that introduced the metropolitan county councils was presented earlier. In the previous section we briefly summarised the changing 'periods' of central-local relations and politics in the post-war decades. In this section we will consider the context of local political change and politics in England during the 1970s and particularly the more general changes occuring within local government.

The reorganisation of local government in the early 1970s was a major upheaval; the number of local authorities was reduced, the scale and responsibilities of councillors and the tasks of officials were expanded, the introduction of a two-tier system of local government in the English metropolitan areas was controversial. These structural changes brought their own political, institutional and personal consequences. Our purpose at this point is to indicate how the reorganisation of local government affected relationships both within and between levels of government.

There is broad agreement that two trends were of major significance for style of decision making in local government in the 1960s and 1970s. On the one hand was the internal reorganisation and management changes within local authorities brought about by the introduction of corporate planning. On the other hand was the increasing party politicisation of local government.

A persistent characteristic of debate about government and local government over many decades has been the concern about efficiency and the general effectiveness of public bodies. One of the major elements of the debate with respect to local government through the 1930s and in

the post war period was the matter of the size of local authorities and the sharp division between town and country which had remained largely unchanged from the late nineteenth century. A related concern was the structure and function of local government, leading after a number of false starts and unpursued recommendations to the setting up of the Redcliffe Maud Commission which was to precipitate change (even if the changes made to local government were at variance with the Commission's recommendations).

The search for greater efficiency in local government was also focussed on the internal workings and structures of local authorities. The committee on management in local government under Sir John Maud which reported in 1967 produced a wide ranging set of studies (Maud, 1967). Its main recommendations were to seek a clearer division of labour and role between council members and officers, to streamline the committee structure and particularly to reduce the number of committees, to appoint a management board of senior councillors to provide a decision making forum which would seek to overcome the vertical divisions created by service departments and committees and, finally, to seek the appointment of a chief executive officer in all local authorities.

Shortly afterwards a study group set up jointly by the Secretary of State for the Environment and the local authority associations with a working party under the chairmanship of M Bains picked up on a number of the issues raised in the earlier Maud report (Bains, 1972). The thrust of the Bains report was to insert a "wider-ranging corporate outlook" into local government. While there were points of difference between the Bains and Maud reports (particularly on relationships between members and officers) the corporate management proposals at the centre of the later proposals also sought to break down departmentalism in local government. A principal

recommendation from the Bains report was that working relationships between local authorities within the new two tier system was essential in order "to co-ordinate ...county and district functions".

Introduction of corporate management and the role of chief executive into local government (which was almost universally achieved in title if not in action (Alexander, 1982)) created internal frictions as chief officers who had been used to a great deal of discretion began to face closer scrutiny of their decisions from the newly empowered chief executive and policy committee. Planning departments were particularly liable to confrontation with the new chief executive and associated central policy unit. Planners, with their well developed sense of a comprehensive perspective on policy, derived from training and professional ethos, saw their previous prominence in giving a lead to integrated policy-making being matched and cut back.

The party politicisation of local government has been developing since 1835 but at an accelerating pace since 1945 (Gyford, 1985). The period from 1945 to 1975 has been described as 'adminsitrative politics' (Hill, 1972).

> ...Administrative politics is found where the administrators dominate the decision-making process, yet acknowledge the claims of democratic politics by bargaining, negotiating or consulting with people outside their own organization, and, when necessary, securing legitimacy for their own actions through the use of formal democratic mechanisms. In such circumstances politicians play two roles. They are seen by the administrators as representatives of public opinion in general or of particular interest groups. As such they must be consulted and policies must either be sold to them or constructed so as to avoid giving political offence. Additionally individual politicians may become, in effect, co-opted into the ranks of the administrators, often beoming 'socialised' into the professional ethos of the education officers, or the planners, or the housing managers. (Gyford, 1985, 88-89)

This period of technical and administrative dominance is thought to have given way in the mid 1970s to 'ideological politics' (Hill, 1972). The reasons for this change have been identified as a growing division between the major political parties over welfare policies and the role of the state (itself a reflection of a deep ideological polarization between Conservative and Labour), greater electoral volatility, the emergence of a strong third-party challenge and persisting economic difficulties (Gyford, 1985, 90). Alongside the growing polarisation of the main political parties was a deepening divergence of opinion on how to deal with the evolving economic crisis of the 1970s. While Labour retained the traditional socialist view that government should seek to maintain social consumption including softening the effect of recession on people by income and family support measures (although the Callaghan government was not immune to pressure from the international financial community to cut back public expenditure) a growing Conservative ethos was for a long term reduction in state activity, a return to market principles and much greater private sector activity in the fields of housing, education and other traditional state welfare sectors. As the actions of the incoming Conservative administration of 1979 were quickly to show (in the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act) town planning was caught within the new ethos by being seen as a brake on free enterprise and wealth creation. At the local level the polarisation of the major parties was seen, inter alia, in the pursuit of privatisation of local services by Conservative controlled authorities and the growth of the 'new left' within Labour authorities.

One of the simplifications that has occurred with respect to the actions of 'new left' in local government is for some commentators to assume that it was a unified and consistent movement. All Labour controlled local authorities that set out to challenge Thacherism and

support local services were assumed to share common values, goals and ideas about policy. Recent analyses have been more circumspect in pointing out some of the differences within the movement. A distinction that is now more generally accepted is that the 'new left' in London was different from that in the other metropolitan areas (Khan, 1990). We have already noted that within South Yorkshire the new mood sweeping through the Labour Group in Sheffield in 1980 (and showing itself in some county council policies in the 1970s) did not seem to extend its influence across city boundaries. The emerging signs of a new Labour local politics were to be seen in the city in the 1970s and the views of South Yorkshire county councillors elected from Sheffield wards after local government reorganisation in 1973.

The point we are seeking to make is that these more general trends and changes in local government in Britain (reaction to centralisation and growing party politicisation) were being felt in South Yorkshire county and can be identified in this record of the preparation of the structure plan. However, the policy outcome was the product not only of events and happenings internal to the county council but also as a consequence of the county council's approach and relations with other local authorities, public bodies and with central governemt itself.

Member-Officer Relations in South Yorkshire

We have already discussed the changing relations between the elected representatives and the officers in the planning team in terms of the events which occured during the preparation of the plan. In pursuing the topic of those relations further we include here the responses from both councillors and officers to seperate questionnaire surveys administered to samples of both groups during the later stages of the planning process in South Yorkshire. The value of the response is to put the specific events into somewhat broader sweep of general opinions about the relationship and to present the views that members and officers have about each other.

Members Survey.

The survey was carried out during the autumn and winter of 1976 with a sample of South Yorkshire county councillors. As explained elsewhere, the field work took place about 12 months later than originally intended. If the original timetable had been adhered to the interviews would have taken place at the height of the confrontation over future public transport options. The delay may have meant that some of the opinions which members expressed were more even-tempered than they would have been at the earlier date. The reason for the delay stemmed from the chief executive's sensitivity about the survey. As a consequence the questionnaire was heavily vetted and some questions were excised (we agreed to this course of action in order to obtain, at least, some information from members). The main casualty in this process were questions about these councillors' political attitudes and past local government experience.

A number of questions about member-officer contacts and roles were included in the schedule. Principally, we were keen to follow up information about members

attitudes to officer involvement in the public participation programme. A further interest was in assessing whether the complexities of the structure planning process had affected member-officer relations.

The interpretation of member-officer relations which sees the former as making policy with officers carrying it out (described as an exploded myth by the Bains Report, 1972, 8), would appear to be even less valid when considering strategic planning. The conventional view of the division of labour in local government suggests that members will play a major role in the early stages of policy-making, when basic decisions about aims and objectives are being decided. Officers may play a larger role in the later stages when the policies are being implemented. Among the simplifications implied by this view of policy-making is the idea that policy decisions are made at one point in time or even in one place (influences on policy are legislation, central government advice, views of public, officers and other public bodies so that in reality a commitment towards a decision may "evolve" rather than be decided at a particular instance). Another simplification is the assumption that member-officer relations do not vary according to policy area or field. We would argue that the normal pattern and timetable of policy-making in development planning conflicts with the "conventional" view of the division of labour in local government. The planning process normally entails an intense period of officer-led activity where the members may give broad guidance followed by a period where members are more deeply involved in contributing to and guiding the choices of policy. In the later stages the members may play a supervisory role over the implementation process. With a strategic plan much of the policy task is, inter alia, to attempt to coordinate the actions of a wide range of agencies and bodies. Over the period of putting together a development plan the planning authority will be in

constant negotiation and bargaining with many bodies (neighbouring or second tier local authorities, businesses and private individuals) and only occasionally will these consultations and agreements involve elected members. The simple model of member-officer relations did not seem to be applicable to strategic plan-making.

As we have already seen in the case study the involvement of members increased when they felt that key decisions about the content of the plan were being pre-empted by the officers. What is more, member involvement was always likely to be high at later stages in the strategic planning process in metropolitan areas simply because of the scale of problems encountered and the form of planning process adopted. The planning process favoured in the MCCs was problem-led, with objectives being set at later stages of the planning process. As a consequence the planning process required member involvement at late stages of policy-making. We might conclude that simple models of member-officer relations which propose a linear change in the involvement of the two parties over time may be more appropriate where routine decisions are concerned, such as refuse collection, rate-fixing and other well-established policy areas.

At the time of the interviews the planning process had not been completed and there was still no clear indication of the kinds of strategies which were likely to emerge from a long and intensive period of professional work. Some pointers towards political intentions had been given by the confrontations over public transport policy and the majority group councillors seemed intent on continuing to cater for the needs of the less well-off sections of the population.

Two questions to members concerned their perceptions of the councillor's role. We found that 15 councillors

(28.3%) agreed with a statement that the elected member should be a voice for the public while 26 (49%) believed that once elected members should use personal judgement and act according to their assessment of issues. Seven members felt that a combination of both approaches was most appropriate although other answers convinced us that two of these were more prone to the idea of councillor as reflecting public opinion. In terms of commonly used role orientations (Newton, 1976: Darke & Walker, 1977) this suggests that one third of the sample tended towards a delegate role and about half were in favour of the trustee model. The rest of the sample gave a mixture of reactions. Some felt the distinction used in our questioning was too simplistic. Three members placed party political allegiance as the main influence on them. Others indicated that flexibility was an important quality in a councillor.

The conclusion was that 12 councillors (22.6%) firmly held to a delegate role and 18 (34%) favoured a trustee position in firmly believing that their decisions were final. The rest of the sample (17 members or 32.1%) were more difficult to classify into the three-fold division used by Newton but most appeared to take a "flexible" approach to their task suggesting that they were politicos ("...being a mixture of both delegates and trustees." Newton, 1976, 122). The distribution of roles bears similarity to that found by Newton in his study of 66 Birmingham councillors (ibid.) where he identified those favouring a delegate, trustee or politico role as representing 27%, 47% and 26% respectively.

The schedule included questions about member-officer contacts in general. We asked where respondents whether they could see a clear line between the tasks of councillor and officer. Nine members (17%) said that the line was difficult to draw, whereas 30 (57%) felt there was little difficulty in differentiating roles and tasks.

A substantial majority of the latter group believed that there should be a clear division of labour and responsibility. On the other hand, five councillors felt that there should be no dividing line and four of these spontaneously added that member-officer relationships were good. Of those who said that there should be a clear line of responsibility (22 councillors in the sample), two members (9% of those seeing the need for a clear division of labour) said without prompting that member-officer relations should not be too friendly. The implication being that those who saw a clear division of tasks were minded to maintain a degree of formality in their relationships with staff.

Half of the respondents elaborated on the division of labour that they thought appropriate. Eight used the conventional model of differentiating policy-making from implementation as the basis for member and officer roles. Thirteen members took the position that members made decisions but that officers put up the various options to allow a choice to be made. A further five councillors said that members brought an awareness of public opinion to the policy making process as well as their own interpretation of need, while officers added professional and technical advice.

Influentials (policy committee members and committee chairs and deputies) were marginally more likely than backbenchers to say that the division of tasks between members and officers was easy to identify (75% compared to 66%).

Councillors identified their own role as that of a delegate were more likely to say that good relations existed between members and officers in South Yorkshire County Council. (Table 6.1)

TABLE 6.1 Councillors Views on Member-Officer Relations by Role Orientation

	delegates	trustees
member-officer relationships are good	7	4
there should be a clear dividing line between members' and officers' roles	10	20

chi square shows that the relationship was significant at the 5% level (the probability of the distribution occurring by chance is greater than a 1 in 20)

One area of questioning was the role that members felt officers should play in public participation and contacts with the public. The question was open-ended and a variety of responses resulted. However, some structure to the replies was discerned. At one extreme, five councillors categorically felt that there should be no official contact with the public while ten members felt that officers should be left to get on with doing their job (implying that contact with the public was a legitimate activity for officers). (Table 6.2)

TABLE 6.2 Members view on Officer Contact with the Public

	Number	% of sample
should be no contact	5	9.4
to collate and sift information	6	11.3
give technical advice to members	11	20.8
provide information to public	21	39.6
should be left to get on with task	10	18.9

The table is intended to show the spectrum of opinion with an increasingly interventionist role for officers in public contacts from top (no legitimate contact) to bottom. Thus, while a majority of members saw professional staff having a role in contact with the public (58.5%) only one fifth of the sample would wish professionals to play a lead or 'unsupervised' role with respect to such contacts.

Members of policy committee and committee chairs/ deputy chairs (influentials) favoured a more restricted role for officers in relation to the public. For example, in

response to the question on the role that officers should play in public participation, 12 councillors (nearly a quarter of the sample) spontaneously stated that it was for members to decide policy (implying that officers might use public participation as a lever for promoting their preferred policies). This included 7 influentials (that is, one third of the influentials in the sample compared to 15.6% of "backbenchers").

By combining some of the categories used in table 6.2 the views of influentials on officer involvement in public participation and contacts shows more clearly. (Table 6.3)

TABLE 6.3 Influentials and Backbenchers Views on Role of Officers in Public Participation

	Chairs & Policy Cttee	Other Councillors
clerical/subsidiary role	5 (25%)	6 (18.8%)
giving information	12 (60%)	20 (60%)
initiating activity	3 (15%)	7 (21.2%)

A link can also be shown between members views on the officers role in public contacts and views on whether member and officer roles can be clearly distinguished. We re-classified the data into whether the members saw officers role in public participation as necessary or unnecessary. (Table 6.4)

TABLE 6.4 Members Attitudes to Division of Tasks between Members and Officers by Views on Officers Role in Public Participation

	Attitude to member-officer relations	
	no clear division	clear division
Role of officers in public participation		
undesirable or unimportant	1	27
necessary or important	4	14

p = 0.028 using Fisher's exact probability test (more than a 1 in 20 probability that the distribution could occur by chance)

After a brief presentation of the simplified model of member-officer relations ("members make policy and officers carry it out", which was put up partly in order to get members talking) respondents were then asked whether the open days had helped to maintain the traditional division of labour. Twenty three councillors saw the incompatability between a more informal meeting and the formality of the committe system. Five members said spontaneously that they would like to see more informality in local government. Ten councillors thought it immaterial to their roles and tasks whether meetings between members and officers were formal or informal. Eleven members believed the committee system was sufficient for fulfilling the functions and managing the tasks of local government.

The responses show that even within a small group of councillors there are a number of different interpretations of how local authority business and member-officer relations might be arranged. One or two councillors were aware of the debates (on the policy/ administration division and the respective roles of members and officers) in the Maud and Bains reports and subsequent discussions. Some felt that the policy/ administration model was too neat and doubted its validity. At least four councillors indicated that officers were influential in policy-making, one member saying that official advice carried great weight. One of these respondents said that an able officer could bring councillors round to his way of thinking and so get the policy that was professionally preferred. These members who mentioned the importance of professional input into policy-making seemed to give support for informal meetings between councillors and officers as a means to greater understanding and allowing scope for meeting on

equal terms. They saw the committee system as sometimes being a hindrance to understanding between members and officers.

> ...In formal meetings its 'them and us' which is totally misleading.

Informality in contacts with officers was a way to step outside the sphere of party politics. In a less formal setting, party politics "would not come in".

By way of contrast another councillor said that officers

> ...must be behind the manifesto as much as the members. Officers should show their political colours.

Yet another view was given by a councillor who felt that informal meetings with officers were less for a free exchange of ideas and more for monitoring officers' work. His suggestion was that informl meetings should take the form of 'policy reviews' where the council could be

> ...assured that officers were carrying out the policies of the controlling group of the County Council.

We noted that a higher proportion of councillors who said that they had no difficulty in defining the line between the tasks of member and officer were critical of open day events and saw them as irrelevant to the maintenance of the respective tasks of the two groups. (Table 6.5)

TABLE 6.5 Councillors Ability to distinguish Roles of Members and Officers by Views on Effect of Informal Meetings on Maintenance of Traditional Division of Labour

	open days help maintain trad. roles in LG	open days not help maintain
The line between members & officers tasks		
difficult to draw	2	4
not difficult to draw	12	12

p = 0.095 (only a 1 in 10 probability that the distribution could occur by chance)

We might infer that members who saw open days (and informal contacts with officers) as not affecting traditional roles in local government saw a danger in greater informality, particularly when the findings show that a fifth of these councillors believe that the committee system is adequate for the conduct of council business.

Officer Survey.

In the survey with officers of the structure plan team we found that junior staff had relatively little contact with councillors. The county planning officer said that he liked his PO2 staff to take direct responsibility for their work which meant attending meetings and speaking to relevant agenda items. Assistant chief planners and higher grade officers did see a good deal of councillors either in committee or when the county planning officer directed members to them for specific advice or information. The CPO said that members often sought help with queries after committee meetings which indicates that the formal meeting also led into a more informal and advisory exchange.

The CPO showed that his perception of relations was tied in part to a conventional model of relationships when he mentioned that the restaurant provided in the members' building at county hall was used by chief officers allowing informal meetings at "high level".

Eight officers in the sample (50%) said that councillors only get to know professional staff at assistant chief planner level and above. Four planners added that the officer who had specific responsibility for the public participation programme had more contact with members than his status equals in the department. This was because of the intent to keep councillors fully informed of and involved in the programme. Additionally, the

programme had accounted for a high proportion of planning committee business in 1974 and 1975 which meant members becoming more familiar with the planner concerned.

It was partly because of the perceived distance between members and officers that the county planners had introduced the open days. Most officers felt that they had gained much from the open days. All sixteen planners mentioned open days as the main context in their South Yorkshire experience where they had contact with members. Four officers (presumably on the basis of the open day experience) denied that members only got to know chief officers saying that this was not the case in South Yorkshire. Five officers said that relations were less strictly defined and circumscribed in South Yorkshire compared to their earlier local government experience.

Some planners seemed unsure what councillors actually discussed in committee.

> ...Heck! I don't really know what policy matters the county planning committee discuss. I don't really have time to know...too busy planning...too much to get through.

Apart from the county planning officer, only four planners (in total 31% of the senior staff in structure plan team) said that they had been directly contacted by a councillor on a matter of business. Seven officers (44%) felt that it was necessary to have a means of forging links and making contact with members, one of these saying that the detailed explanation of policy and proposals should take place outside committee. Three planners suggested informal sessions with members (workshops and frequent seminars) would help relationships and the policy process. The value of such forums would allow time for the professionals to expand on their ideas and reasoning which was difficult to achieve in committee.

> ...A lot of explanatory work should go on outside committee.
>
> ...get a more effective dialogue.
>
> ...open days (were) very useful...allowed officers to state their views on non-party lines.
>
> ...(we do not want to) just prepare material and present it - fait accompli.
>
> ...make it clearer for them.

One officer mentioned that staff could "...learn political values" at informal workshops or seminars but the overwhelming perception was of "explaining" professional rationales to members rather than a two-way process.

In response to the questions about structure planning three officers saw a value of the South Yorkshire approach to the planning process was the opportunity for dialogue. Nevertheless, reality does not all match intent.

> ...(key) issues were generated by the officers...ludicrous. They should be fed in by politicians.

A junior officer stated the value of the normal arrangement.

> ...(we need a) balance - otherwise bureaucracy can get out of hand. (There is) a danger in each officer giving his views. (I) feel that the main point of contact should be the committee.

The suggestion of more informal meetings was not intended to set up an alternative forum for decision-making. Five officers emphasised the continuing and central role of the committee.

Inevitably, the officers were aware that not all councillors held the same influence over council affairs. One planner said that in meetings he was "...conscious of the powerful members round the table". Another

rhetorical question was "...whether (contacts) should be with a few, selected members?".

Some planners implied that they were happy with the form and content of lay-professional contact which anticipated later questions asking whether officers would like to see changes in their contact with members. Three planners felt that there was scope for greater contact but they did not want too much informality.

> ...Dialogue must be structured - not too much pub discussion.
>
> ...talk...(but) give a framework for discussion. (We) never talk about overall things (such as) whether they are the right issues.

A number of interesting suggestions were made for changing member-officer relations.

> ...more contact between the county planning officer and chairmen of major county committees.
>
> ...more contact with influential members.
>
> ...trouble-shooting sessions where member-officer misunderstandings could be clarified.
>
> ...A periodic information broadsheet for members explaning work being carried out in the department.
>
> ...Allocation of an officer to each member on committee to act as 'agent', providing information, help with council problems...
>
> ...more involvement by members in the development of policy.

A general desire emerges for more fully involving and informing members about professional work, with a balance in favour of "structured" informality. Only one planner saw a danger in greater informal contact on a day-to-day basis saying the professional integrity might be undermined. Another saw the necessity of controlling less senior staff "...to prevent them from shooting their head's (sic) off".

Some remarks implied a need to educate councillors.

> ...(need) to argue and explain misconceptions with two or three officers around a table.

> ...(in) committee...a tendency for officers to jump in the air when councillors click their fingers...deferential. There is not enough challenge of views and facts. Witness the committee...if a member is wrong, officers don't respond. They should have (mistakes) pointed out but officers only speak when spoken to.

The last respondent seemed to regret the distribution of understanding and grasp among the 45 members of planning committee, implying that 'less able' members should be excluded from detailed policy debate. Another planner felt that a more informal means of bringing members and officers together would not solve the lack of understanding of technical issues by members. This officer was not happy with open days "...because of the quality of the comments and the obvious lobbies".

An inference to be drawn is that some planners believe that complex issues should be left to the experts or the majority party leadership. Only one officer admitted that professionals can disagree among themselves, and that it would be a good thing for members to appreciate this,

> ...members should not get a departmental view...that is very 'civil service' type of thinking. (They) should get more of how the department works...benefit from raw views.

We asked if these officers felt members received too much or too litle information. Five planners (31%) said that members needed as much information as possible if they were to fulfil their role as decision-makers. A further officer did not think that members got too much information although there was often a duplication of papers in different committees.

Four planners (25%) said that members did get too much information. They felt technical reports were superfluous with one saying that papers were not presented in political manner (which seems to indicate a percieved division of technical and political matters). Other suggestions for improving papers for members included attention to picking out the implications of policies, more digests, precise summaries, putting technical material in appendices with key points highlighted. The committee presentation was also useful when planners needed "a barrister's approach".

In all, seven planners (about half this sample) were critical of the content and standard of material going to councillors. There was concern that officers did not take enough care in communicating effectively with members.

There was some concern at the scale and scope of the task undertaken by elected representatives.

> ...Members have a difficult job to do properly. Those who are conscientious are likely to get a coronary.

But not all planners were sympathetic towards those who were motivated by the 'voluntary principle'.

> I don't think they should have an easy time. They are elected as members of a structure plan authority...a responsible job...they need to do it.

The county planning officer saw no easy answer to the technical grasp required by politicians. Apart from the chair and deputy there might be a handful who wanted to see everything the planners produced. On the other hand, the majority just wanted a page or two. He proposed a summary report together with comprehensive back-up for those who wished it.

Where officers mentioned that councillors were not getting the right kind of information, the criticism

seemed to be that material was selected for committee by staff and tended to be directed away from sensitive topics (the chief executive for the county had been cautious about some of the reports emanating from the planning department during the period under study which could explain these comments).

> ...Members are selectively fed, sometimes with artificial problems.

> ...too much on trivia. Not much information, for example, on the Community Land Bill or free public transport.

Overall, there is little consensus on how official reports and professional advice might best be presented to councillors and how technical issues be fully aired with members.

We asked whether these officers felt that members made use (in making decisions) of the information with which they were supplied. Nearly all these respondents said that members did not always appear to use official reports in coming to decisions. The range of comments went from statements that councillors based almost all their decisions on party political beliefs to references about specific "blind spots" where members went against "all the technical and official objections". On balance, the comments were not overly negative about members' technical understanding or inability to take professional advice. Only four planners (25%) seemed of the view that councillors held inflexible opinions on policy matters. Indeed, some officers seemed suprised that members trusted their professional judgement so fully. They were indicating that members did not scrutinise technical information and accepted professional recommendations. Underlying many replies was a sense that members should work harder at understanding and using the information supplied by officials.

We asked if staff had experience of member obstruction against technical advice or, on the other hand, had seen unquestioning "rubber stamping" of recommendations. Two planners said they had observed both kinds of action in local government. Five recalled memorable examples of rubber-stamping. There was a overall view that councillors in South Yorkshire were more conscientious than these planners had expected on the basis of earlier experience.

Obviously, the issue of free public transport was high in the consciousness of these planners. Three officers mentioned that members' firm opinions on this issue were not influenced by professional advice. Several planners saw this as a specific issue where staff did "not see eye to eye" with members. Other areas of friction were over the financial implications of county council policies and over recreation as a key issue where, on the latter, it was said that this had been promoted by members after prompting from staff in another council department.

In all, nine planners (56%) were critical (in varying degrees) of some councillor decisions. Views ranged from the mild to the edge of indignation.

> ...Members have not taken their decisions on the basis of advice.

The chair of planning was mentioned by one planner as being "rational and sensible" who followed up with the comment that

> ...if he does not agree with something, he will ask...before it gets to committee.

Vested interest (which we took to mean allegiance to other areas of policy, party politics or committee loyalties) was mentioned by three officers as a reason behind councillor decisions.

Given their views it is not suprising to find that, of these planners, eleven (69%) would not want to see members having more control over work in the department. They were arguing for, in effect, maintenance of the status quo in professional independence. The close relationship between chair of committee and chief officer in defining the work programme was felt by three officers to be sufficient. A major concern emerged about "interference". One planner did not want councillors "opening the mail", which he said had happened in his previous workplace.

While there was a sense of wanting a "rational" and cooperative resolution of major policy questions and issues there was also an underlying belief that each (councillors and officers) had their place and those locations were on either side of a technical-ideological divide.

> ...Pragmatically, I would not like to see councillors have more control over work in the department. Ideally, yes. In what ways? We need to know their values; their values are often too dogmatic and ideological; too much compromise. Philosophy has to come from the politicians.

When asked directly about the division of responsibility and tasks between officers and members it was generally accepted where the ultimate responsibility lay. "The committee carries the can!". Ten officers (62.5%) saw the final responsibility as being the politicians. Most officers saw their role as providing information and advice to members. Members could add the "seasoning" of values.

> ...Officers feed impartial assessments to the members, not value judgements, those are for the members to make.

A detailed knowledge of their ward and local area was the main role for members according to three planners and was mentioned by others.

...Members provide local colour; know their local areas.

...his (sic) big asset is that he is closer to the grass roots.

...to fit...(policy to)...their local areas as they see them.

...A body of politicians should have continuity whereas officers change and move jobs. Collectively, politicians should know what is going on.

A class dimension was introduced.

...(he) is more representative of the people, more likely to be working class; blue collar. We've all come from the universities, which have a rarified atmosphere.

Such perceptions can lead to evaluation.

...Officers are responsible for showing members their responsibility.

Only occasionally was there a recognition among these officers that their advice was not value-free.

...officer makes assumptions and therefore cuts down the opportunities for decision.

On the respective roles, seven planners (44%) did not see a strict division of labour.

...like to think making policies is something we both did.

...How you arrive at a decision will involve a great deal of overlap.

...It's a fluid relationship. Should appreciate the others role and (fluidity) would enhance (both).

The simple model of members deciding policy and officers implementing it was categorically rejected.

...It's irrelevant...as we are a policy-making not an implementing department with a seperate environment department which implements policy. The thing that bothers me is the exact opposite (of the simple policy-implementation model). Officers may find it easier to think in strategic terms at the early stage, with the policy bent at the end of the day to fit their local areas as they see them, so

that members may take a greater role at the end of the planning process.

...(not all) strategic matters can be followed through by officers.

Discussion

What emerges from this set of findings about the member-officer relationship from the surveys of members and officers in South Yorkshire is that both groups tend to view the relationship in their own terms. This is not remarkable and mirrors the findings presented earlier on respective attitudes towards public participation.

Most members see the making of policy as their prerogative and most expected officers to play an impartial, non-political and essentially advisory role in local government. Up to one third of the members appeared to hold a 'trustee' conception of their public and electoral role. Specifically, this was reflected in the way they handled and dealt with comments from the public about local issues and problems identified during the participation programme. A further third of the sample held a pragmatic view of their role in local government. As politicos they appeared equally likely to adopt a trustee or a delegate role depending on the circumstances. Where their party leadership was taking a strong lead in policy-making they were likely to fall in behind.

In terms of the member-officer relationship many councillors did see a sharp distinction between the two 'sides' of local government. Where this distinction was sharply percieved members felt that they were the legitimate point of contact between the council and the public and were critical of officers taking too forward a role in public participation. There was a large "middle of the road" group who assumed that officers were employed to provide information and take political

direction from the members. If officers were politically sensitive towards the goals of the majority group this was helpful and could strengthen relations. We also found that councillors who saw a clear division of labour in local government were also more likely to be cool towards the idea of a more informal and discursive contacts between members and officers. They saw less point in links outside the structure of committees and established procedures of decision-making than their more liberal colleagues.

The results also show that there is some ambivalence among officers towards more informal relations between members and officers. Senior staff were concerned about possible indiscretions being made by junior officers but the latter appeared to regret not having closer contact with members. Underneath the desire for more contact was a belief that meetings should be structured and not too open-ended. There was also an underlying sense of mission in several comments which implied that members did not understand the professional task and technical approach to issues and believed that more informal contact could provide officers with opportunities to convince members of the rationality of expert opinion.

There was a lack of awareness among the officers about the reality of power and party control within local government when the planners introduced the open day idea. This was seen as a means to involve members in some of the more detailed work of the department. As such it did represent a overt recognition that elected representatives are the accountable body. What was missing from the thinking behind the introduction of open days was an awareness of the variety of roles that councillors play in local government.

We have used the three-fold distinction between delegates, trustees and politicos. More sophisticated

models have been developed. Newton (ibid.) has also used more complex, multi-dimensional role classifications. For example, he suggests that a cluster of role choices came together for his sample of Birmingham councillors to give five role types (parochials, people's agents, policy advocates, policy brokers and policy spokesmen). Although we were unable to go as far in our questioning of the South Yorkshire sample to allow a comprehensive classification of this type there is a clear sense, based on a variety of evidence, that a small group of powerful policy advocates were holding a tight rein on the policy process in the county. What the evidence also shows is that these councillors, on the whole, did not attend open days and were less likely to wish for more informal meetings and contact with officers.

That there was disappointment and surprise among the planners that these most powerful members did not attend the open days does indicate a lack of awareness of the reality of party political power in local government as it was eveloving in the 1970s. By expecting members to differentiate the comments and problems of their constituents at the first open day appeared to show that officers recognised the councillors' role as an area representative and trustee. What was not fully recognised and appreciated by the officers were the many other dimensions of role orientation among members.

Given the restrictions on what we were able to collect in the survey with members the following is more speculative than what has gone before. However, we have shown that the less powerful, more parochial members and we believe that those who held to a delegate role were most strongly drawn to the open day idea. The latter were more committed to the idea of finding out information about their constituents. The more sceptical members went along to test the water and see what it was about. The powerful largely avoided these meetings.

That many elected members appeared uneasy at the first open day with the task of deciding between competing claims and information about public opinion in the "political vacuum" of an informal meeting was a clue to the usual nature of political decision-making and of dominant ideologies in local government. Elsewhere we have indicated that members mostly hold to a strong representative principle.

On the more general theme of member-officer relations, of which we are using the example of the open day experience as an apt illustration of differing prespectives, the evidence suggests that the officers were concerned to achieve a partnership whereby the planning process would be improved, that members would be fully informed and integrated into the planning process but underlying many professional responses in the survey was a concern at the calibre and ability of the members to deal with the complex issues in structure planning. All of this evidence could be seen as the officers seeking to develop a rational decision process in the county. The basis of that rationality being the belief in a systematic evolution of policy from facts and information and from the intentions of politicians.

Where the procedural ideal breaks down is that politicians do not share with the planners the same understanding about the decision process. The politicians (strictly, the majority group and, even more strictly, the Labour leadership) in South Yorkshire did not wholly subscribe to the step-wise accumulation of evidence and detailed technical work towards a strategic policy. They became openly opposed when that process began to question their favoured cheap fares policy on public transport.

To be fair to the planners it is worth pointing out that the period of the case study was the mid to late 1970s. Not only were procedural models of planning process in vogue but it has only been in the 1980s that the growing trend towards greater party politicisation in local government was fully recognised. What we show, in terms of member-officer relationships, by this case study are the frictions of a local government system in the throes of learning to adjust to those increased party pressures and ideologies. The use by local miners of a lapel badge in the late 1970s proclaiming "The Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire" is indicative of some currents of local political opinion. It was the strength and pervasiveness of those currents that was not recognised by the planners working in county hall at the time.

From the perspective of the 1980s, the (exaggerated) concerns of the Thatcher government and the findings of the Widdicombe inquiry have highlighted the changing nature of member-officer relations in local government. Some of the proposals in Widdicombe could have been helpful if introduced in South Yorkshire county procedures. In particular, the mechanisms of policy advisers and attendance of officers at party group meetings considered (and recommended with safeguards by Widdicombe) would have offered alternative ways for the planners to have geared-in their technical work to the party political process. But hindsight is always easier than foresight.

County District Relations

Relationships between the tiers of local government in metropolitan areas following the 1972 Local Government Act were marked by conflict and tension. It may be that disagreement is endemic to split responsibilities in government. However, research on the topic of inter-authority relations has shown that some fields of joint responsibility are prone to greater friction than others. In Greater London, transport and town planning were the particular cause of open splits between the boroughs and the county council. These strategic issues and responsibilities appear to create considerable potential for disagreements on objectives and orientation. The upper tier authority in working with the needs of the wider electorate in mind may be seen by the lower tier as not taking account of the needs of the local population or local political agendas. A dramatic illustration of this difference in perception was the legal action taken by the London Borough of Bromley against the GLC Fares Fair policy on London Transport based on the view that Bromley residents were cross subsidising other travellers through the property tax or rating system.

In addition, split responsibilities between tiers of local government may lead to boundary disputes where tasks or cases of responsibility are blurred. This overlapping of tasks and action can in turn raise accusations of excessive officialdom and bureaucracy. The large departments often found in upper tier authorities are also a visible cause of public comment, and call forth stories of bureaucratic inertia and 'unnecessary' work (a point of view that was to become more generally popular in government circles in the 1980s with academic backing in Niskanen's theory (1971,1973) of the in-built tendency for public bureaucracies to oversupply goods and services and to seek budget maximisation as a source of power). Upper tier

authorities on the other hand have been critical of the parochialism of smaller local government units.

Comparative work in inter-authority relations in the metropolitan areas between 1973 and the mid 1980s shows that it is dangerous to generalise (Flynn, Leach and Vielba, 1985). These writers note that any relationship in a complex multi-functional division of labour such as two tier local government has many strands. Some of the links and relationships will be cooperative and uncontroversial, other areas of contact and joint work can be fraught with difficulties.

> ...Coexisting with periodic outbreaks of overt conflict, or longer periods of attrition in connection with particular shared or contingent functions, there was found in all examples studied a much larger set of functions which were proceeding in a cooperative or, at the very least, a neutral way. Most of the time in relation to most functions, the relationship of the metropolitan counties with their districts is not a recipe for conflict and uncertainty... Indeed, in all the metropolitan counties, the conflicts which have been found have been underlaid by a large area of relatively uncontentious activity...
> (Flynn, Leach & Vielba, 1985, 95)

Moving on to talk about specific cases, these authors consider that the first 3 or 4 years after reorganisation saw exceptions to the general picture of uncontentious relations. In particular they note that the position in West Midlands and West Yorkshire was more fraught in the comparative spectrum of inter-authority relations in the metropolitan counties. They note a good deal of consensus between the tiers in Tyne and Wear, 'reasonable' relations in Greater Manchester for most of the decade after 1973 (except for some sourness in the early 1980s about highway agency agreements and party political point scoring by some of the Conservative Party local leaders in the districts). Inter-authority relations on Merseyside were summarised as having always been difficult between the county council and Liverpool MDC particularly when the latter was controlled by the

Liberal Party. On the other hand, relations between Merseyside County Council and other district councils (such as St. Helens and Knowsley) have been recorded as generally good.

The loss of county borough status by many West Midland local authorities such as the largest, Birmingham, and smaller city councils, such as Solihull, was found to be the main cause of inter-authority aggravation. In West Yorkshire political rivalries caused early problems but Flynn and his colleagues note an improvement in recent times 'particularly in land-use planning'. Paradoxically, they also record an overall deterioration of metropolitan county - district council relations since 1981. Whilst this is outside the period of this study of the structure planning process in South Yorkshire it indicates that the relationship is fundamentally volatile and that political and ideological differences remained between the tiers after a decade of life under the reorganised local government structure. This finding could be further evidence for the structural basis of conflict where power is divided between relatively autonomous bodies.

Inter-authority relations in South Yorkshire were described by Flynn and colleagues as being tense over planning matters and highway agency agreeements but " the common political orientation, as in Tyne and Wear, has been an integrative force, especially recently". Having been a close observer of the relationships between the county planning department and the district council planning departments over the period from 1973 to 1979 makes it difficult to accept their summary comments. Much of the private debate and some of the public presentation of issues around the structure plan in South Yorkshire was characterised by disagreement, conflict and, sometimes, ill humour. Whether the frequent examples of frayed temper in inter-authority meetings

were adopted to give added point to disagreements or were a true reflection of deeply held convictions is more difficult to ascertain but they were certainly present and persistent. It often seemed that any kind of agreement on several key planning matters was unlikely to be found.

County District Relations: The South Yorkshire Structure Plan.

A number of sources provide the evidence upon which this account is based. These include, as in other parts of the study; the minutes of various 'internal' and public meetings involving county and district members and officers, project notes and observations (many of which record verbatim exchanges and comments, and interviews with key county and district personnel. It is hoped that the inter-linking of official documentation and project notes, structured interviews and observation provides sufficient 'traingulation' for confidence in the results and conclusions.

Very clear areas of contention and conflict between county and district authorities emerged from this part of the study. A principal issue was the fuzzy boundary between strategic planning concerns and topics and local planning responsibilities. This matter was never to be resolved and the dispute carried through to the examination in public. After 1980 a more pragmatic approach emerged when the district councils had to work within the statutorily approved framework of policy provided by the structure plan and in some cases the district councils were able to defend their planning decisions when the structure plan was in place by pointing to the approved policies in the document.

Topics linked to the structure plan which created tension between the county and districts during the 1970s were

the public participation programme, the development plan scheme (for dealing with local plans) and highway agency agreements. Before looking at the more specific areas of tension and conflict we will summarise the general attitudes and views of the councillors and senior planning officers as found as a result of interviews in 1976 and 1975 respectively.

County Council views of the County District relationship

We asked the sample of county councillors whether they felt that the public participation programme had affected inter-authority relations. Twenty five (47%) said that it had affected relationships for the worse and had fed disagreements but 23 (43%) felt that the programme had no influence. However, when probed the reasons for the latter statement proved to be extremely varied. Six councillors felt that there had been no influence because there was general support for public participation throughout the five authorities and four of these respondents went on to say that the programme may have improved matters because it increased contact between them. This sub-sample was in a minority insofar as another 19 councillors who felt that the public participation programme had not affected relations said so because inter-authority links were in such poor shape in any case. Three councillors felt that relationships were improving although they had few illusions and did not see the current situation as without tensions.

The majority of these interviewees appeared to agree with the idea that discussion of all planning matters was a sensitive issue between the county and district authorities. With nearly half the sample saying that public participation work by the county council had compounded or even created disagreements there is further support for the conclusion that planning was a source of inter-authority tension.

County councillors who said that the public participation programme had worsened relations were more likely to be positive towards the programme than councillors who felt that relations were so poor that the programme had little effect.

All the staff in the county planning department that were interviewed in 1975 had some degree of regular contact with district council officers. For the more senior staff including the county planning officer the normal form of contact with district council was in relatively formal meetings often with councillors present. Junior staff were normally in contact with their district council counterparts in working meetings and in consultations where members were not involved. The purpose of formal meetings involving more senior staff was frequently expressed as being for the exchange of information and views "to achieve agreement among the five authorities" or for "tying up loose ends" (for example, in Technical Committee).

A principal working arrangement between the five authorities during phase 1 of structure plan work were the inter-authority working party for officers. A frequent comment was that relationships in the working parties had deteriorated over time.

> ...Districts were helpful early on - we tried to develop individual relationships.
>
> ...The working parties set out saying - 'lets work together and therefore see each other' - but this proved to be naive.
>
> ...Chief officers (in the Districts) have gone against the Working Parties.

It appears that the working parties had failed to work as expected.

...Originally the idea was that the Districts should do work for the Working Parties (but this did not work out).

...We did not anticipate differences being as trivial as they are. I would have become grey haired if the Working Parties had continued.

...Not successful. A victim of time rather than of the system. It became a personal thing, with people having axes to grind.

...We need their help - they don't need ours. They (Working Parties) were successful as a talking shop to study detail but unsuccessful in getting work out of the Districts ... Not useful for getting decisions because level of officers involved was too low.

...Disagreements were nit-picking.

...The Working Parties - everybody contributing work to the subject - that was the idea, but it didn't work like that ... Districts took it as an opportunity to argue and criticise.

...District Council representatives would raise points of principle which could not be solved in the Working Party.

Perhaps the time of these interviews, soon after the demise of the Working Parties and the introduction of frequent meetings (Districts Meeting) between third and fourth tier officers (acting as 'filters' for the contacts between the county council and the district council planning departments) meant that this issue would figure strongly in county officers' consciousness. However, not all senior planners in the county had unfavourable comments about the working parties as a forum for inter-authority working.

...We put out the papers - the Districts have an opportunity to tell us if we are wrong. No trouble on my working parties. They accept the issues I'm dealing with.

This respondent dealt with population, employment and economic aspects of the structure plan, none being a fundamentally contentious issue for the district councils. Other work was much more contentious, for

example, a senior officer felt that for some topics disagreements had been too fundmental for resolution in the working parties.

> ...At the housing meetings - things had to be passed up to a higher level.

We found that a common factor amongst officers who felt that district council involvement in working parties was not successful was membership of Housing and/or Shopping groups.

Only one officer saw the demise of the working parties as due to factors other than the difficulties of county-district relations.

> ...Too much administration, too big, so the Phase 1 Working Parties were abolished.

It seemed that relations at more junior levels of working relations were less unsatisfactory than the higher levels of contact.

> ...Informal contacts at officer level are very useful.
>
> ...Informal meetings more fruitful.

A senior officer gave a different assessment.

> ...I have tried to foster informal contact but it is time-consuming and unproductive.

There were a number of comments about variability in the amount and utility of contact with seperate district council officers but there was no consistency. This suggests that county officers have found some of their counterparts more helpful than others. One respondent seemed to confirm that contacts had got worse over time.

> ...Personally, I have worked with (District Officers) ... a definite advantage. We made progress in Phase 1 in terms of work and number of decisions but this progress has not been maintained. January to June 1975 was unproductive because of the switch in the management system (within the County Planning Department) and we have had to wait for crucial information (from the Districts).

Seven officers were critical or questioned the value of the formal meetings with district council planners and none that we spoke to was wholeheartedly favourable. However, four officers were positive about their informal contacts and only two officers that we spoke to felt that informal links were unsuccessful or unproductive.

Six officers said that if they needed information they would try an informal approach and only resort to a formal request as a last resort. Again it seems that adopting a formal or informal approach depended on the topic and the district council concerned. Positive comments about formal or informal working were received about all but one of the district councils. Nevertheless sensitivity to these informal contacts from the district council side had caused efforts by senior staff in the districts to block these links. The result was more caution about initiating informal channels of information exchange with counterparts.

> ...At first I would have made a personal contact (in order to get information). Not now - it's not fair to ask for information which chief officers may not want to give. Relations have hardened.
>
> ...Because of the embargos, district council policies are difficult to get. No problem with junior officers but its the personalities at higher levels. They fear that we are going to take over their responsibilities.

Thirteen officers said that relationships between county planning staff and the district councils were poor or bad. All mentioned or implied that the division of functions between the tiers was a cause of tension because of possible 'trespass'. Three officers felt that links were poor at the time of these interviews (second half of 1975) but were optimistic about the future and saw improvements in relationships. One officer preferred not to answer the question about the quality of county-district relations and the other two officers who answered felt that relations were good with respect to

some issues and some district councils but poor with respect to others.

> ...Initially the County was reasonable - Districts played it by the book. They were envious of South Yorkshire - resentful of the new power structure. They regarded the County as irrelevant and so jockeyed for position.

Seven officers mentioned that personality differences and clashes of temperament were a reason for the poor relationships between county and districts on planning matters. Four officers felt the new local government system (of divided responsibility) was at fault but three of these respondents felt that the two tier system and the specific personalities found within the district councils exacerbated each other in a cumulative way.

> ...Disagreements are tied up with individuals.

> ...Personalities are just not sympathetic to each other.

> ...Principally, District Council planners can see no need for the County Planning Department because the County Council is weak. The Districts operate as if they are unitary authorities - see no need for the County Council.

> ...The bulk of the reason is the system. I like to think that we are more reasonable than they are. The system is at fault. There are no proper rules. We cannot define roles or tasks, all the way through is conflict ridden. Also there are some unreasonable people among the District Council officers. Irrationality can flourish in a bad system.

The tension between the local government system with its divisions of responsibilities between tiers, professional attitudes towards work which tend towards a rationalistic, non-political search for satisfactory policies and informal personal relationships comes out clearly in some responses.

> ...Officially relations are extremely poor. This comes either through chief officers or politicians. But relations at our level are extremely good. (They) will say - officially I'm instructed to tell

you this ... (but there is trust on both sides) ...and then tell the true story.

...There are good working relations with X ... but he can only go so far before he gets his knuckles rapped.

...I'm pushing for the County to take a harder line to gain respect - to demonstrate our professional competence.

A few officers saw some other sources of poor relations within the county council.

...(We are) affected by something that has happened elsewhere. Conflict over Highways Agency Agreements - affects other contact. Depressing - relationships with opposite numbers get so affected by this role-playing.

...The Districts are not happy with the agency agreements. There are some bad parts within the County. The Passenger Transport Executive is jealous of its powers.

Comparisons were made with previous experience.

...It's appalling in relation to X (former place of work - a shire county council). The reasons are pretty obvious. If the County Council talks about where people might live the Districts don't want it. In South Yorkshire, the Districts are more powerful because there are fewer of them and they have lost power to the County. In X there are ten districts, they are less powerful and they gained power from reorganisation - staff gone to the Districts from the County. Shire Districts find it difficult to get staff.

...In Y there is no such conflict. Z has not so many problems (Y & Z were Metropolitan County Councils). It reflects the County Council and District Council split. Many of the District Councils have the same personnel as before reorganisation.

Four planners felt that relationships would improve once the structure plan was approved because then the division of responsibilities and functions would be clarified. On the other hand another respondent felt that formal submission of the plan would signal new conflict.

...The crunch will be the Examination in Public...then we will see the extent of conflict.

Another saw the publication of the structure plan as marking a change in the locus of county-district relations.

> ...District-County relations will be superseded by County Planners versus other (District) departments. For example, Public Health, Housing and Treasurers.

Six respondents felt that relationships would be resolved by effort on the part of officers and politicians.

> ...Difficulties have got to be resolved ... seek to resolve as often as possible by the attitude of County officers.
>
> ...only if the County Council backs down and is willing to share responsibility with Districts. Then Districts would see us working for them. It's the only way it will work.
>
> ...As planners we are used to being unitary, not professionally adjusted to a binary system. The problem is defining roles in the profession. We will have to draw a line somewhere. In-fighting is about where the line should be drawn.
>
> ...There is scope for more co-operation. They have a lot of work at the local level.
>
> ...I thought we could sort things out in 9 months but it has not worked out that way. Patchy relationships...reasons rest with the members - flexibility, willingness and earnestness (to co-operate) will be reflected in the attitudes of officers.

Three planners felt that the county council should take the lead in resolving relationships or take a tougher line.

> ...The best bet to get a role is to be an effective transportation agency.
>
> ...We can provide a useful information source to the District Councils in terms of strategic issues for local plan matters - but its not a decisive input.

There was a difference of opinion on whether the Department of the Environment could step in to help resolve conflicts. One planner felt that the Regional

Office had not done as much as it could to clarify responsibilities and topic areas. Others disagreed.

> ...The DOE should strengthen the arm of the weaker authority - the Metropolitan County. The ultimate weapon would be no certification for local plans.
>
> ...circulars could make things clearer. Scottish Regional Authorities can call in applications so they have more powers than English authorities...
>
> ...The DOE needs to define roles more specifically.

One of these respondents was not perturbed by some of the disagreements.

> ...I'm not unhappy about conflicts over policy. What annoys me is unwillingness to give information and information is power. Conflict situations are good!

Public Participation and County-District Relations.

The approach taken towards the strategic planning process in South Yorkshire has been discussed elsewhere. The essence of an adapted 'rationalistic' approach was to identify problems within the county area prior to the listing of objectives and the stepwise development of options, strategies and preferred policies. An early approach to the public followed logically from the 'problem-led' process to allow the planners to assess local opinions on environmental matters and concerns. There was a high level of commitment for public participation from the county councillors derived from the manifesto prepared by the County Labour Party prior to the first elections. Senior officers in the County Planning Department were also keen to develop citizen involvement in the planning process. The result was strong internally generated pressure for an early and extensive programme of public participation.

It very soon became clear that this decision was not favoured by the district councils.. What is more questionable is whether the particular approach taken in

the first stage public participation programme by the county planning department was the cause of friction or whether there would have been disagreement irrespective of the form and content of the programme.

An early project paper written by the author in 1974 notes that

> ...(w)hat was to appear as a tactically shrewd approach from the point of view of developing and sustaining public interest during the first year of the new system, may have been politically unwise from the point of view of inter-authority relations. (Darke, 1975, 10)

A major reason for the district councils' developing anxiety about the phase 1 public participation programme was the broad scope, covering a wide range of environmental and planning issues, some of which were felt to step beyond the county councils remit. The topics which the county planners raised for public comment in phase 1 included shops and shopping, housing and local environmental schemes such as play areas and local public open space. The district councils' felt that this was trespassing on their responsibilities and immersed the county planners in matters over which they had no statutory rights or control. Other questions of demarcation were being raised in those early days but the public participation programme being implemented by the county council gave a convenient rod to beat the strategic planners with.

Rumblings of discontent about the public participation work were to emerge at an early stage. For example, the official notes recording the work of the Structure Plan Working Party on Public Particiaption (meeting no. 5, 23 May 1974) indicate that the representative from Barnsley district council planning department had noticed "some confusion" on the part of members of the public attending meetings called by the county council to introduce the first structure plan kit. The confusion was over the

division of responsibility in planning and the Barnsley planner went on the state that the county council should limit itself to seeking public comment about strategic planning matters only.

At later meetings of the public participation working party this criticism was expanded to embrace comment on individual county planning department staff who were seen as not adequately clarifying the distinction between county and district council responsibilities at public meetings. A suggestion made by a district council officer at the sixth working party meeting (19 June 1974) was that it would have been preferable if the district councils had organised and run the public meetings. The district council planners felt that the public comments recieved from the first structure plan kit were more likely to be of use to their work than to the structure plan team.

A second criticism of the county's public participation programe was that excessive contact with the public over planning matters might lead to disillusionment when the local authorities could not 'deliver' the policies that the public wanted.

A further criticism that they had gone ahead with the public participation programme without consulting the district councils was strenuously denied by the county council. Indeed, they argued that the principal purpose of the working party was to ensure consultation and agreement on the programme.

However, the county planning staff agreed to place greater emphasis on strategic issues in the second kit and to give a larger role to the district councils in later public meetings arranged to raise strategic planning issues. County council officers raised (perhaps disingenuously) the question of reciprocal arrangements

whereby county staff could play an active role in meetings arranged by the district councils to discuss local plan matters. District council staff were not unanimously enamoured of this proposal and suggested that the county council would have to spell out the nature and extent of that involvement in the context of the development plan Scheme. The incident indicates that an element of 'tit-for-tat' sparring was emerging in the search for position on the strategic - local boundary.

The kits did provide a good deal of public opinion and comment on environmental issues ranging across the strategic and neighbourhood scale. The county planners indicated that they were willing to make the more localised information available to the districts but their response was to warn the South Yorkshire officers not to disaggregate the information below the district-wide level.

The district councils were invited to participate in filling in the kits and thus offer a disticts' view on environmental problems in their locality. Copies of the kits were sent to district councillors but the response was very limited.

Twelve meetings of the inter-authority working party on public participation were held between February and November 1974. The district councils appear to have become concerned during this period (circa August) about the relatively 'junior' staff involved in the working party and the matters of principle that were being discussed and the commitments that were being agreed (such as county council involvement in consultations and participation in local plan meetings). The outcome was a phasing out of the working parties and the initiation of a 'third tier' inter-authority meeting (Districts Meeting) where a tighter oversight of county-district

discussions on the structure plan could be maintained at a higher level of authority.

Attendance records of the 12 meetings to discuss public participation on the structure plan show that Doncaster MDC sent a representative to only two meetings. On the face of it this was unremarkable given that in the early stages of structure plan preparation a separate 'urban' structure plan was being prepared for Doncaster but Doncaster was seen by some of the county officers as the most 'difficult' of the district councils to work with. Another example of the shifting opinions (and actions) of this period was where Barnsley MDC replaced its 'third tier' representative by a more junior member of staff at the third meeting (again, on the face of it, not suprising as there were several working parties meeting at this time with a substantial drain on staff time).

The demise of the public participation working party was not to mean the end of controversy over the programme of citizen involvement about the structure plan. At the second meeting of the districts meeting (July 1974) the formal attendance of district council staff at meetings arranged by county council with community associations, local pressure groups and other bodies representing local people was pressed by district council officers. Barnsley MDC officers indicated that they were preparing a paper on the roles of county and district councils in planning for the county area and that this would cover contact with the public.

This paper, from the planning assistant from Barnsley MDC who had been involved in the public participation working party, criticised the county of "participation overkill". The county planning officer was so disturbed by this charge that he telephoned the planning assistant concerned to discuss his views. Anecdotal evidence from the planners at Barnsley indicated that the assistant did

not realise to whom he was speaking and after a "vigorous" discussion felt some embarrassment on later learning the identity of the caller. It was during this period that district council officers were complaining that the views being developed in the public participation working party were being overruled by the county planning officer.

The major report arising from phase 1 public participation; Statement of Problems, Satisfactions and Opportunities (SYCC, 1975b) was subjected to criticism by district councils from the early draft stages. The nature of criticism was by now well established; it was said that the county planners should confine themselves to strategic planning matters and to "key issues" relevant to county planning. Many of the subjects in the PSO report were not considered to be county matters. As an example of this concern which rumbled on through inter-authority meetings of planning staff from August to December 1974 was the debate in Technical Committee on 27 November. Chief officers from the district councils raised their concerns in the presence of DOE Regional Office staff. Shopping was specifically identified but housing, environmental improvement and other detailed planning matters were raised at other times and places in this long running dispute on the boundary between local and strategic planning.

Towards the end of 1974 county council planning officers proposed setting up a broad inter-authority liaison group on public participation in planning. They were aware that the district councils were proceeding with a number of public consultations on local planning matters without inviting county council involvement. At the following meeting of Districts Meeting (17 December 1974) a counter claim was made by the district council officers that the county council had embarked on a process which was building up public expectations on environmental change

and development over which the county council had no direct control.

However, as the year drew to a close (as did the phase 1 programme of public participation) the focus of county-district skirmishing over responsibilities moved on to other issues.

The inaugural meeting of the Structure Plan Sub-Committee of Joint Consultative Committee was held on 28 February 1975 with the county council's "Approach to Public Participation" report (SYCC, 1974d) as an agenda item. The response from district councillors was that it should be the elected members who make decisions not members of the public. A more familiar comment was that the kit exercise led to comments that were specific to localities and not relevant to the structure plan. It was also reiterated that the programme was confusing to the public. One district councillor felt that if the county council had approached his staff they could have been given most of the information without talking to the public.

At a later JCC structure plan sub-committee a Rotherham district councillor asserted that too much time had been taken up "by the silly structure plan Kits", in a debate which one senior professional in the county planning department described as a "constant attack" akin to facing a "battering ram". The chair of this meeting (the chair of county planning committee) asked members if they considered the public participation programme to have been "valueless" or had taken too long. A vociferous Rotherham MDC councillor agreed and added that "public participation is irrelevant to the structure plan" and was unfair "because it got people interested in things which are not strategic planning matters".

The JCC structure plan sub-committee of 17 October 1975 was to see a continuation of district council antagonism towards the programme. A member from Rotherham MDC asked for information on the form of public participation proposed for later stages of structure plan preparation.

> ...What the man in the street says is absolutely useless. Where is the public participation from the members point of view? The District Councils feel that the County is not getting anywhere with participation. What we want is more member participation!

Later criticism centred on the time set aside for analysis of public comment on options for the structure plan.

> ...Seventy or eighty per cent of the points made will be irrelevant anyway. The really meaty stuff will not take three months to analyse. There will not be much that is relevant. The only relevant form of public participation takes place at the local level, when it's in their own backyard and they know what they are talking about.
> (Rotherham MDC member, JCC structure plan sub-committee, 17 October 1975)

The chief executive for Barnsley MDC had reservations about the public participation proposals at draft structure plan stage when this was discussed at JCC structure plan sub-committee on 29th April 1976 saying that the Phase 1 experience had produced "anything but answers on strategic planning".

The interviews with members and officers in the district councils that were carried out some time after the phase 1 work on the structure plan (1977) and hence allowed respondents the benefit of reflection and hindsight. When asked about the phase 1 public participation work, district councillors were almost universally critical. Some were against public participation per se (all Doncaster MDC interviewees were cool or negative about citizen participation in principle). Other comments from MDC interviewees took the view that .approaches to the

public had to be sensitively handled and criticised the South Yorkshire approach.

Specific comments from district council interviewees were that the county council had

> ...dived in too early and the public did not understand much of what went off (Barnsley MDC member, 25 May 1977).

> ...With the initial public participation the County had got the types who were going to be involved in things anyway, so they did not get a cross section of views (ibid.).

Other comment was that the county had "...got off on the wrong foot by going into too much detail" (Rotherham MDC member, 17 May 1977) or had failed to effectively target their inquiries. "...People talked about footpaths and local issues" (Barnsley MDC member, 26 May 1977) or made comments on "...bus shelters or the types of tree they wanted planting" (Rotherham MDC member, 17 May 1977).

The kits were considered to have been unsuccessful. "...They didn't take off - not got through - not a hit" (Rotherham MDC member, 23 May 1977). A Sheffield MDC officer criticised the raising of expectations.

> ...The County Council was unable to deliver the goods promised to the public at the start. This worried (Sheffield MDC) at the beginning.

The Leader of Rotherham MDC felt that the county council had queered his council's pitch and as a consequence the district council had suffered the accusation from the public that local councillors did not take account of their views. A Sheffield MDC member (who had also been a South Yorkshire councillor during the first term) said that "...group involvement in the South Yorkshire Public Participation exercise was not a bad thing, but the results were not clear" (Sheffield MDC member, 1 June 1977). He went on to say that

> ...the whole exercise died after 1975...People have become more cynical of the process since 1974...Now people are saying 'It's only an exercise. What comes out of it?' This attitude breeds apathy. (ibid.)

A Sheffield MDC officer showed more understanding of the county council's rationale.

> ...The timing of the Public Participation exercise has been fair. There is a need to have a lot of public participation in the beginning and South Yorkshire did this excellently. It is inevitable that there will be a gap in the middle. This is when planners are working on drafts and options. (Sheffield MDC officer, 20 June 1977)

Nevertheless he went on to say that

> ...Public Participation in the South Yorkshire Structure Plan has been the biggest disappointment of the whole process. When it started three years ago, the Public Participation exercise was the best in the country - virtually. It was the most ambitious. As the planning process proceeded it became more of a disappointment and there was less interest in it. The public and the groups involved have been sold down the river, because there is no clear evidence that the results of the exercise have influenced the Draft Structure Plan. (ibid.)

A Rotherham officer said that the public had become punch drunk and confused.

> Public participation takes place in so many different instances and ways. Some officers are finding it difficult to get through to the public now. (Rotherham MDC officer, 17 May 1977).

What is difficult to disentangle from these comments is whether they represent antipathy towards public participation itself, criticism of the content of the South Yorkshire exercise or a more general comment on the division of town planning responsibilities between the tiers of metropolitan government.

A considered view on some of these blurred distinctions came from senior staff in the planning department in Barnsley MDC. Making comment on the participation programme was complex in their view.

> ...On the one hand, it's an exercise in its own right and there are some faults but it's certainly as good as other people have done. It's not perfect and people have criticised ... parts of it. But then you have got to look at it in the context in which it is done and we always felt that it was a little bit irresponsible.
> (Barnsley MDC officer, 13 May 1977)

He went on to say that when his local authority had approached groups on local plan matters they found that the groups had previously been contacted by the county council which created embarrassment for the local planners and confusion for the public.

His colleague added to the analysis.

> ...There are two ways of looking at participation. If you accept what I call the therapeutic argument - that any participation exercise is good therapy for people, because it gets them used to talking to councillors and to officers; gets them used to talking to councillors and to officers; gets them used and practicised, then this is a good thing... We need more channels opened up and we want people to be able to come up and buttonhole an officer or member and develop that skill and expertise.
> The second, the resource-based or Sherry Arnstein, approach is 'don't participate unless you have got something to participate with'. In other words you have got to have something on the table, some money, some resources, something real to offer. If you haven't got something real and meaningful for the person you are offering (to) then steer clear of it.
> If you accept the first approach then it (the South Yorkshire Programme) has been a qualified failure.
> If you accept the second, then it's been a disaster.
> (Barnsley MDC officer, 13 May 1977)

His colleague took up the theme (these two officers had requested that they be interviewed together).

> ...Mentioning Sherry Arnstein, there is a danger in thinking you are three steps up the ladder when you are really just starting on the first. Some of the things they did may have given that impression. I think later they learnt and I don't think they did initially but because of enthusiasm there may have been the implication that people were further up the rungs.
> People were talking about issues, no members of that group (County Planning Department officers) had

> absolutely any responsibility whatsoever for them (issues). (They were) not even officers of the authority actually handling the issue... If we go (to the public) and talk about something which we do not have (specific) responsibility for, at least the Authority does (have that responsibility). In this case their Authority had no responsibility at all and we knew what the response was.
> (Barnsley MDC officer, 13 May 1977)

They went on to talk of the county officer in charge of the public participation programme.

> ...(P)erhaps he is still the most committed person and it is very difficult for him to accept the point (about participation overkill). He's really in the therapeutic school - it's good per se, for getting people talking - If you accept that, if you believe it, you reject people who say it queers the pitch for something that is more meaningful, by definition, because each thing helps you in getting better.
> Now what we are saying (is that) if you do one and there is nothing there, people will lose out, then you won't get proper involvement in the next one.
> (ibid.)

Asking specifically whether the experience of phase 1 public participation had changed the nature of county-district relations drew a mixed response.

> ...The exercise has not affected County/District relations. The County's job is to produce a struture plan and that is it. We will oppose issues which are bad for our own Authority.
> (Doncaster MDC member, 4 July 1977)

The implication was that relationships were not particularly poor, a view that was explicitly accepted by the chief planner for Doncaster in saying that relations "had never been really bad" even if " there has been some confrontation - sometimes bitter".

No such unananimity was found among the Barnsley members that were interviewed. One described the programme as an "aggravation" whereas the chair of planning committee said that the programme was not an influence on inter-authority relations. Both agreed, however, that

relationships were not good nor did they show any sign of inproving.

The chair of Rotherham MDC planning committee told us that inter-authority relations were "good" and that his local authority was most cooperative and tolerant of the new county council. An officer felt of the public participation programme that,

> ...in the long term it has improved relationships. It has given pointers to where the District Councils' ought to be going. At one particular meeting (Structure Plan Sub-Committee, Joint Consultative Committee) there had been a lot of verbal haggling and it was unfortunate that the subject of the Kits was brought up.
> (Rotherham MDC officer, 22 June 1977)

This interviewee went on to say that one of the key Rotherham councillors with a professional interest in town planning had been strongly "...anti-County and (his remarks) had coloured the prejudice which had lasted for about 12 months after that particular meeting. His going altered a lot of things" (ibid.). (The member referred to gained a Parliamentary seat in the mid 1970s).

> ...Relationships have changed. At first the 4 District Councils were looking for common interests against the County Council. Now the relationship is developing. Rotherham has come more in line with the County Council and might be drawing away from other Districts. (ibid.)

In the opinion of this officer the phase 1 public participation programme was an important element in forging closer inter-authority relations. "It kept the dialogue going, kept us together. We go on talking even if we disagree".

This respondent's view of the past relationship between Rotherham County Borough and West Riding County Council contrasts with the views presented by Doncaster members and oficers. Rotherham was said to have had a "good working" contact with the former county.

Sheffield planning officers were generally dismissive of the notion that the public participation programme had influenced inter-authority relations. The principal difficulty was seen as the blurred division of planning functions. One of Sheffield councillors (who become Leader soon after the interview) said that concerns about public participation had made relationships "much worse".

Both members and officers in the districts were concerned about the possible loss of power and control over some aspects of the future development of their locality. The issue of the county council's approach to public participation became the butt of a demarcation dispute that would not go away. We have concluded that any element of town planning functions and processes could have become the basis of inter-authority conflict given the formal division of responsibilities built into the system after 1972. It so happened that given the 'problem-led' process favoured by South Yorkshire county planning committee and department and the intention to undertake extensive public participation in structure plan preparation that the latter became one of the issues around which the power struggle was fought. However, there were other scenes in the evolving and dynamic drama.

The Development Plan Scheme.

The 1972 Local Government Act introduced the mechanism of a development plan scheme to provide an inter-authority framework for the preparation of local plans in county areas. The scheme was to indicate priorities for local plan work. County councils were charged under the Act with putting together the scheme in consultation with district councils. The lead role taken by the county council was logical given that structure plan policies would indicate the principal areas of development growth

and change and hence the major locations for local plan preparation. When local plans were prepared the legislation required the county council to negotiate and grant a certificate of conformity to show that the local plan took account of structure plan policies and proposals and dovetailed local policies into the overall planning framework for the county area.

The South Yorkshire county planning department proposed in late 1973 that the 4 district councils each contribute towards a listing of local plans already prepared or in preparation "to provide a basis to launch the preparation of schedules" for future local plan work. The county planning department wished to obtain information from the district councils on

1) transitional plans for each Metropolitan District Council with each plan named, listed and mapped.
2) details of local plans (prepared or already in the proces of preparation)
   a) type and title of plan and area
   b) purpose and scope of plan
   c) programme for preparation of local plans including start year and an indication of priority in the MDC's development plan programme
   d) responsibility assigned for local plan preparation (whether joint working with other local authority, etc.)
3) index map of the extent of district plans

A draft development plan scheme was circulated within the county planning department in February 1974 and was also sent to DOE Regional Office in Leeds as part of a larger document entitled "Local Government Reorganisation - Planning Documents". The document summarised the purpose and scope of four papers which were considered necessary elements of the town planning system within the county at that time. The 4 documents were a) the draft development plan system, b) the development control scheme (for coordinating development control procedures and decisions between the 5 authorities) c) the structure plan project report (which detailed county-district procedures and organisational matters for structure plan preparation)

and d) a 'handover' document (a listing of all plans and planning policies relevant to planning applications/ decisions at 1st April 1974 - the effective date of local government reorganisation).

The composite document was "to assist in securing the constructive relationship referred to in para. 7 of DOE Circular 74/73" and followed the guidelines provided by the annexes, for example, with respect to the development sontrol scheme (DCS). Whilst agreeing with the circular in that the DCS was an informal arrangement (development control being essentially a district council function) the county council noted that the DPS and the certification of local plans were statutory procedures requiring formal agreement and cooperative working. An 'interim' arrangement was necessary whereby priority areas were to be identified for the preparation of local plans until the structure plan was approved. This necessity was supported in the circular by the argument that by this means "the proposals of the Structure Plan will be prejudiced as litle as possible".

The county planning officer made a presentation about inter-authority collaboration on planning matters to the county planning committee in March 1974 and the draft DPS was sent to the 4 MDC planning departments in May 1974. At this time, Rotherham was the only district planning department to have returned its listing of currently prepared or ongoing local plans in response to the request from the county council.

The draft DPS was a substantial document which reiterated the Government's thinking and advice on inter-authority working and covered the rationale for cooperative working,the statutory position and procedures, types of local plan envisaged in the Act, statements about their preparation, publicity and public participation, certification and adoption.

District council acceptance of the scheme was not automatic and the next few months saw a considerable informal amd formal debate about it and other joint working arrangements. The main arguments against the county scheme raised by the district councils were doubts about the ability of the structure plan to provide a framework for local planning and that a single scheme for all 4 district councils was inappropriate. The latter suggestion came from Doncaster MDC where an 'urban' structure plan was still being prepared at that time.

In August 1975 draft development plan schemes for Barnsley and Rotherham MDCs were put before county planning committee and a number of unresolved matters were identified. The next step was to seek approval from the relevant district councils. The DOE Regional Office was informed of progress (presumably to indicate that Sheffield and Doncaster councils had not progressed so far with discussion of the schemes for their areas). A memo from the county planning officer to the county chief executive indicated that draft schemes for Doncaster and Sheffield would be at the stage of being forwarded to the two councils for approval "within a few weeks". However, the delay had been a cause of renegotiation of the draft proposals. Internal memos within the county planning department at this time indicated some concern that the draft DPS and priorities for structure plan preparation were largely being decided by the district councils and that a county-wide view was being lost as a result. County council staff were worried that district council reaction "may lead to alteration of the present schedules" (internal memo, SYCC Planning Department, 11 September 1975).

By late 1975 the draft DPS's for Rotherham and Barnsley had not reached the relevant district councils having 'got stuck' with the county chief executive. They had

been sent to the chief executive for vetting in terms of their legal/formal content, a normal sequence with all major documents affecting inter-authority working. The vetting process had become more laboured as inter-authority relations had become more conflictual. The chief executive's department had become more sensitive about not fuelling controversy with the district councils and this effectively slowed down the publication of any potentially contentious material. Planning staff in the county were getting increasingly agitated believing that the cause of delay would be blamed on the planning department rather than their chief executive or the district councils. Meanwhile, Sheffield and Doncaster MDCs had not made any formal comment on the draft schemes that they had been sent in June 1974.

A review of the correspondence between the county planning department and Sheffield MDC over the draft DPS helps to identify some of the background to delay. A letter from Sheffield's chief planning officer sent to the county council in January 1975 indicates that his local authority "has little constructive comment on the draft DPS" provided by the county council because of disagreement on most of the views expressed and belief that the county council would be unable to carry out "some of the stated intentions".

Specifically, the letter questioned the ability of the structure plan to provide a framework for local plans. The chief planning officer for Sheffield argued that the structure plans were intended as broadly based documents comprising written policies whilst local plans were graphically presented plans to guide physical development. The county council proposal that concurrent local and structure plan preparation will provide a means of testing the feasibility of planning strategies in the structure plan was also queried with the argument that the differing time scales of structure plan and local

plan policies and proposals did not allow valid comparisons between the two. The county's draft development plan scheme was also criticised for not mentioning the effect of the 10 or so local plans already in existence in Sheffield. The comment notes that these plans are expected to cover a substantial proportion of the future development in the city through the period up to the end of the century. A number of other comments are made including concern at the idea of "informal certification" which seems to be seen as a way of seeking agreements on local plans without having to go through committee approval. The fear here may be that planning officers could commit the district council to provisions that were not generally acceptable to the local authority.

The county planning officer's reply took a conciliatory tone suggesting that the two local authorities were not far apart in their perceptions of the scheme. Specifically he argued that the distinction between structure and local plans was not as sharp as the chief planner for Sheffield had indicated.

In March 1975 a draft DPS prepared by Sheffield MDC was forwarded to the county council. A principal variation from the county scheme was the elimination of any mention of mechanisms for management of the development plan scheme. Similarly there was no mention of county council monitoring of local plan work. Rather than an initial three year period of operation of the scheme followed by a review, the Sheffield scheme also suggested that the review be undertaken after 12 months. The effect of these proposed changes to the county's favoured scheme was sufficient to deadlock discussions for many months. No agreement had been reached by the end of 1975 nor was a formal agreement ever to emerge. The Government eventually deciding that there was little need for such schemes as they became less commited to structure

planning and to the two tier local government system in the metropolitan areas.

Advice Note 1/73 from the DOE was still current in the late 1970s insofar as it had not been formally overturned. Yet the number of agreed schemes was relatively limited and where there were formally agreed schemes they were left unrevised and became increasingly out of date (Healey, 1983, 82). The passing of the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act effectively put an end to the requirement for local planning authorities to prepare development plan schemes. Partial exemptions from this task had been given under the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act which allowed local plans for the inner city to be deposited without county council approval as long as they were in conformity with the structure plan. The 1980 Act allowed local plan adoption in advance of structure plan approval (with Secretary of State agreement). A further reduction in the power of county councils' over local planning matters was the withdrawal of their veto over applications for planning permission.

It has been suggested that these amendments were part of Government concern at achieving speedier planning decisions and reducing barriers to development. However, it could also be seen as part of a growing disillusionment with the two tier system and a portent for the eventual abolition of the metropolitan county councils.

Highway Agency Agreements

The 1972 Local Government Act confirmed county councils as the highways authorities but under section 187 allowed them to set up agency agreements whereby the district councils could be given responsibilities for the implementation of county matters. The maintenance and construction of highways was one of the functions where

such agreements could be reached. There was a strong rationale for agency work in highways. Prior to local government reorganisation in the metropolitan areas the large former county boroughs had been responsible for highways work and they had an established structure and organisation for this activity, including the professional staff and manual (direct labour) workforce. Established staff were said to have been reluctant to move into the newly formed metropolitan county councils. The district councils were able to point to the agency provision in seeking to retain some control over this function. In 5 MCCs (outside London) substantial amounts of highways agency work was agreed (Flynn, Leach & Vielba, 1986, 84). The exception was West Yorkshire where little work on highways was devolved to the districts (the exception was Bradford MDC where the council claimed the right to maintain unclassified urban roads). The traditional role of the former West Riding County Council in carrying out the construction and maintenance of roads in the wide flung rural areas accounts for the continuity. In South Yorkshire there was an acknowledgement from the MDCs that the county was the legitimate highways authority but they also argued that there was good reason for allowing agency agreements given their prior experience in organising and managing roadworks and a belief that the local workforce would be less settled and more disturbed if they were required to be part of a mobile countywide team of labour. It was also suggested that MDC teams of workers would be more efficient than a countywide team. In the interviews with district councillors it was stated that as a precepting authority (in terms of rate income) the county was cushioned from both public criticism of high levels of spending and rate levy and the full force of bargaining about local government financial settlements and the levels of central government grant. The district councils believed that they were more concerned with value for money and efficient use of resources.

A Sheffield MDC member who also held a county seat in the first Council (and who later went on to a seat in Parliament) felt that the highways agency agreement issue was mainly fought around the question of workforce. The city council argued that they had a highly efficient works department geared up to road repair, maintenance and construction and there was little reason for change. His open support for allowing highways agency agreements led to difficulties over his split allegiance to two local authorities. In putting the views of Sheffield MDC before those of the county council in meetings at county hall he was threatened with having the whip withdrawn and therefore losing his membership of the South Yorkshire Labour Group. It was just this kind of double bind that led to the Sheffield District Labour Party ruling against councillors standing for both local authorities after 1977. Alongside the dispute over highways agency agreements was a concurrent battle within Sheffield MDC to bring the powerful city engineers department to heel over road planning and design standards. Sheffield council was at this time developing a large 'greenfield' area in the south east of the city (Mosborough) and some of the key members of Sheffield planning committee were getting annoyed at the way that the county engineers were insisting on carriageway widths, sightlines and setbacks in road design which created 'prairie planning' rather than the favoured, compact, higher density neighbourhood design. The retention of agency work could be used as a bargaining chip in bringing the Engineers to heel and showing the professionals that members and paymasters were working to a wider agenda.

The county council were not keen to allow agency agreements because from their point of view to have control of all highways work would allow uniform management practices and more flexibility in work planning. Both the county council and the MDCs found the

delays in agreeing whether to accept agency agreements or not to be irritating. The county council was annoyed because it delayed their rationalisation of roads work in the county, the MDCs because of their concern over the break up of established Works teams. One district councillor saw the inability of the county to agree to agency as being due to "vested interests attempting to retain or take responsibilities which help to justify the existence of County Council Departments". The counter charge seems not to have been acknowledged or percieved.

There was an interesting illumination of the claim made by Flynn, Leach and Vielba that West Yorkshire was able to retain highways work because of the past organisation of the roads programme under the former West Riding County Council from the work in South Yorkshire. Officers at Doncaster MDC noted that their members had "an almost universal dislike of relations with the County Council" because they could recall the way that they were treated by members from the former County. They recalled that West Riding County Council's treatment of RDC and UDC councillors before reorganisation was "degrading". Specifically, we were told that several Doncaster members recall the delegated agreements whereby they had to attend a referencing committee where planning matters for their areas were discussed. They were invited into the committee at the appropriate time and then asked to leave whilst the county councillors made their decision. The RDC/UDC members were only told of the decisions after the meeting and felt demeaned by the process.

The highways agency issue continued to reverberate despite the MDCs getting their way. In 1976 the county council decided to assert its responsibility for highways work "at the cost of considerable inter-tier contention" (Flynn et al. 1985, 86). One of our Sheffield council respondents said in interview that this "created difficulties for the Works Department... Sheffield City

Council went to the Minister for a ruling on agency work..." which was given in favour of Sheffield". This councillor continued by saying that the dispute and the ruling further soured county-district relations for some time although by the time of the interview (mid 1977) he felt that rapport was beginning to develop again.

Several of the Sheffield respondents talked of a clash of personalities as a factor in poor inter-authority relations during the 1970s and this was more frequently said about officer relations. Some staff were difficult in the sense of appearing not to want cooperation at any price. We did ask about professional careers and found that several senior officers in the MDCs had applied for posts in the county council and had not been succesful. It is an open question whether it can be inferred from this that personal jealousies and resentment underlay some of the tensions that we found in inter-authority relations but comments by district council officials about the enhanced pay levels received by professional staff in county Departments were not unknown.

Conclusion

The history of county-district relations in South Yorkshire shows that conflict was never far below the surface during the 1970s. Frequently the underlying tensions erupted into open disagreement. For many of the officers in the front line the position was to become debilitating as skirmishing and the apparent inability for staff from county or district to understand the other point of view became entrenched. The reasons for friction were several and included structural factors such as the divided functions between the tiers of local government after the 1972 Act. The blurred division between the structure plan for a county area and the local plans for smaller areas of development pressure also contributed to tension. Sitting alongside the

structural limitation to harmonious inter-authority relations the depth of problems and needs within South Yorkshire provided a difficult context for preparing a long term strategic planning framework for the county. Yet personal factors cannot be dismissed as being irrelevant to inter-authority relations. There are few innocent parties.

Central-Local relations

The influence of central government pervaded the structure planning process from the outset. This applied in South Yorkshire as elsewhere. The county council was unable to proceed with plan preparation until the official commencement order was received from the Department of the Environment (DOE) and once the planning process had begun much of what the planners set out to do was constrained and motivated by the legal requirements built into the legislation and the associated regulations. In addition the Department issued advice and technical information from time to time. The existence of this common core of statutes and advice should not be taken to imply a common structure plan process or indeed a similar relationship in all cases between central government and the county councils. Bristow notes that

> the law and regulations supposedly provide a process to which all county planning departments conform, but the reality is of each seperate county exploiting the legal and bureaucratic system in such a way as to maximise its own interests as perceived at the time of policymaking and plan production. (Bristow, 1983, p.231)

The dynamics of the central local relationship around the structure planning process in the 1970s include the particular interpretations that county councils placed upon the legal and administrative requirements. The government's intentions were spelled out in the legislation and Bridges provides a useful summary.

> The 1968 reforms were based on the concept of an hierarchical division of plan and decision-making functions. Within this hierarchy the structure plan would have a central role, at once serving to interpret national and regional policies within the local context and providing a strategic framework for more detailed local plans and development control decisions. At the same time the structure plan was intended to be integrative across a range of major land-using activities such as housing, employment and industry, and transportation. (1979, p.243)

The structure plan was seen by the legislature as having an important positive role in the British land-use planning system. Barker notes that the

> essentially negative character of development control does not apply to structure planmaking. The law says...that each local planning authority should prepare a survey and a structure plan; and that the DOE (Secretary of State) may do the work itself or get another local planning authority to do it, and claim the cost from the defaulting authority. (Barker, 1983, p.272)

The law, therefore, gave the DOE considerable powers under the default provision. This overriding power which was known (although rarely mentioned) to all planning authorities as one of the more extreme options for use by the centre if they did not fulfil their duties. In the late 1970s it began to look as though this option might have been invoked by the DOE against one or two recalcitrant local authorities that were not convinced of the need for a structure plan in their areas. Whitehall and ministers were continuously appraised of structure plan progress through the system of DoE Regional Offices set up in 1964-1965 to provide a more localised outpost of central government on matters of planning and environment. A close working relationship was able to develop between structure plan authorities and DOE local staff as a consequence of the decentralised system.

Clearly, a principal, if not the foremost, source of direction to local planning authorities was the legislation. The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act consolidated in the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act (particularly Part II on Development Plans as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 1972 to bring the planning system into line with the Local Government Act 1972) required the production of a structure plan setting out the 'local authority's policy and general proposals in respect of the development and

other use of land in that area'. The Act indicated that due regard should be given to national and regional policies and the plans of neighbouring local authorities. The intention was to develop a long term strategy for the counties and provide a framework and statutory basis for local plans. The Acts indicate that local planning authorities have a duty to institute a survey of their area to examine matters which may be expected to affect the development if the area and spelt out the specific topics which should be included in the survey. The Acts also indicate the form of the structure plan (specifically a written statement accompanied by diagrams, illustrations and descriptive matter and lists other details and information that would normally be expected to be contained in the plan). The publicity that was required and the process that the plan had to pass through before the Secretary of State for the Environment granted approval was contained in the legislation. The SoS was also given powers under the Acts to make regulations with respect to the form and content of the plan and the procedures to be followed throughout the planning processs (from preparation to repeal and replacement). Regulations were produced under this supplementary power.

The first major advisory document to be issued by the government as an aid to structure plan preparation was the expensively produced Development Plan Manual (MHLG, 1970). The manual offered a series of hypothetical examples of different forms of (new) development plan introduced under the Acts. Yet the early period in the evolution of the new development planning system was one of considerable change and flux in the content and responsibility for structure plans. Whilst the manual has been seen as representing a move away from an essentially physical view of planned development by proposing that the social, economic and physical systems of an area be considered and planned for this was

qualified by the phrase "so far as they are subject to planning control or influence" (MHLG, 1970, para.3.6). Already we can see scope for ambiguous interpretation of the content of plans or at least the potential for variety in how local planning authorities might understand the advice. The matters to be directly subject to planning control and influence were proposals for physical development but the manual could be taken to indicate support for the inclusion of social and economic concerns and policy. This potential for varied interpretation gave scope for disagreement between centre and locality and between spatially contiguous or concurrent local authorities on what might bethe appropriate approach to structure planning. Among the most contentious of the matters relating to form and content (and the cause of frequent disagreement particularly between county and district councils) was the potential range of topics in the structure plan and the level of detail that the upper tier authority could introduce.

The development plan manual identified seven closely related functions for the structure plan. These were

> interpreting national & regional policies,
> establishing aims, policies and general proposals,
> providing a framework for local plans,
> indicating action areas,
> providing guidance for development control,
> providing a basis for co-ordinating decisions,
> bringing main planning issues & decisions before Minister and public.

Official statements about the purpose and function of structure plans went through several changes during the 1960s and 1970s. For example, the PAG report of 1965 saw the structure plan as presenting and clarifying the local authority's development objectives alongside the purpose of providing a base for detailed planning and development control (Planning Advisory Group, 1965). This initial interpretation was strongly directed at the physical aspects of development.

Later presentations of the functions of the structure plan had distilled the list contained in the development plan manual to three main purposes.

> (a) to state and justify, to the public and to the Secretary of State, the authority's policies and general proposals for the development and other use of land in the area concerned (including measures for the improvement of the physical environment and the management of traffic)...
>
> (b) to interpret national and regional policies in terms of physical and environmental planning for the area concerned... (such) policies tend to be primarily economic and social...
>
> (c) to provide the framework and statutory basis for local plans, which then in turn provide the necessary further guidance for development control... (DoE Circular 98/74, 1974, para.3)

This format for presenting the purpose and functions of the structure plan remained unchanged into the late 1970s through the period when over 40 structure plans were finalised and submitted for central approval.

The departmental circular plays a significant role in transmitting central government policy and thinking to local authorities, a role that supplements the more legalistic prose of the Acts. However, the standing of the circular can be unclear. Bristow notes that

> they are not legislative in status; Departmental Circulars are formally a means of guidance by which central government explains its actions, or sets out its intentions or wishes, for the assistance of local government. Compliance is therefore not mandatory (unless required by the legislation), but noncompliance may or may not invoke penalties. Yet even if such advice were mandatory, we may be reasonably certain of one thing, that only the originator of the communication knows the precise shades of meaning contained in its words. For the recipient authority will hold a view of what it thinks central government means by the words which have been used, and how rigid that view (especially if of policy) might be. At the same time it will itself be developing an interpretation and understanding of the words, and hence its own interpretation of the concepts and policies

contained in the communication as it perceives them. For example, if we were to take from the above circular [NB. DoE Circular 4/79, 1979 which reiterated the three main purposes of the structure plan expounded in Circular 98/74] the statement "Structural matters...are proposals of the county planning authority which are subject to approval by the Secretary of State", it seems admirably clear. Yet immediately we can see that the Secretary of State's approval or discretion in relation to appropriate policies could well change over time, and that the change might not always be known immediately to the planning authority. More indirectly, do all counties necessarily have the same view of structural matters as the Secretary of State, and if not, are such matters worthy of inclusion in a structure plan? In such seemingly simple questions lie the seeds of divergence and disagreement. But a more fundamental issue remains. Although variations in textual interpretation may occur, and do on occasion lead to legal action, they need be of only marginal importance if the fundamental objectives and attitudes of each side are the same. This need not, however, be the case. If objectives diverge or the approach to policy solution is different, then misinterpretations, as perceived by each side, become not only more possible and plausible, but they also provide vehicles for one side to oppose the objectives and policies of the other. Each is looking for loopholes in the statements of the other. There is, of course, a limit beyond which such opposition is not effective, and which is normally determined by the relative powers and resources of each side; but obstruction may still occur in quest of the most favourable compromise - favourable as seen by each side as it seeks to bring about change beneficial to its own interests in the formulation and implementation of an agreed policy. (Bristow, 1983, pps. 232-233)

Statutes, regulations and departmental advice thus provide elucidation of the government's intentions in policy-making but do not guarantee conformity or convergence of principle and practice across the country.

A further factor in variability in the interpretation and incorporation of central directive and advice is the mediating role played by the DoE regional office. The eight offices act as a funnel for information transmitted from Whitehall as well as passing back to the centre any information and questions that arise at the 'coalface' as

a result of implementation of the planning system. Within Whitehall the headquarters office of the DoE includes a branch (Development Plans and Regional Policy -DPRP) which maintains overall liaison and supervision of the structure planning process.

> The regional offices and this headquarters branch have both had parallel or, increasingly, mixed sections of professional planner and administrative officials who, between them, have been supposed to ensure that advice and instructions to the counties and districts have been coherent and consistent. A national policy that there should be a single type of plan, made in roughly similar fashion and based on broadly standardised planning policies and asumptions, has been applied and monitored by this two-tier and half-professionalised civil service machine. It must then consider all formal objections to the submitted plan, consider and approve the authority's report of the public consultation arrangements, and decide which objectors and other interested persons to invite to contribute to the EIP. The DOE appoints the EIP panel, of course, and tells them what topics they must examine and report upon. The DOE gives the panel a brief to assist their work and then considers their report before announcing its proposed modifications.
> For any particular county's plan, 'the DOE' consists largely of the appropriate regional ofice, acting mainly under the authority of its regional controller (planning) and its superintending planner... (Barker, 1983, pps. 272-273)

Barker goes on to note that the 'high priests' of structure planning were to be found in DoE at Marsham Street within DPRP who have taken more than a technical or theoretical approach to structure planning by active involvement in defining the substance of strategic planmaking.

Monthly meetings between the directors and planning controllers of the eight regional offices and headquarters staff within DPRP have, in principle, allowed the transmission of information, advice and problems in both directions. Headquarters staff are in the best position to identify the spectrum of structure plan activity that was emerging and during the 1970s kept

a close eye on progress in structure plan preparation. Regional offices could hold a more partial perspective on issues, problems and progress on structure planning because of their involvement with a sample of structure plan authorities. In addition, Barker notes that liaison between Whitehall and the regional outposts was not perfect.

> The county councils could also face an inconsistent response from central government when dealing with different divisions in the DoE. Minerals extraction questions, housing matters and pollution were dealt with by separate divisions at headquarters office. These divisions have a range of tasks which extend well beyond strategic planning. Some divisions have been decentralised to Bristol (rural affairs and wildlife conservation) which exacerbated the potential for inconsistency in central advice or inadequate liaison with the structure plan authorities.
>
> Whatever the problem, however, it has been the job of the regional office to shape and convey to the county planning department in question what each interested DoE division may want to say about the emerging plan. (Barker, 1983, p.273)

Beyond the problems of intra-departmental coordination the matter of consistency in central government advice is further exacerbated where county planning departments liaise with other central departments. As county planning departments are required and advised to consult with almost every domestic government department, nationalised industry and other governmental/ quasi-government agencies the local planning authority is faced with a difficult task. Equally, DoE regional office staff face a tricky task of staying abreast of the contacts and advice that county departments receive during the course of structure plan preparation. This observation is given added point when it has been noted that one of the most serious weaknesses of the British system of government is the less than effective levels of

cooperation and communication between government departments.

The relevance of these observations in relation to structure planning is that the counties were attempting to assess the validity of their approaches to structure planning (particularly in the early stages of plan preparation) principally through contacts with DoE regional office. Many were equally keen to receive information about official response to the plans that had already been submitted for approval and the line that had been taken by panels at examinations in public. There was also, in the case of South Yorkshire, where county - district relations were tense, an element of jockeying for position and relative advantage with respect to justifying their policy stance at the future examination in public. It was common for professional officers to quote the legislation or DoE advice to support their position in county-district meetings or to refer to other local authority plans and examinations in public to indicate likely government response during the official inter-authority meetings held to progress structure plan work. DoE regional office staff would also quote examples to support their comments on the planning process and policies.

From the South Yorkshire case study we can find several examples of precedents drawn from other areas of the country being used by professional officers to support their views on the interpretation of central advice. These included

i) county staff referring to the examination in public on the East Sussex structure plan and the DoE decision on housing land issues (JCC/SP Sub, 9 January 1976)

ii) county staff referring to the examination in public on the East Sussex structure plan and the DoE decision on

development of industrial sites and applications for development (JCC/SP Sub, 16 August 1976)

iii) county staff referring to the examination in public on a West Midlands structure plan and comments from the panel on the level of detail in the plan (JCC/SP Sub, 17 October 1975)

iv) county staff observing that the Hereford and Worcester structure plan was almost sent back for revision by the DoE because of superficiality with respect to a number of policies especially transportation (JCC/SP ,Sub, 15 July 1975).

At the JCC/SP Sub-Committee in October 1975 the County Planning Officer mentioned the West Midlands examination in public saying that they had sent an observer who had discovered that

> the amount of detail in the plan was quite fantastic. The official response to the Worcester plan was that the level of detail was not sufficient. It is all very well for the district councils to say that detail should be cut out of our policies but the DoE require a certain amount of detail.

Barker records that the eight DoE regional offices did not begin strcture plan work on exactly the same basis. Although the network of regional offices originated at the same time there were "some variations of style and resources according to the importance of the region, individual senior officials, and, perhaps local psychology concerning independence from London" (op cit, p.275). In general the style of regional office interaction with local authorities has been portrayed as strongly directive. The Rayner Review of the Civil Service included a study of the DoE/DoT regional offices and they were seen as *dirigiste* in relations to local government. The professional planners

> provide a regular flow of technical and planning policy advice to the local authority planners throughout the preparation of each structure plan, in order to ensure that the submission as eventually drafted is compatible with Government policies. (DoE/DoT, 1980, p.53)

Although the report makes note of the use of statutory directions and formal procedures as a means to maintain progress on structure plans the more normal regional office style has been informal negotiation and pressure.

> Very well armed with ample legal powers, including the statutory directions to counties to keep moving forward, the regional offices have led local authorities over the novel ground of structure planning. An important final step in preparing the draft plan has been the use of the 'presentation meeting', at which the draft plan was offered for consultation to all interested government departments, with the DOE regional controller in the chair. This meeting has been carefully planned and timed, and sometimes preceded by some bargaining on the substance or wording of the plan to meet certain difficulties. Like the later stage of the EIP, this 'examination in private' may be said to have been somewhat formal in that neither the county nor the regional controller's staff, as the two principal parties, would want a row or any hiatus to develop at this meeting of it could be avoided by prior consultation. (op cit. p.176-277)

The idea of variations in approach and style between different regional offices was raised in passing during our interviews with senior planning officers in the other English metropolitan county planning departments during the fieldwork for this study. The matter was not specifically addressed in our questioning and for that reason no comments on the quality of links with DoE were made by the interviewees in Greater Manchester or Tyne and Wear.

The Merseyside planner indicated that the county council had not relied solely on channelling information and seeking advice through the north west regional office. A direct approach to Whitehall and Members of Parliament had been part of their assessment of their ideas and promotion of structure plan policies. This appeared to

have paid off at the time of the interview (August 1977) despite the comment that "governemt departments in Whitehall were sceptical, at first, of direct lobbying". The major reports that the county had produced in 1975 (Review of Merseyside, and Targets for Merseyside) were widely distributed at the time. The detailed responses that came back from a number of Ministries were considered by the county staff as "unprecedented in respect of a non statutory document". Other cited examples of the positive outcome from this approach were DoI agreement to support advance factory construction in Liverpool inner city, an early MSC scheme for industrial retraining, and a derelict land agreement where the county council was to play a key role as an intermediary between the government and the district councils.

This account tells us as much about the Merseyside approach to structure planning as about central government and civil service style of dealing with local authorities. In Merseyside our interviewee said that their approach was to "get close to government policy-making" and this had included inviting civil servants to see for themselves the conditions and problems of the county. In this respect Merseyside stands apart from the other metropolitan county councils who followed a more conventional procedure by feeding information into the government departments through the regional machine. Yet to say that the reason for the central-local relationship with respect to structure planning on Merseyside was all down to the initiative of the county officers and members would be to simplify the account. Merseyside made a shrewd decision to go to the top but they could have been rebuffed by Whitehall. Nor was the north west regional office bypassed. The interviewee mentioned that the staff in the regional office played an important role in raising the awareness of Merseyside problems in Whitehall and when directly probed the respondent added that the regional office was 'good' in comparison to some others

(Yorkshire and Humberside was mentioned as being less effective). Commenting as an ex-civil servant who felt that he knew all the regional offices he went on to say that the north west team was the best in England. He added that the inner city white paper (1977)owed much to the work of the north west office and this showed the quality of their professional work.

In the West Midlands the senior planner that we interviewed also had positive comments to make about the staff in the local DoE regional office. He saw a strong committment to the locality among the civil servants. The county council had faced "no serious difficulties" with the regional office. It seemed that the relationship was relatively formal with the exchange of documents and formal liaison meetings as the main forms of interaction. Of course, the West Midlands was unusual in comparison to the position found in the other metropolitan county councils because the incoming administration had inherited a large number of 'urban' structure plans in the late stages of preparation, presentation or approval. However, at the time of the interview the respondent indicated that formal discussions on the procedures and content for their county structure plan had only recently begun despite work having starting over twelve months previously.

In West Yorkshire the interviewees volunteered the comment that they had found the Yorkshire and Humberside regional office of the DoE to be "weak on advice and support with respect to dvelopment planning". It would seem that this outpost of Whitehall related to the local structure pllan authorities with "legalistic caution" (Barker, 1983, p.275) which meant responding to questions rather than initiating discussion and action, of dealing with issues as they arose rather than anticipating local authority planners' needs, acting on single issues rather than on broader principles, reiterating central advice

with little interpretation and generally taking a passive rather than an active role in relationships with the counties. It is of interest to note that both West and South Yorkshire adopted a distinction between prescriptive and advocative policies in their structure plan submissions. The latter being a clear bid for resources in policy fields not directly falling within the purview of the structure plan or county council responsibilities. The function of 'advocacy statements' (which DoE Leeds were not keen on) was to indicate to or inform Whitehall/ Parliament of a problem or a need. Use of this mechanism appears to reflect both the county councils' lack of confidence in the regional office as a transmission route for information to the Secretary of State and a relatively restricted repertoire of lobbying methods used by the Yorkshire county councils. The latter observation is particularly clear when comparing the sophisticated efforts made by the Merseyside planners to seek central government comment on their work with the passive role adopted by the two Yorkshire metropolitan counties. It is somewhat ironic that alongside a relatively sophisticated analysis and programme of public consultation and participation in both of the Yorkshire metropolitan counties their means of influencing central government were so simplistically drawn and pursued. The evidence points to a general lack of confidence on the part of the county planners in the ability of the regional office in Leeds to 'fight for their interests' which we will illustrate by examples from the South Yorkshire case material. The effect of this suspicion of regional office and of the value of enlisting the civil servants support for their planning process and policies was an overwhelming acceptance of the formal procedures and processes for consultation and plan approval.

Before moving to the specific examples of the links between Leeds regional office and the South Yorkshire authorities we need to indicate other general ways in

which central government advised and consulted local authorities over structure plan matters. In addition to legislation and associated regulations planning authorities were also provided with more informal advice. Principal among these channels of central guidance were departmental circulars. The status of circulars is that they offer guidance but are not statutorily binding. They provide a government with the means to explain their intentions and wishes for the benefit of local (planning) authorities.

> Compliance is therefore not mandatory ... but noncompliance may or may not invoke penalties. ... For the recipient planning authority, or for the present reader, interpretation of such a rubric requires an understanding not only of the words but also of the attitudes taken in the interpretation process. The recipient authority will hold a view of what it thinks central government means by the words which have been used, and of how rigid that view (especially if of policy) might be. (Bristow, 1983, p.232)

Not only may interpretation and attitudes towards the advice be open to misunderstanding and misperception but the Secretary of State's level of discretion and firmness in implementing the advice may itself vary over time. More fundamentally, there may be divergent objectives and approaches to the task of development planning, in which case the scope for misinterpretation or manipulation is increased. A search for loopholes and imprecision on the part of local authorities may see the raw exercise of power as the ultimate arbiter.

The scope for misinterpretation and misunderstanding is considerable given the broad and wide ranging task of development planning and the considerable volume of advice and information flowing from central government. During the 1970s the DoE was producing somewhere in the region of 100 circulars per year on a wide range of topics. Some of these were only marginally relevant to structure planning authorities but many were directly pertinent. A listing of the main relevant circulars is

appended and the main structure plan circulars particularly the memorandums on development plans contained listings of the key circulars which the DoE wished to further remind LPAs about.

Less formal means of providing information to local planning authorities are reported conference papers and press statements that ministers and civil servants give from time to time. Similarly the DoE has sought to publicise the results of research studies (such as the findings from the Linked Research Project on Public Participation in Structure Planning) which get DoE support (although not necessarily their full approval).

Central-Local Relations: the South Yorkshire case

The following evidence is intended to show that the role of the DoE in relation to the preparation of the South Yorkshire plan was relatively passive and indirect. The principal means of involving the DoE by South Yorkshire County Council during the planning process was through formal meetings and consultations on the main documentation produced by the county at key stages.

The regional office was represented on a few of the working committees but these were relatively high level 'approval' meetings rather than detailed 'working' occasions. One of the principal meetings where regional office was formally invited as observers was Technical Committee, a county council initiated meeting of senior planning and other departmental officers from the 5 county authorities. County council structure plan reports were discussed at Technical Committee prior to entering the committee cycles for elected representatives. In discussing the phase II working arrangements for the later stages of structure plan work the county planning department notes

> 3.4 To a considerable extent, dialogue has already begun throughthe medium of the Public Participation Programme...
> 3.5 The dialogue in Structure Plannig is a complex, multi-organisational one, the following being the main participants.
> ...
> (f) Central Government - DOE, DOI, DOT, RHA's etc. and Regional EPC.
> (g) statutory undertakers - including NCB, BSC, RWA's etc.
> ...
> 3.6 It is accepted that many of these potential participants have already begun to be involved, but it is the premise of this paper that the coordination of such involvement needs to be improved. If the proposed dialogue is to cover a broad spectrum of opinion, then some thought must be given as to how to channel these views into a useful form. This implies an expansion of the concept beyond a mere 'gripe-collection' service to the task of assembling the creative statements necessary in building decisions...
> 3.7 Two important elements are required in order to develop a productive dialogue, the first being a management structure within which to operate it, and this has many implications, the other being a focus, or a series of foci, for that dialogue. (SYCC County Planning Department, 1974, pp. 13-14)

The diagrams accompanying the paper indicate the relationships between the various bodies directly or indirectly involved in the planning process and are of note because they show central government as one among several 'statutory consultees' (including statutory undertakers, employers, associations/organisations, public and other County Departments). A distinction is made in the diagram between "central government" (presumably including DoE) and the Secretary of State for the Environment. A 'line of relationship' is shown between these two 'external' influences on the structure plan process where no such influence is shown upon the metropolitan district authorities or other major consultees. This 'county centred' view of consultation and influence can be further interpreted to show that the DoE is seen as a major consultee on a par with any of the other statutory consultees and that consultation is a

formal, technical matter not one of informal contact and influence.

Technical Committee met 5 times between November 1974 and October 1975. DoE regional office was accorded two places on the committee in the phase II organisation document with the intention of placing representatives from the Housing and Planning division and from the Roads and Transportation division respectively.

In fact, at the first meeting 5 DoE staff were in attendance including the Principal Planner, Regional Controller (Roads & Transportation), a senior planning officer (H&P division), senior research officer (H&P division) and a senior officer (R&T division).

From notes taken at the meeting the major DoE contribution came from the principal planner and the SRO. The former welcomed the report on Phase II working arangements saying that they "were sound" and that nothing in the report was "incompatible with circular 98/74". He made a plea for simplicity in structure plan working and took the view that the range and depth of the plan should be conditioned by the availability of staff resources. He also hoped that the plan would be submitted "within a reasonable period". On the function of structure plan submissions the prinipal planner noted that it could be useful, if the facts warranted it, for the plan to demonstrate that resource limitations (land, labour, finance) would affect achievement of what the county council considered to be necessary for development but that the proposals should in the main be made on the basis of "reasonably assured resources". He went on to say that this kind of issue could be explored at the formal 'presentation' meeting or at meetings with the regional office which could begin once structure plan options were available. When pressed the principal planner agreed that the plan could be used to make a case

for more resources for social programmes and that the county council could look at social conditions and specific policies in the districts as a basis for using the structure plan as a source of securing help for problems relating to district council functions.

The role taken by the senior research officer from DoE at the first Technical Committee meeting was to raise a number of detailed technical points relating to the report on Problems, Satisfactions and Opportunities rather than to give strategic direction.

Later meetings of Technical Committee saw a smaller group of regional office representatives. At the second meeting (16 April 1975) three senior professional staff were in attendance. Their input was muted with mainly detailed comment from the senior planning officer.

At meeting no.3 (26 June 1975) two professional officers from R & T division were in attendance as well as the two senior staff from Housing and Planning division. The question of public participation in the preparation of transport programme and policy statements (TPPs) was raised by the senior planner from DoE Leeds. The county planning officer thought the suggestion "was hilarious" on grounds of being impossible within the time scale available. Given the muted concern about preparing the structure plan within a reasonable time the SRO's comment that housing policies in the plan might follow the Teesside example and offer a jointly agreed statement was ambiguous and the ambiguity was compounded by her request that four further statements of existing policies be included in the existing policies report. The regional office staff also expressed concern at the reluctance of the district councils to provide summaries of their existing policies and land use commitments. The project notes record this a particularly sour and ill tempered meeting with respect to county-district interchanges yet

the DoE representatives remained largely uninvolved and impassive. At one point the county planning officer asked if the district councils could be called to account particularly at the examination in public ("put in the box") for their refusal to provide information to the county planners. The failure by the DoE representatives to clarify that implied threat seems to have created a negative response from the district council staff. Perhaps as a consequence during the Districts meeting (a second and third tier officer meeting of planners from the five authorities) in August 1975 several critical comments were made about the Leeds regional office. On the advice that DoE would require some precision and depth to the household and housing information coming from the district authorities one district planning officer said that "the Regional Controller is out of touch with reality". There was also discussion about the the lack of coordination between Leeds and headquarters office. In turning the tables onto the county council the district council representatives warned against proceeding the structure plan options on poor information and incorrect statistical data for this could mean that DoE Leeds would refuse to accept the plan. The county response was "we doubt it knowing the characters involved". The critical comments about the regional office made during this meeting were further confirmed in the in depth interviews with county planning staff carried out over this period. One respondent commented that the "unwillingness of the district councils to give us information is annoying". He added that it was of little value looking to regional office to resolve this county-district dispute for "the Regional Controller is a very depressing character who cannot see more than 6 months ahead".

The fourth Technical Committee meeting saw the presence of the same three senior DoE staff who had attended the second meeting. A contentious item on the agenda was the

county council's decision to prepare a single structure plan for the whole county rather than the Doncaster urban plan and the "three districts" plan. The reason was slippage in timetable and a joint plan was seen as a way to save resources and time. When called to comment the DoE senior planning officer said that "on balance" a single plan was the way forward. An interesting debate grew from the comment by the senior research officer from Leeds that the report on Broad Policy Options contained many references to "persuading central government; that is, to the many 'advocative' statements and policies that were being proposed". Her expressed concern was that such statements could be hostages to fortune. The regional office believed that other parts of the country had more severe environmental and employment problems and to draw attention to the position in South Yorkshire could precipitate unfavourable comparisons and possible loss of resources. "Too much pressure could work to the disadvantage of South Yorkshire". It was never explicitly said that to pursuelay outside the statutory responsibilities of the county council or that spending time on 'less mainstream' matters was extending the planning process but the implication could be drawn. Yet again the DoE position became ambiguous for in a later intervention the civil servants noted that the county council was taking "too compartmental an approach to issues and policies" with a clear implication that a corporate approach to local problems and concerns was preferred. On transport policies DoE staff said that the structure plan should be strategic "but in sufficient detail to provide a framework for local plans". Later it was said that the report on broad policy options was worrying for what it showed about the amount of work being done which did not augur well for an early submission. "Careful regard must be given to the timetable when deciding the content of the structure plan. The county council should explore ways of reducing the time for preparing the plan to meet a submission date

of a year from now". The senior planning officer from regional office adding that "it has taken you 18 months to get to this stage and the most difficult work is yet to come"; a reference to the task of mapping the broad policy decisions onto the physical/spatial base of the county when conflicts would become more open and special pleading would intensify. He added that "you have not left untouched many facets of policy in the county. The plan is there to do a job. There is a need to get it finished".

As if to show even-handedness in a final contribution to the meeting the DoE representatives pointed out that South Yorkshire was the only county in the region not to have agreed a development plan scheme. The regional office wanted this to be completed as soon as possible. There would be "harsh words from us if it is not forthcoming".

Regional office sent observers to the county council's Open Days in September 1975. They made few interventions. Their most noticeable contribution concerned the conflict between the council's policy of fare support on public transport and central government policy of stringent control over public expenditure.

The last formal meeting of Technical Committee (10 October 1975) was attended by the two senior staff from H&P division with no representative from Roads & Transportation. The regional office had sent its formal response to the Existing Policies report and they were pleased to see "more realism" in the report on Broad Policy Options. Later comment indicated that the regional office still had some concerns about the latter for it was "painfully obvious that some options are unrealistic" and the work on the plan was taking up too much time. The DoE officers also reiterated their concern that the county planners seemed more concerned to

explain the advocative rather than prescriptive policies at the Open Day with an implication that the county planners were leading the councillors down a cul de sac.

The demise of Technical Committee was a measure of the coldness of county-district relations. The committee had been intended as a high level chief officer meeting with the purpose of dotting the i's and crossing the t's of professional work within the county. With the collapse of Technical Committee the most public focus of inter-authority discontent on the structure plan process was thrown onto the Joint Consultative Committee (Structure Plan Sub-committee). This had the 'advantage' of letting councillors rather than officers from the five local authorities shoulder the burden of disagreement. With no formal meeting of professional staff at which to present the DoE view on the planning process the regional office began to send its staff to the JCC Sub-committee instead. Initially the senior planning officer who had been given principal responsibility for the South Yorkshire plan attended (16 August 1976, 8 September 1976, 14 September 1976 and 14 December 1976) during a period when the strategies for the structure plan were beginning to be firmed up. In this period interventions by the regional office representative were generally of a technical nature. At the first of the September meetings of JCC sub-committee the report on Initial Strategies was the main item for discussion having been sent by the county council for consultation and comments during the summer. The DoE regional office had sent back a brief 2 page letter setting out their comments on the county report. The letter is worth quoting in part for the evidence it provides of a tougher central line towards the county when compared to the comments from civil servants at meetings in 1975.

> Because of its obvious impact on regional policy I feel bound to let you know of my doubts about the approach embodied in Strategy 3. While the need to help people living in areas of environmental

> deprivation and low incomes is fully recognised it would not, in my view, be in the best interests of the county or the region if scarce resources were to be so concentrated in such areas that the opportunity to reap the economic and social benefits of development in more promising areas were lost. (letter from Principal Planner, DoE Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Housing and Planning Office to County Planning Officer, 3 August 1976)

Later parts of the letter were even more succinct and clear.

> I am sure that you know that this policy [RD: Cheap fares on public transport] runs counter to that of central government on revenue support for public transport. Rate borne subsidies on the scale proposed are unlikely to be acceptable to the government. (op. cit.)

In relation to the idea of environmental priority areas the letter also notes that without

> the co-operation of the districts several policies in this subject area cannot succeed, and it was apparent at the recent meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee that their co-operation is not yet assured. (op. cit.)

At the JCC sub-committee of 8 September the senior planning officer from regional office took the view that they were "reasonably satisfied" with the Initial Strategies "with some reservations which have been put to the county council". The district councillors response to this was swift. Their interpretation of the response letter was that many of the DoE comments coincided with their own critiques of the report particularly with respect to the wisdom of the priority area strategy. Both county and district councillors pressed the civil servant to clarify the ambiguity/ contradictions percieved between the expressed general satisfaction with the county's Initial Strategies and DoE criticisms of strategy 3 and the familiar district council concern about level of detail. The standard comment that the structure plan should provide a framework for local plans was the stock DoE response and "unless it does so the

structure plan fails to affect the development of the county".

Next day at County Planning Committee the county planning officer reported to his members that "the DoE have made it as plain as they humanly can that they approve of our approach to the structure plan but this is from the DoE regional representatives not the Secretary of State".

At the follow on meeting of the September 1975 JCC sub-committee reconvened to continue the debate on Initial Strategies the DoE representative pursued the objections to the priority area concept but added that "the DoE is mainly concerned to see agreement among yourselves. The county council has broad DoE agreement on the Initial Strategies". When cheap fares policy came up for discussion later in the meeting the chair of the sub-committee (John Driver, chair of the county planning committee) responded to DoE reiteration of its opposition to the policy by asserting that the "other metropolitan county councils are coming round to the South Yorkshire view, so we hope to persuade the DoE..." on the efficacy of government subsidy to bus services.

Consultation on the Initial Strategies drew responses from a range of government bodies and statutory undertakers. The only Ministry with substantive comment was Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Ten other bodies ranging from the National Coal Board to Yorkshire and Humberside Sports Council made responses. The Department of Education and Science, the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office Prisons Department responded but with "no fundamental comment or objection" according to reports on consultation by the county planning department.

From September 1976 events and activity moved rapidly towards the production of the first structure plan for the county. The imminent elections of May 1977 being the

spur for county councillors and the reason for their growing pressure on the county planners from early 1976. Over the period from late summer 1976 open consultation (in terms of formal meetings where regional office representatives were present) of interaction between the county council and the DoE was limited. It was as if they had seen the structure plan into the final straight and were less concerned about the final details. Nevertheless the 'presentation meeting' was in the offing and the examination in public would follow when the official DoE viewpoint could be openly expressed.

The presentation meeting was used as an important last step in preparing the draft plan. At this established element of county - central government interaction within the process of structure plan review the county was invited to make a presentation of its planning policies and of the draft plan to all interested government departments in the region, under the chairmanship of the Regional Controller. Others have called the meeting the 'examination in private' where fine tuning might be negotiated prior to the later stages of public consultation, comment and the examination in public. The principal task of the presentation meeting was to review the draft plan against government policies to check for compliance. Although the author was not party to the presentation meeting the decision by county planning staff to continue with the priority area approach indicates that government criticism had failed to deflect them from the approach preferred by the county councillors.

The newly appointed Principal Planner from regional office attended the JCC sub-committee held in July 1977. At this meeting the county and district councils agreed to 're-open' five authority discussion on the structure plan. Formal contact between the 5 authorities in South Yorkshire had broken down earlier in the year because of

the failure of either side to reduce its demands and negotiate a resolution to their increasingly entrenched positions about the nature and detail of the structure plan. Clearly there had been pressure from DoE to progress the process of consultation. Although none of the DoE reps at the JCC Sub-Committee had much to contribute we can surmise that they were in attendance to ensure that the county and district councils were following through their agreement to talk again. However, feelings from the district councils were running high. For example, the Doncaster representatives indicated that they would be putting their views on a number of matters directly to the DoE (including on a number of matters where they felt that the county council was overstepping its legitimate role).

Members from the five local authorities agreed that their chief planning officers would meet to thrash out the best way to complete consultations on the draft plan. An early evening meeting was held at County Hall on 21 July 1977 with the chief planning officers from the districts and senior county planning staff. The regional office was represented. The county planners indicated that they hoped the meeting would lay the ground for consultation "on minor matters where we might get some agreement". The expectation of any agreement on the more fundamental matters of the strategy, cheap fares policy and the level of detail had effectively been abandoned. The DoE reps indicated that they wished to see agreement at least on basic data relevant to the plan such as population figures, on matters such as density of residential development in parts of the county and on jointly agreed statements of housing policies. One comment from the DoE was that the examination in public for the South Yorkshire plan "would be the first involving a metropolitan county council and a lot of eyes would be upon it". The DoE reps also pointed out that the Secretary of State would decide which matters were for

discussion at the examination "and these need not be the matters that the boroughs put forward". From conversation after the meeting it emerged that the Barnsley planners had requested DoE attendance against the wishes of the chief planners from Sheffield and Doncaster. Later it became clear that the Barnsley planners wished for clarification on the matters that were likely to be discussed at the examination in public and in particular whether the listing of potential local plans that had been included as an appendix to the draft plan was binding. (A development plan scheme had still not been agreed between the five authorities at this time.) The DoE were unequivocal about where the ultimate power lay for deciding the range of issues relevant to the plan but appeared optimistic about getting some progress towards county-district agreement on detailed matters.

Thus from late July an intensive set of meetings was begun as part of the inter-authority consultation on the structure plan. The author attended two of the five meetings arranged as a consequence of the 'crisis'. The DoE was represented at all the meetings but according to project notes took no part in the debates.

In conclusion, it seems that the role of the DoE regional office in advising the local planning authorities about matters to do with development planning and specifically about their role in resolving areas of inter-authority concern was in, this case, often ambiguous, passive and unassertive. Only towards the end of the process as the time for the examination in public approached did a more unequivocal stance appear but by that stage the inter-authority relationships within the county were already well entrenched.

The Examination in Public

The examination in public procedure was introduced into the formal development plan process as a response to the changes in the form of development plans and in planning legislation. The differentiation of types of forward plan under the legislation which appeared in the late 1960s emphasised the broad nature of structure plans which were to become principally written statements focussed on the long term policies appropriate to the local planning area. Local plans on the other hand were intended to specify future change and action at a smaller scale and with greater spatial precision. These distinctions became encapsulated in different approaches taken by central government towards the public assessment and scrutiny of plans. Structure plans were of a broad significance and it was therefore felt necessary to subject them to public inquiry in front of representatives of central government. With respect to local plans on the other hand although opportunity for public discussion and representation was also considered necessary the requirement of Department of the Environment scrutiny of the detail of planned action and proposals was felt less essential.

With respect to both structure plan and local plan public inquiries the Department of the Environment was clearly concerned that the inquiry process could take up a great deal of the time and resources of both central and local government personnel. Experience of the public inquiry procedures under the former development plan system introduced in 1947 had shown that allowing everyone who felt their interests were affected by the plan and its proposals was liable to mean protracted proceedings. Another aspect of experience from the planning inquiry introduced immediately after world war 2 was that too great a precision about long term proposals for

development had a blighting effect on land and acted as a brake on decisions and change.

A Code of Practice for Structure Plan Examination was published in 1973. In justifying the new arrangements for development plan inquiries the code refers to the need for a framework within which broad policy issues can be explored. In seeking to speed the inquiry itself, as well as the Secretary of State's response, the DoE clearly wished to avoid protracted and repetitious discussion. The 'streamlined' procedures within the code owe a great deal to experience from the Greater London Development Plan inquiry conducted under the 1947 Act procedures, which had lasted for nearly two years during which time over 28 000 separate objections were considered and over 300 presentations made to the inquiry by objectors (Pahl, 1977).

The code introduced in 1973 indicates that to hold a 'traditional' development plan inquiry for both the structure plan and local plans in the same local area would see duplication of the concerns and issues raised during discussion. A format was proposed whereby matters of broad principle and strategy could be raised with respect to the structure plan and detailed representations and grievances could be more appropriately taken at inquiries relating to local plans. The desire for a more focussed discussion, for expedient debate and for 'relevance' was to be achieved by giving the Secretary of State the power and responsibility of defining the agenda, selecting the topics for debate and identifying the participants at the examination in public of the strategic policies in the structure plan. The almost automatic right to be heard (if as a local resident or having a local connection) at a development plan inquiry was abandoned. This apparent reduction in the 'right of redress' which is a strongly held principle in British administrative law and tradition did not generate a great deal of public concern perhaps because

the quid pro quo was given by allowing all people with a concern about development the opportunity to appear at local plan inquiries. The fact that little public concern was expressed at these changes may also be an indication that the general public had only rarely become involved in development plan inquiries in the past. Past exceptions to this generally low level of public interest in planning matters were the GLDP inquiry which did create widespread interest within London (although many of the representations came from professional/quasi-professional participants) and 'controversial' issues such as major road developments and major developments in the countryside and in environmentally sensitive areas. Even among the professional community and activists there was not a great general concern at the proposed changes in procedures for public representation on structure plans given that they were intended to be such broad documents and that individual land holdings and property were not capable of being identified in the 'broad brush' proposals likely to be found in the plans.

In addition, there was another 'tit for tat' in the new procedures which was that the examination in public was intended to be less adversarial in style and format. An aspect of the planning public inquiry in the past was that because land and property issues were to the fore and consequently matters of land value the procedures were frequently legalistic with major parties employing solicitors and barristers to present their arguments and interrogate other participants. They had become intimidating to the layman unused to the hurly burly and carefully laid traps of the court-room. An intention behind the revisions to the old inquiry system was that the examination in public should become less confrontational, more 'rational' with participants sitting round a table discussing the issues and not scoring points off each other.

This intention is seen in the way that the examination is run. A panel of three appointed by the Secretary of State presides consisting of an 'independent' chair, a representative from the DoE (usually the regional office for the area) and a member from the DoE Inspectorate. Previously inquiries were presided over by a member of the DoE Inspectorate alone who could be seen as partial. The new arrangement was intended to overcome some of the objections.

Nevertheless, the power of the Secretary of State to exert influence over the proceedings at the examination in public remains considerable. Some would argue that this is rightly so. The planning inquiry may be seen as part of the administrative process of wise decision making where the ultimate voice and power is that of the government. Nevertheless, part of the rationale behind the code of practice for the examination in public lies in the wider mood of public participation and dialogue which was a strong current in government during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

If that was the rationale the reality as been somewhat at odds. The procedures themselves give considerable power and discretion to the Secretary of State, on top of which the experience of how that discretion and power is used shows that some views and opinions may and can be excluded from debate.

One of those areas of discretion concerns who participates at the examination. Paragraph 3.29 of the code refers to this question.

> As the examination is directed to discussion of the selected matters, and not to hearing objections, it is not intended that all those who have objected should be invited to the examination: the volume and content of objections as a whole will be known from written material. Where objections give rise to matters selected for the examination, not all those whose objections or representations relate to those matters will be invited to take part in the

> discussion. The aim will be to select participants who can, as part of their contribution to the discussion, reflect the objections which are significant to the Structure Plan level. Participants will not necessarily be restricted to those who have made objections and representation.

Hence, the discretion open to the Secretary of State is extremely wide. Not only does the Minister select topics and participants from among those who originally made representations but can also invite some participants irrespective of their open involvement during the periods set aside for receipt if comments. What is rationalised in the code as an expedient measure could be used to de-politicise controversial issues and ensure a commitment to central government policies and opinions. In the quasi-judicial context of the examination in public the traditional right to have objections to development plans heard has been lost.

The response, that detailed matters of planning policy may be fully debated in the local plan inquiry where the traditional right of all objectors to appear has been retained, is only partially satisfactory. The sequence of structure plan preceding local plans which was incorporated into the 1968 and 1971 planning legislation and advice undermined the validity of that claim insofar as objectors at local plan inquiries may find that some detailed decisions have already been pre-empted by the discussions and policies adopted following the examination in public. A potential danger with the discretion made available to the Secretary of State over the examination in public as a result of the code of practice is that it could mean that the inquiry becomes a technical, professionally led process rather than a public and political event where lay people and politicians can play a full and active part.

The South Yorkshire Examination in Public

The examination took place in Barnsley in September 1978. In many respects the South Yorkshire examination followed a familiar pattern. The proceedings were extended and often tedious, covering 13 working days and 80 hours of time. Very few members of the public came to observe the proceedings, an observation which accords with the general lack of interest raised in the plan. There were only a limited number of representations from voluntary organisations and individuals. The discussions that took place were almost exclusively between the professional officers of government bodies and businessmen representing major economic and private sector employers. In other studies of examinations in public a summary of the scene was of 'grey men discussing grey issues' (Vielba).

A full record was kept of the proceedings at the South Yorkshire examination in public as part of the raw data for the case study. Other material available were the submissions from most of the participants and short summary notes of the sessions (morning and afternoon) produced by the DoE secretariat. The South Yorkshire examination was the first to be held where no daily transcript was available to participants or public. The code of practice indicates that the provision of transcripts was to be normal.

> The documents relevant to the examination will be available for some time before it opens, and transcripts will be available as it proceeds. (para 3.51)

Other documentation was relatively easy to obtain once we had been identified by the DoE secretariat.

A number of other organisational and procedural matters are worth noting before the content of the proceedings are recorded. The examination was held in a relatively isolated hotel on the edge of Barnsley. In a county where car ownership is low and where (at the time) bus

travel was cheap and efficient particularly on main routes (such as between the major urban centres and radial roads) the location was difficult for the user of pubic transport. The service from Barnsley town centre to the vicinity of the hotel ran at 20 minute intervals and the nearest setting down point was 12 minutes normal walking distance from the venue. Barnsley was not an inappropriate centre for the examination as it had been selected as the 'county town' in preference to Sheffield on the argument that the latter city dominated the region already and to base the county council in Sheffield would have added to the relative inequalities between the four towns. Travellers from Sheffield (including the author) faced a 25 minute walk from the nearest bus stop on the inter city bus service. Needless to say there were many other locations within the county which would have been much more conveniently placed for the non car owning population.

Nor was the examination particularly welcoming to the public. Another factor in the relative isolation of the hotel was that people attending the examination were ensconced particularly if they wished to attend both the morning and afternoon sessions. In this case participants either had to take lunch in the hotel or bring their own refreshments as the town centre was too far away for the car-less. On the opening day of the examination two members of the public were turned away from the door of the venue by an over-zealous official who told them that it was not an open meeting. This incident only became known to the panel and other participants because the couple concerned felt incensed enough to go to the local press. They indicated that they would not attend on subsequent days because they had been made so unwelcome. The press publicity might have generated more knowledge of the existence of the examination than had been available beforehand but there were very few members of the public in attendance during

the examination. Press interest also dropped off very quickly and few reports appeared in local papers after the opening day.

The ambience of the examination was therefore one of a technical meeting with little room or interest for the public, where accessibility and support for the 'ordinary folk' of South Yorkshire was in short supply and where a deep knowledge of technical, planning issues and processes was an almost essential prerequisite for understanding what was taking place. This is not to say that such detail and complexity is unnecessary. This would be far from the case. Technical debate about the nature of forecasts and about the assumptions made in coming to decision and policies, about reasoned objections to those policies are an essential element of the examination process. What is being argued here is that such technical debate need not be the whole tenor of the proceedings and that a more publicly accessible and political element to the examination could and probably should have been introduced.

An example of how a technical orientation was established is found in the arrangements prior to the opening if the examination. These arrangements included the preparation and distribution of the representations from the invited participants. Many of these were long, technical documents which required considerable time and effort for reading and assimilation. The mere look and weight of this material was intimidating. In addition a further 81 papers were produced by the participants during the course of the examination; an average of 10 supplementary papers per day of the meeting. The effect of this meticulous and exhaustive rationalisation of the professional work and representations was to add to the technical flavour of the proceedings which seemed at odds with the intentions of a discussion of broad principles or of involving the public in a format that was less

legalistic and judicial. That the examination did not achieve a full exploration of the broad issues and 'politics' of the structure plan nor did justice to highly detailed work which had gone into the technical papers is a double criticism of the format of the inquiry. However, the more severe criticism is of the opacity of the proceedings for the electorate. At least the technical experts and specialist participants got a fair opportunity to state their cases.

The departure from the code of practice created by not producing a full daily transcript of the proceedings had both an immediate and a less overt consequence. The obvious effect was the obligation it placed on the panel to take copious notes. This often caused delay as the Chair interrupted participants in mid flow in order to catch up on his own record. A proper recording process and daily record could have meant more time for discussion and explanation of representations. The Department of the Environment did provide a short summary of each session but this rarely covered more than the topics raised on two sides of A4 typewritten notes as a record of three hours of discussion. A tape recording of the examination was made by the DoE mainly to satisfy the Council of Tribunals. Very shortly after the examination the researcher approached the DoE to seek access to the tape recording in order to check a matter from our own records. Permission was not given and Leeds regional office did not know where the recording was kept (assuming that it was).

The justification for not providing a written transcript was excessive cost and lack of demand for subsequent use of the transcript based on the experience of previous examinations. However, this rationalisation and the specific experience of not being able to gain access sets up a potentially alarming scenario. While the DoE may have stayed within the guidelines laid down by the

Council of Tribunal on public recording of appeals and other public meetings of more than individual interest so far as making a record is concerned, there is little value in so doing if the record is then difficult to access or is lost. The code of practice mentions that the Secretary of State (in effect his appointed inspector or civil servant) should have the benefit of the transcript to read alongside the report from the panel prior to coming to a decision about the structure plan. Without a transcript the Minister has only the report from the panel as guidance and checks for interpretation or nuance become impossible.

The panel at the South Yorkshire examination was formed in accordance with the code of practice. The chair was a Queens Counsellor supported by a member of the Planning Inspectorate and the DoE Regional Controller of Yorkshire and Humberside. The panel were briefed in Whitehall prior to opening the examination (this was normal DoE practice). DoE regional office was also prepared to give a briefing to the panel which would have been provided by the civil servants in Leeds who had been most closely involved with preparation of the structure plan. This local briefing was refused by the panel although at previous examinations in public elsewhere it has been normal practice for the panel to get local insight before the proceedings.

The topics covered in the examination were

Day 1 a.m. The derivation and underlying philosophy of the Structure Plan Strategy.
Day 1 p.m. The extent to which the plan strategy conforms with national and regional policies.
Day 2 a.m. Justification for the general resource assumptions on which the plan is based.
Day 2 p.m. The assumptions inherent in the net job shortfall envisaged in the plan and the population projections upon which, among other things, it is based.
Day 3 a.m. & p.m. The justification for job priority areas in the light of the regional focal points for growth policy in the regional strategy.

Day 4 a.m. The scope for attracting new industry and commerce to the county and the extent to which this will be a factor in the successful implementation of the plan.
Day 4 p.m. & Day 5 a.m. The proposals for the green belt, in particular the cases for and against extending it to cover the whole county outside the existing urban areas, in the light of the Government's response to the regional strategy review.
Day 5 p.m. The policy for designating areas of county landscape value, having regard to:-

i national practice and the practice of neighbouring planning authorities
ii its value in South Yorkshire.

Day 6 a.m. The likely availability of resources required to implement the plan's transport policies.
Day 6 p.m. The justification for detailed and restrictive car parking policies.
Day 7 a.m. The justification for protecting the areas affected by transport schemes after 1986.
Day 7 p.m. Matters for further discussion

3a The assumptions inherent in the net job shortfall envisaged in the plan and the population upon which, among other things, it is based.
3b The justification for job priority areas in the light of the regional focal points for growth policy in the regional strategy.
3c The scope for attracting new industry and commerce to the county and the extent to which this will be a factor in the successful implementation of the plan.

Day 8 a.m. The priorities for the transport proposals envisaged in the plan.
Day 8 p.m. & Day 9 a.m. Housing

a. the supply of suitable land for housing
b. the distribution of land for housing within the county having regard to the future distribution of the population.

Day 9 p.m. Shopping

a. the policy imposing limits on sales floorspace in the main centres.

Day 10 a.m. Shopping

b. shopping policies elsewhere in the county.

Day 10 p.m. Recreation
Day 11 a.m. The adequacy of policies for mineral workings and their after-use in the light of the needs of operators, the national interest and local amenity.
Day 11 p.m. Housing (continued)
Day 12 a.m. Spoil disposal policy
Day 12 p.m. The extent to which the various policies in the plan are complementary and consistent.
Day 13 a.m. The need to establish relative expenditure priorities.

The topics cover a wide range but it is possible to perceive a particular 'line' in the DoE agenda which is to assess the county council's reasons for intervention

and restraint. In particular, on day 3 (job priority areas), day 6 (car parking restrictions), day 9 (sales floorspace limits) and day 11 (mineral working policies and the needs of operators) there were strong indications that the DoE was uneasy about the efforts being pursued by the county council to channel and direct key land use policies.

During the examination the chair played a powerful and dominant role. He asked most of the questions of participants, was quick to seek clarification on presentations made and tried to prevent repetition of arguments and points previously made.

Representation and Participants.

Earlier we noted that the Secretary of State has discretion over who appears at structure plan examinations. In order to assess whether a particular orientation was taken by the Minister in choosing participants a simple analysis was carried out of who made comments on the structure plan when on deposit and who was invited to present their views at the examination.

Around sixty organisations or individuals made representations. Most came from local authorities in or adjoining South Yorkshire County (8 district councils and 5 county councils) or from local organisations. A handful of individuals made representations. It is not possible to be perfectly precise about numbers because some representations were made after the official period set aside for receipt of comment. We could find no consistency on why some of these late submissions were accepted by the DoE and some were not.

Table 6.6 shows a classification of those making representations and whether they were asked to appear at the examination. The tables also indicate those who were

TABLE 6.6

Bodies making representations *or* invited to participate

Organisation		A	B	C
1.	Central Government			
	Departments and Ministeries (inc. DoE)	2	2	3
	Commissions	1	1	1
	Advisory Councils	1	1	2
2.	Regional Bodies			
	Regional Economic Planning Council	–	–	1
	Water Authorities	2	2	–
3.	Nationalised industry	2	2	1
4.	Local Authorities	13	9	1
5.	Chamber of Commerce	8	7	–
6.	Agricultural interest/land owners	1	1	1
7.	Mineral interests	2	1	–
8.	Home builders/property interests	1	1	–
9.	Transport groups			
	(i) BR/Inland Waterways	2	–	–
	(ii) Motoring interests/employers	2	2	2
	(iii) Pressure groups, e.g. Transport 2000/cyclists	3	–	–
10.	Amenity groups	8	5	–
11.	Organised labour	3	1	1
12.	Parish Councils	2	–	–
13.	Leisure interests	2	1	–
14.	Individuals	5	1	1

Key: Column A refers to the numbers making representation
Column B refers to the numbers asked to participate
Column C refers to the numbers specially invited to participate

TABLE 6.7

Grouped analysis of representations and participants at South Yorkshire EIP

	A	B	C
Governmental bodies (including 9(i))	23	17	9
Property/commercial/industrial (excluding 9(i) and 9(iii))	14	12	3
Voluntary organisations (including 9(iii)	18	7	1
Individuals	5	1	1

TABLE 6.8

Bodies who were asked to participate (from representations) as a percentage of those making representations plus those specially invited to attend the Examination in Public (i.e. for each grouping – B plus C is expressed as a percentage of A plus C)

Government bodies	81%
Property/commercial/industrial	88%
Voluntary organisations	42%
Individuals	33%

Key: Column A refers to the numbers making representation
Column B refers to the numbers asked to participate
Column C refers to the numbers specially invited to participate

invited to appear without having originally submitted comments on the plan. It would seem that amenity groups, bodies representing organised labour, parish councils and individuals had a lower likelihood of being invited to participate in the examination when compared to chambers of trade and commerce and to business interests. A strange anomaly (which was presumably not known to the DoE) was the inclusion of two trade associations sharing a common business address who were given separate opportunities to participate in the examination and yet both were represented by the same person, their common secretary. In addition to choosing from the range of organisations and individuals who made representations on the plan the Secretary of State also invited a number of additional participants to the examination. A number of central government Departments and bodies linked directly to the government, the Regional Economic Planning Council, British Steel Corporation and Nature Conservancy were predictable inclusions. Less predictable and more open to question were special invitations given to the Road Haulage Association, the Confederation of British Road Passenger Transport, the National Farmers Union and the leader of the opposition parties on the County Council. It could legitimately be argued that these bodies could have made their views on the plan known through the proper procedure for representation and that many of them were better placed to know of the timing and mechanisms for making representations than many other groups and individuals in the locality.

We include further analysis of the pattern of representations and invitees in Tables 6.7 and 6.8. The evidence from these tables suggest that commercial and trade interests (ie the private business sector) were given greater opportunity to appear than were individuals, grass roots bodies and the interests of organised labour. This apparently preferential selection seems to be consistent. The listing of special invitees

shows the same trend towards preference for the participation of the private business sector as did the main body of invited participants.

It could be argued that voluntary bodies and individual members of the public failed to raise important policy issues in their submissions and comments on the plan when compared to the representations from commerce and business. However, that conclusion is difficult to sustain when the evidence is considered in detail. Several voluntary associations and individuals who were not invited to attend the examination raised fundamental policy issues. A cycling group raised questions about mode of travel and safety. A thoughtful submission was made by a member of the public on the need to tailor the employment strategy to job skills and experience among the workforce in different parts of the county. Another individual made a well presented report on the particular employment problems and needs in Penistone. On the other hand the quality of presentations made by those invited to speak at the examination was patchy. Some participants were doctrinaire and presented poorly argued cases. It is possible to question the criteria of originality and relative importance that must have been used by the Secretary of State and his advisers in selecting who should and should not appear at the examination.

Another issue which arises from the data is why so few voluntary groups and particularly those representing organised labour made formal comment on the plan. We noticed that in the public participation programme there were some types of community and voluntary organisations that were under-represented. Trade union branches were among the most difficult category of local association target and draw into the participation process on structure plan matters. Among the reasons for this are the traditional dissociation between workplace and

community issues (the production / consumption divide to put it in another way) and the lead time necessary for getting 'unusual' issues onto the agenda of established organisations. A further set of reasons for a relative sparse response by voluntary associations and the public to the draft plan and the written statement include the nature of the County's public participation programme in the later stages of the structure plan process which was more in the nature of public relations, publicity campaign than a dialogue with the public. The dominance of Labour politics in local government in South Yorkshire may also have contributed to the limited response from some bodies such as trades unions. The stability of the local Labour vote may have engendered a trust which results in the unions and other local bodies leaving matters to local politicians with a major source of influence coming through involvement in party organisation and structures. This latter factor may have been taken into account when the DoE selected participants for the examination. If this were the case it still leaves unexplained the paucity of invitees from the local (non-business) community in South Yorkshire. Admittedly the Trades Union Congress was invited to the South Yorkshire examination but failed to turn up so in one sense the labour movement has only its own officers to blame for failing to have a voice. (The South Yorkshire examination was not unique in this. There were other contemporary examples of the TUC being given invitations to examinations in public and not attending.)

Selected Elements of the Discussion

We turn now to consider some of the specific exchanges and discussions in the examination. The intention is to give both a flavour of the proceedings but also to excavate the ideological and deeply held values exhibited by participants. In particular we are interested in the views and attitudes of the panel for they are the

'messenger' of central government views which they brought from the pre-examination briefings and also the carriers of impressions and recommendations back to Marsham Street.

The technical nature of the discussion in the examination, dominated as it was by professionals employed by the state interspersed with the contributions of business and (less frequently) the public meant that the political and redistributive objectives and implications of the favoured plan could be played down. The objections from the metropolitan district councils provided the backbone to the agenda for the examination and the interventions of other participants could be welded by the panel onto that agenda where appropriate. Political and ideological differences between the Labour controlled local councils and the business interests that were participating in the examination seem to have been submerged in the broad criticisms of the plan. The examination in public allowed the opportunity to bring together that opposition and unify the normally circumspect relations between groups holding different political positions. Unification was possible by means of the 'technical' nature of the examination which effectively depoliticised the debate and the underlying questions of redistribution and redress of inequality which lay behind the plan. By maintaining a technical facade to the examination, by the absence of the direct participation of members of the public and by creating an environment where local politicians did not appear or feel comfortable the examination was directed away from addressing the big political issues. Nor can this emphasis be seen as the result of an imposition of will. The county council was implicated in the technical emphasis at the examination. It could have been in their gift to attempt to raise the political basis of the plan in their submissions and presentations. They chose not to do so and to join in the professional, non-technical

ethos of the event. For example, county council officials frequently tended to fall back on the response that a specific policy was a 'political decision' when questioned closely on the rationale for cheap fares policy on the buses, or on job priority areas. The implication being accepted by such comments was that the topic was therefore outside the remit and responsibility of the official, and beyond rational discussion. The inference to be drawn was that participants to the examination implicitly accepted a separation between fact and value. Whereas it was legitimate to discuss, say, the basis for different population projections it was not legitimate to discuss policies which were intended to alter income distribution or environmental benefits targeted at specific groups. There was a reluctance to introduce 'unquantified' material or arguments. For example, a key element of the structure plan was the intention to direct resources to the deprived centre of the county along the Dearne Valley. A chief officer from the county council had been briefed on the nature and extent of community life and social ties within the population of the Dearne towns but he baulked at presenting this material when the job priority areas were under discussion. Considering that the examination is expressly intended to expose policy differences and disagreements the 'collusion' of all parties to the technicist ethos of the meeting was surprising. It does raise again the issue of whether hidden political agendas and the unseen hand of power may work to inhibit official confrontations which rub against the status quo.

There were many examples of the way in which market forces and the interests of capital were expressed and accepted by participants at the examination. These examples sometimes originated from unexpected quarters. For example, in one of the sessions on employment policies in the plan a representative of the British Steel Corporation (the nationalised company that had been

at the root of much uncertainty about the future of skilled steel work jobs in the Sheffield-Rotherham complex for some years) objected to the job priority approach in the plan. Of course, as a major and large scale employer of skilled workers the company had reason to be concerned at any proposal which might impede its ability to attract labour but as a state supported enterprise it might also have been assumed that its management would be concerned about the welfare and working conditions of the workforce. Adding to comments about the job priority area policy the BSC representative said that they had concerns about the slum clearance policy of the city council in Sheffield which rehoused people away from the Don Valley (where most of the large steel foundries and engineering workshops were located in the 1970s) because the skilled workforce was moving outwards in the city. The Corporation did not agree with these planning policies "because they draw away BSC men to where they can get jobs with better working conditions". There was no reaction to this surprising statement from other participants.

Another example of the way in which the interests of business and capital come to be implicitly accepted and acceptable was in the evidence from one of the local authorities at the examination when discussing shopping policies. The planner spoke of the need for growth and investment, concluding that any restriction on shopping floor space in the central areas was unacceptable. He agreed when fed a question by the chair of the panel that the more controls there were on development the less attractive was the prospect for developers. The intention of this authority and its planning department appeared to be to secure as much growth as possible in the highly-rated central areas with no explicit mention or concern for the ways in which such a policy would affect other aspects of life and development in the area,

such as effects on district centres, corner shops, congestion and the like.

Not surprisingly the panel played an influential role at the examination. The event was principally for their benefit and the participants were reverential of that knowledge. Presentations were directed at the panel and the panel led the questioning about the plan and its policies. Their role was principally an inquisitive one and they led the criticisms of the plan often picking up on the criticisms to be found in the presentations from participants. At the centre of their probing were the job priority area approach and the positive discrimination / redistributional policies. Three themes emerged from an analysis of the panel's contributions to the examination. Firstly, they consistently used the theme of laisser faire and status quo as a platform for criticising the interventionist thrust of the plan. Secondly, they maintained throughout that the Dearne towns should be left to decline and they failed to show publicly any understanding of the nature of those traditional coal-mining communities or the social costs of past and continued neglect. Thirdly, they sought frequently to remind the county council that it was they who were in a subordinate in the hierarchy of central-local relations and that the ultimate power of decision on the plan lay with the centre.

These themes can be illustrated with a number of verbatim exchanges which are representative of a great many to found in the notes of the examination taken by the researcher.

On car parking policy.

County official:

> ...more car parking provision in the city centres would need more highway provision.

Panel chair:

Could it not be left to find its own level?
*

On shopping policy

County official:
... a fundamental principle behind the shopping policy is if money is spent in one place it cannot be spent elsewhere.

Panel chair:
...How far does that conflict with the view that planning should not interfere with the market?
*

District council official:
...The shopping floorspace limits in the structure plan do not allow us enough flexibility to discharge our duties and functions.

Panel chair:
...You could apply that argument to any policy that sets limits. The conclusion is that there is not much point in having a structure plan.
Ah! I see I have struck a responsive echo.
*

Local traders association:
Floor space limits should not be in the plan, not even as advisory limits.

Panel chair:
Why? Because they have no teeth?

LTA:
Quite! The whole chapter on shopping should be excluded. Market forces will dictate shopping patterns.

Panel chair:
Thank you. No questions.
*

A different LTA:
Shopping is not a structure plan matter.

Panel chair:
Would you support...(the participant recorded above) who said that interference is repressive?

LTA:
Exactly...the limits on floorspace are retrospective.

Panel chair:
I don't understand. Do you mean repressive?

LTA:
Yes!

Panelist:
Or too restrictive?

LTA:
Yes!

Summarising the afternoon discussion on shopping policy.

Panel chair:
The prime objective of the structure plan is to attract private investment. Hence the fewer the constraints the better...that is an attractive argument.
(directed at South Yorkshire county council officials) You must grasp that nettle ... we think that you must deal with this in a wider context. It goes to the core of your plan and you need to answer it in depth.

*

Panel chair:
The fulcrum of your plan must be to attract investment.

County Council official:
Planning is concerned to get reasonable control over development without deterring investment.

Panel chair:
The other side of the coin should be stated!

The last interchanges are taken to indicate that the panel was not simply asking for the reasoned justification of the plan to be strengthened but that county council should seek to reduce its control policies over development if investment is to be encouraged. The comments from the panel chair about the main objective of the structure plan being to attract private investment is clearly at odds with the county council's concern from the outset which was to impact on the major economic, environmental and social problems of the area.

The second theme in the panel's approach to questioning the structure plan was not to accept the county council attempt to stop the decline of the Dearne towns. A lack of understanding or sympathy for the plight of people living in the Dearne came out on a number of occasions.

Panel chair:
Is it a failure of the council's cheap bus fares policy that people (in the Dearne) will not travel seven miles to get to work?

County council official:
No. South Yorkshire is not the only area where there is a reluctance to travel.

Panel chair:
If the Secretary of State says that the money is better invested in the existing infrastructure should he take into account the people who will not help themselves?... People travel much further to work in other parts of the country.

In the discussion of shopping policies the chairman suggested that a hypermarket in the job priority area would help to attract industry. The county council had consistently opposed superstore developments on the principle that they would damage the trade and viability of existing shops in local centres.

Panel chair:
It comes back to the insularity of the mining communities. The plan seems basically to try to preserve them. Should it not be that you try to change them?

County council official:
The planner's job is to plan for existing communities...
*

Panellist (DoE regional office):
...we are concerned about the discussion of commercial viability in the structure plan. The Secretary of State will find it difficult to endorse such vagueness...It is all very well to say that planning provides for what people want. We would say - Yes! tempered by what they can have.

Panel chair:
Can people have the luxury of insularity in the job priority areas?
*

County council official:
...industrial estates in the job priority areas have 'taken off'.

Chairman
Would not industry in the focal points of the county

'take off' with similar effort?
(to conservation society representative)
Are your neighbours...reluctant to travel to work?

CS representative:
No. They are mostly commuters to Sheffield.

The implication of the panel's approach was that the Dearne towns should be left to decline. A crude consistency seems to emerge from the panel's approach to shopping policy and other topics in the structure plan which was 'the less intervention the better'. If there was an alternative to the county council strategy to emerge from the examination in public and particularly from the panel it was 'do nothing' and let existing processes and trends continue.

A third theme in the panel's remarks at the examination can already be seen in some of the exchanges above, which was the occasional reminder that the ultimate power within the state lay with central government.

On the sixth day of the examination a county council officer was presenting the transport policies incorporated into the plan.

County council official:
...we have no reason to believe that the Department (of Transport) will accept less expenditure on the transport sector in South Yorkshire in 1979/1980 than in the current financial year.

Panel chair:
Accept? Surely you mean allow?

Later in the discussion the chairman of the panel returned to the theme of state support for cheap bus fares.

Panel chair:
Has bus use gone down?

County council official:
The drop in patronage at the end of 1977 was due to a strike by bus crews. The general trend is a 2% increase in riders per annum.

Panel chair:
But £20 million (1976) to £27 million (1977) in support for bus fares leading to a 2% increase in patronage is surely and expensive buy?

County council official:
That is a political decision.

Panel chair:
Surely the Government will draw the line?

Discussion

An overall conclusion from observation and analysis of the examination is that the debate was carefully managed and controlled with a number of key points being reiterated in criticism of the policies in the plan.

Firstly, the selection of topics and participants falls within the discretion of the Secretary of State and any particular emphasis could be considered the prerogative of the system. When the selection of topics and participants as well as the thrust of panel questions and criticism builds into a consistent effort to undermine the credibility of the plan's policies there is room for concern.

The main point to be drawn from the limited involvement of the public in the proceedings is that many of the points made by participants and particularly the comments from the panel would have more difficult to sustain unchallenged if a broader representation of the public had been in attendance. There are a number of general constraints that work against public involvement in examinations in public. These include necessary reading and assimilation of substantial technical documents in order to remain in touch with the content of the discussion, the requirement of written submission to the plan as the basis for invitation to participate (although presenting comments does not automatically ensure an invitation to appear), attendance over a considerable time period during normal working hours (for example, the

failure to complete the debate on several topics meant that discussion was continued at another time and not necessarily at the subsequent session) and the discussion of broad principles rather than detail. On the evidence from the South Yorkshire examination in public not only have the general public a very low probability of making representations but they also have less likelihood of being invited to participate at the examination even if they do present their views.

Management of the form and content of the examination went beyond the selection of participants and topics. As most presentations were made by state employees or representatives of large organisations the dominant mode of expression was authoritative, specialised and professional. Much of the content of the examination consisted of specialised points on technical matters and planning technique. During the first few sessions the pattern of presentation was in the form of systematic argument using technical vocabulary. An illustration of the social distance between the panel and the South Yorkshire public was when one of the few participants with a local accent was making a presentation and was asked by the chairman to slow down and speak more clearly "because some of us do not come from South Yorkshire". Later on the panel was (unnecessarily) abrupt with the representative of a local voluntary association who had difficulty in grappling with their submission and marshalling his points. The incident served to illustrate that the public were tolerated, up to a point, in a context which put a premium on technical and professional debate.

The content of the discussions was also at the discretion of the Secretary of State (in terms of the overall agenda) and the panel (in terms of the day to day management of the discussion). Throughout the code of practice runs an implication that the examination will

deal with broad issues. In personal conservations with DoE officials over this period they expressed the opinion that the examination is intended to explore new information, new arguments and new points of view. However, the South Yorkshire examination seemed to meet none of these objectives. Most of the time was taken up by restatements of original representations and pre-examination submissions made by the participants. Occasionally, the panel showed some exasperation at the more extended and monotonous expositions of familiar arguments but for the most part such recapitulation was accepted. Indeed the panel often acted as if many of the statements being made were new and original by taking copious and verbatim notes of presentations with the consequence that proceedings were slowed. Given this open concern to accurately record participants statements they in urn began to add further qualification to already carefully worked papers.

The focus on detailed recapitulation of technical reports and representations set a framework where presentations outside the dominant form and mode of expression could appear unusual and 'unprofessional'. A context was set where participants appeared to become sensitive about raising matters which might fall outside the norm. Matters of fundamental values, qualitative material and broader judgements were brushed over quickly or not raised at all (the example of the material prepared by the county on community life in the Dearne towns is a case in point). Self imposed sensitivity to political matters and to unquantified information came naturally to state employees used to the structural frameworks of government and the division of labour between professionals and politicians. Given the almost universal collusion with the unwritten rules about the form and content of presentations at the examination, those participants who were not able to conform (that is, the non-profesionals) were placed at a disadvantage and

their representations were given lower credibility. In such contexts the public becomes a 'muted group' by not sharing in the dominant mode of expression and hence finds that it may be disregarded or unheard.

A further consequence which follows from this evolved consensus (which was catalysed by the panel's actions, reactions and inactions) is that the content of the examination became predictable, constrained and manageable (for the panel). By directing and allowing the presentations to focus on middle range technical issues and avoiding the introduction of fundamental values and political arguments the potential for the examination to move in new directions or to embrace innovatory ideas was much reduced. Equally this tactic ensured that conflict was contained and did not spill over into openly political discussion which could have threatened the unity created by following a technical agenda. It seems that the discussion was sufficiently absorbing for it to grip the concentration of the majority of participants and hence served to limit bolder and more contentious possibilities. Discussion of and concentration on technical matters acted as a brake on the consciousness or expression of broader and more radical issues.

Into this constrained, constraining and, for most participants, already familiar form of debate it was possible for the panel to add its own criticisms with increasing insistence. The dominant emphasis has already been noted but focussed around the relevance and efficacy of the job priority area policy. It was argued that private business would not wish to invest in the Dearne Valley. A more or less explicit ideology of allowing the market to determine the nature and location of development (and was proposed and supported by officials from, among other bodies, the metropolitan district councils) was expounded and expanded by the panel. If a

consequence of this laisser faire approach to structure planning was to mean the further deprivation and decline of the poorer communities in South Yorkshire then this was implicitly accepted as a cost of following trends rather than accept large scale intervention to act against the trend and seek to redress the relative inequalities found within the county.

We are saying that the panel's criticisms of the social priorities in the South Yorkshire structure plan were artificially narrow and failed to consider the possible social and community costs of continued neglect and decline in the deprived areas. The ground rules and the form of the proceedings allowed manipulation of the content and structure of the debate so that effective rebuttal of the critique was difficult. Most of the participants helped to sustain an atmosphere of good natured rationality and related to the panel with deference. Consistent ideological arguments were skilfully introduced and sustained within this professional / technical framework. The main examples of the ideology were the frequent comments by the panel that people in the Dearne should help themselves, could travel elsewhere to work, shop and play and that the existing communities were best left to die out. The corollary accepted with little or no objection was that private business needs attractive new locations, proximity to markets and a large workforce in areas where the infrastructure and mechanism of collective consumption was already well established. Only the county planning staff (and even then in a muted way) argued against this dominant view by suggesting that jobs and investment could follow people in need rather than vice versa.

Much of the analysis above was presented over 10 years ago (Darke, 1979). From the perspective of the late 1980s/ early 90s the debate found underneath the events at the examination of the South Yorkshire structure plan

were reflected in the views of the Conservative government under Mrs. Thatcher's leadership. For example, the chair of the panel was offering comments which were echoed in Norman Tebbit's famous phrase; "get on your bike" as advice to the unemployed living in the north of England. The Thatcher government has also pursued a non-interventionist line with respect to development and investment in the built environment believing that the market knows best.

A more general observation comes from Miliband who has suggested that

> what appears 'reasonable' by way of state action (or non-action) to power holders will normally be in tune with the 'rationality' and requirements of the socio-economic system itself; external and antithetical criteria, in so far as they offend that 'rationality', are by definition unreasonable. (Miliband, 1977, p.93)

By putting the specific events at the South Yorkshire examination in public into a wider context of the role of the state and the relationship of the state to economic interests, it is possible to conclude that the main purpose of the examination was to demonstrate the reasonableness of accepting the needs of industry when deciding strategic planning policy. The 'irrationality' of the county council's proposals for positive discrimination was presented by reaffirming laisser faire principles and, occasionally, questioning the need for any type of planning controls.

Later in his discussion of the relative autonomy of the state from dominant economic interests Miliband goes on to say that

> ...the state does, of course, 'intervene' massively in the life of advanced capitalism, and sustains it in a multitude of different ways which cannot all by any means be labelled 'economic'. It mainly does so in accordance with the 'rationality' of the capitalist mode of production. But this is not a simple process either, least of all in a bourgeois

> democratic and constitutional setting. For in such a setting, the political system allows pressures to be generated and expressed against and in the state, and may turn the state itself into an arena of conflict, with different parts of the state system at odds with each other, and thereby reducing greatly the coherence which the state requires to fulfil its functions, 'economic' or otherwise. (Miliband, 1977, 96)

The importance of the examination was that the 'rational' evaluation of the plan occurred within the legally defined framework of a public debate and therefore has the stamp of legitimacy within a representative democracy. After the close of the examination the government was able to exercise its power of veto over the plan. The report of the panel was published in July 1979 along with the schedule of modifications proposed by the Secretary of State for the Environment. A principal proposal, as was expected, is the deletion of the job priority area policy. The modification was justified in the Secretary of State's paper on the grounds that the concept of giving priority to particular parts of the county "gave rise to considerable controversy and was opposed, in whole or in part, by most of the District Councils as well as other organisations within the County". The Secretary of State also recommended that a focal points strategy be adopted to bring the structure plan into line with the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Strategy. Also in his opinion "structure plans should not include policies which would tend to inhibit the growth of major centres with the greatest potential for new industrial, commercial and office development". Shopping floor space and car parking controls in the major urban centres of the county were proposed for deletion. The County Council acted with some bravado in the short term but the changes were accepted given that some of the policies had already been acted upon and that concurrent changes in the redefinition of development areas in the county (which excluded Sheffield) meant a great deal of congruence between the job priority areas

Fig. 5·1
South Yorkshire Structure Plan
Key Diagram

As approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment, December 1979.

Settlements

The four main urban areas

Other settlements
over 15,000 population
10,000 - 15,000
5,000 - 10,000
under 5,000

Main areas of new residential development

Employment

Carlton Areas of greatest potential for industrial development

O Major office locations (E II)

Environment

Environment Priority Areas (V1, V2, V5, S2c)

Areas of County Landscape Value (V22, V23)

Green Belt (V15, V17, V18, V19, V21)

Recreation

Areas of Search for informal countryside recreation facilities (R6)

Urban Fringe (R8)

Shopping

Main central areas (S5)

New shopping centre (S4)

Transport

Existing limited access roads with access points

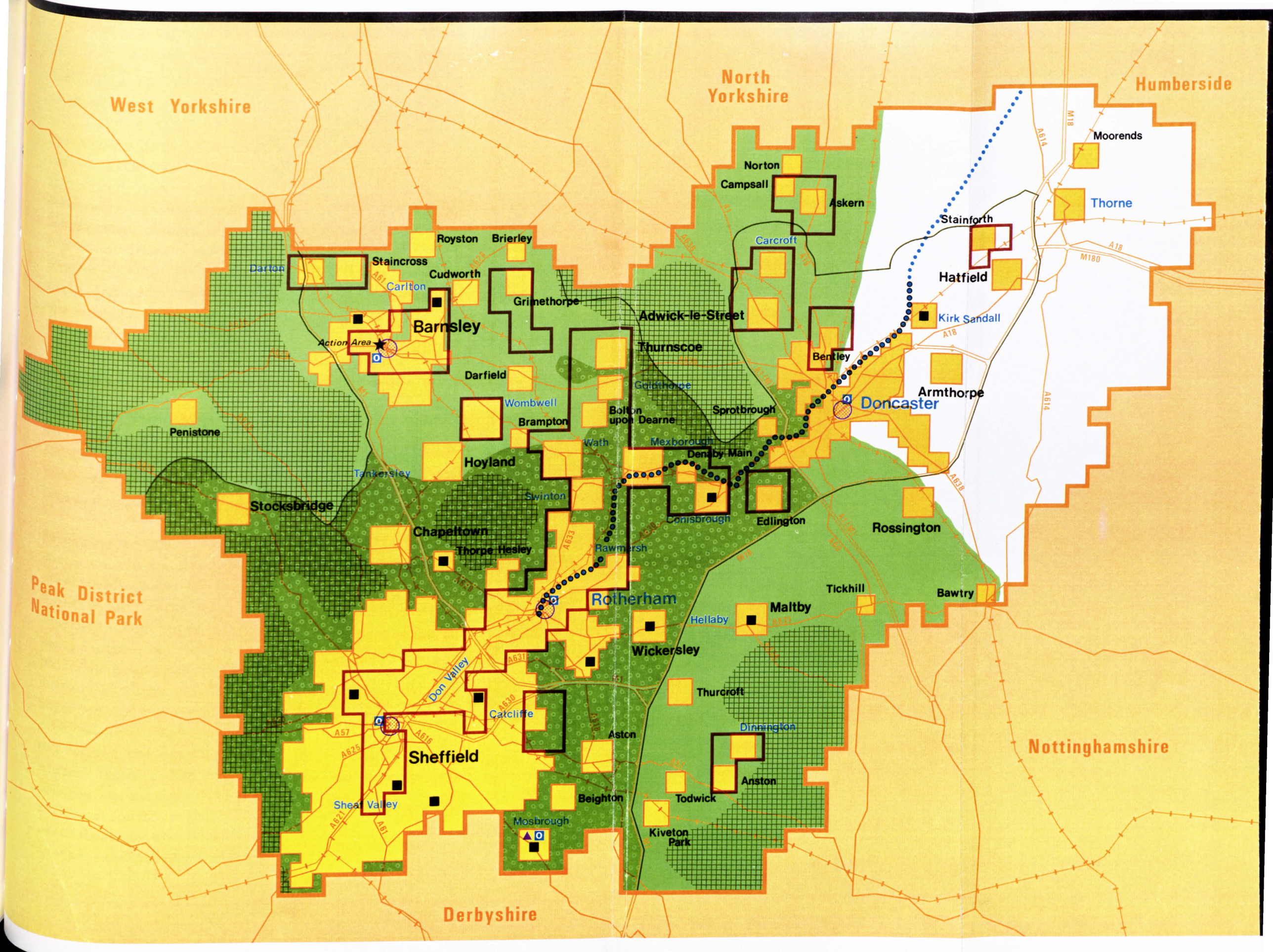
Other existing major roads

Rail links

Proposed Sheffield & South Yorkshire Navigation improvement (T17)

Existing high standard section of canal

Note: references refer to the policy statements included in Part C of the Written Statement. Only the main references are shown here.



West Yorkshire
North Yorkshire
Humberside
Peak District National Park
Nottinghamshire
Derbyshire
Moorends
Thorne
Norton
Campsall
Askern
Stainforth
Hatfield
Carcroft
Kirk Sandall
Bentley
Armthorpe
Doncaster
Royston
Brierley
Staincross
Darton
Cudworth
Carlton
Grimethorpe
Barnsley
Action Area
Adwick-le-Street
Thurnscoe
Darfield
Goldthorpe
Wombwell
Brampton
Bolton upon Dearne
Sprotbrough
Penistone
Wath
Mexborough
Denaby Main
Hoyland
Tankersley
Swinton
Stocksbridge
Conisbrough
Edlington
Rossington
Chapeltown
Thorpe Hesley
Rawmarsh
Rotherham
Tickhill
Bawtry
Maltby
Hellaby
Wickersley
Don Valley
Thurcroft
Catcliffe
Dinnington
Aston
Sheffield
Anston
Todwick
Beighton
Sheaf Valley
Mosbrough
Kiveton Park
A614
M18
A18
M180
A61
A638
A633
A631
A630
A57
A625
A616
A621

defined in the favoured structure plan and the targeting of government support for areas of high unemployment.

The ultimate decision on development plans has always rested with the centre since the post war enactment introduced the development plan system. Given the democratic basis of the British polity the state needs to ensure that power is not exercised without opportunity for individual representation, comment or redress. However, what did occur in the 1970s was that as the scale and importance of development planning expanded so did statutory public involvement in the discussion of structure plans become more restrictive. In part this was a result of adding greater discretion to the Secretary of State in his choice of agenda and participants at the formal examination and also to the nature of structure planning itself which did make the macro scale of development planning more about principles rather than specific spatial impacts; a change which reduced the ease of entry for members of the public into discussions about the plans.

Returning to the specific example of the examination in South Yorkshire the use of an 'impartial' chairman who effectively focussed criticism of the plan by being well briefed and carrying through an agenda of support for limited state intervention and freeing market forces it was possible to consolidate an ideological attack on the policies preferred by the county council. The critique united a large number of the participants (who were selected by the Secretary of State) including officials from several Labour controlled local authorities yet maintained the appearance of the relative autonomy of the state from dominant economic interests. The contradiction inherent in the idea of the powerful interventionist state and the ideas of democracy, public participation and local control over policy were present in the examination in public in a more immediate way than

had been the case during the earlier stages of structure plan preparation, not least because the examination was followed by the decision by the Secretary of State.

SECTION 7

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

> ...Question everything...Question everyone in authority, and see that you get answers to your questions...Question your government's policy, question the arms race, question the...slums, and the economies over feeding school children, and the rule that makes women have to renounce their jobs on marriage, and why the derelict areas are still derelict...But questioning does not mean the end of loving, and loving does not mean the abnegation of intelligence...But, I implore you, do not forget to question. (Holtby, 1983, 506)

There have been three main elements to this account of the structure planning process and public participation in South Yorkshire during the 1970s.

Firstly, we have provided an account of the strategic plan-making process itself which has used official documentation, unpublished reports and papers from within the county planning department, interviews with key personnel, and non-participant observation of working groups. We have sought to compare and contrast the plan-making process in South Yorkshire with the procedures followed in the other metropolitan counties (apart from London).

Secondly, we have studied the public participation process in the strategic planning process. Again the main focus was upon South Yorkshire using similar research techniques and sources with supplementary information drawn from the other metropolitan counties.

Thirdly, we have considered the strategic planning process in the metropolitan county of South Yorkshire as an example of policy-making in a national context where many bodies and interests are represented.

This chapter is intended to draw together the main conclusions and general observations from the research. Although we do not intend to introduce new material at

this stage we do intend to seek a synthesis and a set of conceptual and theoretical (that is, explanatory) derivations which hopefully will give further generality to the study.

While the idea of structure planning in the major conurbations has given way to the unitary development plan (since abolition of the metropolitan counties in 1986) we do not believe that the relevance of comprehensive planning has diminished. Indeed, some have argued that after more than a decade of control of the British land use planning system by a government committed to the free market and seeking to undo restrictions on development for the private sector, the need for an overall machinery and strategic policies which are consistent, broadly based and applicable to conurbations are increasingly necessary. The crises of transport congestion and poorly controlled development and, particularly, inter-regional imbalances in growth and prosperity suggest that the need for a return to strategic planning goes beyond comprehensive planning for the city region and requires the reinstatement of regional planning.

The strategic planning process.

We believe that the most important analytical distinction that we can employ in the discussion of the strategic plan-making process in metropolitan areas in the 1970s is between the *procedures* by which the plans were put together and the *substance* of the policies and plans that resulted. We have referred to this distinction elsewhere as being the dialectic of *form and content*.

Procedures

Strategic planners in the metropolitan areas during the 1970s learnt from experience and prior research on the structure planning process. They responded to the messages coming from studies of 'first generation' structure plans which indicated that goals-led approaches were difficult to implement. Cross (1983) draws this conclusion in his review of the English structure planning experience (ibid., 298). The main difficulty faced by the early structure planners was the transition from very generalised goals to operational policies.

All of the six metropolitan county councils followed a 'problem-led' approach to structure planning after 1973-74. All, apart from Merseyside, were said to have adopted a process which drew inspiration from the AIDA technique developed by researchers at the Institute of Operational Research. However, we believe that the broad similarity implied by earlier studies of the strategic planning process (Turner, 1977) is a simplification. We have indicated that the process adopted by the Merseyside planners differed from that followed in all the other metropolitan counties insofar as they moved to a preliminary strategy directly from the initial review of data and problems in the county. All the other metropolitan county planning departments built up their strategies and preferred plans by proceeding through a series of steps or phases over an extended time period.

Thus, we reject the idea that, with the exception of Merseyside, there was a common or consensual approach to the strategic planning process in the metropolitan counties. The accounts that were given earlier show that each authority had a distinctive approach. We consider (and agree with Cross, ibid.) that one of the most significant differences between structure planning methods is whether or not the planning process included a seperate stage of preparing alternative strategies. The stage of alternative strategy building was often the

result of a systematic integration of policies into a number of comprehensive packages after a meticulous refinement of individual policy work. Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear counties did include such an accumulative process and synthesised them into a number of discrete strategies. This was not the case (or intention) in Merseyside, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. The qualification is made because Merseyside was required by the Department of the Environment to go back to preparation of alternative strategies after the county had already decided on and presented its urban regeneration strategy. The DOE requirement seems to have been for no other apparent reason than a notion that without consideration of alternatives the protocol of methodological purity had been breached.

Cross (ibid.) notes from his review of planning process a general agreement that even where the plan-making methods were dissimilar the plans that emerged were the result of "...a process of combining elements from various options, strategies, or themes; rather than by a process of evaluating discrete alternatives and selecting one of them" (ibid). One of the principal lessons learnt from the experience of putting a structure plan together seems to have been that the systematic build-up of a number of alternative or rival strategies was not likely to produce discrete options. Our interviewee from Tyne and Wear recorded that at a relatively early stage the planning team realised that four 'upper level' issues were likely to dictate the main policies of the plan and therefore work was prioritised around these rather than continuing to treat all issues and policies as being of equal value for the strategic future of the county. Ashby, referring to the planning process in County Durham, said that "...(m)any of the component parts of strategies seemed likely to be in common; the construction of several different whole strategies would cause us to generate

artificial options merely for the sake of building up a complete package around a key alternative in one topic,..." (Cross & Bristow, 130).

Another way of summarising the distinction between those structure plan authorities that followed a systematic procedure intended to produce a set of discrete alternative strategies and those that did not has been to identify the difference as being between linear and cyclical methods of policy generation. This formulation expresses the distinction between step-wise and iterative procedures.

Using the documentation on planning process from the metropolitan county councils we can provide a summary diagram of the various approaches they adopted.

Figure 7.1 Planning process stages in metropolitan structure plans. (West Midlands excluded)

Greater Manchester County Council
Survey - Findings and Issues - Strategies - Plan

Merseyside County Council
Problems/Survey - Stage 1 report - Targets for Merseyside - Alternative Strategies - Plan

South Yorkshire County Council
Survey - Findings & Issues - Options - Strategies - Plan

Tyne & Wear County Council
Survey - Issues - Themes - Alternative Strategies - Plan

West Yorkshire County Council
Survey - Problems - Solutions - Packages of solutions - Themes - Plan

The first observation might be to echo Cross and say that there is no general similarity between the processes. However, there are similarities insofar as all these counties began strategic plan-making with a survey and/or an initial stage of defining local problems. The inclusion or not of an alternative strategies stage is illustrated in the diagram which indicates that Merseyside and West Yorkshire stand out from the others.

Merseyside followed a stage of preparing alternative strategies at the request of the DOE after the urban regeneration strategy had been prepared.

On Merseyside the determination to reach a strategy quickly and not to agonise about the fine detail of policies seems to have been largely due to the ethos of the chief planner. Had the inter-authority team remained in charge of the planning process it is likely that a 'linear' process leading to alternative strategies and evaluation and choice would have obtained. As it was a rapid cycle of problem definition and consultation resulted in the stage 1 report which gelled the skeleton of the regeneration strategy. The 'Targets for Merseyside' paper was a detailed elaboration of the strategy with a more considered review of resources and county council commitments.

In West Yorkshire the intention of providing annual reviews of strategic issues was accompanied by a cyclical and synthesised approach to policy-making. Rather than a systematic development of policies in a series of parallel streams the planners identified a set of distinct approaches or themes which were subjected to public scrutiny and consultation prior to confirmation of the favoured strategy. The identification of the themes (or philosophies as the planning team called them) was through a "relatively crude judgemental process" on the part of the planners. The choice of the preferred plan was drawn from a "liberal interpretation" of public comment and the outcomes of consultation.

In both cases there appears to have been a jump from analysis to prescription without elaborate intermediate stages. Rather than standing aside from early judgement about policies that might resolve some of the local problems this approach was taken head on. In exercising judgement there also appears to be an acceptance that

policy-making entails political choice and the early focus onto a single strategy implies a direct incorporation of the planners understanding of their paymaster's political philosophy and approach.

On the other hand, the planning process adopted in Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear stands in contrast. Much energy was expended on seeking out the 'best' or optimal planning process which would reduce or attempt to reduce the extent of judgement at every stage. Hence, the attraction of AIDA because it keeps judgment at arms length. The prolific output from the Methods Group in South Yorkshire which sought to rationalise every step in the planning process and the stream of technical papers from the Tyne and Wear planners seeking to 'explain', in quite abstruse language, the various steps and stages that the team was following indicate the importance that the professionals attached to procedure. The examples all show a deep concern to get the methodology right and to distance the process from making judgements or jumps to synthesis. Within these processes there are strong efforts to hold the politicians and the political process at arms length; to compartmentalise political input (and public opinion). In this way the process was partly disengaged from the usual political controls over policy work and the policy process rendered opaque to the lay-person.

Examples of the consequences of political disengagement were the comments about the technocratic nature of the planning process by politicians in Greater Manchester, the late involvement of elected members in defining policy options and the 'arms length' attitude among the GMC planners towards public participation and informing the public about the stages in the planning process. In Tyne and Wear the relative absence of reference to the role of elected members in the documentation on the planning process and in our interview responses suggests

that it was not only the public who found the complex and extended series of stages and manipulations of data and opinion to be opaque and confusing. As for South Yorkshire we hope that the detailed description of how the structure plan was put together largely speaks for itself in showing how the technicalities and the technical "purity" of the process in the early stages created a political backlash. Even though the public participation officer in South Yorkshire was keen to get the politicians involved and devised open day seminars for members and got members to fill in the kits there is a sense that the planners were seeking to make the politicians dance to their instrumental tune in the professional choreographing of a model planning process. Part of the reason for the backlash from councillors was their concern at being left outside the technical process and realising that they had lost a degree of control over parts of the policy process.

We can elaborate the argument being presented here. The inherent difference between the roles of members and officers in local government was discussed. In the days of Maud and Bains the relationship could be problematic but was not usually confrontational. However, the 1970s was a decade of growing party politicisation of local government and in consequence it was a period of growing political confidence and muscle-flexing among elected councillors. A reduction in the traditional deference given to professional opinion by councillors was also weakening as part of a broader process of lowered public confidence in the infallibility of the environmental professions. The upsurge of pressure for more public participation in the decisions of governments in the late 1960s was not unconnected with an enhanced popular wariness about professional conduct and action. Town planners were one of the professional groups most vulnerable to public reaction and criticism in this period in being blamed for the unpopular inner city

clearance programmes and the high rise developments that replaced the old nineteenth century terraced housing in most British cities in the 50s and 60s. It is in this context that political challenge to the professional work on strategic plan-making in the 70s has to be seen. Yet the challenge to the systematic planning processes followed by these metropolitan authorities also came from another direction which was from the growing realisation that the procedural models evolved in the 60s were a poor representation of the decision-making process.

In all three cases of a 'linear' planning process being applied to the preparation of a metropolitan struture plan we have recorded that the planning teams fundamentally adapted the intended process at some stage. The Greater Manchester account records that after following a particularly rigorous stage of policy option work the results were considered too complex, "technocratic" and the range of choice too wide for giving 'realistic' strategies. In Tyne and Wear the record shows that the rigour of the intended systematic procedures broke down initially at the key issues stage and, later, at the stage when translating broad aims into feasible policy packages. Although our account of the planning process on Tyne and Wear is sketchy it would seem that the adaptations to the intended process were injected as a result of internal professional re-evaluation as well as judgements about the political acceptability of some of the technical work. As for South Yorkshire the record shows that, in one sense, political intervention in late 1975 decisively influenced the future direction of the plan in placing an embargo on any critique of the cheap fares policy. Equally, the introduction of key elements of the final written statement such as the priority area policies for jobs and environmental improvement were predicated on political pressure and, following from those pressures, judgements

by the planners about the political values of the majority group leadership.

However, even when these interventions into the 'purity' of the systematic planning process are noted in the record and, for whatever reason, led to adaptations, an underlying allegiance among key professionals to a more technocratic way of working remained strong. From a reading of the official documentation of the planning processes 'political' interventions are played down (if they get any mention), and the official versions of the planning process recorded in structure plan documentation indicates a systematic incremental and apparently logical, stepwise progress to the inevitable outcome of the preferred strategy. We have seen how the South Yorkshire planners at the centre of the structure plan team were thrown completely off balance by the political intervention in 1975, were 'suprised' by the reactions of the district councils to their (county planners) requests for information and were unable to deal easily with the 'political' strategy that was fed into the strategy building stage of the process by the review group (drawn largely from staff who had a more distant relationship to the planning process). The unhappiness and lowered morale that pervaded the county planning team in South Yorkshire at times was profound and was well summed up in the comment from one of the team when the draft plan was being taken through consultation and public participation which indicated that there was no sense of professional pride and identity in a plan which "could have been put together ages ago".

We all get committed to our work and to favoured ways of doing things and the more senior and involved the more ingrained and deep-seated is that commitment. What we are suggesting here is that many professional planners, for a number of reasons, placed a major emphasis on model procedures. Among those reasons were professional

education and training, where process has been a core concern in the curriculum through the 60s and 70s. Promotion of model procedures had become a mark of professional credibility and status. Reputations and the trappings that accompany high professional standing in this period were often as much dependent on the quality of plan preparation as on delivering policy outcomes. Where most strategic planners (particularly in the metropolitan areas) were working on plan preparation rather than implementation of existing plans or policies the challenge to creativity lay in getting the process 'right'. The emphasis on procedure in strategic plan making was also bolstered by the advice from the DOE where (despite the title of the Development Plans Manual) form was more strongly promoted at the outset than content. By the time that the DOE became concerned about the way that county planning teams were setting up elaborate and systematic process models and sought (through circular 98/74) to tone down strategic plan ambitions many planning departments had already got the bit firmly between their teeth and were cantering (DOE officials would probably say meandering) through the stages.

Some time ago Gower Davies (1972) used the phrase "the evangelistic bureaucrat" to refer to the planning profession in Newcastle. While there may have been simplifications in parts of his analysis of the decline of Rye Hill and the professionals' role in its post-war history, the sense of single-mindedness on the part of officials recorded in these accounts of the plan-making process in the metropolitan counties recalls that earlier description. So convinced were the planners in South Yorkshire that they were correct in their approach and reasoning that they soldiered on regardless of the effect, which was to deepen the resolve of their own councillors to create a 'political' plan and heighten opposition from the district councils. Structure

planning procedure was not seen as open to dialogue and negotiation but a professional cause to be promoted through thick and thin. Ironically, the most vehemently defended element in this stand for professional autonomy was the planning process rather than the content of the plan. It was assumed that the required content and relevant policies would emerge automatically from the model process.

The point of breakdown in the model procedure in all three cases was at alternative strategies stage. Greater Manchester planners decided to simplify the strategic options emerging from technical work. On Tyneside, the planners introduced a couple of strategic policy packages which had not emerged from technical work up to that point. In South Yorkshire the 'have-nots' strategy arose because assessment of the strategies that had evolved from the systematic work were felt to be politically bland and unlikely to gain favour from the Labour group. An irony is that the AIDA technique championed by the planners was favoured principally because it was supposed to throw up all potential policy options into the ring. On this evidence the use of AIDA did not create an exhaustive set of options, but, almost the contrary, the way that it was used seems also to have introduced a political blandness to the policy process.

A conclusion that we draw from this analysis is that the five metropolitan county councils that began *ab initio* to prepare structure plans in the early 1970s do differ in the detailed evolution of the planning process followed. We have explored these differences from the perspective of the interplay of systematic technical work and political inputs. Where Merseyside and (to a lesser degree) West Yorkshire took a pragmatic and politically sensitive approach to the process of strategy building, the other three planning departments sought to achieve a more or less technically 'clean' approach by adopting and

adapting a systematic approach to policy generation which drew heavily upon the AIDA technique. The reasons for these differences are more difficult to pinpoint but we suggest that they are strongly linked to the differing philosophies of the senior staff including the county planning officers. The extent to which the process was adapted from the initial model and to which political intervention occurred appears dependent on the extent to which planning officers were prepared (or naive enough) to take a purist approach to policy development to the extent of questioning existing political priorities. On Merseyside political sensitivity and awareness among senior staff meant that controlling party group preferences were introduced more or less from the outset. In West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Tyne and Wear the planning teams appear to have recognised and consulted on the political acceptability of emerging strategic options in the midst of the process. The South Yorkshire example stands out as a case where professional efforts to sustain the methodological purity of the favoured policy process continued to the point of shipwreck.

The analysis that we have been pursuing so far depends on consideration of how far the strategic planning teams in the metropolitan counties choose and related their preferred planning process to the prevailing political ethos of the majority group in county hall. However, taking account of the political context is only one dimension of the possible influences on structure planning. That context includes other government bodies (including central government) and the local public.

While we have been critical of the professional single-mindedness and political naivety of the strategic planners in South Yorkshire they did take seriously the manifesto commitment to public participation. Other metropolitan planning authorities gave relatively little

attention to public comment and sought only to fulfil the statutory requirement. Merseyside rates high on political consultation and negotiation and on consultation with other government bodies but low on consultation with the public. South Yorkshire on the other hand rates high on consultation with the public but low on consultation with politicians and other government bodies. The other metropolitan county planning authorities fell between these extremes.

Substance

Superficially there was very little difference between the substance of the metropolitan structure plans. All considered the local economy and employment, housing and population, environment, recreation and leisure, commerce and shopping, and transportation as key issues. The Tyne and Wear planners also included a number of further 'lower level' issues for inclusion including energy, education and social services. The latter are indicative of another similarity between the metropolitan structure plans which was a corporate approach which went beyond purely land-use concerns. Seeking to include a broad canvas of issues in the plans was inevitable given a problem-led planning process. Although there were dissident voices from within the planning teams themselves the dominant view among the metropolitan county planners was that policy inputs across a wide range were necessary to tackle the deprivations and structural problems found in conurbations. A major difficulty for metropolitan counties was that they did not have direct control over education and social services; these being district council functions. In consequence, the central paradox for structure planning in the conurbations was that although the need for corporate approaches to strategic planning more pressing (and arguably more pressing than was the case in the shire counties) the scope for implementing broad

integrated policies was impeded by the structure and functions of local government. Additionally, all the metropolitan areas were suffering from low growth (as the 1981 Census was later to show the areas of greatest growth in the intercensal period from 1971 to 1981 were smaller towns and the outer areas within easy travel distance to London). The metropolitan structure plans therefore became vehicles for making bids for resources rather than acting as direct harbingers of change. As one of the interviewees expressed it, metropolitan structure planners had to be "outward looking" if they were to introduce corporate policy.

The means to make wider bids for resources was principally through 'advocacy' or 'lower case' policy statements which were wide in scope and went well beyond a land-use base. Merseyside again emerges as the exception when seeking resources through the medium of the structure plan. Rather than laying a comprehensive set of demands to the government on the table at the examination in public, Merseyside took a more interactive and direct approach and publicised their demands to Whitehall at an early stage by their Stage One report. In the end this may have backfired insofar as the civil servants appeared to dislike this unfamiliar precocity but it illustrates, in a further example, how the Merseyside planners did not see strategic planning as a cool, technical exercise determined solely by rational argument but rather saw bidding for resources as a political process. They attempted to use the planning process as a means to get resources and local change by lobbying and active negotiation with those who had most power to provide them.

Over time, the corporate emphasis in the metropolitan structure plans became anathema to the Department of the Environment. Any principled enthusiasm in Whitehall for a broad approach to strategic planning in the early years

of structure planning was extinguished as the resource implications and extended time scale of metropolitan plan making became apparent in practice. From the time of the publication circular 98/74 the DOE made strong efforts to limit the scope and ambitions of the metropolitan planning departments. Yet ambiguity prevailed. Some encouragement for the corporate approach was given to the metropolitan counties by central government attitudes towards the inner city problem which emerged in the Bill and later, the Act in the late 1970s. By emphasising the economic dimension of inner city decline there appeared to be an implicit acceptance of a multi-pronged approach to regeneration in the cities. Unfortunately, this attitude did not impinge on panel members at the examinations in public of the metropolitan structure plans

Digging deeper into an analysis of the content of metropolitan structure plans reveals that although they share common substantive concerns there are crucial differences in the policies that were proposed to overcome specific problems. We believe that a core difference is whether specific policies and the plan as a package were 'market led' or 'interventionist'.

As an example of each of these contrasting approaches to policy we can briefly compare Merseyside and South Yorkshire. The economy chapter of the Merseyside structure plan saw regeneration as principally a matter of supporting private firms and businesses; that is, economic and employment policies are directed at support for the private sector. The main priorities were to provide land for industry's needs, encourage private investment, prestige office sites and so on. In contrast, the South Yorkshire plan was much more directive with policies that sought to restrict land supply and planning permissions in the major centres and

to point employers and developers to the job priority areas.

An indicator of the extent to which the metropolitan structure plans were market-led or interventionist was the scale of modifications required by the Secretary of State following the examination in public. South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear faced the strongest reaction from central government and were served with the longest lists of required modifications. West Yorkshire was asked to make greater provision for housing, industrial and office development. The modifications asked of the Greater Manchester plan were principally related to land release for development with directives from the Secretary of State to district councils to ensure that they sustain a supply of land for housing during the plan period. In some cases (Oldham, Salford, Tameside and Trafford) the minister asked for larger land releases than those identified in the plan.

Jowell and Noble (1980) saw the government's reaction to the Tyne and Wear plan as principally an attempt to restrict the social content of the plan but we feel that given that all the metropolitan structure plans included a broadly similar range of topics a more valid explanation lies in the extent to which the local authorities embraced (or not) market principles in defining policy. The Tyne and Wear written statement saw economic regeneration as publicly led, identified public transport as the main option for travel and movement in the county, wished to restrict the growth of Newcastle and banned out-of-town shopping developments.

Form and Content

From separate consideration of the form and content of the metropolitan county structure plans we wish to draw the two elements together. Elsewhere the author has

developed the idea that there is a close link (Darke, 1982, 1983 & 1985). The impetus for this idea of a dialectic between procedure and substance, form and content, stems from epistemology and the theory of knowledge. By definition, epistemologists have been concerned to explore the relation between knowledge and action. Fay (1975) has presented one (reasonably accessible) interpretation of this link between social theory and political practice. Camhis (1979) provides a broad summary of the relationship between planning theory and the philosophy of knowledge.

We draw an analogy between positivism in the social sciences and procedural planning theory inasmuch as both stem from a concern to isolate and control values and value judgements in inquiry and in policy making respectively. The idea of positivism has been to model the social sciences on the older, physical sciences. Even if value-free inquiry were possible in the physical sciences it is a particularly difficult enterprise to embrace in practice or in principle in the social sciences if only because the researcher shares common human emotions and thoughtways with the subjects. This idea is now relatively well known under the rubric of the social construction of reality. The idea of objectivity is been severely modified as a result of the awareness that everyone brings their own subjectivity to bear in observation and explanation of the world.

Fay notes that positivist social science can give objective knowledge and hence provide the basis for effective social control. The form of political practice that corresponds with positivism is social engineering whereby social control and policy is held by those with the most, or most objective, knowledge. From the perspective of positivism and social engineering the most appropriate policy-makers are scientists themselves who become policy experts by virtue of their possession of

knowledge. Crucial to sustaining the key policy-making role of the value-free scientist is the belief in the homomorphism between explanation and prediction. That is, positivists believe that to know something and explain its behaviour is to be able to control it. Technical control is an integral element of positivist science. Fay (ibid, p 40) suggests that alongside the positivist view of science and conceptually linked to it is a form of political practice which can be titled technological politics or policy science. A principal axiom of policy science is that only the knowing and the knowledgeable have the ability and skill to make policy because only they can be trusted to act rationally and in a value-free way.

This conceptual linking of knowledge to action has been taken further by Fay and others by considering other modes of science and social science, such as interpretivism and critical theory. However, the key point for this discussion is that we may now explore the intimate link between procedural planning theory and technocratic action.

In planning theory the effort to find a generic planning process was the impetus for the development of the distinction between procedural and substantive spheres or concerns. Procedural theory was intended, like positivist methods in science, to exclude extraneous or implicit values. The ideal planning or policy-making process for the procedural theorist was where decisions were arrived at as a result of a rational, value free process. Procedural theory demanded that the planning professional stand aloof from making value judgements and holding beliefs. Any values that entered the policy process must be 'external' and legitimate.

Hence, we might interpret the systematic planning procedure adopted in South Yorkshire and the actions of

the planning staff as seeking to treat the values and preferences of politicians and public as 'inputs' but only after they have been vetted for their legitimacy. The planners (implicitly) saw themselves as the ultimate arbiters of technical legitimacy and rationality and when they doubted the wisdom of the cheap fares policy placed themselves explicitly in that role. They thought the politicians were, at best, ill-informed and, at worst, wrong-headed in holding down fares on public transport. They were prepared to challenge the political legitimacy of the committee and council decision with the technical legitimacy of the procedural theory and professional rectitude. They paid the price for that position by misjudging the power of the politicians and seeing their ideal planning process ultimately replaced by a more pragmatic variant.

Of course, to hold such ideas about the superiority of professional knowledge and procedures exposes the planner (or any other public service professional) to contradiction and an uneasy accomodation to the realities of power in government. It is something that professionals in government have to live with perhaps whilst directing wistful glances at colleagues working on their own account in the private sector or at the powerful 'autonomous' professions of law and medicine.

The notion of a relationship between form and content in metropolitan structure planning can be further generalised on the basis of the descriptions and analysis presented earlier. We have recorded that the substantive policy package that emerged from the systematic, linear process initiated by the South Yorkshire planners was 'trend-following'. The structure plan for South Yorkshire that was most likely to emerge from the professionally led planning process would have seen continued growth in Sheffield and the main centres with no mediation of the economic and environmental problems

of the coalfield. We believe that the existence of this relationship can be generalised. In other cases where politicians appear to have been less directly involved in the planning process, 'trend following' and/or market led policies resulted. This applies to Greater Manchester, Merseyside and, to a lesser degree, to West Yorkshire.

Tyne and Wear proves more difficult to fit into the explanation of a link between form and content being developed here. The plan that emerged was interventionist yet on the basis of documentation the planning procedure appears to have been highly technical. However, we have also noted that the planners on Tyneside introduced adaptations to their model process at several key points (key issue definition, identification of themes). We have also noted that the chair of planning committee was closely involved in the planning process and he carried the confidence of other members of Labour group. The implication to be drawn is that there was a deeper sensitivity to the political climate and power relations (less professional pride?) on Tyneside than among the South Yorkshire planners. However, the strongest potential explanation for the emergence of an interventionist package of structure plan policies on Tyneside (and South Yorkshire) lies in the continuity of strong Labour party control throughout the planning period. Tyne and Wear along with South Yorkshire were the only two metropolitan counties to remain Labour in 1977. Where political control was more volatile the professionals had more freedom to pursue their favoured procedures and policy interests.

Public Participation

The metropolitan county councils took a variety of approaches to public participation in strategic planning.

South Yorkshire's was considered to be among the most innovative programmes of all the structure plan authorities. The reason for this lay in the enthusiastic take-up of the political commitment towards public involvement shown in the 1973 South Yorkshire Labour Party manifesto. Contributory to this enthusiasm was the energy of the officer employed to manage the programme and the concern to integrate information from the public into the strategic planning process.

The interest in the South Yorkshire programme of public participation lies in the introduction of experimentation with a range of participatory techniques within a set of aims and objectives for the programme which were made explicit from the outset. These aims drew from the emerging experience and conclusions from the DOE sponsored Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning and identified information collection, information dissemination and the opening up of dialogue with members of the public as key elements of the programme. The latter was seen as providing opportunities for the public to gain more knowledge of the planning system and an educational vehicle. Aspects of the programme that were innovative included the use of 'kits' for gaining the views of organised groups and the incorporation of trade-off techniques within the kits as a means of identifying public priorities; the open days for councillors as a means to gain political input to the programme; work with schools and young people; the use of 'community workers' to gain responses from groups that were under-represented in early returns of the kits and the use of community panels at the draft plan stage.

An important conclusion is that despite the orthodox view that public participation in strategic planning is particularly tricky, because people are less concerned about overarching issues, and that participation in

planning is more likely to be successful when local matters are being considered has to be reviewed. People in South Yorkshire did become involved in discussion and debate about strategic matters with the kits and the community panels being particularly useful in this respect. A further conclusion is therefore that with targetted programmes and careful design of the techniques people can be drawn into making comment and showing interest in strategic matters. This will involve greater expenditure of money, resources and staff time but the costs of the South Yorkshire programme shows that in global terms the amounts are relatively small. Of course, the numbers in the local population who were involved in South Yorkshire's programme even during stage one of the planning process (which followed the planning team's intentions) was a small proportion of the one and a quarter million living in the county. To attempt to gain involvement from a large proportion of people in such programmes is unrealistic and depending on the aims of the prticipation programme is probably unnecessary.

Nevertheless there are qualifications that need to be made. The study of groups who had participated in filling in the kits which we undertook at draft plan stage showed that impact of participation and memory of the earlier involvement was quick to dissipate. In part this was due to the extended time period between the stage one participation programme and the production of the draft plan but also to the changing membership of groups whereby those who were involved at an early stage were either no longer active in membership or influential in the organisation (particularly group officers).

Although there are positive lessons and some pitfalls that can be identified from the programme as a combination of participatory techniques an evaluation of the South Yorkshire approach has to be placed in the context of the planning process as a whole. Taking this

broader perspective raises questions of how the information collected was incorporated into the policy process and what the programme achieved. The overall conclusion with respect to the use of results from the participation programme has to be that the planning department found some difficulty in incorporating the information into the planning process. Much of the information gave a broad indication of public preferences but as the process of policy development evolved reference to public opinion and information from the participation programme became less frequent. The planners were also unable to get clear responses from politicians who they had hoped would mediate between conflicting preferences and information from the public. Only at the margins did the public's views affect policies in the structure plan, on recreation and some environmental issues. On the 'big' questions of employment, public transport and future location of housing and commercial developments, public opinion had little effect on the final proposals in the preferred plan. What is of particular interest is our conclusion that this would have been the case had the planners continued through with their model planning process without intervention from the politicians. We believe that the plan which would have emerged from the technically led, rationalistic process driven by the planning team would have followed pre-existing trends in the county whatever public opinion and preferences had indicated.

A principal conclusion that we draw from the study is identical to that drawn by Boaden et al. (1980, 95)) and Thornley (1977, 49) that participation is not a technical exercise.

> ...(I)t has profound implications for the planning and governmental systems within which it occurs. (Boaden et al, 1980, 95)

Putting a similar point within a broader theoretical perspective Thornley states that

> ...(a) lack of theorising and/or a belief in the political neutrality of planning and participation does not provide exemption from a value position. (Thornley, 1977, 49)

Thornley has argued that the success or failure of participation in planning cannot be separated from the objectives of such participation and that, in turn, there are a variety of theoretical perspectives on participation which may be held implicitly and yet which have profound implications for those objectives. In his analysis three theories of participation were advanced.

The first of these, the consensus-stability perspective (derived from theories of social relations which stress social order), incorporates participation as a mechanism for providing information to decision makers which helps to sustain the adaptability and equilibrium of the social system as a whole. The informational value of public participation in planning dominated the comments of the Planning Advisory Group in 1965 and the Skeffington report in 1969 as did the intention to reduce conflict through participation and achieve concensus on the plan which was a stated aim in much official documentation from the DOE. In terms of the democracy-efficiency dualism that has pervaded debate about local government throughout the post war period, the consensus-stability view of participation leans strongly towards efficiency in policy-making. In Thornley's words improved efficiency

> ...can only be achieved through allowing an elite to make the decisions, ensuring their accountability, and improving the quality of information on which these decisions are based. Participation is useful inasmuch as it contributed towards the latter two objectives without endangering the first. It is seen as a means of improving communication, coordination and understanding. In this way people are integrated into an acceptance of the 'rules of the game' and the system is provided with the

> feedback necessary for adaptation and maintenance of equilibrium. (ibid, 45)

The second of these themes or perspectives on planning participation is conflict-increased consciousness (deriving from conflict theories of social order). Participation is seen as a means to achieve change and given that most conflict theories see the main source of stratification to lie in class relations and inequality the main demand behind conflict and change is reduction in material and political divisions. Participation is both a means of increasing levels of consciousness and a direct source of pressure for change. The developmental benefit of participation reflects the democratic ideas of those who seek participatory democracy and equality in terms of power and participation is necessary for meaningful participation to take place.

The final perspective in this trilogy is containment-bargaining. While some theorists have seen the inherent conflict which permeates the social order they believe that for the wider good, conflict has to be managed and controlled to prevent its overthrow. Conflict has to be channelled into 'constructive' directions as a form of conciliation. Thus incorporation of conflict becomes an essential aim of participation and the offer of participation in governmental decision-making is a means of bringing the formerly unrepresented into the system. Participation in this sense is a double edged mechanism for it offers the previously disenfranchised a place within the frame of government but in accepting the place they also are implicitly accepting the rules under which decision-making occurs.

In the previous section of these concluding comments we indicated that there was an intimate relationship between the form and content of planning and decision-making. We are now in a position to extend that analysis and propose that the relationship also incorporates participation of

the public. A triangulated link is suggested between problem-solving strategies (planning process), problems and possible solutions to them (the form or substance of planning policy) and the role that the public and public comment plays in state decision-making (participation).

The technocratic position sees participation as a source of information for decision-making but admits no role for the public in the final decision. The policy outcome of the technocratic process is inherently conservative and accepts the status quo. The group most capable of providing leadership and decision-making are those with the most information and the tools for handling that information and moulding the most appropriate solutions and policies to problems and system disequilibrium. Implied in the position represented here as the technocratic view of policy making and participation is an ambivalence towards democracy. While paying lip service to representative democracy an underlying belief in technocratic politics shows through from time to time.

The perspective that sees participation as containment and bargaining corresponds most closely in this study to the position taken by the politicians in South Yorkshire. They saw participation as having value for raising the consciousness of the public in local government matters but as a means to confirm the legitimacy of the elected representative. When the participation programme was referred to by the planners as adding information into the planning process which went against the politicians' previous decisions (principally on cheap fares policy for public transport) they reacted strongly and chose to curtail the programme. The politicians recognised that the public held a variety of views on key matters of policy and that social divisions within society were endemic. For this reason they supported a much more interventionist structure plan than the professional planning team was prepared to propose (and were unhappy

to support). Implied in this political view of participation is support for the representative form of democracy.

We have not identified a specific group in this study who could be said to champion the idea of participation as a means to create enhanced consciousness and potentially to feed conflict. The nearest to this position was the planner who managed the participation programme. The intention of using the programme as an educative device has the hallmark of commitment to participatory democracy although other aspects of the programme in South Yorkshire (such as attempting to use politicians to mediate in the process of finding a way forward when faced with conflicting views from the public) suggests an appreciation of the institutional basis of representative democracy in English local government.

Gutch (1979) has sought to relate the Thornley typology to evidence from the author's work in South Yorkshire with somewhat different conclusions. In terms of councillor attitudes towards participation he suggests that from the Newton typology of councillor roles (Newton, 1976) the senior members of Labour Group in South Yorkshire were trustees or politicos who were aware of the conflicting views and opinions among members of the public but sought to limit participation when it might exacerbate conflict and undermine their role a final arbiters on policy.

In an interesting subdivision of the attitudes towards participation among officers Gutch (ibid, 15ff) distinguished the chief planning officer, the senior officer directly responsible for the running of the participation programme and junior staff in the planning department who were responsible for detailed technical work. While the chief officer was seen to be likely to have an instrumental view of participation, the senior

officer in charge of the programme was thought likely to hold a bargaining view of participation or even a more 'idealistic' perspective which highlighted minority viewpoints whilst recognising the constitutional position that councillors were the legitimate decision makers in local government. The junior member of the planning team was thought in this analysis to be most likely to take a strongly idealistic view of participation and be most sypathetic to the views of disadvantaged groups to the point of acting as advocate or 'bureaucratic guerrilla'.

A broader issue which relates to the question of public participation and democracy concerns citizenship. Developments in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s and pressure for constitutional reform in Britain show that the debate is not dead. Rather than the events of 1968 (including the Town and Country Planning Act) and pressures for greater public involvement in the policy process being a brief interlude, issues around the rights and responsibilities of citizens remain important and it is not too far-fetched to suggest that the 1990s will see those debates back onthe national and international agenda. We hope, in a modest way, that this work could help to point up some of the potential and pitfalls of tying public involvement into the policy process in the future.

Inter-governmental policy making.

The approach to studying the inter-governmental relations that formed the context within which the South Yorkshire structure plan was put together was to utilise the framework devised by Rhodes in considering central-local relations in general. This gave an appreciation of the complexity of the relationships involved while

recognising the unequal distribution of power within the British governmental system.

The most significant finding in relation to the interplay of the different arms of government around the structure plan was that central goverment reacted strongly against the key principles. Given the nature of the British system of government with local authorities required to always act within the limits of legislation passed by Parliament and given the requirement within the planning acts that the Secretary of State for the Environment approve the (form and) content of structure plans the modifications that he required after the examination in public were legitimate in the constitutional sense. However, the modifications effectively reinstated a trend following plan after the effort, resources and struggle required at the local government level to produce and present an interventionist and redistributive package of policies.

The intention in concluding is not to question the legitimacy of that turn of events. Clearly, the Secretary of State was within his rights. Rather we wish to suggest that there was an inevitability in the outcome and we believe that outcome would have been broadly the same had there not been a Conservative government in power in Westminster.

The reason for suggesting the inevitability of the outcome is because the state in liberal democracies can never neglect the demands of business interests because the production of goods forms the life blood of the national economy. The state is dependent on accumulation and has to maintain it. The question of the role of the state in liberal democracies has been an important academic issue which particularly came alight during the 1970s. We do not intend to summarise the whole of that considerable debate here except to indicate that the

Marxist accounts of the state (which we were strongly drawn towards in that they were almost alone in tackling the relationship between the economic and the political within modern society) had flaws which weakened their validity. In particular, many versions of Marxist state theory have categorically insisted that the democratic state serves the interest of capitalism without a convincing explanation of why this should be the case. Associated with this insistence has been an unwillingness to accept that the state is not monolithic and that different arms of the state may and do act in contradiction to each other. It is this reluctance to admit of any element of pluralism within the state in liberal democracies that is a further damning flaw in much past state theory.

Crouch (1979) has formulated a more pluralistic theory of the liberal democratic state which has some appeal. He suggests that such states are subject to two major pressures: polyarchy and the privileged position of business. These two pressures ensure that the state is not responsive to dominant elites alone. He believes that this account of structural privilege is much more convincing and powerful than the abstract functionalism of contemporary Marxist formulations. Thus, the state has to show responsibility towards people as a whole rather just to capitalist interests and a general popular demand for increasing material prosperity, employment, stable prices and political stability mean that governments have to depend on institutions that can guarantee at least some of these goods.

> ...In practice, the state consists of a web of institutions which find their ultimate sanction in the monopoly of coercion but depend for their smooth functioning on that coercion not being wielded...It is the pursuit of stability which provides the clue to the ultimate motivation of state action. (ibid., 39-40)

Moving from the realms of theory to the empirical we suggest that considerations of stability lay behind the decision by the Secretary of State to reject the interventionist strategy favoured by Labour local councillors in South Yorkshire. The planning process in South Yorkshire between 1974 and 1979 had created considerable friction at all levels between officers and members within the county council itself, between county departments and committees, between the county council and the district councils, between the county and central government. On top of that the policies that the county council favoured were being questioned in terms of the viability of the priority area approach and the effects that this might have on the established urban centres in the county. Given that level of conflict and the potential effects that pursuing the interventionist strategy may have had on established businesses in the four centres the Secretary of State's decision had an inevitability. So "in the last analysis" the state did act to protect the dominant interests within the county and the nation.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

South Yorkshire Structure Plan Work Programme

The project report (SYCC, 1973c) included a section on the structure planning process. Apart from introducing the 'problem-led' approach the section listed the key elements of the process. These were commitments, surveys and forecasting, base year assumptions, data units, definition of aims and objectives, plan generation and evaluation, transportation, resources and monitoring/review.

The process was seen as falling into three main phases, although the department noted that inevitably there was likely to be some overlap. We summarise the project report outline of the phases.

Phase 1 (anticipated to be complete by late summer 1974)

Composed of three separate but inter-related components.

First component.

Determining needs, opportunities and problems of the area. Developed from initial survey and forecasting work undertaken in detail for 1986. Key forecasts (population and employment) to be projected forward to 2001. Surveys (involving all departments of the county council and the district councils) to cover major strategic aspects such as population, employment, housing, transport, and resources. Other work on "secondary" issues such as recreation, shopping, education and social/community services also proposed. Various elemens of public participation work will assist definition of needs, opportunities and problems

Second component.

Setting aims and objectives and defining main issues. Latter to develop from work on first component. Aims and

objectives to be basis for generation and evaluation of policies and proposals.

Third component.
Assessment of various technical approaches to plan generation and evaluation. Needs to be weel forward by end of Phase 1 in order that need for any models can be specified, calibration done and data requirements set. Work on development of a monitoring system could also begin in Phase 1. Need for county wide transportation model particularly stressed.

Phase 2 (anticipated from late summer 1974 to end of 1975)

Definition of broad policy choices. Not evaluated in first instance but used as basis for more detailed definition of objectives and for plan generation. The major plan generation and evaluation stage will lead to the preparation of a "short-list" of alternative strategies, from which one can be selected as favoured solution to problems defined earlier. Evaluation of alternative strategies will be based on criteria and standards related to a) effectiveness in meeting objectives of the plan, b) distribution of benefits and social costs between various sectors of the population, c) financial and real resource implications for both the public and private sectors, and d) ability of the plan to function well under a range of possible future circumstances. Emphasis on 1986 end point but subsiduiary work to consider 2001. Survey and forecasting work on "secondary" aspects of the plan to continue. Transportation aspects stressed including use of Garin/Lowry model dealing with accessibility aspects of land use distributions. Incorporation of land use transportation models employed by former district councils and development of a county wide model. Publication of most parts of reports of survey.

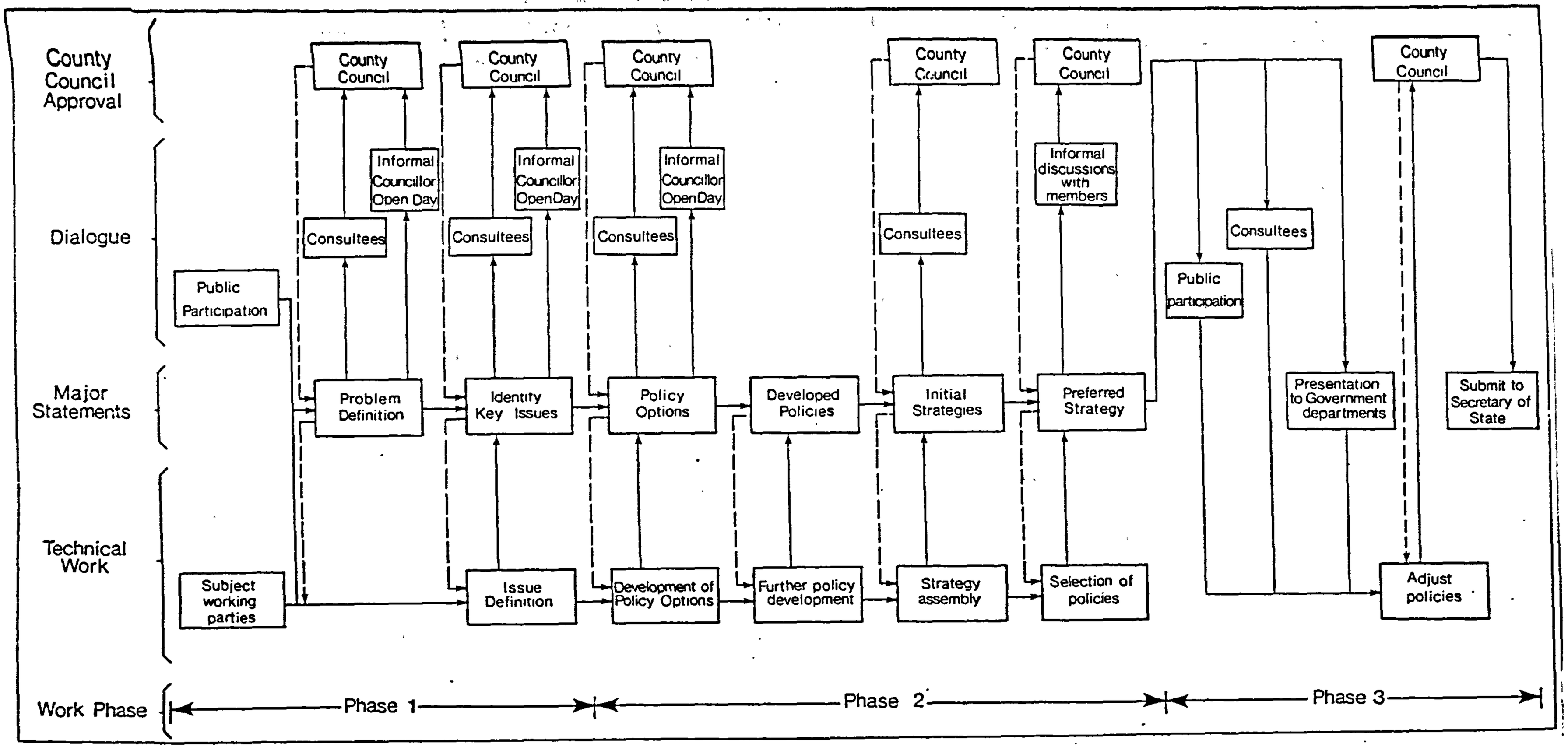
Phase 3 (anticipated to begin early 1976, submission of plan to Secretary of State expected end of 1976)

Adjustment and elaboration of favoured strategy. Evaluation of priorities for action in early years of plan. Major consultation exercise and the most important part of the public participation programme. Detailed assessment of resource implications of the plan and aim for well-balanced expenditure between sectors and over the plan period.

We include in this appendix a diagram of the work programme (Fig. A1.1) as identified in the project report (represented as a critical path), and a broad comparison between the proposed timetable of structure plan work and the actuality (Fig. A1.2). What is noticeable about the latter is that after the end of 1975 the widening time-gap between intention and reality is held steady, that is, no further slippage was allowed and the original trajectory of plan preparation was sustained (although "lagged" by the amount of slippage already incurred by late 1975).

One reason for the slippage was the continuous elaboration of the work programme and its sub-stages throughout the planning process. An example (Fig A1.3) is given from a Methods Common Task Group discussion note (SYCC, 1975r, DN METHD 22, 6-7).

Volume 1 of the report of survey (SYCC, 1977c) included a full description and diagrammatic representation of the planning process (Fig. 7.1)



The South Yorkshire Structure Plan Process

Notation

Main flows of work, recommendations, etc.

"Feedback" and further revision

Work Programme	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
P.S.O. = problems, satisfactions and opportunities			PP = Public Participation		SP = Structure Plan
Identification of P.S.O.					
Summary of existing policies					
Identification of key issues					
Broad policy options					
Fine policy options					
Formation of policy sets					
Technical Audits					
Initial strategies					
Favoured strategy					
PP on favoured strategy					
DoE presentation meeting					
Submit SP					

PROJECTED
ACTUAL

Project report
Official date of reorganisation
First SP Kit
First Councillor Open Day
Second SP Kit
Second Open Day
PAS Report
Second Kit Final Rept.
Third Open Day
First open statement of concern by councillors about slippage in the planning process
CC Elections
Examination in Public
Secretary of State decision

1979

BROAD POLICY OPTIONS STAGE | FINE POLICY OPTIONS STAGE | DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN STAGE

WORKSTREAM

BROAD POLICY OPTION DEV'T

OUTPUT Broad Policy Options & pols. in Boxes

STEP 1 Develop Policies in Boxes

Two foci + Spatialising Financial + Economic Guide Public's View

31/1/76 OUTPUT Detailed Policies

STEP 2 Group into Sets

29/2/76 OUTPUT Policy Sets

STEP 3 Evaluate

15/3/76 OUTPUT Policy Sets expressed in terms of performance measures

Establish Performance Measures

STEP 4 Strategy Assembly

7/4/76 OUTPUT Alternative Strategies

Evaluation of Alternative Strategies

OUTPUT Draft S.P. alternatives expressed in terms of performance

Publication of Draft S.P. for Public Partic'n

Public Parth on Draft SP

OFFICER DISCUSSION

Detailed Specialist Discussion

officer involvement

Officer Discussion

Officer discussion

DIALOGUE

SEPT. 26 OPEN DAY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Discussions between chairs of CPC & other members. Ad-hoc committee reports

Member discussion & Planning Committee

Planning Committee

Open Day

Planning Committee

Formal consultation with Districts

Formal Districts consultation

PUBLISH IN CONTACT

Publish in CONTACT

FIG A1.3. ELABORATION OF PLANNING PROCESS (From SYCC, 1975, DN METHD 22)

Appendix 2

Departmental Structure and Working Arrangements: Structure Plan Team and Corporate Planning

The first county council was elected on April 12 1973. The chief executive was the first officer appointment shortly after this date. Other chief officers were appointed over the summer of 1973. By July 1973 the county planning officer, chief planners and two assistant chief planners were in post and a further 6 senior planning staff were at their desks by the end of the year.

The county planning department was structured into three arms. The county planning officer had originally sought four divisions (structure plan, policy and resources, local plans/implementation, and research). The proposed research section was never established; no chief planner (research) or senior assistants were appointed and the policy and resources division took on a research function with a small unit of senior professionals and staff.

Planning committee was one of eight major service committees. A corporate structure was established with a policy committee acting to provide an integrative policy function. The most significant observation to be made on committee structure was that a separate environment committee was introduced, served by a distinct department and its officers. This was not the case in the other metropolitan counties. The main reason given for the separation of planning and environmental policy-making in South Yorkshire was that the long-standing industrial derliction of the county from coal-getting and heavy industrial processes needed a special and separate responsibility. Leisure and recreation matters were also delegated to a separate committee but this was less unusual in that other metropolitan county councils also created distinct leisure and recreation machinery.

The Planning Department

Each of the divisions or groups in the county planning department was headed by a chief planner directly responsible to the county planning officer. The original establishment included a deputy CPO but this post was never filled. From 1974 onwards the department operated at around 80% of the establishment. The model establishment was put together by the CPO and senior staff in post by 1973. We have noted in the main text that within the three groups an 80% establishment represented around 40 senior professional officers, much larger in proportionate terms than found in the other metropolitan counties. In defence of the relatively large establishment it is worth noting that other metropolitan counties had a prior base of county-wide strategic planning work from pre-reorganisation study teams.

Policy and resources group was responsible for "...the analysis of strategic councty policies, county and district policy integration, formulation of area and subject policies and for transportation policies...The group also deals with priorities for action, budget reviews and performance analysis". Within the division were three sections; physical resources (dealing with land, agriculture, minerals, reclamation and disposal, planning policies section dealt with existing plans and transportation at local, strategic and regionl levels; county studies section took responsibility for collecting and collating basic data such as employment and population while also monitoring policy priorities and resource allocation. The embryonic research unit was part of county studies section.

Local Plans and implementation section was responsible for "...liaison with district councils on local plan

preparation and for the county contribution to the preparation of local plans". Major planning applications were dealt with by this section as was the coordination and implementation of county policies. There were four units within local plans and implementation section, each being responsible to one of the metropolitan district councils.

Structure plan group was, of course, mainly responsible for structure plan preparation. An organisational complication was that the prior commencement on preparation of a Doncaster urban structure plan meant that structure plan team did not have a totally clean sheet to work with. A further complication was that part of the county fell within the Peak District National Park where a separate plan was in preparation by the planning board.

Structure Plan Group

The group can be shown as sitting within a complex matrix of internal committees and departments and external agencies (fig A2.1). Structure plan staff were seconded into the joint transportation and planning unit to sit alongside staff from county engineers and the passenger transport executive. The function of JTPU was to co-ordinate traffic and transport policies and implementation.

The project report (SYCC, 1973c) saw topic working parties as the basis for internal structure and working arrangeents for structure plan section. It was suggested that they would "...form the focus for much of the detailed work which must take place on individual topics, including establishing data needs and forecasting methods, generating policy alternatives, suggesting evaluation measures and so on" (ibid., 28). The working parties were to cover the full range of topics likely to

be issues in the plan, including where "...executive responsibility lies beyond the county council's control (i.e. with the district councils, central government, statutory authorities and the like)" (ibid.). The working parties were, therefore, seen as essential elements of a system of joint working necessary for dealing with startegic planning issues. It was said that the topic working parties were likely to form a useful working basis through the period of structure plan preparation.

Corporate Planning

The department of administration (under the chief executive) put up its proposals for corporate planning and management just after April 1974. The arguments for the system were familiar, that is, to enable all departments to make a contribution towards analysing needs, setting objectives, proposing alternative solutions and suggesting policy priorities on a county-wide and integrated basis. Three basic requirements were identified as being essential to the operation of the corporate system. Firstly, senior management team was the main locus of corporate work in order to offer the integrated professional advice necessary to support the chief executive in presenting policy issues to members. The second requirement was the need for a "policy plan" for the county council. Thirdly, the management team of chief officers required a broad base of departmental support from other officers in order to make the corporate system work (fig. A2.2).

The county planning officer held a place on the management team along with other chief officers (chief executive, county engineer and county treasurer). Communication between the management team and elected members was provided by regular reports from the team to policy committee and informal contacts between the chief

executive and committee chairs. It is of interest that the SMT was a small group which allows greater potential for consensus and corporate agreement but increases the task of communicating corporate policy to other chief officers and departments.

A corporate planning group was introduced to support and assist the management team in its work towards the preparation of a county policy plan. The team was, in turn, supported by a series of inter-departmental working groups. Corporate planning group held monthly meetings and consisted of chief officers of departments not represented on management team as well as deputies from other departments (for example, chief planner from structure plan section was a member).

Inter-departmental working groups set up to support corporate planning group. They were of two types. Firstly, programme area teams "...to formulate policy" and, secondly, functional groups to coordinate and administer specific management tasks.

The 6 programme area teams were physical environment (chaired by chief environment officer), public safety and protection (chaired by chief fire officer), transport (chaired by joint deputy of the JTPU), economic development (chaired by principal assistant county treasurer), leisure (chaired by chief recreation officer) and social (chaired by chief planner of structure plan team). The policy formulation role of the PATs was seen as developing the objectives of county policy in relation to specific statutory responsibilities. PAT proposals were vetted by policy committee and the relevant service committees.

The skill-based functional groups were proposed as;
finance,
manpower,
land/buildings,
computing,

research and intelligence,
project coordination,
performance review, and
purchasing.

Structure plan technical committee was welded in to the corporate structure (as a functional group) although membership was composed of the most senior staff in the planning department (it was not inter-disciplinary) and also included district council and DOE membership. It was proposed in the corporate planning proposal that structure plan technical committee might be replaced by special meetings of the corporate planning group, a suggestion which appears to misunderstand the status and function of the inter-authority meeting.

The chief executive's paper also labelled the joint transportation planning unit as a functional group. This proposal can also be seen as anamolous insofar as the JTPU was a permanent inter-departmental unit with a clearly defined set of tasks (work for the transport element of the structure plan, preparation of the annual transportation policies and programme (TPP) submissions to DoE/DoT, and contributions to the passnger transport executive's plan). In any case, JTPU reported directly to management team.

The point that is worth giving some emphasis is that there was an uneasy interlocking of the planning department's arrangements for cross authority working and the chief executive's proposals for corporate planning. Technical committee and the JTPU were not 'legitimate' functional groups for they were dealing with substantive policy areas and not internal management tasks for the local authority. Equally, there was no possible logic in the inclusion of senior officers from other government bodies in the internal management of the county council. It is hard to imagine what the reaction of district planning officers and senior civil servants would have been if they had been invited onto the corporate planning

group vested with the responsibility of preparing the county's policy plan given the friction (between county and districts) that quickly built up over the substance and working arrangements on the structure plan.

The 'coolness' that could be observed, during the course of the research, between the chief executive and the county planning officer was owed, no doubt, to fundamental differences of opinion over these matters of management principle, professional boundaries, integrity and, ultimately, power within the bureaucracy of the county council. The tension was not aided by the similarity between the favoured concept of broadly-based structure plan (rather than a land-use plan) and the policy plan proposed by the chief executive which was to embrace all county policies and intended to achieve consistency across all county council work.

Linking the two systems.

By mid 1974 there was considerable pressure from the chief executive to marry the initial working arrangements towards the structure plan into the corporate system. An overlap was apparent between the programme area teams and the structure plan working parties. A proposal came forward for integrating the latter into the corporate scheme. A reasonably neat topic fit was thought possible between structure plan working parties and some programme area teams.

structure plan working parties	programme area teams
employment & population,	economic development,
housing,	social,
transportation,	transport,
shopping,	economic development,
community development,	social,
recreation and leisure.	leisure.

However, three structure plan working parties (public participation, plan generation and evaluation, and public utilities) did not "fit" with the list of programme area teams identified by the chief executive. The mismatch seems to compound the misunderstandings from within the chief executive's department about the structure planning process and the legitimate boundaries of the corporate management structure. Principally, the corporate management mechanism was being proposed as a direct lever on inter-authority working on the structure plan and internal management matters within the planning department. Both of these proposals were rejected by the CPO with a consequent souring of relationships between the two chief officers.

Indeed, a reorganisation of internal working arrangements for stage 2 of the planning process was carried through by senior staff in the structure plan team which moved away from the principles of inter-departmental (corporate) working. The emphasis in the paper on phase II arrangements (SYCC, 1975s, TP METHD 01) was on the county planning department sitting in an intermediate position between district councils (as "...directly responsible for formulating and implementing many aspects of social policy") and central government (as having a supervisory/ monitoring role on planning policies). While being critical of the way in which inter-authority working had been conducted in phase I (by references to the dialogue needing to be better coordinated and channelled into a "useful form" and expanding "... beyond a mere 'gripe-collection' service to the task of assembling the creative statements necessary to building decisions") the paper also notes that "...the bulk of the technical work will fall upon one department".

Rather than the structure of plan preparation being incorporated into the corporate management arrangements proposed by the chief executive the obverse appears to

have happened. Technical committee membership was expanded at this stage to include the county environment officer, the county recreation officer and the joint deputy of the JTPU. The senior county council officers on technical committee would report back into county council member committees (planning, environment and recreation) and policy committee via senior management team.

The paper (ibid., 24) states that the corporate planning system was

> ...not the vehicle for a public policy plan covering social and economic policies for the county, if only because the districts, who are crucial elements in the success or failure of such a plan, are not involved. Such a plan demands county/district working on a more intimate basis, a difficult objective to achieve.

The statutory requirement of preparing a structure plan was used as a strong reason for giving precedence to the working arangements favoured by the planning department rather than those being promoted by the chief executive (which were seen as being of lesser importance as they referred to internal working arrangements). The structure plan functional group (set up under the corporate working arrangements) was 'put in its place' when identified by the county planners as having been introduced in order "...to assist in coordination" of structure plan work "...rather than policy development".

Comment

The purpose of this brief analysis of the interlinking of structure planning and corporate planning processes is to show that

> an internal "power struggle" was being waged between the chief executive and the chief planning officer

(and their respective departments) at a key stage in the structure planning process,

as a consequence of that struggle there was greater sensitivity and veto by the chief executive over key structure plan documentation and papers (particularly the key issues paper) which added to the slippage of timetable in phase II,

the episode stands as a further example of the single-mindedness of the structure plan team in its endeavours to stand at the centre of the planning process and not be diverted from as systematic and 'undiluted' a process as possible.

Appendix 3

Survey schedules

University of Sheffield

SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL STUDY

Officers Questionnaire

Date Time

Location Interviewer

Respondent

PREAMBLE

As part of the study that the University of Sheffield is carrying out we are asking officers and members for their views on a number of matters relating to planning in the county.

Firstly, I would like to ask about your profesional background.

1 What are your professional qualifications?

2 What posts have you held previously to your present job?

3 Why did you apply for the job with South Yorkshire?

4 Over the period of local government reorganisation, did you consider applying for a job with a district authority?
PROMPT (IF NOT) Why was that?

5 Does your present job live up to your expectations?
PROMPT (IF NOT) Why is that?

Lets go on to talk about structure planning.

6 What have been your main tasks so far within the department?

7 How would you describe the approach to structure planning taken in South Yorkshire?

8 What, in your opinion, are the main policy maters that the county planning committee has discussed so far?

9 How do you view the structure plan in relation to the total planning system in South Yorkshire?

10 Is there anything else that you want to say about structure planning?

Going on to consider public participation.

11 What purpose do you feel is served by public participation in planning?

12 On the whole would you say you are in favour of public participation in local government or against greater public involvement?

13 The public participation programme in relation to South Yorkshire structure planning has gone further than similar exercises by other county authorities. What do you think of the South Yorkshire programme?

14 Which elements of the programme do you think are most useful for structure plan-making?

15 Why was such a comprehensive programme introduced?
PROMPT What was the most important influence on the decision?

16 Given the difficulties with district/ county relations, do you think the public participation programme has contributed to this?

17 Have you read any of the public participation replies?

18 Have the replies affected your views on the planning problems in South Yorkshire?

19 How important do you think the public participation replies were in drafting the Key Issues?

20 It has been said that the legal requirement for public participation in structure planning will give officers a direct route to the public, bypasing member

and thus undermining their authority. How do you feel about this?

21 With hindsight, do you think there are any specific shortcomings in the South Yorkshire public particiaption programme?

22 The structure plan kits were concerned largely with local and district authority matters. Do you think that this invalidtaes the approach that has been taken to participation by the county council?

Turning to officer-member relations

23 What are the main ways by which you come into contact with members?

24 It has been said that members only get to know the chief officers. Would you agree?

25 Have members ever contacted you directly on any issue?
PROMPT Could you tell me more about that?

26 Do you feel that the committee is the appropriate meeting place between officers and members for dealing with council matters?

27 Is there any way in which you feel that member-officer contact should change?

28 Do you think that members are supplied with too little, sufficient or too much information?

29 Do you think that members use that information in reaching their decisions?

30 It has been said that members can be either irrationally obstructive to officer advice or else simply rubber stamp proposed policies. In general, what has been your experience?

31 Do you think members should have more control over the work of your department?

32 In your view where does the job of an elected representative of the council start and your job as a local government officer end? In other words, what is the dividing line between the councillors job and yours?

Open Days

33 Were you present at the open days held in relation to the structure plan?

34 IF YES What was your impression of the open day(s)?

35 Would you like more informal/ off-the-cuff contact with members?

36 Do you feel that the open day type of meeting should be extended?

Corporate Planning

37 It has been said that the corporate planning system is not particularly appropriate for local government. Would you agree with that in the light of your experience in South Yorkshire?

38 Do you think the system of informal working within the structure plan team can lead to the decsions of individual officers going forward for approval without adequate discussion?

39 The content of the structure plan is influenced by a number of outside factors - th district councils, politicians, regional authorities, public participation. How much influence do you think these external factors have?

County - District relations

40 Are you, or have you been a member of any county-district grouping or working party, or taken part in any other formal meetings with the district councils?
NOT WHICH

41 IF YES What are the main objectives of the meetings?

42 Do you have any (other) informal contacts with district officers?

43 If you needed information which you knew to be available within the district councils, how would you go about trying to obtain it?

44 How do you see the relationship between the county and the district planning departments?
PROMPT Why is that?

45 IF NEGATIVE Do you think these difficulties will be resolved?

46 It has been said that, of all the metropolitan county areas, the relationship between county and district is the poorest in South Yorkshire? Do you agree and, if so, why do you think this has come about?

47 Is there any aspect of county-district activity where relationships are particularly difficult or acute?

48 Is there anything that you would like to add on county-district relations?

THANK YOU

University of Sheffield

SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL STUDY

Members Questionnaire

Date Respondent

Location Time interview began

Interviewer

Introduction

The aim of this study being carried out by the University of Sheffield with the help of a reserch grant from the Social Science Research Council is to consider the place and purpose of public particiaption in structure planning. In the course of the study we have been observing the progress of the public participation programme but in order to get a further perspective we would like to take the attitudes and opinions of members into account.

You have been chosen on a random basis from among all the county councillors. We shall treat the replies in confidence and will mainly use the collected comments to draw overall conclusions about membes views. There will also be an opportunity for the findings to be sen before they appeara in any report.

First of all, I would like to ask about the public participation programme.

1 What purpose do you feel is served by public participation in structure planning?
Is the purpose to gather information for the purpose of policy-making, to allow local government to pass information back to the public, or to raise the public's interest in government generally?

2 On the whole, would you say that you were in favour of public participation in planning or against it?

3 The Labour Party commitment to pubic participation in the county manifesto of 1973 pledged "meaningful

participation by local communities in the formulation of any plans affecting the areas in which they live".
What do you think was intended by that statement?

4 The programme of public participation in county planning in South Yorkshire has gone further than similar programmes in other counties.
Do you think that this was the intention of the programme?

5 What do you think of the programme of public participation in South yorkshire so far?

PROMPT Do you think that it has been too ambitious, not ambitious enough or about right?

6 Why was such a comprehensive programme introduced when a less extensive programme would satisfy the legal requirements?

7 Which elements of the public particiaption programme do you feel have been most useful for plan-making?

PROMPT The programme has included the two kits to contact groups, community workers, the public attitudes survey, an exhibition and newspaper features.

8 How important do you think the publics replies have been in moving the county planning committee towards policies on the structure plan?

9 How far should the problems and satisfactions of the public be used in coming to decisions on policies in the structure plan?

10 Why do you think that it was decided to present one preferred plan for discussion early next year rather than a set of strategies?

11 The public may be expecting a more extensive discussion of alternatives.
Do you expect any public reaction to the single plan approach?

12 Would you say that your attitude towards public participation in structure planning has remained much the same over the peiod since the work began in South Yorkshire?

PROMPT IF ATTITUDE HAS CHANGED In what ways?

13 Your views on public participation may be influenced by your view of the role of the councillor.
Some people say that there are two theories of political representation. The first is that the member should be the voice of the people and should act as they want him to. The second says that the councillor should exercise his own judgement and act according to his own conscience and his own judgement of the situation.
Which of these two approaches would you agree with most?

14 It has been said that the structure plan, which could influence land use and resource allocations for many years into the future, should not be too closely identified with party political matters?
What are your views on this?

15 Have you read any of the replies from the public as a result of the South Yorkshire structure plan programme?

16 Have you had a chance to study the summaries of the publics replies prepared by the officers?

17 Have those replies or summaries influenced your views on planning problems in the county?

18 What role do you think officers should play in relations with the public?

19 With hindsight, do you think there are any specific shortcomings in the public participation exercise so far?

20 Would you agree to the same sort of programme on the structure plan if the county were to begin again?

21 How do you see public participation on the structure plan developing after the approval of the first submission?

22 There will be a new form of public inquiry called the examination in public to discuss the structure plan after it has been submitted.
Do you think that having had the opportunities to comment on the plan before submission will affect the publics' reaction at the examination?

23 Do you think that the public participation programme has affected relations between county and district authorities?

24 Were you present at any of the members open days which were held in relation to the structure plan?

PROMPT IF PRESENT What did you gain from the meetings?

25 Would you like to see more informal meetings of that kind?

26 It has been said that the dividing line between the work of the councillor and that of officers is very difficult to draw.
What are your feelings on this?

27 The traditional view is that members decide policy, officers follow the members lead and carry out those decisions.
Could more meetings like the open days help to ensure that members and officers retain their traditional roles in local government?

28 Is there anything you would like to say on the matters that we have been discussing?

We have been talking specifically about public participation in structure planning but have also touched on the whole question of the purpose of the structure plan and how it is prepared. Do you anything to add?

THANK YOU

University of Sheffield

SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL STUDY

Groups Survey

Group

Date and Time

Location

Interviewer

Respondent(s)

Status in group

Occupation

ESTABLISH HOW RESPONDENT WAS CHOSEN (SELF SELECTION, GROUP DECISION)

1 Does the rest of your group know about this interview?

2 Firstly, I would like to ask you about the group. About how many people are members?

3 How many of these are active members?

4 What are the main aims and purposes of the group?

5 And what are the main activities?

6 How often does the group hold full meetings?

7 What sort of people are members?
PROMPT Jobs, Ages...

8 Does the group have an executive committee?

IF YES 9 How is the executive committee constituted?
PROMPT Election, key posts, numbers?

10 How frequently does the executive meet?

11 How many members normally attend the executive meetings?

12 Do key members of the group meet more frequently to discuss business?

Since it came into being in 1974 the South Yorkshire county council has been preparing a structure plan. The county planners have involved the public from time to tiome. The main public contact was in 1974 and 1975. I believe your grouup was contacted during those initial stages of plan preparation.
13 Do you recall the earlier stages when the county planners were seeking public comment?
PROMPT What were those stages?

14 Did you have any special status in the group in late 1974 and early 1975?

15 What do you recall of the way county planners tried to involve the public?

16 How did your group handle the information and the requests for opinion?
PROMPT working party, full group meetings etc.

17 At that time would you say that the group's interest in the structure plan was extensive, minimal or something in between?

18 Did the group make any submission to the county council?

19 At the time of these contacts in 1974/75 did you gather any impression of how the new county planners might involve the public inlater stages of the planning process?

20 Since 1975 the county council has been producing a magazine called CONTACT whcih gives views in planning matters. Do you recall seeing the magazine?

21 Does the group receive the magazine directly from the county council?

22 What happens to the magazine when it arrives?
PROMPT Is it circulated around the membership, discussed by the executive, etc.?

23 Has CONTACT been useful?

24 What function do you think is served by the magazine?

25 Early this year the county council produced a draft structure plan for South Yorkshire. How did your group hear about the structure plan?

26 Were you sent a copy of CONTACT explaining the draft structure plan?

27 What happened to that particular issue of CONTACT?
PROMPT special meeting, distributed around the membership etc.?

28 Did the group complete the questionnaire which was attached to that issue of CONTACT?

IF YES Who was involved in preparing a submission?

29 What do you think will happen to the groups views on the draft structure plan?

30 Was there any feeling that further information was needed about the draft structure plan?

31 Did the group try to get any further information? PROMPT meetings, mobile exhinbitions, full reports etc?

32 What sort of information would you have liked to have in order to make the task of preparing comments easier?

33 Did your group know of the public meetings which were held to discuss the sructure plan?

34 Did anyone from your group attend any of these meetings?

IF NO GO TO 38
IF YES 35 Did they report back to the group?

36 Was the meeting helpful in increasing the groups understanding of the plan?

37 Was the tape slide presentation useful?

38 Do you recall the main implications of the structure plan as they affect you and the members of the group?

39 What were the main features of the plan?

40 What was the most informative source of information on the structure plan?

41 The planners decided to present a single preferred plan to the public rather than a small number of possible plans. Do you think that the latter course would have been more useful than presenting a single plan?

42 Did anyone in the group expect alternative proposals rather than a single plan?

The county council is obliged to present their finalised plan to the public and receive repreentations at that time (probably some time during the coming winter).
At some time next year there will b a form of public inquiry into the objections and representations made about the plan.
43 Do you think that your group would want to take part in such an inquiry?

44 Have the members of the group taken part in or observed a planning inquiry before?

45 Has the group ever been approached by a local authority on a planning matter?

46 Has the group ever approached a local authority about a planning matter?

47 What has been your overall impression of the public participation programme in the South yorkshire structure plan?

48 Some time ago your group took part in an earlier survey. Would it be possible for us to use the information that Dr Hampton and Wendy Beale collected from you? It would be in the strictest confidence.

THANK YOU

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Documents produced by Metropolitan County Council Planning Departments

The metropolitan county councils and the Greater London Council were abolished in 1986. County archives were created and some documents from the period 1974 - 1986 may be available from those metropolitan district councils that took on responsibility for storing the papers from their respective county authorities. An abbreviated bibliography follows where the origin of documents were the respective county councils. Unless otherwise stated the originating county council department for documents is taken to be the Planning Department.

Underlining represents documents available to the public at the time of publication. Where documents are committee papers or internal working papers the titles are presented in inverted commas. Minutes or records of meetings are listed under the title of the committee or meeting in date order.

Abbreviations used
GMC - Greater Manchester Metropolitan County Council
MCC - Merseyside Metropolitan County Council
SYCC - South Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council
TWCC - Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County Council
WMCC - West Midlands Metropolitan County Council
WYCC - West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council

(O) - a suffix attached to records of meetings involving County Planning Department officers only (where no members were involved), otherwise where minutes are recorded they represent the record of a formal meeting involving County members and officers (for example, County Planning Committee).
(C) - a suffix attached to records of meetings involving officers from County Planning Department and other Departments within South Yorkshire County Council
(D) - a suffix attached to records of meetings involving officers from the metropolitan district councils in the county

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MCC (1978) Strategy for Merseyside

MCC (1980a) Merseyside Structure Plan: Written Statement

MCC (n d) Towards a New Merseyside: Structure Plan - Summary for Consultation (fold out leaflet)

MCC (n d) Merseyside - Schools Pack

MCC (1980b) Statement of Public Participation and Consultation

SYCC (1973) "County Planning Committee .- Minutes"
23 June
10 September

8 October
12 November
10 December

SYCC (1973a) "Public Participation in South Yorkshire - Some thoughts" (paper by Officer in charge of the Public Particpation Programme - 22 October)

SYCC (1973b) "Public Participation in South Yorksire - Some Notes for Discussion" (paper by Officer in charge of the Public Participation Programme - 10 December)

SYCC (1973c) "Project Report" Draft.

SYCC (1974) "County Planning Committee - Minutes"
14 January
21 January
11 February
18 February (Project Report)
11 March
18 March
25 March
8 April
13 May
3 June
17 June
1 July
15 July
19 August
2 September (report "First Approach to the Public")
16 September (report "Public Participation in the Structure Plan)
30 September (report "Open Day")
14 October (final draft of Second SP kit)
4 November
18 November
2 December
16 December

SYCC (1974) "Minutes of general meeting (Structure Plan) with District Planning Departments" (O)
no. 2 16 July
no. 3 20 August
no. 4 16 September
no. 5 15 October
no. 6 21 November
no. 7 17 December

SYCC (1974) "Technical Committee - Minutes" (D) incl DOE representatives
no.1 27 November

SYCC (1974) "Core Group - Notes of Meetings" (O)
no.1 13 December

SYCC (1974) "Structure Plan Working Party on Public Participation - Notes of Meetings" (D)
no.1 28 February

no.2 18 March
no.3 4 April
no.4 3 May (report on "Monitoring the PPP)
no.5 23 May
no.6 19 June
no.7 11 July
no.8 8 August (report on 2nd SP Kit)
no.9 5 September
no.10 1 October
no.11 24 October
no.12 15 November

SYCC (1974a) First Structure Plan Kit

SYCC (1974b) Second Structure Plan Kit

SYCC (1974c) "Help Plan Your Future" South Yorkshire County News 2

SYCC (1974d) South Yorkshire County Council: First Approach to the Public Summary report prepared by the County Planning Officer and based on work carried out by the Structure Plan Working Party on Public Participation, August (including technical appendices on sampling etc)

SYCC (1974e) "Structure Plan Progress Reports" written by Chief Planner in charge of Structure Plan team
no.1 May
no.2 June
no.3 October

SYCC (1974f) "Note on Adult Education Courses and the SY Structure Plan"

SYCC (1974g) "Note on Part-Time Community Workers"

SYCC (1974h) "Report on Part-Time Community Workers"

SYCC (1974i) "Phase II Arrangements"

SYCC (1974j) "Councillors Open Day October 30th - Progress Report"

SYCC (1974k) "Public Attitudes Survey - Timetable and First Round Tabulations"

SYCC (19741) "Report on Monitoring the Public Participation Programme"

SYCC (1974m) "Draft Development Plan Scheme"

SYCC (1974n) "Methods Common Task Group - Discussion Notes"
DN METHD 01 Nature of the Structure Plan
DN METHD 02 Plan Generation and Evaluation
DN METHD 03 Social Content of the Structure Plan
DN METHD 04 Alternative Possibilities for a Plan generation Process for South Yorkshire

DN METHD 05 Plan Generation and Evaluation
DN METHD 06 The Functions and Content of the First Submission Structure Plan
DN METHD 07 A Review of Phase I
DN METHD 08 Problem Analysis by Working Party
DN METHD 09 Issue Identification

SYCC (1975) "County Planning Committee - Minutes"
13 January
3 February
17 February
3 March
17 March (report "Councillor's views on Phase 1 PP")
14 April (report "Councillor Open Day")
5 May
19 May (report "Councillor Open Day")
16 June
30 June
14 July
19 August
1 September
29 September
13 October
3 November (report "Councillor Open Day on BPOs")
10 November (reports "Recommendation on Structure Plan Key Issues and Broad Policy Options" & "Policy Evaluation of the SP BPO's" & Political Evaluation of the SP BPO's)
17 November
24 November (report "Broad Policy Options")
1 December

SYCC (1975) "Structure Plan Technical Committee" (D) incl DOE representatives
no.2 16 April
no.3 26 June
no.4 10 September
no.5 10 October

SYCC (1975) "Structure Plan Functional Group - Minutes" (O)
no.8 7 May
no.9 2 June
no.10 25 June
no.11 16 July
no.12 20 August
no.13 29 September

SYCC (1975) "Structure Plan Policy Group" (O)
No formal minutes of this group were kept but project notes are held by the author. The topic of the group during 1975 was principally about key issues and the policies being developed to cover the topics.

SYCC (1975) "Structure Plan Core Group - Notes of Meetings" (O)
no.9 5 June

no.10 30 June
no.11 15 July
no.12 22 July
no.13 22 August
no.14 12 September
no.15 25 September
no.16 16 October
no.18 4 November
no.19 25 November
no.20 9 December

SYCC (1975) "Structure Plan Group - Notes of Meetings" (O)
no.16 21 May
no.17 20 June
no.18 18 July
no.19 14 August
no.20 17 September
no.21 15 October
no.22 12 November
no.23 11 December

SYCC (1975) "Notes of general meeting (Structure Plan) with District Planning Departments" (D)
no.8 19 February
no.9 24 March
no.10 6 May
no.11 3 June
no.12 12 June
no.13 21 June
no.14 21 August
no.15 30 September
no.16 18 December

SYCC (1975) "Structure Plan Public Participation Common Task Group - Notes of Meetings" (D)
no.1 24 February
no.2 26 March
no.3 12 June
no.4 16 July
no.5 5 September
no.6 14 October
no.7 5 December

SYCC/ Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham & Sheffield MDCs (1975) "Joint Consultative Committee (Structure Plan Sub-Committee) - Minutes"
no.1 28 February
no.2 13 May
no.3 15 July
no.4 9 September
no.5 17 October

SYCC (1975a) CONTACT County Planning and County Environment Departments
no.1

SYCC (1975b) "Comprehensive Statement on Problems, Satisfactions and Opportunities" Structure Plan Major Reports

SYCC (1975c) "Key Issues" South Yorkshire County Council - Major Structure Plan Reports

SYCC (1975d) "Existing Policies" South Yorkshire Councty Council - Major Structure Plan Reports

SYCC (1975e) "Development of Broad Policy Options"

SYCC (1975f) "Broad Policy Options for the South Yorkshire Structure Plan: Results of Technical work and Dialogue to date"

SYCC (1975g) "Policy Evaluation of the Structure Plan Broad Policy Options"

SYCC (1975h) "Political Evaluation of the Structure Plan Broad Policy Options" report of the Chairman of the Planning Committee

SYCC (1975i) "Recommendations on Structure Plan Key Issues and Broad Policy Options"

SYCC (Gutch R) (1975j) "South Yorkshire's Approach to the Public on its Structure Plan" (draft article for 'The Planner')

SYCC (1975k) "Structure Plan Progress Report"
no.4 March
no.5 April
no.6 July
no.7 October

SYCC (1975l) "Enforcement of Planning Control" (paper for Councillor's Open Day 28 April)

SYCC (1975m) "The Plan Making Process and its relationship with Development Control" (paper for Councillor's Open Day 28 April)

SYCC (1975n) "South Yorkshire Structure Plans: Key Issues - a note on the ten key issues suggested as the basis for subsequent work on policy formation and evaluation" (paper for Councillor's Open Day 2nd May)

SYCC (1975o) "Public Participation Discussion Notes"
DN PUB PT 04 What use are the public's views? (paper given by R Gutch to Assoc. of London Borough Planning Officers (Social Aspects Study Group meeting - 17 January 1975)
DN PUB PT 05 Analysis of Public Participation results
DN PUB PT 06 Use of Public Participation results in the potential surface analysis

DN PUB PT 07 Use of Public Participation: Results in work on Recreation
DN PUB PT 08 Use of Structure Plan Public Participation Results by District Council Departments
DN PUB PT 09 Councillor Open Days
DN PUB PT 10 Public participation on the Draft Structure Plan
DN PUB PT 11 Exhibitions
DN PUB PT 12 PTE and Public Participation
DN PUB PT 13 Statutory Public Participation

SYCC (1975p) "Public Participation Discussion Papers"
DP PUB PT 01 Report on County Councillors Views Phase 1 of the Structure Plan
DP PUB PT 02 Public Participation Programme - Minority Viewpoints
DP PUB PT 03 Note on the Results of the Newspaper Questionnaire
DP PUB PT 04 The Public's Point of View: a summary of some of the overall findings of the structure plan Public Participation programme (prepared for Councillors Open Day 2 May)
DP PUB PT 05 South Yorkshire Structure Plan - Public Attitude Survey (by Gill Courtenay and Julia Field of Social & Community Planning Research)
DP PUB PT 06 Results of the Structure Plan Kit exercises
DP PUB PT 07 Report on County Councillor's Views Phase II of the Structure Plan
DP PUB PT 08 The Magazine Questionnaire
DP PUB PT 09 Doncaster Structure Plan kit
DP PUB PT 10 Doncaster Structure Plan Public Participation
DP PUB PT 11 Doncaster Structure Plan Land Use Transportation Study Public Involvement Programme
DP PUB PT 12 Report on Councillor Open Day on Broad Policy Options for the Structure Plan

SYCC (1975q) "Public Participation Technical Papers"
TP PUB PT 10 Second Approach to the Public
TP PUB PT 14 Analysis of "The Most Important Problem" section

SYCC (1975r) "Methods Common Task Group - Methods Discussion Notes"
DN METHD 10 Explanation of the Network
DN METHD 11 Issue Definition
DN METHD 12 Policy Generation
DN METHD 13 Statement of Existing Policies relating to Structure Plan Issues
DN METHD 14 Broad Options
DN METHD 15 Draft Network and Work Programme
DN METHD 16 Draft Programme for submitting a 1975 SP
DN METHD 17 Modification of Timetable
DN METHD 18 An Examination of the Role of Different Value Systems in Matrix Analysis

DN METHD 19 Coarse Evaluation of Policy options
DN METHD 20 Broad Policy Development - Social Groups and a Spatial Base
DN METHD 21 Issue Development - A Follow-up on TP 03
DN METHD 22 Fine Policy Options

SYCC (1975s) "Methods Common Task Group - Technical Papers"
TP METHD 01 Phase II Arrangements
TP METHD 02 Matrix Analysis as an aid to Issue Identification
TP METHD 03 The process of Change from problem statements to Issues
TP METHD 04 Generation of Policy Options

SYCC (1975t) "Transport Common Task Group - Technical Papers"
TP TRSPT 01 The Scope of Policy Choice in Transport

SYCC (1975u) "Broad Policy Options - Memo"

SYCC (1976) "County Planning Committee - Minutes"
5 January
19 January
2 February
16 February
1 March
15 March
5 April
3 May
17 May
7 June
21 June
5 July (report "Initial Strategies")
12 July
19 July
26 July
13 September (report"Consultations on Initial Strategies
4 October
18 October
1 November
15 November
6 December

SYCC (1976) "Structure Plan Policy Group" (O)
No formal minutes were kept of meetings of this Group but project notes were kept by the author. The main work of the group in 1976 was in assembling "policy sets" where policies for key issues were brought together, policy conflicts resolved and integrated sub-strategies developed.

SYCC (1976) "Structure Plan Supervisory Group - Notes of Meetings" (O) with (C) as occasional consultees
no formal minutes appear to have been kept of the meetings of this 'short-lived' group although there

are notes of the meetings prepared by the author. The main activity of the group occured in April/ May

SYCC (1976) "Structure Plan Strategy Group - Notes of meetings" (O)
see note on Supervisory Group above

SYCC (1976) "Structure Plan Assessment Group - Notes of meetings" (O)
see note on Supervisory Group and Strategy Group above

SYCC (1976) "Structure Plan Core Group - Notes of Meetings" (O)
no.21 8 January
no.22 20 January
no.23 9 February
no.25 10 March
no.26 23 March
no.27 6 April
no.28 11 May
no.30 19 August

SYCC (1976) "Structure Plan Group - Notes of Meetings" (O)
no.24 14 January
no.25 12 February
no.26 11 March
no.27 7 April
no.28 12 May

SYCC (1976) "Technical Audits - Notes of Meetings" (C)
no formal minutes of these meetings appear to have been kept but project notes were made at a number of the Audits taking place between late March and July

SYCC (1976) "Structure Plan Functional Group - Minutes" (C)
no.14 25 March
no.15 10 May
no.16 27 May
no.17 6 July
no.18 14 September

SYCC (1976) "Notes of general meeting (Structure Plan) with District Planning Departments" (D)
no.17 26 March
no.18 10 May
no.19 29 June

SYCC (1976) "Structure Plan Public Participation Common Task Group - Notes of Meetings" (D)
no.8 5 February
no.9 24 March
no.10 16 June
no.11 26 November

SYCC/ Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield MDCs (1976) "Joint Consultative Committee (Structure Plan Sub-Committee) - Minutes"
no.6 9 January
no.7 29 April
no.8 16 July
no.9 8 September (report "Comment on Initial Strategies")
no.10 14 September
no.11 14 December

SYCC (1976a) CONTACT
no. 2 February
no. 3 June
no. 4 October
Special Issue on Transport

SYCC (1976b) Second Approach to the Public

SYCC (1976c) "Structure Plan Public Participation Common Task Group - Discussion Notes"
DN PUB PT 15 Use of SCPR at the Alternative Strategy stage
DN PUB PT 16 Some Notes on Participation at draft plan stage

SYCC (1976e) "Methods Common Task Group - Discussion Notes"
DN METHD 23 Policy Sets
DN METHD 24 Reports of Survey and Written Statements in Structure Plans
DN METHD 25 Reports of Survey - Suggestiond for Preparation
DN METHD 29 Effectiveness Evaluation
DN METHD 33 Effectivness Evaluation - Criteria weighting
DN METHD 35 The Trade-off Procedure for Evaluation

SYCC (1976f) "Methods Common Task Group - Technical Papers"
TP METHD 05 Evaluation in the South Yorkshire Structure Plan
TP METHD 06 Development of Structure Plan objectives

SYCC (1976g) "Public Participation on Alternative Strategies - Notes of a seminar 20 February (involving planning staff from GMC, MCC, WYCC, and Cleveland CC, DoE, SCPR and Opinion Research Centre, and academic representatives from the Linked Research Project into Public Participation into Structure Planning)

SYCC (1976h) "Public Participation Common Task Group - Discussion Papers in Public Participation"
DP PUB PT 12 Broad Policy Options - Councillors Open Day
DP PUB PT 13 Public's Point of View Recreation and Transport

DP PUB PT 14 Public's Views on the draft transport plan - Doncaster

SYCC (1976i) "Public Participation at Draft Plan Stage"

SYCC (1976j) "South Yorkshire Structure Plan 'Fine Policy' Development"
paper 1 Issue 8a Urban Open Space
paper 2 Issue 9 Surface Minerals
paper 3 Issue 7d
paper 4 Informal Countryside Recreation

SYCC (1976k) "South Yorkshire Structure Plan Policy Sets"

SYCC (1976l) "South Yorkshire Structure Plan: Proposed Level of Detail"

SYCC (1976m) "Initial Strategies Report and appendices"
Appendix P1 "Issue 9 Surface Minerals"
Appendix P2 "Issue 8 (pt) Urban Open Space"
Appendix P2 "Issue 8 (pt) Golf Courses"
Appendix P4 "Issue 2 Employment Diversification and Job Distribution"
Appendix P5 "Issue 8 (pt) Countryside Recreation"
Appendix P6 "Issues 6 and 7c Transport (including environmental aspects"
Appendix P7 "Issue 7b Air and Water Pollution"
Appendix P8 "Issue 8 (pt) Leisure Centres"
Appendix P9 "Issue 10 Shopping"
Appendix P10 "Population"
Appendix P11 "Issue 7d Environmental upgrading and reclamation (including previous Issue 7a)"
Appendix P12 "7e Environmental conservation"

SYCC (1976) "South Yorkshire Structure Plan - Comments on Initial Strategies"

SYCC/ Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield MDCs (1977) "Joint Consultative Committee (Structure Plan Sub-Committee) - Minutes"
no.12 19 July

SYCC (1977a) CONTACT
no.5 February
no.6 September

SYCC (1977b) South Yorkshire Structure Plan: Draft Written Statement

SYCC (1977c) South Yorkshire Structure Plan: Report of Survey - Vol 1 "The Structure Plan Process"

SYCC (1977d) South Yorkshire Structure Plan: Report of Survey - Vol 2 "Defining the Key Issues"

SYCC (1977e) South Yorkshire Structure Plan: Report of Survey - Vol 3 "Developing Strategic Policies"

SYCC (1978a) CONTACT
no.7 Spring
no.8 Summer
no.9 Winter

SYCC (1978b) South Yorkshire Structure Plan: Written Statement

SYCC (1978c) South Yorkshire Structure Plan: Report of Survey - Vol 4 "Revising the Draft Plan"

SYCC (1978d) Participation Statement

SYCC (1978e) South Yorkshire Structure Plan - In Brief (Booklet)

SYCC (1978f) South Yorkshire Structure Plan - It's Here (Leaflet)

SYCC (1978g) South Yorkshire Structure Plan -Technical Reports
TG1 Forecasting areas and zonal systems
TG2 Local plan evaluation of the initial strategies
TG3 The South Yorkshire land potential analysis
TE1 The steel industry in South Yorkshire
TE2 The coalmining industry in South Yorkshire
TE3 The engineering and metal goods industry in South Yorkshire
TE4 Warehousing in South Yorkshire
TE5 Offices in South Yorkshire
TE6 Service industries in South Yorkshire
TE7 Job need and supply forecasts for South Yorkshire
TE8 Industrial and commercial land needs
TE9 Activity rates and labour supply forecasts
TE10 Job Priority Areas
TP1 Population (1977 edition)
TP2 Housing need and tenure
TP3 Scaling the initial and preferred strategies
TP4 Residential land availability
TP5 Population (1978 edition)
TV1 Air pollution in South Yorkshire and the definition of air pollution problem areas
TV2 Water pollution in South Yorkshire and the definition of priority stretches of river for water quality improvement
TV3 Green Belt policy
TV4 Definition of Environment Priority Areas

SYCC (1978h) "Representations, Objections and the Examination in Public"

SY Structure Plan (1978a) "South Yorkshire Structure Plan - Examination in Public: Summaries of Sessions" unpublished records, Department of the Environment, Yorkshire and Humberside Region
Session 1 (5 Sept.): The derivation and underlying philosophy of the Structure Plan strategy

Session 2a (5 Sept.): The extent to which the Plan Strategy conforms with National and Regional policies
Session 2b (6 Sept.): Justification for the general Resource assumptions on which the Plan is based
Session 3a (6 Sept.): The assumptions inherent in the net job shortfall envisaged in the Plan and the population projections upon which, among other things, it is based
Session 3b (7 Sept.): The justification for Job Priority Areas in the light of the Regional Focal Points for Growth policy in the Regional Strategy
Session 3c (11 Sept.): The scope for attracting new industry and commerce to the County and the extent to which this will be a factor in the successful implementation of the Plan
Session 4a (11 Sept.): The proposals for the Green Belt, in particular cases and against extending it to cover the whole County outside the existing rural areas, in the light of the Government's response to the Regional Strategy Review
Session 4a (12 Sept.): (continued)
Session 4b (12 Sept.): The policy for designating areas of landscape value, having regard to:-
    i. national practice and the practice of neighbouring planning authorities, and
    ii. its value in South Yorkshire
Session 5a (13 Sept.): The likely availability of resources to implement the Plan's transport policies
Session 5b (13 Sept.): The justification for detailed and restrictive car parking policies
Session 5c (14 Sept.): The justification for protecting the areas affected by transport schemes after 1986
Session 3a/3b/3c (14 Sept.): Matters for further discussion
Session 5d (18 Sept.): The priorities for the transport proposals envisaged in the Plan
Session 6a/6b (18 Sept.): Housing
Session 6a/6b (19 Sept.): (continued)
Session 7a (19 Sept.): Shopping a. the policy imposing limits on sales floorspace in the main centres
Session 7b (20 Sept.): Shopping b. shopping policies elswhere in the County
Session 8 (20 Sept.): Recreation
Session 9a (21 Sept.): The adequacy of policies for mineral workings and their after-use in the light of the needs of operators, the national interest and local amenity
Session 6a/6b (21 Sept.): (continued)
Session 9b (25 Sept.): Spoil disposal policy
Session 10a (25 Sept.): The extent to which the various policies in the Plan are complementary and consistent
Session 10b (26 Sept.): The need to establish relative expenditure priorities

SY Structure Plan (1978b) "Papers circulated at the Examination in Public" unpublished documents, Department of the Environment, Yorkshire and Humberside Region
81 papers prepared by participants at the South Yorkshire Structure Plan Examination in Public

SYCC (1979) CONTACT
no.10 Spring

TWCC (nd) Structure Plan: Project Report

TWCC (1976a) Report of Survey

TWCC (1976b) What's in it for us? (booklet for the public on reports of survey)

TWCC (1976c) "Structure Plan Public Particpation arrangements: Environment Committee paper on 2nd stage assessment and 3rd stage programme"

TWCC (1977d) "Structure Plan: The Generation Method"

TWCC (1977e)"Public Participation Response on the Report of Survey - Structure Plan: Responses Report, Part 1"

TWCC (1977f) "Consultations on the Report of Survey - Structure Plan: Responses Report, Part 2"

TWCC (1977g) Structure Plan: Outline Strategies

TWCC (1977h) Take Your Pick (booklet for public on outline strategies)

TWCC (n d) "Consultations on the Draft Structure Plan"

TWCC (1978) Choosing the Strategy

TWCC (1979a) Structure Plan: Consultations on Choosing the Strategy

TWCC (1979b) Tyne and Wear County: Structure Plan

TWCC (1979c) Tyne and Wear County Structure Plan: Participation Statement

WMCC (1978) West Midlands County Council: Strategic Choices - County Structure Plan Report of Survey

WMCC (1983a) West Midlands County Structure Plan: Proposals for Alterations

WMCC (1983b) West Midlands County Structure Plan: Proposals for Alterations - The Statement of Public Participation

WYCC (1974) "West Yorkshire County Council: Structure Plan Project Report"

WYCC (n d) West Yorkshire: Its Future-Your Future-Their Future (brochure on the 'new plans')

(for WYCC) Opinion Research Centre (1975) "A Report on a Survey of Public Attitudes in Connection with the Preparation of the Structure Plan" London: ORC

WYCC (1975) West Yorkshire Structure Plan: First Annual Statement

WYCC (1976a) West Yorkshire Structure Plan - Second Annual Statement, July 1976

WYCC (1976b) West Yorkshire and Its Future - Choices to be Made: A Summary of the Structure Plan Second Annual Statement (booklet for the public)

WYCC (n d) West Yorkshire Structure Plan: Second Annual Statement - Analysis of Reactions from Consultees and the Public (including separate appendices listing responding organisations)

WYCC (1977a) Third Annual Statement

WYCC (1977b) Reports of Survey

WYCC (1978) Structure Plan

WYCC (1978a) West Yorkshire and its People: A Plan for the Future - A summary of the Structure Plan Draft Written Statement (booklet for the public)

WYCC (n d) Structure Plan: Summary Report on Draft Written Statement, Public Participation and Proposed Modifications (mimeo)

WYCC (1978b) Structure Plan: Statement on Participation

WYCC (1984) Structure Plan Alterations (paper to Policy Committee - Strategic Policy Sub-Committee: 5th September)