AREA MANAGEMENT: A CHANGE OF MIND?
- A Critical Examination of Area
Management in Local Government.

by

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SYNOPSIS.

The dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter one discusses the development, evolution and nature of corporate planning, ending with a critique of this approach in local government organisation. Chapter two then goes on to discuss the evolution and potential of area management in local government. Essentially chapters one and two suggest that both these approaches are inter-linked in terms of their development, how they are perceived and problems. Chapter three follows this by stressing the importance of officers and councillors in local government, in terms of how they perceive the above approaches. It then goes on to examine the problems that these key actors face in their work; how corporate planning has done little to solve them; and how area management can tackle some of these problems and perhaps enhance the roles of both officer and councillor.

The first three chapters provide the theoretical background for the empirical nature of the second half of the dissertation. Chapter four examines three area management schemes in operation today - area organisation in Stockport, the Priority Areas Programme in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and area management in Dudley. These are examined separately indicating their nature, structure, organisation and objectives along with their relationship to the wider corporate system within the local authority. Chapter 5 continues on from this and discusses seven themes found to be important in area management, in relation to the three case studies. The role of the councillor and the importance of commitment in area management are examples of the themes discussed. Chapter 4 and 5 essentially provide the evidence to allow me to develop area management proposals for Strathclyde Region in chapter 6. On the basis of these earlier findings the suggested proposals are designed to solve many of the problems found to be in existence in the case study schemes.

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Prologue - the nature and scope of the study.

Approaches to policy-making and management in local government have changed significantly since the mid 1960s. "Essentially the changes represent a move away from the passive performance of duties imposed by Parliament towards a more purposeful approach in which local authorities attempt to learn about the nature and causes of local problems and to respond accordingly." (Hambleton, 1978, p.17). The purpose of this study is to provide a critical review of these moves towards the more responsive local authority, at two levels. At the local authority level, corporate planning and management will be examined to provide the background for a more detailed and specific evaluation of area management at the sub-local authority level.

The concept of "area management" in local government has been with us for some years now, but it is only quite recently that the variety of approaches and objectives possible within this field of local government organisation has been realised. The broad aim of area management has been described by the Department of the Environment as "adapting local government organisation so that it can respond more sensitively and effectively to the needs of areas". (D.O.E. 1974 A). At the outset, however, it must be stressed that the purpose of the study is not to evaluate area management as simply a technique in local government administration or organisation, but to relate it to wider questions, such as its relationships with local government and democracy; that is, to the system and regime through which it is articulated. It is the contention of this

paper that the success or failure of these or any new techniques in local government organisation owes not so much to the methodology or technical application of these approaches as to the wider implications of the local government system itself and the underlying beliefs and attitudes which maintain it as an institution.

Indeed, it is important to note a distinction between the specific and more general aims or goals of this study. In more specific terms this dissertation is interested in exploring the responses to calls for more responsive and effective local government which have been so prevalent over the last decade. Much has been written about the manner in which corporate planning and area management can achieve a great many objectives in reaching or striving for their twin aims. In general the literature has been optimistic about the future of these approaches, despite early problems, describing them as "long-term" processes. In the author's opinion it is now possible to look at these responses critically and evaluate both their usefulness and chances of achieving their early goals in real life, not simply in terms of their structure and organisation but in human and political reality. It is on these terms that local government is run on a day to day basis, and therefore it is on these terms that the processes must be evaluated. Indeed this type of approach is strongly advocated by John Dearlove, "Traditional assumptions about the functioning of local government need to be questioned and research needs to be undertaken into the factors which build in stability and inhibit responsiveness and flexibility. Only if research is based upon a keen appreciation of the reality of local

politics and political decision-making can reforms
be suggested which will make government sensitive
and responsive to the needs and demands of all
citizens - and no amount of efficiency can make up
for that." (J. Dearlove, 1973, p.236).

Indeed a primary hypothesis of this study suggests
that although new and innovatory methods of organising
local government have been important, these have in
no way changed attitudes to how, or methods by which,
local government works. In reality a mismatch exists
between new organisation, and traditional attitudes and
commitment.

In the long run therefore, the dissertation will
be concerned with local government and the people who
work in it, because the councillors and officers play
a major role in shaping the system in which they work.
Tim Mason suggests that "just as the creation of a
policy and resources committee does not create corporate
management, the existence of an area committee does
not create area management" (Mason, 1978, p.18) and
thus reminds us of the importance of the perceptions
and attitudes of the officers and councillors in deter-
mining the nature and effect of new approaches to local
government organisation.

In association with these specific aims however,
this study will also be concerned with change and its
implications for both local government as a whole and
area management. This will not be dealt with separately
but will be a recurring theme which hopefully will
highlight its importance to the understanding of the
more specific issues discussed above. The following
four topics will be explored implicitly within the
specific issues examined in the dissertation:-

1. The nature of change in local government,
2. How people perceive this change,
3. Constraints on this change, and
4. "Dynamic Conservatism".

Again, this examination will be based in "reality",
as described before, particularly in terms of less
tangible but extremely important factors; "change
looks different depending where you stand, what
position you hold, how you think you are affected,
how much you know about it and your apparent ability
or lack of ability to influence it - in short, your
power in the situation." (Eddison, 1976, p.133) and
"No matter how 'good' a change or idea sounds when
argued rationally it is how it is perceived at the
irrational, the emotional and the personal level that
counts." (Eddison, 1976, p.134). This then is the
nature and scope of the dissertation, with the in-
tention of providing a clearer understanding of in-
novation in local government, how officers and
councillors perceive it and the constraints which
this can apply to change.

Finally, chapters four and five are based on
empirical studies of three local authorities which
have implemented some kind of area management. The
data which provides the basis of these chapters was
gathered by means of interviews with officers in the
local authorities concerned. It must be stressed
therefore, that this information could be seen to be
a reflection of subjective and perhaps even biased
views which will certainly limit the findings to a
certain extent. The author respectfully suggests
however, that at the very least the findings of these
chapters will provide a valuable insight into area
management in local government, how councillors and
officers relate to this innovation, and the resulting
problems.

CHAPTER 1.

Corporate Planning: The Foundations for Area Management.

Although the concept of area management has been
with us for some time, it has not been readily accepted
by local authorities. The reasons for this will be
explored in the following chapters, but generally speak-
ing they lie in the very nature of local government
itself, in terms of beliefs, attitudes and traditional
assumptions. Perhaps more pertinently, part of this
argument lies in the development of the idea of area
management over the last twenty years.

Essentially, the first two chapters are concerned
with the fusion of overlapping ideas on local govern-
ment, urban problems and the search to develop more
coherent and purposeful approaches to public policy-
making. This particular fusion of ideas has resulted
in the introduction of corporate planning and area
management to the local government scene. Before looking
more specifically at area management, it is essential
to examine an earlier but perhaps parallel development
in local government: corporate planning. In many ways
the development of area management has been seen as a
corollary and/or a response to corporate planning and
has been significantly influenced by this latter
approach. Indeed, this dissertation contends that both
approaches to local government organisation are in-
extricably bound together in terms of their objectives,
how they are perceived, and consequently their adoption
and effectiveness in local government.

Section 1 – The Development of Corporate Planning.

Robin Hambleton has identified three main currents
of change which edged British Local Government towards

the idea of a corporate approach during the 1960's:-

    a) Government Reports on urban problems.

    b) The reform of Local Government and

    c) Political changes in Local Government
                           (Hambleton, 1978, p.52).

Each of these developments will be reviewed briefly
in turn

a) Urban Problems

    A wave of government publications began to map
some of the inter-relationships between urban problems
and to hint at more integrated approaches. In 1965,
the report of the Planning Advisory Group advanced
proposals, later implemented by the Town and Country
Planning Act 1968, to strengthen the policy content
of land use planning, and in 1967 and 1968 the Plowden
and Seebohm Reports respectively, stressed that
educational deprivation and personal social problems
could not be viewed in isolation from other urban
problems. All of these reports were, of course, relatively
restricted by their terms of reference but they each
helped to pave the way for more comprehensive approaches.

b) Local Government Reform.

    A second movement for change was concerned with
the reform of local government, beginning in 1957 with
the establishment of the Herbert Commission to consider
the reorganisation of local government in London. This
resulted in the London Government Act 1963 which created
the Greater London Council and the thirty two London
Boroughs. The 1960's then saw a procession of govern-
ment reports all on the issue of reform and reorganis-
ation, starting with the Maud and Mallaby Reports in
1967 on management and staffing in local government,
and the Redcliffe-Maud Report in 1969 on the structure

of local government in England and Wales which called
for the establishment of unitary authorities. The
Labour Government under which the Redcliffe-Maud
Commission was set up were ousted in 1970 and the new
Conservative Government rejected its' proposals. The
Local Government Act 1972 created the more-or-less
uniform two-tier system of counties and districts in
England and Wales, replacing some 1300 directly elected
local authorities with just 401 authorities. The
corresponding Act in Scotland created a similar two-
tier structure with nine regional authorities, fifty
three districts and three island authorities.

A striking feature of much of the criticism of
local government has been this obsession with what
is sometimes called the area problem. Even so, there
was a growing feeling inside local government that
reorganisation of areas and functions was not enough,
as both the Maud and Mallaby reports highlighted.
According to Dearlove "if nothing else, therefore,
'solving' the boundary problem served to put the
management problem at the very top of the reorganis-
ation agenda." (Dearlove, 1979, p.2). Indeed the
Royal Commission on Local Government in England and
Wales (1969) suggested that a corporate approach
would be required in the proposed reorganisation.

The 1960's would therefore appear to have been a
period when change and innovation in local government
were expected with great anticipation. John Dearlove
stresses however "it is important to realise that it
is only the implementation of reorganisation that is
novel" (Dearlove, 1979, p.2). There is a chain of
concern about local government which stretches right
back into the nineteenth century. In other words,

there is a body of 'traditional wisdom about local
government' (Richards, 1973 p.47) and a well
established discourse about practically all the
contemporary problems. This conditions and limits
the conventional debate. The tradition is made up
of simple statements that purport to describe and
explain, how local government works; to diagnose
the faults; and to suggest reforms which will lead
to a better system characterised by democracy,
efficiency, effectiveness and coordinated rationality.
"These statements may be termed 'orthodoxies'"
(Dearlove, 1979, p.3). Precisely because we are
dealing with statements which are regarded as true
and as embodying just plain common sense, it is seen
as quite superfluous to explore them and subject
them to any sort of critical questioning based on
empirical enquiry and theorising. However, it is
precisely the absence of sustained and rigorous
critical enquiry, conciously located outside the
assumptions of the orthodoxies that has enabled them
to survive and remain unquestioned.

In other words, despite the major changes expected
during this period through reorganisation and the
movement towards corporate management, they appear
to be firmly based in traditional orthodoxies in
local government. Because of this they are rarely
questioned and where they are questioned the critique
rarely poses any fundamental challenge because it
invariably comes from within the confines of the
wider tradition, emphasising neglected aspects of
it. For these reasons the degree of change and its
implications for local government organisation have
to be questioned at an early stage.

c) Political Change in Local Government.

A third strand in the changing climate of ideas
was political change in the composition of local
councils during the period 1966 to 1972. Large
numbers of new members were elected and in some
councils party control changed for the first time
since the war. "In these years, the influx of large
numbers of young, enthusiastic councillors did much
to unsettle established attitudes and to prepare a
political climate where change was more acceptable."
(Hambleton, 1978, p.55).
These three strands of change played a major part
in paving the way for the introduction and development
of corporate planning.

Section 2 - From Maud to Bains.

So far the discussion has revolved around changes
in central and local government which facilitated the
introduction of a new approach to organisation. In
many ways, this new approach was to all intents and
purposes a management technique and owes its more
detailed development to the contributions of the Maud
Report (1967) and the Bains Report (1972). It is
interesting to note that the changes which have taken
place in the management of local government are not
simply improvements in methods and techniques. They
are, to a great extent, a manifestation of changing
conceptions of the role of local government.

The Maud Report represents a major critique of
the traditional conceptions of management. This
conception involves the management of separate services
directed at separate problems. It is specialist manage-
ment. The local authority is a collection of essentially

separate services brought together more by historical
accident or for administrative convenience than for
anything they have in common. This separation was
enshrined in the internal structure of the authority.
Each service constituted a department headed by a
professional officer. The clerk of the authority
was not in charge of these offices, he was rather
'first amongst equals'. For each department there
was a corresponding committee of elected members and
this form of organisation led to a profusion of
departments and committees. The Maud Report criticised
the committee system and the absence of unity of
direction in the management of authorities, it was
argued that the committee system wasted time, pro-
liferated paper, involved elected members in the
detail of administration and, ultimately, discouraged
people of talent from serving on councils. Furthermore,
the proliferation of committees and departments was
said to give excessive departmentalism or fragment-
ation with corresponding difficulties in obtaining
coordination.

In order to cure these ills, the Committee pro-
posed a series of changes in the internal structure
of local government. Its major recommendations were:

1. The creation of a management board to
   formulate the principal objectives of
   the authority, to review progress and
   assess results and to co-ordinate the
   the authority (para. 162).
2. Committees should not be directing or
   controlling bodies nor should they be
   concerned with routine administration
   (para. 165).
3. A drastic reduction in the number of
   committees (para. 169).

4. That the Clerk be recognised as head of
   the authority's paid service, and have
   authority over the other principal
   officers (para. 179).
5. Principal officers should 'work as members
   of a team of managers and specialist
   advisors...'(para. 182).
6. 'That local authorities examine their
   departmental structure with a view to a
   drastic reduction in the number of separate
   departments' (para. 227).

Although most commentators on the Report have
emphasised the proposed structural changes, in fact
the Report did make some important recommendations about
the process of management. It attempted to make a dis-
tinction between strategic decisions and their im-
plementation arguing that the management board should
set objectives (Para. 162) and that elected members
should delegate far more to officers and not become
involved in administrative detail. Plus the report
also advocated 'systematic management...which does
not leave direction and control to chance; with a
periodic review of the long term objectives of the
authority' (Para. 183). At the time of the Report's
publication however, the whole emphasis fell on the
proposed structural changes. But the Report fed the
groundswell of local authority opinion and Rod Rhodes
suggests that 'the time was ripe for change and change
there was, although virtually no authorities adopted
the Maud proposals in their entirety' (Rhodes, 1979
p.136). In other words, the traditional conception
of management was modified to admit the need for
improved coordination. The seeds of a more all

embracing conception had been sown, however, in the
Maud Report. They now began to germinate in the form
of 'local authority policy planning' or, as it
subsequently became know, 'corporate planning'.

Following the Maud Report, three overlapping
influences helped to reinforce this new conception
of local government management. These were firstly,
the work emanating from the Institute of Local Govern-
ment Studies at the University of Birmingham, which
provided an academic or research focus for the
development of corporate planning. Secondly, the
influence of Planning Programming Budgeting Systems
(PPBS) introduced to this country from America and
finally the influence of the Redcliffe-Maud Commission
on the reorganisation of local government which was
noted before. All these influences culminated in the
publishing of the Bains Report (1972) and Paterson
Report (1973). The Bains Report's central axiom is
worth noting: 'Local Government is not, in our view,
limited to the narrow provision of a series of
services to the local community...It has within its
purview the overall economic, cultural and physical
well being of that community..." (Para.2-10). The
Report's major recommendations were that the elected
members' role in deciding the policies of the
authority should be emphasised with the usual call
for improved delegation to officers. The appointment
of a Policy and Resources Committee, a Chief Executive
and Chief Officers group was recommended. The process
of management was seen to involve the "identification
of need, the setting of objectives, establishing
priorities and monitoring and reviewing performance. "
To this latter end, the Report recommended the
appointment of a Performance Review Sub-Committee.

Finally it recommended a number of internal structures
that could be adopted by the new authorities.

Therefore, by the early 1970's, these over-
lapping influences had combined to provide a major
platform for change in local government, albeit with
the emphasis on efficiency. It was the enforced
upheaval of local government reorganisation in 1974
in England and Wales, and 1975 in Scotland which
acted as the catalyst for change and created un-
precedented opportunities for the introduction of
new approaches. The overwhelming majority of the new
authorities accepted the need for some form of
corporate planning and almost without exception,
Chief Executives, Chief Officers Groups and Policy
and Resources Committees were appointed by the new
authorities. As far as the internal structure of
local authorities is concerned, therefore, there has
been a massive change. As far as changes in the process
of management are concerned the situation is less
clear. Rod Rhodes suggests that 'it would appear that
changes in the process of management have not been
as extensive as those in management structures."
(Rhodes, 1979, p.146) and Hambleton suggests that
it was left to the Paterson Report (1973) to place
official emphasis on the corporate planning process,
which it saw as the 'whole core' of the authority's
activity. The process outlined by Paterson is very
similar to that presented in figure 1 which illustrates
the rational approach to public policy-making and
which corporate planning tends to stand for.

So far the main emphasis has been on the evolution
and development of corporate planning without a clear
statement of what, in the long run, this approach is
attempting to achieve. Therefore, to summarise briefly,

Figure I: <u>A model of the policy making process</u>

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                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │ needs-problems        │
                    │ -opportunities in     │
                    │ the community and     │
                    │ resources available   │
                    └──────────────────────┘

   ┌──────────────┐                          ┌────────────┐
   │ feedback     │                          │ objectives │
   │ and review   │                          └────────────┘
   └──────────────┘

   ┌──────────┐                              ┌──────────────────┐
   │ action   │                              │ identification    │
   └──────────┘                              │ of alternatives   │
                                             └──────────────────┘
   ┌───────────────────┐
   │ choice/priorities │
   └───────────────────┘
              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
              │ evaluation                    │
              │ -expected benefits against    │
              │ existing or other use of      │
              │ resources                     │
              │ -interaction with other       │
              │ problems/activities           │
              └──────────────────────────────┘
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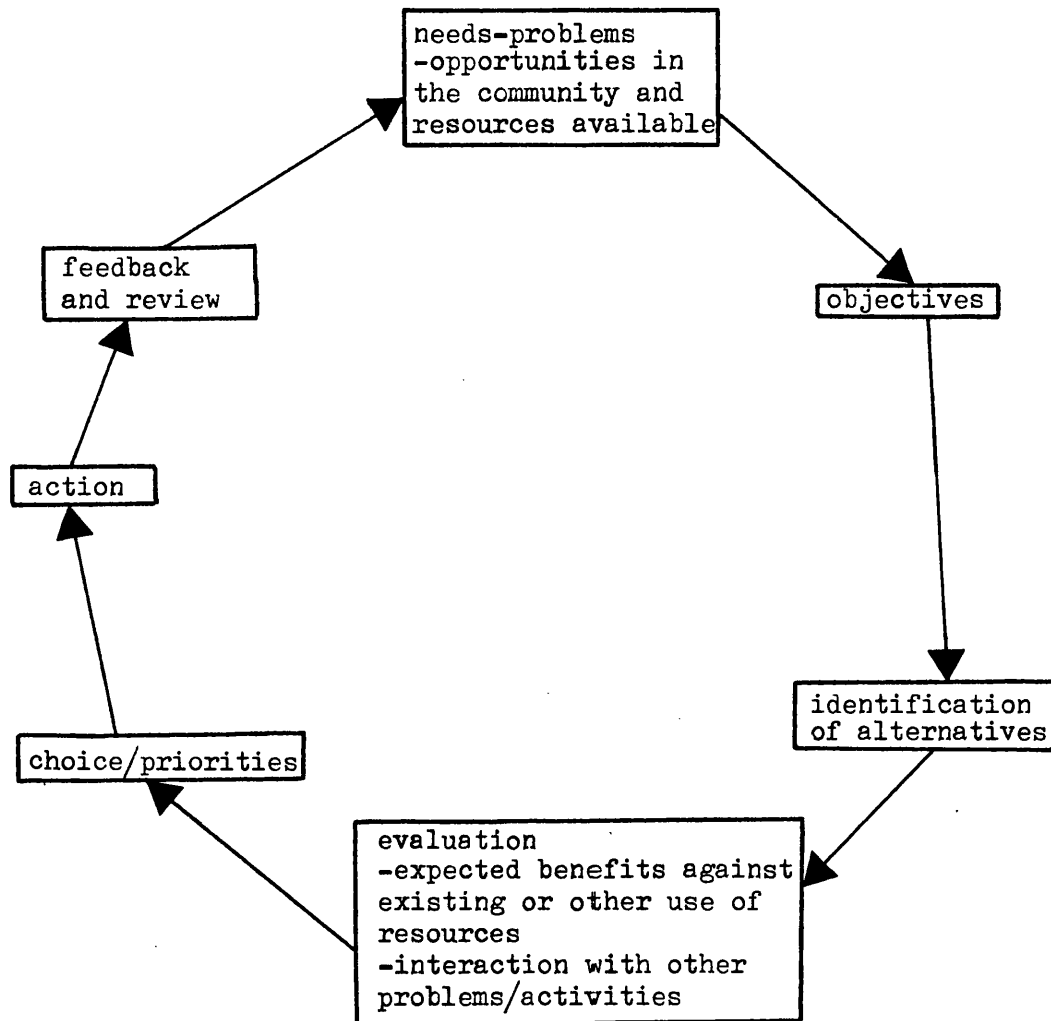
Source: Hambleton, 1978, p. 48

corporate planning in local government takes many
forms so that definitions cannot be categorical.
Generally speaking, however, we can say that a
corporate approach means taking an overall view of
a local authority's activities and the way they relate
to the changing needs and problems of it's area.
More specifically it involves the local authority
developing management and political processes
and structures which will enable it to plan, control
and review its activities as a whole to satisfy the
needs of the people in its area to the maximum extent
consistent with available resources. Thus, the two
words 'corporate planning' communicate two fundamental
ideas — that the local authority should consider its
resources and activities as a corporate whole and
that it should plan and review them in relation to
the needs and problems of its environment. By
focussing on needs and problems in the environment it
directs attention away from the parochial, historically
defined concerns of a particular department and develops
an awareness that the service exists for those who need
it not those who provide it.

This is obviously an extremely brief description
of the aims of corporate planning, however, it serves
to illustrate the high ideals and expectations upon
which they were based. It is not intended to discuss
the processes or techniques, such as Position Statements,
Policy Analysis and Annual Planning Budgetary Cycles,
by which corporate planning was to achieve these aims,
as they have been well documented elsewhere. (Eddison, T.,
1973, Stewart J.D., 1974 A, & Skitt, J (ed.) 1975).

This section as it stands has highlighted two
important points which should be noted. The first
aspect concerns the nature of change which was called

for during the 1960's and 1970 s. This period saw a
great many influences on government to reform and
change; it is interesting to note however, that most
of these influences were initiated by government
itself, especially central government. This immediately
raises the question of who will benefit from the
resulting change. If one accepts Donald Schon's
observation that "the resistance to change within
bureaucracies is more than a question of passive
inertia. It is more nearly a form of 'dynamic con-
servatism' - that is a tendency to fight to remain
the same" (Schon, 1971, chapter 2), then it would
appear that motives should clearly be questioned.
Indeed, Dearlove suggests that "we should not rule out
the possibility that reorganisation may be an overt
strategy designed to place the control of government
in particular hands." (Dearlove, 1979, p.13).

The second point, concerns the magnitude of change
hoped for through the introduction of corporate planning.
The expected change was great and I would suggest that
neither the pervasiveness of the traditional system,
in terms of it.'s embodiment in over a century of local
government history, nor the influence of central govern-
ment were fully realised. For example, through corporate
planning, local authorities were attempting to look
across the range of their separate services. The policy
instruments of central government do not recognise this
development. Although change has taken place in the
locality, change has not taken place at the centre.
The centre can discuss an educational building programme -
that falls in service channels, but it has more difficulty
discussing a multi-purpose building project because that
concerns many departments. The danger is that at the

point where corporate approaches are developing in the local authority, the bias in the policy instruments reinforces separatism. "The local authority is, in effect, encouraged to plan its services separately." (Stewart, 1977, p.33). In view of these factors plus the entrenchment of traditional assumptions and orthodoxies mentioned before, the anticipated change was perhaps an optimistic expectation.

It thus appears that the nature of the development of corporate planning would affect the outcome in practice; it would be difficult to accept the magnitude of the perceived change within the existing entrenched system. Indeed in discussing the system of traditional administration which existed prior to the existence of corporate planning, Dearlove suggests that "we are dealing with the attempt to get rid of problems that are not properly explored in a system that is not adequately understood,...so it is almost inevitably going to be the case that we are presented with a package of prescriptions for improvement that miss the very target they are aimed at" (Dearlove, 1979, p.151). In this situation therefore, a critique of corporate planning as it exists today may shed some light on the effects of it's development and it's translation into practice.

Section 3 - The Limits to Corporate Planning.

Some of the weaknesses of the corporate approach have been touched upon, but the intention now is to offer a series of specific criticisms of corporate planning in practice. The critique that follows sets out some of the general problems which have arisen within the approach as discussed by commentators over the last five years. Chapter four, however, will

examine the corporate systems of three local authorities
and will discuss these highlighted problems in more
detail. The critique will roughly follow the structure
set out by Hambleton as follows:-

1. Mechanistic emphasis
2. Centralisation
3. Values
4. Administrative Inertia
   (Hambleton, 1978, p.61-68).

1. <u>Mechanistic Emphasis</u>.

Much of corporate planning practice has been
mechanistic. There has been too much emphasis on
structural change and the introduction of new pro-
cedures all of which may create the impression but
not necessarily the reality of corporate planning.
Indeed, the Bains Report was accepted as a blueprint
in more than a few authorities. John Bolton comments,
"as a former member of the Bains Committee one of my
main surprises in the local government reorganisation
scene has been the absolute fidelity with which some
of the new authorities have applied the diagrams at
the end of the report" (Bolton, 1974, p.548). This
point is crucial, by concentrating on structure,
corporate planning is but a chimera. The introduction
of the policy and resources committee, chief executive
and the like are but the means by which the process
of the corporate approach can get to work and tackle
the problems discussed before. "Advocates of corporate
planning tell local authorities to coordinate their
work, but telling them to coordinate does not tell
them what to do or how to do it." (Dearlove, 1979, p.182).
These comments provide two valuable lessons.
Firstly, they point to the apparent need for clear
definitions to be issued to local authorities in terms
of changes. Bains should not only have recommended

the machinery of corporate planning but how to
operate it. Secondly, they also point to another
problem with change and innovation in local govern-
ment. It is a double-edged problem; on the one hand,
as Schon points out, "where we cannot help but per-
ceive the change, we strive actively to contain or
suppress it" (Schon, 1971, p.15). Thus the lack of
emphasis on process can be seen as a deliberate tactic.
On the other hand, it may be that local authorities
do not have the ability to cope with the changes
suggested in corporate planning and that the tangible
structural changes advocated were implemented, while
the less tangible and more important changes were to
a large extent ignored.

These can be seen however, as virtually one and
the same argument in that "belief in the 'stable state'
(i.e. the existing situation before change) is central
because it is a bulwark against the threat of un-
certainty. Given the reality of change, we can maintain
belief in the stable state only through tactics of
which we are largely unaware."(Schon, 1971, p.2).

2. <u>Centralisation</u>.

Much of corporate planning activity "has been
built at the centre of the authority by the centre.
But there is much that cannot be learnt at the centre
of the organisation. The centre finds it easier to
handle the hard data of statistics than the softer
data of opinion." (Stewart, 1974 A, p.96). It is
argued that the creation of policy and resources
committee and the chief officers group has centralised
decision-making in chief officers and leading politicians.
Similarly, information is geared to the needs of policy

makers and disregards the different information needs
of the backbench councillor and the general public.
Those on the 'periphery' may not be hostile but
there is every chance that they will be unenthusiastic
and lack commitment to the new ideas. However, Rod
Rhodes comments, "some local authorities were already
centralised and unresponsive. Corporate planning has
supported centralisation in those local authorities
where it existed already, and it has attempted to
create some degree of central coordination in those
authorities fragmented on a departmental basis."
(Rhodes, 1979, p.145). Therefore, this criticism is
perhaps not as clear cut as it first seems.

3. Values.

Much of corporate planning practice has played
down values and the expression of values through
political argument. Possibly because of its business
origins corporate planning has stressed the managerial
and technical aspects of local government policy making
and some elected members have expressed a marked dis-
enchantment with what they see as the professionalisation
of the political arena, (note Blaydon, 1974, pp.90-92).
As many commentators have noted this does not mean that
the idea of corporate planning should be attacked but
that new directions for its application which strengthen
rather than emasculate the political process should
be sought. Indeed J. Cartwright comments that "far
from weakening the position of elected members, it
can if properly used, give members powerful support
both in their dealings with officers and in the
tackling of difficult policy issues" (Cartwright, 1974,
p.196, my emphasis). Whether this is the case or not,

the fact remains that in many cases the corporate
system is apparently not used properly.

4. Administrative Inertia.

Corporate planning has not all been conscensual.
It has in particular invovled conflict with traditional
methods, and 'dynamic conservatism' has employed a
number of strategies to resist change. The obvious
ones are: ignore it, counter-attack it, contain and
isolate it. But a more subtle and probably more wide-
spread response, has been to absorb it - to de-fuse,
dilute and re-direct the energies originally directed
towards change. This view is supported by Andrew Cox
who has noted the unwillingness of local authority
departments to countenance any serious attempts at
over-arching co-ordination of their services and
functions, by either a new co-ordinating agency in
local government, or by attempts at corporate manage-
ment. He describes this as admihistrative inertia and
suggests "the emasculation of attempts at corporate
planning and management is testament to the strength
of existing local government departments in the defence
of their programmes and priorities" (Cox, 1979, p.7).

Similarly, R.G. Young (1974) suggests that attempts
to systematise the local government policy process
through corporate planning has faltered. The major
reason for this is the failure to appreciate various
sensitivities offended by the critical questioning of
the nature and effectiveness of an organisation's
existing activities. Four of these sensitivities are
as follows:-

a) The political embarrassment in a process of
    appraising the shortfalls in performance
    of a local authority must be appreciated.

b) The awareness of the basic economic fact
    of relative scarcity. That is, knowing
    that the very act of surveying need would
    itself raise expectations of the immediate
    fulfilment of that need has deterred some
    local authorities from asking factual
    questions – in short acting as a rationing
    device on both economic and political
    pressures.

c) Critical analysis threatens the power,
    status and security which familiarity
    with and expertise in existing procedures
    and policies gives.

d) These questions entail a confession of
    ignorance, and such humility is a rare
    feature in both political and professional
    circles.

These comments therefore, reinforce the notion that
government is generally resistant to change and that
the need for change does not lie in the structure of
local government but in the underlying assumptions
and attitudes which prevail.

There are good grounds for suggesting that it will
not be possible to implement the corporate approach.
Incrementalism, or even policy maintenance, is likely
to characterise the policy process of most local
authorities most of the time. Innovation will usually
only get the odd look in at moments of crisis, be
they locally inspired or the result of pressures from
the central government responding to the logic of
economic 'necessity'. Fragmentation is inescapable.
It certainly cannot be solved or willed away to be
replaced by co-ordination simply by reducing the

numbers of committees and departments and beefing
up the power of central services. Defective machinery
may contribute to difficulties of coordination, but
it is seldom, if ever, at the root of the problem.
The range and complexity of services; the sheer
volume of work they entail; and the absence of basic
agreement are the problems. Unwillingness to change,
then appears to be the major underlying theme to the
development and practical use of corporate planning.
This has had an obvious effect on the nature of this
approach as it exists today and the resulting problems
must therefore influence the nature of area management.

CHAPTER 2.

Area Management: The Development of an Idea.

Some of the many critiques of corporate planning
are related in such a manner as to suggest the need
for some area-based input to make it more responsive.
John Bennington and Paul Skelton of the Coventry
Community Development Project have provided a particularly
thought provoking appraisal. "It's an over-centralised
process which, by concentrating on 'macro' goals,
effectively conceals important conflicts in objectives
and priorities between different classes and sections
of the population. This mystifies political debate....
It relates to a broad undifferentiated geographical
area, which effectively obscures and neutralises
important political issues which are experienced in
the fine grain" (Bennington and Skelton, 1973). In
summary, it is a top-down process working deductively
from the abstract and general to the particular, when
the reverse of such a process is needed if account
is to be taken of local needs and views.

Section 1 – Area management : parallel development or outcome?

The extent to which area management can be seen
as a response to some of the problems of corporate
planning as the above would suggest, can only be
established by looking at the development of area
management. In this way the nature of area management
as it exists today can be clearly understood, in-
dicating problems and the influence of the corporate
approach. Four main influences have been identified:-

1. The increasing size of local authority units.

Although there is frequent criticism of some of
the consequences of large size in our public organis-
ations, the major reforms of the structure of local
government over the last few decades have consistently
tended to create larger organisations in pursuit of
better planning and coordination, greater efficiency,
and a more adequate reflection of increasing mobility
in our society and its economy. Social and political
theorists have long recognised the difficulty of
maintaining or creating flexibility and responsiveness
in large bureaucracies, however, and this concern has
also been aroused among our public administrators.

This problem was reflected in the government
reports of the 1960's such as the Maud and Redcliffe-
Maud Reports which looked at the problems of alien-
ation of the public from local government, apart from
their wider remits of efficiency and internal co-
ordination of services and the reorganisation of
boundaries. Similar concern was expressed in the
Seebohm Report when it recommended 'community-based'
personal social services. Thus by the end of the
1960's there was a recognition of the possibilities
for the restructuring of the access to local govern-
ment to allow for more sensitive and locally re-
sponsive services. This recognition laid the way
for the later development of interest in systems of
area management which might go further in the direction
of coordinating services for an area or in considering
the need for special policies and programmes for
different areas.

2.   Urban Deprivation.

There has been an increasing interest in the applicability of area-based approaches to the intransigent problems of parts of the inner city and other deprived neighbourhoods. This interest has its origins in the 'rediscovery of poverty' in the early 1960's which questioned the feeling of optimism which followed the influence of the Beveridge Report (1942) in cushioning the majority of the population against economic and social misfortune. This optimism was ruffled by a number of social reports that gave evidence that all was not as well as had been assumed. It was not so much that poverty was rediscovered, however, as that confidence in existing policy and practice was shown to be misplaced. The important point, however, is that all the influential reports, Milner-Holland, Plowden and Seebohm described this poverty, not as a general, non-spatial concept, but as an area-based problem caused by the operation of existing policy. Indeed, the small-scale, isolated area of 'special deprivation' overwhelmingly in the older cities, became a fact of life - as report after report announced it's existence.

Not surprisingly, because of the nature of this deprivation, the reports tended to arrive at similar solutions to the problems. They proposed that services should offer themselves more readily and abundantly to groups in need. As expressed most powerfully by Plowden, the need was to weight the service in favour of the deprived so as to attempt to compensate for the 'handicaps imposed by the environment'. Therefore area-based positive discrimination came into being as a viable concept in this country. It is interesting to

note that these were the same reports which advocated
comprehensive approaches to tackle urban problems
and which influenced the development of corporate
planning.

These influences led to the introduction of central
government's Urban Programme and latterly a succession
of poverty experiments, which can be said to include
the area management trials (see later section). Although
the above factors provided the basic arguments for
governmental action on urban deprivation, it was the
concern over race relations which was the catalyst
in hastening action and change. Indeed it was very
much a response to Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood'
speech on April 20th, 1968. This leads into the first
of two factors which may have had an effect on the
nature of area management.

  a) "Because of its connection with the immigration
     issue, the Urban Programme was launched with a
     haste that militated against the development
     of any clear objectives or strategy."
     (Edwards and Batley, 1978, p.68). It was
     politically imperative to be doing something
     and seen to be doing it, and this was
     associated with hopes for a quick and
     visible impact. Its rushed and uncertain
     background imposed an ad hoc nature on the
     Urban Programme from the outset. In many
     ways, this has been the pattern with the
     subsequent poverty experiments. Therefore
     this may have affected how area management
     is perceived today.

b) Many of the poverty experiments have been
   used as political tools. Urban Aid for
   example, has been described as the perfect
   political tool: visible, concrete, widely
   flung, flexible to passing whims and really
   minimal in terms of committed resources. Not
   all the poverty experiments could be described
   in this manner but they all involved minimal
   resources with the maximum impact in terms of
   being seen to be doing something. Again we
   must question how far area management reflects
   this pattern.

3. The development of the 'corporate approach'.

     The Bains and Paterson Committees were the most
influential in promoting the corporate approach, how-
ever, the reports were not greatly concerned with the
problems of greater size and were not enthusiastic
about any area organisation of elected members in
the form of 'executive' committees. In their con-
sideration of officers' organisations, however, both
reports did accept the relevance of multi-service
local offices and also suggested that a locally-based
general administrator or coordinator reporting to
a chief executive might be useful. The Urban Guidelines
and Inner Areas Studies, however, which were set up
at about the time of the Bains Report, went on to
explore the possibility of area management. The
Sunderland study promoted the idea of neighbourhood
centres as a basis for co-ordinating local services
and the possibility of neighbourhood officers to co-
ordinate the planning and delivery of services or
simply to provide information and advice. On the other
hand, the Inner Area Studies varied in the emphasis on

area management. The Liverpool study formulated a specific set of proposals for the introduction of an area management scheme, while the Lambeth study rejected any permanent form of area management as too inflexible.

All of these reports have, however, recognised the importance of improving the sensitivity of local government to the needs of particular areas. The recent White Paper "Policies Towards Inner Cities" has again accepted the relevance of approaches such as area management to improving the sensitivity of local government in such deprived areas. Therefore, although area management has not been formalised in the corporate structure through government reports, it has always remained an option. It should be noted, however, that the need for an area based approach has always been closely related to the problem of urban deprivation and deprived areas.

4. The case for localism and area based approaches.

Darke and Walker have suggested that "British society will only be robust when it has institutions at local, central and intermediate regional levels that are relevant and responsive to the various needs of the society." (Darke and Walker, 1977, p.14). They suggest that localism or area-based approaches are important for four main reasons:-
  a) People most readily identify with issues
     that are immediate to them, issues that
     are therefore likely to be localised.
  b) A healthy society is one in which the
     potential for experimentation and
     innovation is maximised.

c) There are valuable resources which can
   only be exploited through local organ-
   isations.

d) There are some activities that can best
   be controlled and organised at a local
   level.

John Stewart suggests, that "the city must be organised
to recognise different levels of problems and to deal
with them at different levels" (Stewart, 1975, p.17).
The assumption of the centralised local authority must
be challenged. The authority must have the power at the
centre and that is being provided through corporate
planning systems. But it also needs to recognise the
local level, which has its own problems and its own
politics. It requires centralisation and uniformity
where centralisation and uniformity are appropriate,
but response to diversity, where that is appropriate.

     Finally, Hambleton suggests that a false dichotomy
exists in the centralisation-decentralisation debate
and he suggests that "whether we like it or not urban
policy must deal with a socio-spatial system - the
city - and area approaches must have a place in any
effective governmental response to city problems.
An important task then, is to improve the quality and
relevance of area approaches." (Hambleton, 1978, p.179).

     Therefore, area management has obviously been a
parallel development to corporate planning and been
exposed to similar influences. They have both developed
out of a desire to make local government more effective,
sensitive and responsive to the people it serves.
Corporate planning, however, as it was formalised in
the Maud and Bains Reports, was seen to have the ability

to tackle all three of these objectives without any
real emphasis on an area approach. Therefore, a
situation was reached in 1974 where the area approach
to local government was receiving more attention in
the literature, and corporate planning was seen to be
creating efficiency but little effectiveness. It was
in this light therefore, that area management began
to take shape.

Section 2 - The Potential of Area Management.

Apart from the D.O.E's general definition quoted
in chapter one, little has been said about the exact
nature of area management. Up to this point an implicit
definition has been used which involves adapting local
government organisation so that it can respond more
sensitively and responsively to local needs. Therefore,
the aim now is to examine the meaning of area management
in both theoretical and practical terms.

It has been pointed out, there is little agreement
on a definition of area management and that in practice
the term covers a multitude of forms. Webster (1976)
states that "area management is a new approach to
management in local government which is generally in-
tended to make local authorities more sensitive to the
different needs of local communities...it involves
both developments in the administration of services and
changes in the local political process."

Hambleton (1976) goes further and argues that
successful area management creates more 'productive'
relationships between members and officers and the
public. He stresses that area management entails the
local authority considering at ward level the degree of fit
between local need (desire) and the local effect of

policy. If there is a serious mis-match, area management implies an ability at the local level to make the local authority more sensitive and responsive to the particular area's needs. It is quite clear that area management is more than a technique, it is seen, like corporate planning, to be a politico-administrative approach to government at the local level. Hambleton continues, "there cannot be a perfect area approach, only approaches which are particularly effective in relation to particular points in time" (Hambleton, 1976, p.177).

Simkins (1975) provides an elementary, but useful, classification of what area management might be at different levels. At the lowest level, there is decentralised administration of services, based as far as possible on single area offices. She points out, however, that this kind of decentralisation, while possibly being a step towards area management, falls so far short of the ideal that it does not merit the use of the term.

The next step is to look at the local authority's work on an area basis, instead of just on a service basis. This change of outlook may be accompanied by the appointment of officers - 'area managers' for example - whose job is to draw together the work of the authority in each area and to integrate services. Simkins argues that "the real move to area management however, comes with the formation of 'area committees', each made up of the members from the area's wards and often with co-opted members from elsewhere" (Simkins, 1975, p.390). Such committees may merely advise or may have some delegated responsibilities, but are unlikely to make policy decisions. She points out "if it were really worthy of the name, an area management

system would ensure that the views of area committees played an essential part in policy-making", adding that an "area budget" and "area resource analysis" could further strengthen the area committee's role.

Although Simkins saw area management mainly in terms of member and officer involvement, a third element or objective is often added. The involvement of the public in some form of "community forum", representing local residents or community groups, is often seen as an essential part of an area management scheme.

Boatswain (1975) argues that the logical outcome of area management when taken to its maximum possible development, would involve abolishing the central service committee structure of the local authority. He argues that "the programme committee is an out-dated concept, a cumbersome piece of machinery for decision-making, and it leads to a greater feeling of departmentalism among officers" (Boatswain, 1975, p.273) and should be replaced by area committees with responsibility for decision-making on services and policy affecting the area. Boatswain envisages a system where the council's overall policies are evolved by the policy and resources committee, and the council itself acts as the check to ensure that a particular area does not diverge too far from the council's aims. This represents the area management argument taken to its extreme and no area management scheme has expressed its ultimate goal as the abolition of central service committees.

The attitudes of the committees concerned with local government reorganisation were noted in section one, especially in terms of their general lack of

enthusiasm towards area management. In spite of this,
however, the concept of area management continued to
attract attention and according to Michael Rodgers
"eleven authorities have now set up area management
systems" (Rodgers, 1977, p.80), although the Liverpool
scheme has since this time been ended. "In percentage
terms these numbers may be small, but it is interesting
that a structure regarded as a non-starter at the time
of reorganisation is now gaining ground in this way"
(Simkins, 1975, p.390).

Despite the reluctance towards area management
which was expressed in government reports, it is
interesting to note that it was central government who
took an early lead in its practical development with
the initiation of the area management trials. In
September 1974 the Department of the Environment
(D.O.E.) invited metropolitan district councils to
report area management experiences and to indicate
any potential interest in taking part in other
monitored experiments into decentralised administration.
To the D.O.E. at the time it seemed possible that this
system of governance might do much to reduce urban
deprivation, whilst at the same time stimulating
local initiative and political concern. Further, the
D.O.E. in "notes on area management" (1974 B) stress
that area management is a natural development - for
some types of authority at least - of the new approach
to local government organisation embodied in Bains
and the Urban Guidelines Studies and as a means of
extending a corporate approach at the centre, down to
an area level.

As Lawless points out "There were, it was admitted
real problems over definition. What did 'area management'
actually mean? Who would be involved in its operation?

What powers would decentralised administrations actually
have? But these were difficulties to be overcome and
the D.O.E. was prepared to allocate some limited funds
to do this." (Lawless, 1979, p.99). By 1976 six
authorities were, to varying extents, being supported.
Liverpool and Stockport initiated area management
schemes as early as 1974, the former in line with
recommendations of the Inner Area Studies team. By
1976 additional experiments were also being funded
at Dudley, Haringly, Kirklees and Newcastle-upon-
Tyne. In mid 1977, two additional schemes received
assistance from the D.O.E. namely Islington and
Middlesborough. This project as a whole is also being
evaluated in a four-year monitoring programme, to be
completed by 1980, by the Institute of Local Government
Studies (INLOGOV) at the University of Birmingham.

These area management trials may be seen as an
extension of the central government's poverty programme,
which because of the emphasis on the problem of urban
deprivation may suffer from the problems mentioned
in the last section. However, the D.O.E. stress that
area management is not just concerned with deprivation
but is as applicable to Hampstead as Liverpool 8, and
could be implemented anywhere. (S. Garrish, 1974).
Therefore, early on in its development area management
was becoming a general concept in local government as
opposed to a more specific technique for tackling
urban deprivation.

Other area management schemes have been identified,
which may not be 'true' area management schemes in the
D.O.E. sense, but have reflected some of the objectives.
They are Southwark and Coventry (see Hambleton, 1976),
West Norfolk (Simkins, 1975) and Greenock, Sunderland
and Tower Hamlets (Rodgers, 1977).

The purpose of this section is not to discuss all
the objectives of each area scheme. This would be un-
necessary for the purpose of this dissertation plus
they have been adequately documented elsewhere, (see
Rodgers, 1977, pp.82-88, Horn, 1977, chapter 3, and
Harrop, 1978). The essential point to note is the
extreme variation in the types of schemes and area
based approaches in existence and the numerous and
diverse objectives they embody. Figure 2, for example,
indicates the variety of formal objectives noted in the
D.O.E. schemes.

At this stage, however, the potential of area
management in terms of the broad objectives should be
noted. The D.O.E. (1974) distinguish four main objectives
for area management:-

a) To analyse problems and formulate policies
    in a corporate way at an area level to make
    local government more responsive to local
    need (desire).
b) To operate services more effectively.
c) To provide a channel of communication
    between the council and the people to
    remove any feelings of remoteness
    citizens may have towards the council.
d) To strengthen the locally elected members'
    role in central policy decision making
    affecting their wards.

The D.O.E. acknowledge that these objectives can be
achieved by different organisational forms and give
encouragement to local authorities to develop their
own individual area management schemes. The extent to
which this has been achieved will be discussed in
chapter four.

Nevertheless, this brief sketch of area management

FIGURE 2   CLASSIFICATION OF AREA MANAGEMENT SCHEME OBJECTIVES

GENERAL TARGET AREA

	KIRKLEES	STOCKPORT	NEWCASTLE	DUDLEY	HARINGEY	LIVERPOOL	TOTAL
1. Direct extra resources to deprived areas	*		*			*	3
2. Identify local problems	*	*			*		3
3. Improve use of manpower resources		*		*			2
4. Improve complaints service and information flows to public	*	*					2
5. Improve service delivery	*	*		*	*	*	5
6. Increase administrative devolution						*	1
7. Reduce alienation	*						1
8. Increase service decentralisation		*					1
9. Improve co-ordination of services	*	*	*		*		4
10. Improve information flows between officers and ward councillors	*	*			*	*	4
11. Develop community and citizen involvement		*	*	*	*	*	5
12. Encourage involvement of other agencies			*			*	2
13. Feed into corporate planning process	*	*					2
14. Test feasibility for extension of area management						*	1
Totals	8	9	4	3	5	7	36

Source: Horn et al, 1977, p.29

has indicated the varying influences on the develop-
ment of area management and in consequence the wide
variety of objectives the concept embodies. Three
major points arising from this are important. Firstly,
because of the D.O.E's lack of definition as to the
exact nature of area management, it's structure and
process, local authorities may have either ignored
it or been unwilling to initiate such an experiment.
The small number of schemes in operation may be
testament to this fact. On the other hand, the small
amount of resources available from the D.O.E., plus
the feeling that by initiating this type of scheme,
an authority would be admitting that it's existing
policies were not working properly, may have done
little to encourage local authorities to adopt this
approach. Secondly, authorities may have suffered from
what the author terms 'the Bains syndrome', in that
the implementation of area management may have been
carried out in the mechanistic way in which corporate
systems were, that is, with the emphasis on structure
as opposed to the more important elements: organisation
and process. Finally, the objectives of area manage-
ment, plus the problems they are supposed to tackle,
would appear to require major changes in the running
of local authorities and also challenge existing
practice. Therefore, in the light of these factors
and what has been discussed before in relation to
corporate planning, the success of area management
would appear to have been doubtful from the start.

      Chapters one and two have thus shown that area
management and corporate planning are inextricably
bound together in terms of their objectives, how
they are perceived, and consequently their adoption
and effectiveness in local government. They have
been subject to the same influences and generally

speaking are striving for more effective and responsive
local government. They have obviously suffered from
their own peculiar problems but there are clear links
between the two approaches:-

a) Both approaches are concerned with corporate
   as opposed to functional goals. By its very
   nature this challenges the existing approach
   to local government work.

b) Both are political processes, not simply
   administrative. They both attempt to
   improve the councillor's role in terms of
   policy-making and the relationship with
   officers.

c) Both are innovations within local govern-
   ment organisation and may suffer the
   problems of 'dynamic conservatism'
   discussed earlier.

d) The nature of the last three links suggests
   the importance of the people who work in
   local government. It is the councillors
   and officers who are responsible for trans-
   lating the structure of local government
   into a working process whether it be the
   pre-reorganisation or corporate system.
   Plus they are the main actors in the policy-
   making process. For these reasons, their
   attitudes, underlying assumptions, perceptions
   and interpretation of the local government
   system are key factors in both the political
   and administrative sense. Indeed the adoption
   of the corporate approach into local govern-
   ment owes as much to their perception and
   interpretation of change as to the pre-
   scriptions in the Bains Report.

Therefore, although both corporate planning and
area management appear to suffer from organisational
problems, one must also stress the importance of the
people within local government and how their per-
ceptions and attitudes effect both the organisational
processes and innovation in general. The intention
in chapter three is thus to focus on this latter
aspect which will hopefully lead to a clearer
understanding of corporate planning, how area manage-
ment can solve some of the problems, and attitudes
towards change in local government generally.

CHAPTER 3.

Area Management in the Local Democratic Process.

The last chapter concluded by emphasising the role of both councillor and officer in shaping local government. It is they who interpret the process by which a local authority carries out its work, and therefore, in an area management scheme they will interpret the extent and nature of the objectives to be achieved. In this situation, their roles in area management are crucial. The purpose of this chapter is thus to examine the officer and councillor in local government generally and the problems they face, in the hope of discovering the implications for area management. Before discussing these topics however, it is essential to look first at the relationship between local government and the democratic process, as this provides the background to which the roles of the officer and councillor relate. From this review we will perhaps be able to:-

   a) Gain an understanding of these relationships.
   b) Discover the effect that the adoption of corporate planning has had on local government.
   c) Establish the role that area management can play in strengthening local government.

Section 1 - Democracy and Local Government.

Whether we like it or not we live in a country which embodies a democratic regime. This centres on representative government to fulfil its aims of liberty, equality and fraternity. The basic tenets of representative institutions are: free elections, majority rule, protection of minorities, subject to the

majority's final say: and the assumption that government operates on a basis of widespread discussion and a responsiveness to an informed public opinion. In Britain local government has long been defended as a vital and integral part of democracy, although the debate has been going on for a considerable amount of time (see Warren, 1950, Langrod, 1953, Moulin, 1954, and Panter-Brick, 1953 & 1954). The intention now is not to look at this debate in detail but to review some of the arguments, which will hopefully provide some background to the association between democracy and local government.

George Langrod argues that local government does not constitute a basis for democracy and that democracy does not come into being where local government appears, nor does it cease with the disappearance of the latter. He even maintains that there is a fundamental contradiction between democracy and local government. Democracy is by definition an egalitarian, majority and unitarian system. It tends everywhere and at all times to create a social whole, a community which is uniform, levelled and subject to rules. It avoids any splitting up of the governing body and thus puts the individual face to face with the complete whole, directly and singly. On the other hand, local government is, by definition, a phenomenon of differentiation, of individualisation, of separation. He therefore suggests that "since democracy moves inevitably and by its very essence towards centralisation, local government, by the division which it creates, constitutes, all things considered, a negation of democracy" (Langrod, 1953, p.28).

In the light of these criticisms, Keith Panter-Brick has defended the association between democracy and local

government. He suggests that there are a number of
points on which he and Langrod are in agreement. In
the first place, a citizen needs to consider the
demands and legitimate claims of others, and a local
authority needs to consider those of the wider
community and not just those of it's own area. Local
interests have their place, but must not be exaggerated.
Secondly, even where there is no system of local self-
government it is possible for individuals to acquire
and practise democratic habits. In this sense local
self-government is not essential to democracy. It is
the contention that not only is local self-government
not essential to democracy, but that on the contrary
it is in practice inimical to a proper appreciation
of the needs and claims of the wider community that
Panter-Brick challenges. It is the view of Langrod
and also Leo Moulin that, where there are local authorities
concerning themselves with local interests, then the
claims of the wider community will inevitably suffer
a local distortion or simply be obscured. Local politics
is a milieu in which the clear over-all vision of the
central authority is deflected, bent to suit special
and purely local interests. This factor is exaggerated
in that no one denies that local politics may be
parochial in outlook but it is a different matter to
suggest that participation in local politics is likely
to detract from a true appreciation of overriding
claims.

Panter-Brick suggests that, there are two things
required of a democrat, and this applies not only to
the politician, but also to the ordinary citizen.

   1. He should take all demands into consideration.
       This is the requirement stressed by Professor
       Langrod and Dr. Moulin: and it is because
       local affairs are by definition local that

they doubt the utility of local self-
government as a school for democracy. But
this is to overlook the second requirement.
2. The need to select from all the conflicting
demands, those which are to be given
priority. This need is experienced just
as much at the local level as it is at the
national level.

Democracy involves not only the determination of
the general interest by representative institutions,
but also an awareness that what prevails is the general
interest. Otherwise there is no freedom. It is not for
nothing that democracy and self-government have been
identified. In this light, Panter-Brick suggests that
"democracy is not the egalitarian uniformity, Professor
Langrod seems to suppose. It demands that one another's
point of view and one another's interests be mutually
appreciated and taken into account...If the appreciation
of one another's standpoint is not learnt in the local
communities, it risks not being learnt at all" (Panter-
Brick, 1953, p.347). Far from an attention to local
interest rendering a man incapable of appreciating
the general interest, he is indeed likely to conceive
the general interest in highly abstract and dangerous
terms if he has not the more intimate experience of
government at the local level.

This resume of the debate would suggest that there
is a close connection between local government and
democracy, and this has been supported by other
commentators over the years. Warren, for example,
suggests that "a true conception of democracy must
accord not merely a high value, but an indispensible
role, to local representative institutions exercising
a free responsibility for appropriate sectors of
governance, public welfare and social provisions"

(Warren, 1950, p.11). Darke and Walker believe that
if democratically exercised power, influence and
participation are not available at the local level
then the wider democratic structures are based on
inadequate foundations. D.M. Hill perhaps sums up
the role of democracy in local government when she
states, "to be an effective provider of services,
local authorities must be more than efficient. They
must still be judged by that justice, fairness,
equality and openness by which democratic society
as a whole is judged" (Hill, 1974, p.236).

Despite the apparent importance of local govern-
ment to democracy and democratic ideals, there are
problems with this association. In this country demo-
cracy has never been argued out. The aim in the
nineteenth century was middle-class representation and
once the fear of the uneducated mob rule was ended,
the extension of the franchise and the gradual intro-
duction of social reforms. The main concern was with
good administration, not democratic ideals, and local
government was to be reformed - or bypassed - to
improve the standards of state services. At the same
time representative institutions went on much as before,
though their work was greatly increased and was supported
by a growing variety of professional expertise. In many
ways this view can be supported by the local government
reforms in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The stress,
on good administration overlooks, however, the inevitable
division of interests in democratic society.

John Dearlove supports this view when discussing
the traditional orthodoxies mentioned in chapter one.
He maintains that orthodoxy has seen the established
system of local government - as especially democratic.

In effect, traditional orthodoxy with respect to the democracy of local government offers us some sort of perfect competition model of local politics where local elections give people a mandate to work in an equally perfect public policy-making process. This is not the case in reality, for example, party practice is unlikely to conform to the model of responsible party government, and local elections do not work as effectively as they should. "Given the entrenchment of orthodoxies which pictured local government as democratic but inefficient, it was not surprising that the Royal Commission on Local Government in England and Wales was only required to have regard to the need 'to sustain a viable system of local democracy' and so could pursue the major task of increasing efficiency" (Dearlove, 1979, p.57).

These prevailing attitudes have led to naive conceptions of local government where policy is the responsibility of the member and execution that of the officer, while in reality policy and administration cannot be distinguished because administrative detail shades imperceptibly into policy. This situation suggests the complex nature of the relationship between local government and democracy and also points to an interdependence between the two. If one accepts D.M. Hill's argument "that the definition of 'democratic local government' is the councillors' and officers' definition, because what they do, for all practical purposes, is democracy" (D.M. Hill, 1974, p.17, her emphasis), then the internal working of local authorities and the work of councillors and officers is central.

Section 2 - The Councillor in Local Government.
Our attention must now turn to the people in local

government whose task it is to foster the relationship
between local government and democracy. The councillor
is perhaps the most appropriate person to look at first.
Indeed, Gyford suggests that "it is the existence of
freely elected representatives which is the singular
hall-mark of that form of democracy on which British
local government is based" (Gyford, 1976, p.133).
The aim of this section is to describe the councillor's
role in local government, emphasising the problems that
'he' faces in fulfilling it.

The council member is the tangible expression of
this particular representative institution. Whatever
role the councillor may adopt in the work of a local
authority, it is all underwritten by the basic fact
that 'he' is a representative of the people. The extent
to which the councillor does in fact represent the
people is a different matter and one which forms the
basis of a complex debate. The assumption in this
section, however, is that the councillor's function is
to represent, and the aim is to examine the problems
which 'he' faces in carrying out this task.

"Society benefits from an 'immense subsidy' through
its local councillors" (Eddison et al., 1978, p.1, see
also Heclo, 1969). This comment stems from a recognition
of the councillor as a part-time, amateur who receives
a small subsidy for his work. It is generally accepted
that in the main, councillors do a good job in the face
of these restraints. Nevertheless, a prevalent argument
suggests that it is becoming even more difficult for
councillors to do a good job - the task faced by the
elected member today differs substantially from that
of even ten years ago. It differs because of a variety
of developments which make the task more complex and
more difficult for members to comprehend and cope with.

These can be listed under four headings:-

        a)   Local autonomy
        b)   Levels of activity and expenditure
        c)   Reorganisation of Local Government
        d)   The style of management and
            administration.

a) Local autonomy

The most fundamental factor affecting the task of
the elected member is the nature and extent of local
discretion and control. In recent years, it is widely
accepted, central government has extended its controls,
especially financial controls, in a manner which leaves
local authorities with less room to manoeuvre. This has
been emphasised over the last year under a Conservative
Government committed to public spending cuts. The
elected member is directly affected by these develop-
ments and the extent to which they reduce the scope
for local decisions. He is also increasingly dependent
on local government officials to interpret and explain
the nature of control, which are both complex and
subject to change. Financial controls are not the
only matter in question here. The volume and complexity
of legislation, places duties and responsibilities on
local authorities. Members are increasingly dependent
on other persons - and in particular on officers - for
clarification of the nature of controls, and of the
opportunities available for local variation in policy.

b) Levels of Activity and Expenditure.

The changes referred to above have not meant that
local government has reduced its activities. The
conventional picture of the growth of local government
draws attention to the fact that local authority
expenditure has risen faster than the economy as a
whole ever since 1890, see Table one:-

Table 1 - The growth of expenditure in local
          authorities in Britain.

	Current Expenditure.	Capital Debt.
1963	£3,250 Million	£8,350 Million
1976	£13,000 Million	£25,000 Million

Table 1A - Local Authority expenditure as a share of
           all Public Expenditure.

	Local Authority expenditure, % of total P.E.
1950	23.4%
1976	31%

The significance of this growth for the elected member
lies partly in the responses to it, which have emerged.
These responses are professionalism and the adoption
of standardised, rational management and administrative
practice. Heavier demands on local government have,
perhaps rightly, led to responses which may incidentally
distance the elected member from decisions and services.

c)   Reorganisation of Local Government.

     The 1972 Local Government Act considerably reduced
the number of local authorities. It also involved
the loss of some functions in health and water supply
to non-elected bodies. The increased level of activity
by local government is carried out by a smaller number
of authorities, and these authorities are controlled
by a smaller body of elected members. The elections
of 1974 and the implementation of local government
reorganisation meant a reduction of 11,600 councillors
as well as the abolition of the 4,400 aldermanic posts
in England and Wales. A smaller body of councillors
is responsible to a larger electorate for a larger
scale organisation measured in terms of finance and

staffing and far more complicated and regulated activities. In this way the position appears to be one of increasing responsibility and complexity falling on a smaller group of members.

d) The Style of Management and Administration.

At the same time as these developments have taken place and partly as a response to them, the style of management and administration in local government has changed. This is most easily characterised in the growth of corporate planning and of firmly established, structured, centrally directed processes of decision-making. Corporate planning, output budgeting, chief officers groups, management teams and policy and re-sources committees are all a rational response to increase efficiency in the local government service, but they combine to increase the power of professionals, of leading officials and to reduce the power of in-dividual councillors and officers. Greater sophistic-ation makes the system more impenetrable especially to the inexperienced member.

The style of management is not necessarily geared to localised problems or the representative role of elected members. It is not necessarily designed to maximise the contribution of the elected member, or to enable him to participate in decisions. Longer term planning can inhibit participation by members, especially newer members, who are presented with a picture of continuity which is slow and difficult to change.

The power within the local authority tends to become centred in particular groups of officers and particular committees. Where elected members have limited contact with other individuals and committees they may find it difficult to penetrate and understand what is going on and why. Member involvement may lengthen

the process of policy-making and conflict with other
objectives of the administrative machine.

One way of summarising all of the trends referred
to above is to characterise it as a centralist tendency.
The increasing financial control of central government,
the increasing complexity and scale of activity in
local government and the styles of management develop-
ing out of these have the effect of removing many
decisions from control by locally elected representatives.
There is a direct tension between this movement to
administrative efficiency and democratic control.
Such tensions will, no doubt, always exist. At the
present time, however, it may appear that balance has
shifted a long way from the elected member and from
creating an environment which facilitates or encourages
his effective participation in decisions.
Furthermore, while theory tends to emphasise the
equality of councillors, its actual operation tends
to differentiate more clearly between those with, and
those without power. Many discussions of power in
local government are concerned with the relative
power of elected members and officers as if they
formed two mutually exclusive categories. "In practice,
however, the most important division is between, on
the one hand, the chief officer and his chairman and
on the other, everyone else." (Green, 1977, p.70).
Normally this chairman/chief officer axis dominates
the situation against all-comers and can leave the
backbench councillor virtually powerless.
A final set of problems stem from the fact that
councillors are part-time, amateurs facing complex
tasks in a wide range of problem areas. Dearlove (1973)
suggests that they are unlikely to have adequate skills

to cope with many of the problems themselves, and,
because of the necessity of earning a living,
they have only limited time to spend on their public
work. The 'skill' and the 'time problem' have both
been recognised in the institutional devices that
surround the councillor. There are professional
officers to give advice, and a committee system to
enable a degree of specialisation. In view of the
previous discussion, however, these factors would
appear to do little to ease the problems of the lack
of time and knowledge. Indeed, there are more specific
problems related to the committee system and Ronald
Young (1977) suggests that it has at least three
major faults:-

1. It does not permit a careful and sustained
   examination by elected members of the
   nature, basis and effects of policies;
   this is because its whole purpose is to
   make decisions, not to analyse whether a
   problem, for example, has been correctly
   defined.
2. It cannot look in depth at issues which
   straddle the boundaries of several
   committees. If such issues arise they
   tend to bounce between committees, causing
   the utmost tension and conflict.
3. The present operation and size of committees
   do not permit specialisms to be built up
   amongst elected members.

In view of these defects, David Rimington suggests that
"local government is far from democratic and only by
having full-time paid, qualified elected members can
the disaster of bureaucratic management be repaired"
(Rimington, 1979, p.836).

Therefore, it appears that there are a great many
barriers to the effective fulfilment of the councillor's
role as a representative of the people and the upholder
of the democratic process. Perhaps, more pertinently,
it would seem that the introduction of corporate
planning has done little to alleviate this situation
and has also introduced new problems. Representation
is not likely to be effective unless the councillor
receives the necessary support to allow him to
comprehend what is going on around him and to develop
his abilities in coping with his role. Given that
"the overwhelming impression from many members is of
a great desire to learn, a high motivation to improve
their knowledge and understanding" (Eddison, 1977, p.72),
the time has come to look at ways of improving the
councillor's role.

Section 3 - The Officer in Local Government.

Legally local government officers are the servants
of the council which appoints them: they are moreover
servants of the council as a whole. Because they are
seen as servants of the council they are perceived to
be politically neutral, so they can serve any political
grouping. This definition of the officer's role, is
part of the formal democratic model and leads on to
the distinction between policy and administration. The
model suggests that policy is the domain of the elected
representative in local government because this is one
of the essential elements of the democratic process.
Implicitly, therefore, the politically neutral officer
cannot take part in the policy-making process - his
only contribution is that of providing objective
information for councillors to use in policy-making.
Obviously, this appears naive in the light of the

previous discussion, but it is often a widely held
view as Collins, Hinnings and Walsh (1976, p.1) have
recognised. "The persistent use of a formalistic
democratic model....responsible in part for the
paucity of academic work on the position of the
officer in policy-making." In this section, therefore,
the aim is to clarify the influence that the official
has on the democratic process and highlight the
criticism and problems that his role in local govern-
ment faces.

Jones suggests that 'the distinction between policy
and administration can be replaced by a more relevant
line of division; between what is publicly controversial,
or potentially publicly controversial, and what is not."
(Jones, 1973, p.138). Members are to handle the former,
officers the latter. Officials need members to handle
publicly troublesome matters so as to protect their
status in a permanent career service. If officials
involve themselves publicly in controversial matters,
they will be identified with particular courses of
action, in other words become involved with the
political process which is quite rightly the domain
of the elected member. The important point, however,
is that a self-denying ordinance not to participate
openly in publicly controversial matters is a
guarantee of, and a protection for, a permanent
career bureaucracy, able to serve any group of elected
members.

This leads to a more realistic distinction between
the roles of councillor and officer, and also to the
significance of professionalism in the local government
world. Indeed, the Maud Committee (1967) noted that on
the official side, English local government is rooted
in professionalism. Almost every service has been made

into a separate profession backed by a strong association
catering for the training of its members and the develop-
ment of the service. Departments based on professional
expertise have been the traditional structures within
which officers have been employed. If then local
government is a stronghold of professionalism, it is
nevertheless true that the stronghold is under some
attack at the present time. The critiques of profession-
alism generally relate to three problems:-

    a) Failure to relate satisfactorily to the
        local authority as a corporate body.
    b) Failure to relate to the councillors as
        politicians.
    c) The professionals control of information.

a) <u>Professionalism and the corporate body.</u>

     This criticism is one which has been voiced by a
number of commentators concerned with the management of
local authorities. Thus the Maud Committee warned that
"professional exclusiveness undoubtedly militates
against departmental co-ordination" (C.M.L.G., 1967,
vol.1 para. 108). The managerial innovations proposed
by the Maud Report had as one of their prime aims the
overcoming of this professional exclusiveness in favour
of a more integrated approach to policy-making within
the authority. Despite these proposals Kershaw suggests
that "the thrust towards cooperative approaches and
centralised management threatens departmental and
professional autonomy" (Kershaw in Darke and Walker,
1977, p.61). Furthermore, he suggests that the slow
spread of the post of chief executive in local govern-
ment is thought to exemplify the resistance of powerful
departments to a perceived threat of reduced status
and autonomy. More specifically, some of the problems

faced by Chief Executive Officers (C.E.O's) and
Officer Management Teams (O.M.T.'s) may be directly
attributable to professionalism.

The C.E. role was seen to be the focus of corporate
direction and epitomise the transcendance of departmental
boundaries in corporate planning. The degree of difficulty
in achieving this task is never fully realised. The O.M.T.
was seen to be a device to help the C.E. pull on authority
together corporately. This team was meant to symbolise
corporate integration, with regular meetings of chief
officers to systematically formulate common objectives.
The idea of the management team as conceived by Bains
was simpler enough; get all the chief officers working
corporately and you are well on the way to achieving
the corporate approach. This is easier said than done.
Eddison suggests that "almost every chief officer has
a strong sense of commitment to the service in which he
has been trained" and consequently, "corporate working
presents a challenge to all that chief officer has
been committed to" (Eddison, 1974 (4), p.1547).
Therefore, it appears that the success of corporate
planning has been inhibited to a significant degree
by professionalism.

The problem of professional isolationism is not,
however, merely one of management structures. It
derives also from the nature of professionalism.
In particular it derives from the fact that professional
officers, in carrying out their work, may have a sense
of commitment to standards and values set by the
professional bodies to which they belong and in whose
traditions they have been educated. Moreover the
profession may not only be an officer's reference group
in terms of standards and values; it may also be an

important reference group in terms of career prospects.
The likelihood of promotion to the most senior posts
in local government can be enhanced by a good
reputation in the professional world as well as by
a good record with previous employers. Gyford suggests
that "there is no reason to be surprised at the existence
of professional exclusiveness and interdepartmental
rivalry within an authority since it is inherent in
the very nature of the professions, which are
essentially exclusive bodies" (Gyford, 1976, p.38).
The introduction of managerial reforms may avoid
the worst of the problem but is unlikely to cure it
entirely.

b)   Professionalism and Politicians.

     The complaint that officers are not always able to
relate satisfactorily to the councillors as politicians
arises from the fact that the two sets of people
approach the problem of decision-making in rather
different ways. To those schooled in a profession,
especially one with a fairly high technical content,
it is hard to admit that a proposal which is apparently
right on technical grounds can be dismissed on mere
political grounds. The notion that there are objectively
correct solutions to problems lies at the heart of
much professional education. Thus it is all too easy
for professional officers to believe that their own
views are both correct and in the public interest,
and that they are moreover self-evidently so.
     Councillors, as politicians, have their own
'professional' standards and values, based variously
upon ideology, party loyalty, identification with
particular interests and groups, and political self-

preservation and advancement. These standards and
values, except in the case of the most rigid of
politicians cohabit in mixtures that vary from time
to time and from issue to issue. Professional officers
brought up in a tradition of supposedly value-free
technical objectivity may understandably find it
hard to cope with attitudes which seem to them to
consist of special pleading, of party in-fighting
or of jockeying for position. Similarly, doubts
amongst the politicians as to the reliability of
expert advice can only serve to widen rather than
bridge the gap between the two groups. This leads
on to the third criticism.

c)   Professionalism and Information.

The question of the nature of the professional's
role in decision-making centres on his control of
information. The calibre of committee deliberations
depends on those officers and chairmen who control
the flow of information. Obviously, the crucial
cases are those where the information itself is
highly technical. Two possible avenues are open to
the officer (assuming that he does not abuse this
particular situation). One is to try to show the
committee what the consequences of action will be.
Or - and the two are closely linked - alternatives
are put to the committee. In view of the previous
discussion plus the problems that councillors have
in getting information referred to in the last section,
it appears that the professionals control of information
may effect and even bias policy-making.

These factors suggest that the official's input into
the policy-making process is an important one and that
in considering the operation of local government as a

democratic process, the officer must be seen to be as
important as the councillor.

This, however, brings us back to the general theme
of change. Professionalism appears to provide a
significant barrier to change, with 'dynamic conservatism'
being important within the professions and perhaps be-
coming more prevalent with the introduction of corporate
planning. Indeed, the response has been pressure from
the employer side and from professional institutes to
standardise conditions of service, qualifications,
staffing and grading which give national norms of
appointment and services. This of course provides
the necessary security for a professional but in so
doing, it severely inhibits change. Indeed, this
topic will be explored further in the case studies
which follow, in the hope of establishing whether this
factor inhibits the operation and/or success of area
management. This will be done by testing the following
hypothesis:-

> "because of the career structure and
> professionalism within local authorities,
> the effectiveness and perhaps success of
> area management will be restricted or
> impaired."

Finally, the concept of commitment has been
introduced. It was mentioned that officers are committed
to the service in which they are trained and in the
same way councillors are committed ideologically to
certain policies. This would suggest that to introduce
change to local government, commitment is vital. Indeed
Eddison suggests that "unless there is a fairly wide
degree of commitment, unless the change has momentum
at a variety of points, disappointment and frustration

are the inevitable result" (Eddison, 1974 (4), p.1546).
In view of the previous discussion, this factor may have
been lacking in the development of corporate planning.
In fact, the corporate approach, if it is successful
as Bains intended, constitutes a real threat; and
the reaction has been to allow the approach to operate
only in certain areas.

Section 4 - Councillors and Officers : the Relationship.

The previous sections have suggested that the
relationship between officer and councillor in local
government is the crucial defining factor in the
democratic process. The question does not concern who
controls policy but in what ways both are involved in
the process of developing and administering policy?
This section will describe the theoretical background
to this relationship and its practical implications
for local government and area management.

Collins et al (1978) suggest that there are three
models of the way officers and councillors might
relate to each other - the representative, technocratic
and corporate models. The major value underlying the
representative model rests on the ability to dis-
tinguish between ends and means and, therefore,
between policy and administration. The elected members
control policy and the officer structure administers
it. Even when it is conceded that policy and administ-
ration can never be fully separated, bureaucracy is
expected at least to be reticent about matters of
policy. Officers are careful, in most cases, to
preserve the idea that they are the faithful servants
of the councillors. Linked to the notion that the
member is the policy-maker within an authority is
the concept of the member as a community representative.

If this model emphasises the elected representative
as power-holder in the local government system, then
the technocratic model gives pride of place to the
officer as decision-maker. This model suggested by
Collins is not a 'dictatorship of the official' in
the sense that officers manipulate members. The
technocratic model suggests that the dominance of
the officer arises from the nature of modern know-
ledge and the application of advanced decision-making
techniques. "Only those with the requisite knowledge
and technical ability are capable of making decisions.
The councillors are unlikely to have such knowledge."
(Collins et al, 1978, p.40). Furthermore, the
organisational arrangements underpinning and supporting
the system of technocratic values and power will operate
to limit contacts between officers and councillors in
making policy decisions.

The corporate model emphasises the planning system
and its concentration on designing an overall system
for dealing with policy and allocating resources for
the corporate entity, the local authority. In order
to understand the power-base that will emanate from
corporate assumptions, the blending of the political
and technical into a political-management system is
important. The corporate emphasis brings together
small groups of councillors in the shape of party
caucuses and policy committees and small groups of
officers in the management team. If a corporately
organised authority is to work effectively these two
bodies must work closely together. Thus a joint
councillor-officer elite arises, often in a very
visible form, as the major power centre of the local
authority. The corporate model also emphasises a

movement away from discussion on a departmental basis
to one in which environmental problems and needs are
discussed which may cut across functional boundaries.

An essential difference, therefore, between the
technocratic and corporate models presented here is
that the latter recognises a central role for politics.
"If corporate planning develops without support from
an adequate base in politics...it will lead, not to
achievement, but to a mere facade hiding the perpetu-
ation of processes of functional management" (Stewart,
1974 A, p.140). A local authority that wholeheartedly
adopted a system of corporate planning and management
would display, then, a value system which emphasised
the complexity of the local environment, an inter-
twining of the political and technical; and organis-
ationally, a low level of departmentalism.

Obviously the previous discussion is grounded in
theory and the models suggested take an ideal typical
form. It is not argued here that one model or another
represents the practical situation in local government.
The purpose of the discussion has been to clarify the
types of relationships that are likely to be relevant
in local government. The argument is not that these
models will be found anywhere in reality, but that,
messy and inchoate though reality is, local authorities
will be more like one model than another. The point
is not to develop models but to use them towards an
understanding of actual local authority operation.
Indeed the major point relating to the use of the
models is that now they can be tested against what has
been said in previous sections and the last chapter.

The representative model has been described fully
over the last two chapters, and within the area of formal

meetings of the council and its committees the member-
officer relationship is, on paper, clear. The officers
are present to advise and to recommend, but the members
must make the final decisions. Dearlove (1973) describes
this as a 'cultural cliche' which is virtually impossible
to break through. Yet this 'cliche' of local government
obscures the reality, which can be rather different.
The reality of the formal proceedings of council and
committee meetings is that the elected members meet
in the presence of officers to consider reports pre-
pared by the officers containing recommendations for
action made by the officers. This situation is com-
pounded by the fact that many councillors feel that
they do not get the opportunity to respond to this
by providing their 'local' knowledge to the policy-
making process. Even if they do, the end result is
often frustration in the face of the seemingly im-
penetrable control of senior politicians and chief
officers.

These problems overlap with those of the techno-
cratic in that because of the 'control' of policy
by officers, one immediately loses the democratic
element of local government. Perhaps more importantly
the professional background of officials helps to
maintain a functional perspective, which does little,
as has been shown, to enhance the responsiveness
of a local authority. In this light, the corporate
model is seen to redefine the relationship between
officer and councillor and combine the two perspectives
of councillor and officer to produce more responsive
policies and local government. In view of the problems
with the corporate approach this attempt to redirect
and produce more constructive relationships between

officer and councillor has remained elusive.

The conclusion must be that, at the moment, exist-
ing relationships between officers and councillors may
conspire to produce less than responsive policies and
management in local government. In tackling this problem
however, it must be remembered that both officers and
members "are seeking not some recondite truth of
administrative science but a comfortable and utilit-
arian working arrangement which fits their particular
requirements. The emphasis thus falls on the working
out of some locally acceptable practice rather than
any universally applicable prescription" (Gyford,
1979, p.139). In short the knowledge of both councillor
and officer must be combined effectively both formally
and informally to produce policies which are responsive
to the local authority as a whole, and as a collection
of communities.

Section 5 - The Officer and Councillor in Area Management.

The evidence suggests that the key actors in the
local democratic process are faced with many problems
despite the introduction of corporate planning, and this
has led to a great deal of criticism concerning local
government's responsiveness and sensitivity to local
needs and demands. In this light, therefore, we must
return to the potential of area management in alleviat-
ing these problems. The case for area management was
made in the last chapter, the aim now is to focus on
those objectives, which claim to enhance the role of
both officer and councillor in the local democratic
process.

According to Rodgers, " 'Democratic vitality' is
an objective of nearly all area management schemes",
(Rodgers, 1977, p.105 and figure 5) and "enhancing

the representative role of the elected member has
been an explicit aim of area management in some
schemes". (Harrop, 1978, p.176). Even where this is
not the case, however, the existence of area manage-
ment may have resulted in changes in the nature of
that role, in particular changes in the relationships
between elected members and officers and between
councillors and their constituents. It is true to
say that the British local ward councillor remains a
major asset to neighbourhood democracy in Britain
and this is an important reason why the recent experi-
ments with area management are of interest. The
important question, therefore, is what does the area
management approach have to offer to helping the
member to play a more satisfactory role?

Area management has, in many authorities, provided
opportunities for local councillors to consider and
comment on issues affecting their area which would not
otherwise have existed. The majority of councillors in
Stockport, for example, are supportive of the area
committee system, feeling that its' existence enhances
their effectiveness and provides a welcome opportunity
to comment on planning applications. Indeed, it is the
area committee system which appears to be the main
vehicle for the enhancement of the councillors role.
Hambleton (1974) argues that the important quality
of area committees is the way they strengthen the
councillor's representative role. He points out that
ward councillors are often criticised for failing to
represent local ward issues. This is partly the fault
of the traditional service committee structure, although
the councillor is elected to represent a territorial
constituency, 'he' is normally asked to serve only on
committees with broad city-wide functions. It becomes

extremely difficult for him to take an interest in
all the authority's activities affecting his ward.
Area committees provide a forum for discussion of
all the local 'here and now' issues which might be
difficult to raise during a city-wide committee
meeting.

Another aspect of this strengthening of the
councillor's role stems from the regular meetings of
an area committee. With the referral of many items
from service committees, it enables a councillor to
be well-informed of what is happening in his area
and to pass comment on it. Similarly, "area committees
can pick on particular local issues which appear to be
problematic and carry out a 'performance review' or
'trouble-shooting' role" (Mason, 1978, p.17).

J.D. Stewart (1973 B) argues one of the major
advantages of area committees is that they encourage
a corporate approach to be adopted by members,
especially if they discuss not one service but all
services affecting their area. Hambleton (1974) argues
area committees are uniquely placed to connect both
'up' and 'down'. They can connect 'up' to the policy
and resources and service committees, and they can
connect 'down' to ward level by encouraging public
involvement and consultation in the council's affairs.
J.D.Stewart (1974) argues it is this 'unique' position
that allows area committees to open up new approaches
to problems.

Critics of area management argue that the above
advantages might be more easily realised by better
external relationships with the private sector and
central government, or by making members full-time
and salaried, providing them with secretarial help,

and sponsoring them on training courses. However
such measures would not necessarily ensure a
corporate approach at local level, or make members
more accountable to their electorate. Finally,
J.D. Stewart (1974 A) stresses another objection in
that possibly too strong a relationship between the
member and his ward might lead to parochialism with
its worst connotations of narrow minded self-interest,
as opposed to its more welcome aspects of concern and
sensitivity over local needs.

These theoretical objections have been challenged
by the findings of T.J. Phillips in his examination
of Area Committees in Walsall. These committees are
purely concerned with planning matters and thus critics
might suggest that this is not typical of a general
area committee. Indeed this is supported by a factor
which Phillips sees as being important in considering
the significance of the Walsall experiment. He suggests
that "planning is the one major area of local authority
decision-making that does not directly inovlve a
claim on the financial resources of an authority"
(Phillips, 1979, p.27). Because of this, the con-
troversy that has surrounded the committees has
probably been far less, than would have been the case
had they been delegated powers related to other local
authority functions. On the other hand, planning
has implications across the whole spectrum of local
authority services. In practice it is often difficult
to separate the issues that lie behind planning
applications from the policies involved with the
services provided by the council. A potential exists,
therefore, for the committees to become less and less
purely planning committees and more and more multi-
functional area committees. In this light it would seem
that the lessons to be learnt from this experiment are
important.

Phillips suggests that opinions have been divided about the whole principle of the new committees as they can be seen from two perspectives. They can be regarded as a unique and pioneering experiment in making local government more democratic and responsive to local needs. On the other hand, they can be viewed as an unnecessary and time-consuming exercise that could threaten to produce yet another tier of local government; but he suggests that the following advantages are apparent:-

a) Members are more sensitive to local opinions and needs in planning matters.
b) Better quality decisions arise because of greater specialist knowledge of the area concerned.
c) There is increased thoroughness in decision-making by members.
d) There is support from members for Area Planning Committees; widespread member acceptance must be counted as one of the advantages of the new system.
e) Local democracy and participation in planning appears to be fostered by area planning committees.

On the other hand, the committees do have disadvantages:-

a) Inconsistencies in standards applied by different area planning committees.
b) Conflicts of interest between individual areas and the borough as a whole.
c) Increased burden of work on members and officers.
d) Increased cost of making the area planning committees function.

Phillips concludes that the balance of advantages decisively outweighs the disadvantages and this view is shared by what is now a strong concensus of opinion among both members and officers in Walsall that area planning committees are a great asset to the local authority. Therefore, in terms of **area management** the potential of the area committee appears to be significant as far as the development of a more responsive local authority is concerned.

From what has been said, it is possible to list a number of assertions concerning the advantages of councillors working on an area basis in area management:-

1. Decision-making can be based on the councillor's special knowledge of the area.

2. It may be easier for councillors to relate to their area than to local authority policy as a whole. Therefore, the councillor as a resource in decision-making may be better utilised.

3. This factor may lead to a more constructive discussion of local authority problems.

4. Councillors will relate to the area in a corporate way rather than on functional lines. Therefore area management may help to tackle the problem of departmentalism.

5. The area based approach may make councillors more aware of the areal implications of council policy as a whole which may then highlight problems in predominantly functional policy.

6. Area management might sharpen up their representative role because of their increased vulnerability to the electorate. Area committees should have the effect of making members more accountable for their decisions

to their electorate and more answerable if
a mistake is made.

These assertions suggest that area management can play
a major role in tackling the problems discussed in the
last two chapters. Therefore, they will be tested
against what has happened in the case study areas to
find out what effect area management really has in
practice.

Finally, the relationship between councillors and
officers has certainly been altered in some authorities
as a result of the introduction of area management. The
existence of an area committee, or similar body,
provides an official means of contact between elected
members and lower tier officers of the authority;
such contact would often not occur through main-line
service committees. In particular, it allows officers
and councillors who both have a concern for a particular
area to share information on needs and problems and to
discuss ways of meeting them. On this theme, Hambleton
(1976) suggests that "successful area management almost
certainly creates new and more productive relationships
between elected members, officers and the public at
a sub-local authority level" (Hambleton, 1976, p.176).
This indicates the potential that area management has
for improving the relationship between councillor and
officer in the face of the problems discussed in the
last section. Phillips (1979) suggests that this is
apparent in the Walsall area planning committees, when
he suggests that it was quite probable on the original
planning committee for there to be no member having a
knowledge of the locality that the committee was being
asked to approve a planning application for. "Consequently,
members are now less dependent on the officers for advice

and are able to correct officers on points of detail.
They are also able to respond more positively and
critically to advice from officers and often elaborate
on matters raised, thus contributing to a high level
of discussion" (Phillips, 1979, p.31). Therefore,
a final assertion can be postulated: area management
can make decision-making even more a constructive,
two-way process between officers and councillors.

In conclusion, area management has been credited
with a great many bold objectives which can solve the
problems of local government and make it more re-
sponsive. Many of these objectives are those that
corporate planning failed to achieve. Therefore, the
next two chapters are devoted to testing the
hypotheses and assertions which have been set up, to
evaluate the extent to which area management can actually
solve or tackle the problems introduced in the previous
discussion.

CHAPTER 4.

Case Studies 1: Area Management in Three Local Authorities.

The intention in the next two chapters is to discuss
the concepts introduced in chapters one, two and three
in relation to three local authorities which have
established area management schemes. More specifically,
the case studies will discuss area management in terms
of the hypotheses and assertions concerning aspects of
this approach discussed earlier.

In many ways this chapter will provide a general
introduction to each case study in terms of the
characteristics and circumstances of each area, local
authority and area management scheme. Within this,
however, certain themes will be emphasised, such as the
variety and differences between the schemes. Indeed the
variety of approaches to area management dictated that
a variety of case studies were essential to the study.

The nature of this chapter, the need for clarity
and the need to emphasise the differing characteristics
of each scheme all suggest that the case studies should
be examined separately. Therefore, each case study will
be evaluated in terms of the following descriptive
structure:-

1. The characteristics and purpose of the
   area-based scheme.
2. The essential elements and organisation of
   the scheme.
3. The scope of objectives and impact on the
   work of the authority.
4. An evaluation of the concepts introduced in
   chapters one and two under three headings:-

a) Corporate management in the local authority
   and the relationship with area management.
b) Has area management increased sensitivity
   and responsiveness?
c) The work of area management in terms of
   attitudes, departmentalism and the relation-
   ship with main-line committees.

The next two chapters are empirically based on
three separate interviews with officers who are currently
involved in the area management schemes, and Appendix
one gives details of the questions asked, and the names
and positions of each of the interviewees.

Section 1 - Case Study 1 : Newcastle-Upon Tyne.

In Newcastle the Priority Areas Programme is part
of a wider scheme designed to alleviate some of the
symptoms of deprivation or stress which have been
identified in large parts of the city. The most important
single document during the development of this initiative
was the Council's Top Priority Green Paper of April
1976 which outlined the approach the City Council thought
desirable to combat stress in the social priority areas
of the city, mainly the riverside wards from Scotswood
in the west to Walker in the east (see figure 3). After
public consultation based on the Green Paper, this
wider programme was agreed by the Policy and Resources
Committee in September 1976, and by the City Council
in October, 1976. It contained three elements:-

a) Regular review of departmental work
   programmes to ensure that positive
   discrimination was being given to both
   individuals in categories of stress, and
   to geographical areas where there are
   concentrations of people living in
   stressful conditions;

Figure 3 : Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Priority Areas

Source: Harrop et. al., 1978, p. 68

Top priority wards
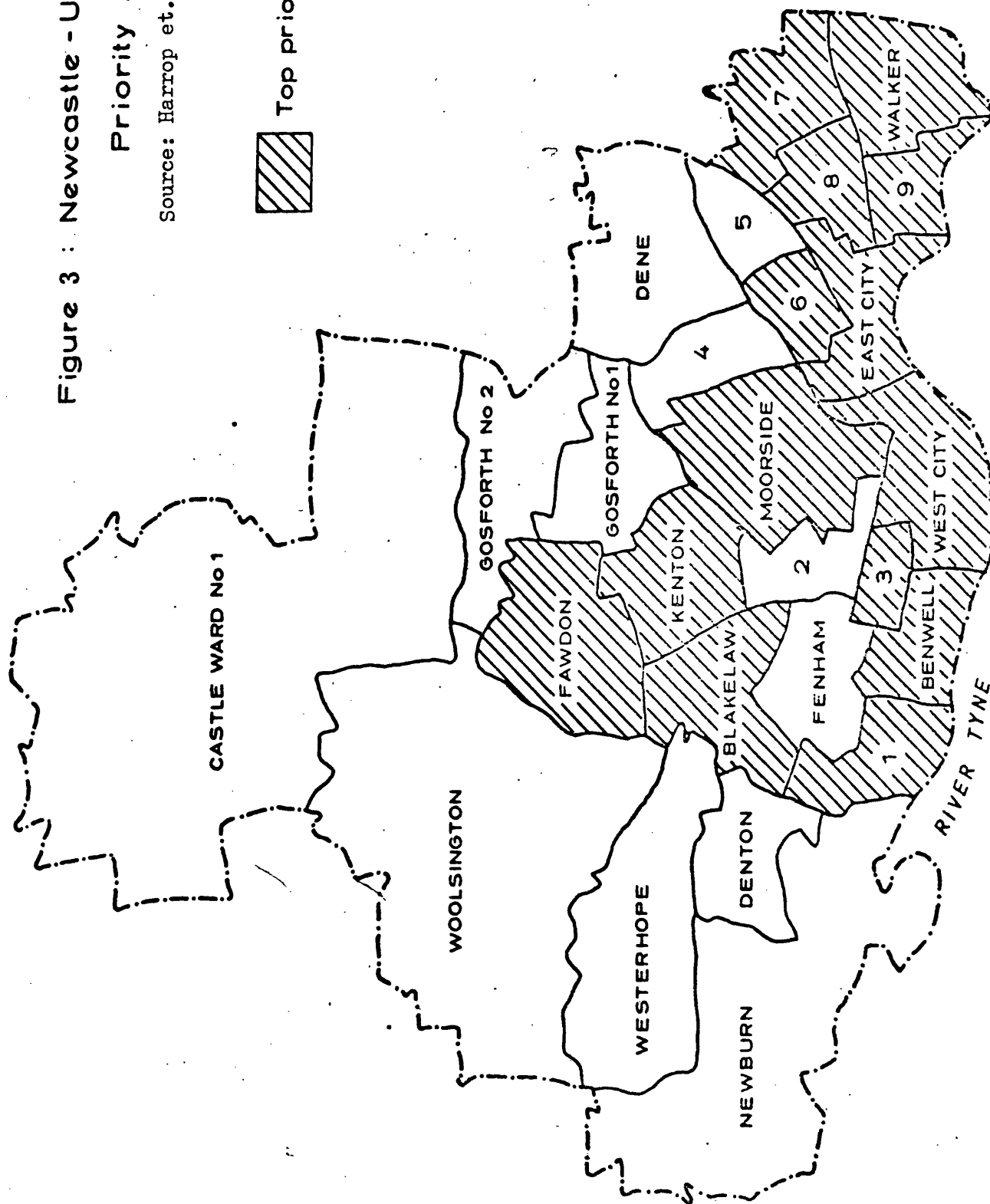
1 SCOTSWOOD
2 WINGROVE
3 ELSWICK
4 JESMOND –
5 HEATON
6 SANDYFORD
7 WALKERGATE
8 ST. LAWRENCE
9 ST. ANTHONYS

CASTLE WARD No 1

WOOLSINGTON

WESTERHOPE

NEWBURN

DENTON

FAWDON

GOSFORTH No 2

GOSFORTH No1

DENE

KENTON

BLAKELAW

MOORSIDE

FENHAM

BENWELL

WEST CITY

EAST CITY

WALKER

RIVER TYNE

b) The appointment of a special team to
   work at attracting more job opportunities
   for the city; and

c) The establishment of teams to work at the
   alleviation of stress in wards where con-
   centrations were greatest.

After a survey, using census data, of all areas
of the city at enumeration district level, concentrations
of stress were identified. Employing this data and other
local factors, twelve of the city's twenty-four wards
were included in the Top Priority Programme (see figure 3).
Three of these wards were combined into one operational
area (Kenton/Fawdon/Blakelaw), and the remaining nine
wards operate as individual areas. In May 1977, an
eleventh team - Moorside - was added to the original
teams, and, in June 1978, a twelfth, Sandyford. These
twelve ward areas are thus the effective spatial,
administrative units for this scheme.

For each of the twelve wards Priority Area Teams
(P.A.T's) were established and are the key elements
in the Priority Areas Programme. Joint member-officer
teams, they are each provided with a substantial budget
to be spent, in consultation with the public, on projects
designed to alleviate stress in their own local areas.
Though having fairly limited delegated spending powers,
their recommendations for expenditure are forwarded
to the Priority Areas Sub-Committee, which only
reluctantly and infrequently refuses to accept the
recommendations of the local teams. The teams consist
of the three city ward councillors and the county
councillor representing the area and one officer from
each of the Education, Housing, Planning and Social
Services Departments. Officers from the Planning

Department are, in general, the team leaders for matters
such as reports of meetings and co-ordination of team
officer work; officers from other departments are
invited to team meetings when necessary. The local
teams develop programmes of action for their wards,
which are normally outside the programmes of the main
line committees. Proposals are submitted to the Policy
and Resources Committee for approval via the Corporate
Plan Group. Coordination between the teams is accomplished
through the Central Group of Priority Area Team Leaders
and this group meets under the chairmanship of the
Chief Executive's professional assistant, who also has
overall responsibility for the progress of the Top
Priority Programme as a whole. This description relates
to the situation as described by the INLOGOV reports
(Horn, 1977 and Harrop, 1978) and is summarised in
figure 4.

This figure indicates how, in theory the area
management scheme relates to the local authority as a
whole. The City of Newcastle has set up corporate
planning within the local authority, with the Policy
and Resources Committee and the Corporate Plan Group
as the major manifestations of this approach. The
Corporate Plan Group, a joint member-officer team are
responsible for the production of plans which ensure
the corporate working of the authority along with
the Policy and Resources Committee. Dave Roberts,
a team leader, doubts the extent to which these
groups have influenced this corporate working, indeed,
he suggests that the work of individual departments
is still the most important feature of local authority
organisation.

Nevertheless, the Priority Areas Programme (P.A.P.)
is supposed to feed into this overall organisation.

Figure 4   ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE TOP PRIORITY PROGRAMME

IN NEWCASTLE

```
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │   COUNCIL    │
                    │              │
                    └──────▲───────┘
                           │
                    ┌──────┴───────┐
                    │  POLICY  &   │
                    │  RESOURCES   │
                    │  COMMITTEE   │
                    └──▲────┬──────┘
                       │    │
   ┌───────────┐       │    │   ┌──────────┐       ┌──────────────┐
   │ CORPORATE │───────┘    └──▶│  OTHER   │──────▶│   COUNCIL    │
   │   PLAN    │               │  COUNCIL  │       │ DEPARTMENTS  │
   │  GROUP    │               │ COMMITTEES│       │              │
   └──▲─────◤──┘               └──────────┘        └──────────────┘
      │      ◤
      │   ┌──────────────┐
      │   │ CENTRAL GROUP│
      │   │ OF PRIORITY  │
      │   │  AREA TEAM   │
      │   │  LEADERS     │
      │   └──────▲───────┘
   ┌──────────┐  │
   │ PRIORITY │  │
   │   AREA   │──┘
   │  TEAMS   │
   └──────────┘
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KEY
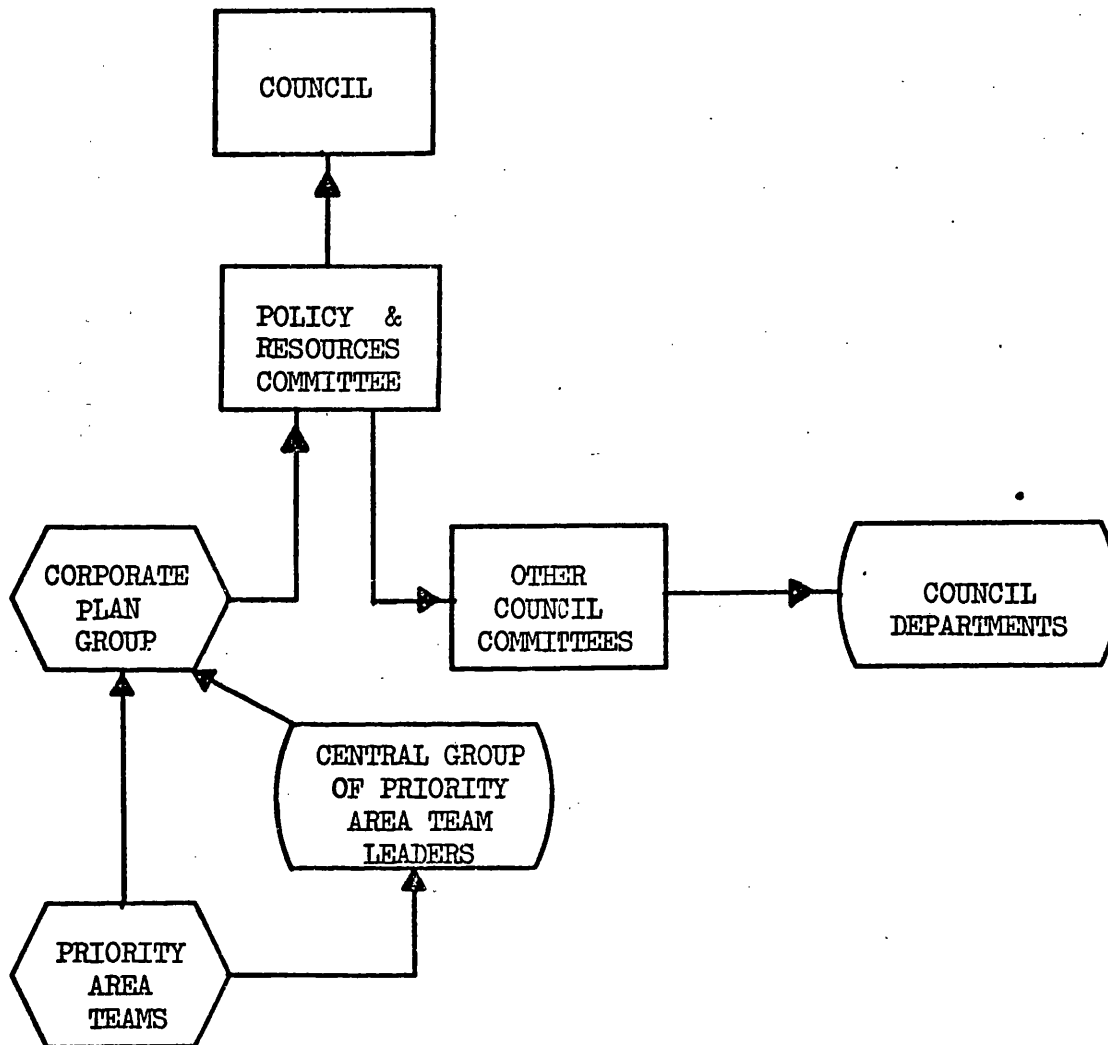
──────▶   Indicates direct reporting relationship on area management

▭   Political groups

⬡   Joint member/officer groups

▢   Administrative groups

Source: Horn et. al., 1977, p. 13

"The individual P.A.T's are allowed a considerable
degree of autonomy, but remain responsible to council
through the Priority Areas Sub-Committee, which imparts
a degree of stability and continuity to the activities
of the individual teams" (Harrop et al, 1978, p.69).
This committee attempts to guide and co-ordinate the
teams without violating their independence at the
local level. Established as a sub-committee of the
Policy and Resources Committee in June 1977, it was
given the following remit:-

    1. To plan, authorise, and monitor the
          spending of the Central Priority Areas
          Budget.

    2. To receive recommendations from P.A.T's;
          to authorise expenditure from the P.A.T's
          pooled budget for specific priority team
          recommendations, and to monitor the
          spending of that budget.

    3. To guide and coordinate the council's
          present and future priority area activities.

The establishment of this committee was part of
Councillor Beecham's attempt on becoming leader of the
council, to formally integrate the P.A.P. into the
normal decision-making process of the authority.
Reflecting this concern, the sub-committee was placed
on the four weekly cycle of committee meetings and
serviced in the usual way by the Department of
Administration. In addition, the committee developed
from a majority party committee into one including
Conservative and Liberal representatives. Despite the
attempt to formalise the organisation of the programme -
mainly to ensure its survival - the Priority Areas
Sub-Committee remains more a special 'one-off'

committee than a routine sub-committee. Chaired by
the Leader of the Council, the committee is, however,
particularly influential and its decisions unlikely
to be overturned.

The remit above suggests that one of the important
functions of this sub-committee is to consider the many
spending recommendations from the teams. Table 2
indicates the nature and magnitude of the P.A.P.
budget.

Table 2.   Priority Areas Programme Budget.

Year	Total Budget	Amount per Term	Central Stress Fund (1)
1976/77	£100,000	£10,000	–
1977/78	£1,010,000	£45,000	£500,000
1978/79	£860,000	£55,000	£200,000

(1) Available to finance larger projects beyond the
    resources of individual teams.

In addition individual teams have delegated spending
powers up to a maximum limit of £5,000 p.a. and a
maximum of £500 per individual item. Originally
restricted to grants to outside bodies only, this
power is now also effective for 'in-house' expenditure.

The 1977 InLOGOV report noted "it is intended that
each P.A.T. should hold public meetings in the ward,
in an attempt to involve the local people in decisions
about their ward" (Horn et al, 1977, p.12). It was
accepted that ultimately the councillors would have
the final decision on any matter but it was hoped that

agreement could be reached before that stage. Given
the varying situations in each ward, it was expected
that each team would develop an individual style and
a programme of activity suited to the local needs and
resources. There are distinct advantages to be derived
from this process. The Programme's budget, for example,
by-passes the usual system of estimates, making
expenditure more flexible and implementation more
speedy. In addition the fact that spending proposals
are usually reached after a certain amount of local
public deliberation ensures that any scheme is less
paternalistic than might otherwise be the case.

This description of the organisation and structure
of the P.A.P. suggests that the range of objectives set
are limited, and table three supports this view and
highlights the substantial difference between the
Newcastle scheme and all the others. The major objective
of the scheme is to tackle the problems of urban stress
on an areal basis and the P.A.Ts' primary function is
to generate and put forward action proposals for the
P.A.T. budget. More specifically, the teams were set
up to identify particular needs in their areas; to
devise ways of meeting these needs; to initiate projects
in their areas and to advise Council Committees and
Departments of major needs.

A report by Newcastle Metropolitan Council (1979 A)
suggests that the teams have promoted a large number of
small and medium size projects, which are meaningful
to the local people, and involved many local groups
in deciding how to spend team budgets, totalling about
£1.5 million since the programme began. Plus the teams
have also developed better officer-member relationships,
better contacts have been established with the voluntary
sector and local residents and, helped to make both

TABLE 3

SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES OF AREA MANAGEMENT

	KIRKLEES	STOCKPORT	NEWCASTLE	DUDLEY	HARINGEY	LIVERPOOL
Provision information/complaint referral service	*	*				*
Involvement with delivery of existing services	*	*		*	*	*
Involvement with planning and policy-making	*	*		*	*	*
Involvement with resource allocation		*				*
Community development		*			*	
Public participation	*	*	*	*	*	*
Special activities		Coordination of special projects with appropriate Chief Officers e.g. share-a-garden scheme, no litter areas	Local programme for Priority Area Team funds. Proposals to involve action projects which would not otherwise be undertaken	Environmental Improvements Projects e.g. eyesore sites and summer play schemes		Projects initiated with contingency and special projects budgets e.g. draught proofing

Source: Horn et. al., 1977, p.40

officers and members more informed and responsive to
local needs.

It appears, therefore, that the P.A.P. has increased
sensitivity and responsiveness to local needs and
problems. Dave Roberts agrees with this, to a certain
extent, and suggests that the increased contact between
officers, councillors and the public has certainly
increased the sensitivity of the local authority.
He stresses that public involvement in the programme
is a key element, with public meetings and the
circulation of minutes for public and team meetings to
local groups and people being important. "The use of
minutes for public and team meetings mean that people
can follow decisions and approach councillors and
officers on that basis" (Roberts, 1980), and this
has also given a certain cohesiveness to local people
and groups because now they have a channel through which
they can influence decision-making. He also points
to an example of where a P.A.T. has actually influenced
the decision-making process. He comments that although
changing attitudes and activities within the local
authority is not an explicit objective, it has happened.
"The Education Committee is known to be fairly intransigent
and unbending, nevertheless, the West City Area Team
have persuaded them to agree to the building of a
comprehensive and community school in the area" (Roberts,
1980). This appears to be the exception rather than the
rule, however, and he is quick to point to the limit-
ations of public involvement in increasing sensitivity.
When suggestions for small projects are involved, the
process is adequate, however, when major developments are
suggested which cut across departmental lines or even
challenge council or departmental policy, then little
is done.

Spencer suggests, however, that "when evaluating

an area management scheme, it must be seen in terms
of the objectives it is setting out to achieve"
(Spencer, 1979). In this light, perhaps we should only
expect minor changes in the work of the local authority
to help the amelioration of urban deprivation. I
would suggest that implicit in the minor changes,
embodied in the objectives of the P.A.P. is a need for
much wider changes to achieve them. Roberts, for example,
states that "one of the main planks of the P.A.Ts
is the improvement of environmental management (as a
means of alleviating urban stress), but the responsibility
for this lies with four different departments, Planning,
Education, Social Services and Housing. While this
situation exists, the priority teams or the local
authority can in no way become more responsive or
effective" (Roberts, 1980). This point is emphasised
rather euphemistically by INLOGOV, when they point
out "among the major service departments, for example,
Education, Social Services and Housing - though all
represented initially and subsequently in each team -
are all involved less than might be desirable"
(Harrop et al, 1978, p.74).

In short, working on an area basis implies a need
for a corporate approach. The people in an area do
not perceive problems along functional lines and when
officers and councillors work more specifically at
this local level and come in contact with these problems,
they also realise the implications of the departmental
approach embodied in the local authority. Indeed, this
has been noted, "the teams have failed to pursue the
more fundamental issues and have made no significant
impact on main line council policy or the delivery
of council services" (Newcastle Metropolitan Council,

1979 A). It is not so much the teams' fault, however,
than the prevailing attitude within the local authority.
Although Newcastle has adopted a corporate planning
system, the prevailing attitude is still with depart-
mental policy-making and administration and is bolstered
by a loyalty to this approach from many of the officers
and councillors, who also see the P.A.P. as marginal
to their work.

More fundamentally the programme's approach has been
criticised on the grounds that it supplements the main-
line committees without influencing their policies
towards a concerted attack on stress. It has to be
admitted that many of the schemes financed by the
programme could, theoretically at least, have been provided
by an existing department. Few of the schemes, for
instance, involve corporate spending; most individual
projects involve only a single agency. Certainly, some
of the major spending departments appear to be absorbing
substantial expenditure from P.A.T's. The authority's
Education Department, for example, received the
relatively modest sum of £115,017 during the financial
year 1976/77 for projects initiated for the P.A.P. During
the first six months of the 1977-78 year this had in-
creased to a total of £235,780 - £136,904 from the
individual teams and £98,876 from the Central Stress
Budget and this total has increased over the last two
years. According to Roberts, although the priority
areas are supposed to receive more resources than
other parts of the city, "in reality less money comes
from the main-line committees to these areas, because
the priority areas budget often has to pay for standard
work normally provided by these departments when the
teams initiate a project" (Roberts, 1980). The problem
of untidiness and litter, for instance, has often

been raised as an issue. To remedy this, extra road-sweepers have been employed by some teams. In practical terms, this may be an effective solution, but in organisational terms is probably not really challenging main line policy. It points to deficiencies without suggesting remedies to any challenging degree.

The prevalent picture is thus one of an area-based approach existing in a functional or departmental back-ground and this is compounded by the fact that the team leaders and officers who work in the area teams are part-time. That is, they have departmental duties to carry out over and above those involved with the P.A.Ts. This situation is adequate if "the area based scheme is to tackle 'minor' or specific objectives which do not affect the wider structures of the local authority but unsatisfactory in terms of tackling wider issues" (Spencer, 1979). In reality the ties back to departments are strong and restrict development away from functional lines.

Therefore at the moment, it is difficult for area teams to influence decision-making and add the areal dimension more forcefully, and it is not surprising that Roberts concludes, "in trying to open out decision-making as it effects a particular area it has not been very successful" (Roberts, 1980). Nevertheless, the most recent evidence suggests a more encouraging future. Roberts states that "although, the P.A.Ts have not really succeeded in getting committees and departments to work more closely together, they have, in terms of individuals within the departments" (Roberts, 1980). A great deal of the day to day work is carried out by people who are at the third and fourth tier in the authority, and although they were already working closely together before the P.A.P., there is probably a greater degree of cooperation than before, now that

these officers are working in teams. He also suggests
that despite the intransigent problems in developing
a corporate approach and breaking down traditional
attitudes among senior politicians and officers, attitudes
among these lower tier officers are changing and becoming
more receptive to cooperation and the corporate working
required for an area approach to be successful.

These changing attitudes may be supported by the
most recent proposals concerning the P.A.P. The latter
part of 1979 saw a stream of reports being produced by
Newcastle Metropolitan Council on the future of the
P.A.P. (1979 A, B, C, D, E). These reports have all
recognised the problems which have been discussed,
and in the report Priority Area Teams - The Way Forward
(Newcastle Metropolitan Council, 1979 C), the Principal
Planner and Team Leaders suggest that the teams have
failed to pursue more fundamental issues and have made
little real impact on main line council policies or on
the delivery of council services. They suggest that
three years into the P.A.P., it is in danger of running
out of steam. There is rapidly growing frustration on
the part of some members and officers, particularly
team leaders, over the failure of the project to
achieve its objectives despite the high priority attached
to the project by the Leader and the Labour Group. The
team leaders believe that the following proposals will
go furthest to fulfilling the objectives of the Green
Paper for priority areas.

1. <u>The post of team leader must be a full-time post,</u>
   responsible for two teams,
   - in the light of experience of the past three
     years, team leaders agree that the achievement
     of the objectives of the project requires a
     full-time commitment;

- full-time leadership allows the time to
  accommodate a greater workload in keeping
  with the priority given to the project by
  members.
- this will enable:-
a) P.A.T. issues to be considered and pursued
  more effectively.
b) Projects to be identified of a more innovatory
  and corporate nature for team funding.
c) An improved service to elected members.
- full-time leadership allows the management of
  the project to be developed in more effective
  ways than part-time working allows.

2. The establishment of effective inter-departmental
  machinery in the form of Priority Areas Officers
  Group and a Management Sub-Group so as to:
- help in providing the information, teams required
  to investigate issues;
- ensure that monitoring of team projects is
  carried out effectively by departments concerned;
- deal with any snags in the processing/implement-
  ation of team proposals;
- identify areas of council activity on which
  teams can comment;
- co-ordinate the relationship between main line
  departments and P.A.Ts.

3. The establishment of a Priority Areas Section
  in the Policy Services Department, to be re-
  sponsible for the coordination and leadership
  of the P.A.Ts, so as to:-
- overcome the present split responsibility for
  the Priority Areas Project between the City
  Planning Officer and the Chief Executive and to
  establish a clear line of responsibility through
  the Director of Policy Services.

- develop links with corporate policy-making
  in the authority and with the range of
  service departments whose policies and
  activities directly affect the lives of
  people in the priority areas.

This then is a clear recognition of the problems
discussed before and a means of providing the machinery
to overcome them. A decision has not yet been made on
these proposals, but their implications on the traditional
structure and attitudes within the authority would appear
to be great. Even if the P.A.Ts were to be transferred
to the Policy Services Department, Dave Roberts still
sees it as being an extremely slow process in developing
a more corporate approach towards the priority areas.

Section 2 - Case Study 2 : Brierly Hill Area Management Scheme, Dudley.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough in the West Midlands
has opted for an area management experiment relating
to only one part of the Borough. Dudley's interest in
area management stems from the approach made to urban
authorities in 1974 by the Department of the Environment
(D.O.E., Sept. 4, 1974). As an authority, Dudley was
particularly interested in developing further its
corporate structures. When the D.O.E. circular letter
was received, just six months after reorganisation, the
corporate management system was still being developed,
and there was particular concern about problems of co-
ordination: "even at this very early stage...it is,
becoming clear that if comprehensive action is to be
taken to deal with the more urgent of the area's problems
within a reasonable time scale, there must be a far more
co-ordinated approach at the local level" (Dudley
Metropolitan Borough, 1974, p.1). Dudley was therefore,
particularly receptive to new ideas which related to

management processes such as area management. The
experimental area, Brierly Hill, more or less corresponds
to one of Dudley's fifteen planning districts (see
figure 5), and it was one of two areas to emerge as
priorities for local planning on both physical and social
criteria. The Dudley scheme was not set up simply as a
device to aid one particular part of Metropolitan Borough
but as a means of exploring a number of more general
aspects of local authority operation and management.

The Brierly Hill scheme has three elements, a
working party of members, a multi-disciplinary team
of officers and one full-time member of staff. This
organisational structure can be seen in Figure 6.

1. The Area Management Working Party.

        Members are involved in the scheme through
    the Area Management Working Party which reports
    to the Policy and Resources Committee and thence
    to the Council. The political composition of this
    group has posed problems over time mainly because
    it was a Labour Council who initiated the area
    management scheme but after only six months the
    Council changed hands in 1976 to a Conservative
    administration. In order to ensure a Conservative
    majority on the Working Party, the new group
    reconstituted it immediately. The majority of
    the ward councillors are from the Labour Group
    and the underlying party political tension between
    Brierly Hill and the Borough as a whole exists as
    a major problem.
        The Working Party has no formal terms of
    reference, it is essentially an advisory committee,
    although powers can, and have, on occasion, been
    delegated to it. The Area Management Officers'

Figure 5 : Brierley Hill

A : DISTRICT PLAN AREAS

COSELEY

SEDGLEY

DUDLEY
CENTRE

GORNAL

KINGSWINFORD
&
WORDSLEY

PENSNETT

NETHERTON

BRIERLEY
HILL

STOURBRIDGE
CENTRE

LYE

CRADLEY

HILL
&
CAKEMORE

HALESOWEN
CENTRE

LAPAL

PEDMORE
&
NORTON

— · — District Plan Area Boundary

▨ Area management area

0   1   2 miles
0   1   2   3 kms

N

B : BRIERLEY HILL AREA

Round Oak
Steel Works

BRIERLEY
HILL

QUARRY BANK

HAWBUSH

AMBLECOTE
BANK

B4179

B4180

B4172

A461

A491

A4036

■ Town centres

▥ G.I.A.

▨ Proposed G.I.A.

░ Major areas of private
housing development

┼┼┼ Railway

···· Stourbridge Canal

── Main roads

0   ½   1   1 mile
0   ½   1   1½ kms

Source; Harrop et. al., 1978, p.109

Figure 6

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AREA MANAGEMENT
IN DUDLEY
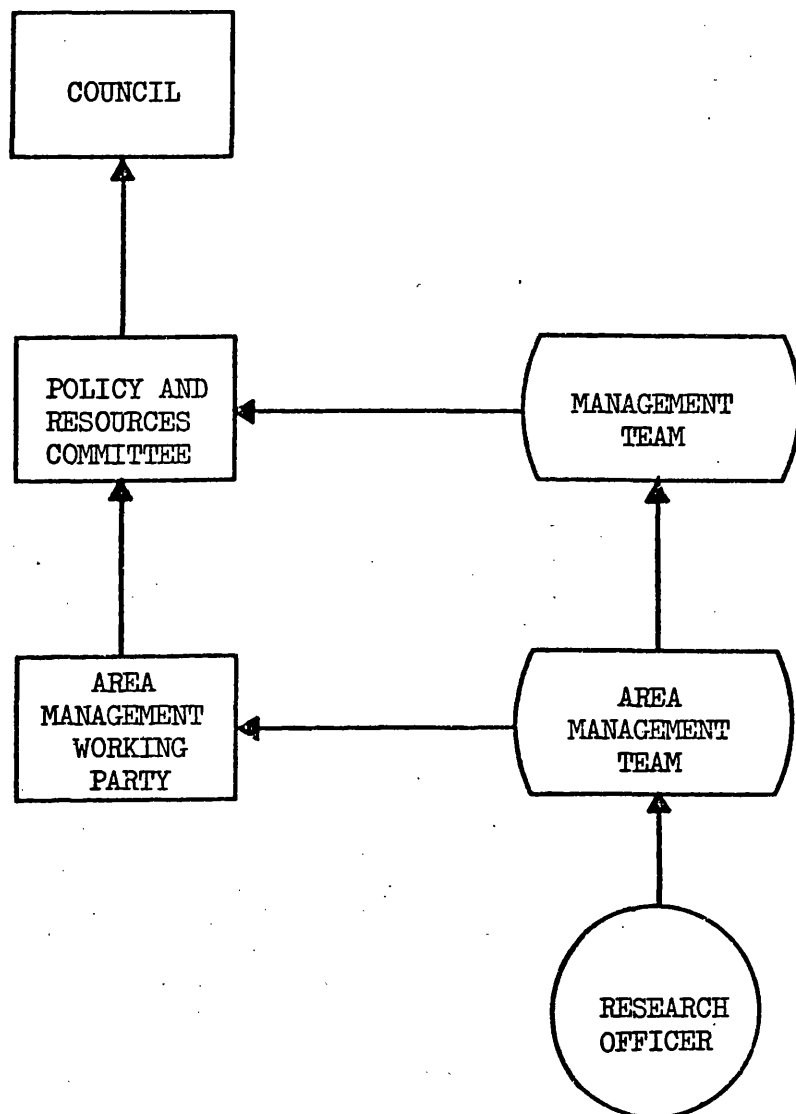
```
        ┌──────────────┐
        │   COUNCIL    │
        └──────────────┘
               ▲
               │
               │
 ┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐
 │ POLICY AND   │◄───────│ MANAGEMENT   │
 │ RESOURCES    │        │    TEAM      │
 │ COMMITTEE    │        └──────────────┘
 └──────────────┘               ▲
        ▲                        │
        │                        │
 ┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐
 │    AREA      │        │    AREA      │
 │ MANAGEMENT   │◄───────│ MANAGEMENT   │
 │  WORKING     │        │    TEAM      │
 │   PARTY      │        └──────────────┘
 └──────────────┘               ▲
                                │
                                │
                          ┌───────────┐
                          │ RESEARCH  │
                          │ OFFICER   │
                          └───────────┘
```

KEY

───────►   Indicates direct reporting relationship on area management

☐   Political groups

▢   Administrative groups

○   Staff   Source: Horn et. al., 1977, p. 16

Team is the source of most the items handled
by the Working Party and few are formally
referred by service committees. A major
aspect of the Working Party's actions is the
noting and requesting of information.

2.   The Area Management Officers' Team.

Officers are involved through an inter-
disciplinary area management team which reports
to the Chief Officer's Management Team. This
team has ten members, mostly third or fourth
tier officers representing all but one of the
authority's departments, (Architects' Department).
Initially, the Assistant Director of Finance
was the project leader but this has now been
taken over by the Assistant Director of
Environmental Health, Mr. J. Spurrier, who
is able to spend up to 40% of his time on the
project. Other team members have area manage-
ment duties in addition to their normal duties
and on average may spend up to two days a month
on area management work. "Lack of time to devote
to area management has been a continuing problem
for some team members, especially in departments
where it is seen to have a much lower priority
than departmental duties" (Harrop, 1978, p.114).
.   Whereas the Working Party normally meets
once in the six-week cycle of the council the
officers team meets more frequently averaging
twice per cycle and its' work is closely related
to the work of the Working Party. In general,
matters are only taken to the Working Party
when a specific member input in the form of a
recommendation is required.

3. <u>The Area Management Research Officer.</u>

      With the aid of a I.O.E. grant, one full-
time member of staff has been appointed to the
project with the purpose of carrying out three
types of work: research into topics selected by
the Team and Working Party producing, reports
and suggesting areas of further research. The
fact that the research officer is the only
full-time member of staff means that the incumbent
is inevitably responsible for much of the day-
to-day running of the project as well as re-
search.

The area management experiment has an annual project
fund of £8,000 to be spent on environmental improvement,
the actual projects being left to the Working Party to
decide. In the first year the fund was used to finance
two schemes which had an immediate impact in the area:-

<u>1976/77 Small Projects Fund.</u>	£
Environmental improvement of three sites	7,250
Provision of two summer playschemes	750
Total	8,000

and in 1977/78 the final allocation of the project fund
was as follows:-

<u>1977/78 Small Projects Fund.</u>	£
Three summer playschemes	1,000
Environmental improvement of five sites	4,390
Provision of play equipment at three sites	1,850
Social services "Link Opportunity' scheme	300
Grants to community centres for provision of equipment	800
Total	8,340

Although other money has been promised and on occasions

actually channelled into Brierly Hill in the course of
the experiment for special projects, the emphasis is
on making better use of existing resources. "The
thinking behind area management is that it should not
generate significant demands for new resources which
at a time of severe limits on growth in local government
spending, are unlikely to be met in any event" (Dudley
Metropolitan Borough, 1976).

Nevertheless both Spurrier and Duesbury agree
that "the money, although extremely limited was essential
to the scheme, because in the first place, it was some-
thing that the members could identify with and latch onto,
and secondly, because it was a special experimental
project the fund meant that it was seen to be doing
something" (Spurrier & Duesbury, 1980). They suggest
further that if the scheme had not taken this form,
money would probably have been provided through normal
service committee allocations and thus would have been
a continuation of the normal work of the local authority.

Despite these perceived advantages, however, the
limited nature of the funds was a crucial factor.
For example, Withymoor, an area within Brierly Hill,
was found to be in drastic need of community and
recreational facilities and the interviewees suggest
that "if the Project had the required funds, the team
could have allocated cash for a community centre, but
because the money was not available, they had to
negotiate with the Education Department to acquire
two rooms in a local school for community purposes".
They concluded, therefore, "that the fund offers little
scope, and in the long run the scheme is not seen to be
doing much in the area" (Spurrier & Duesbury, 1980).

The word "experimental" describes Dudley's approach
very aptly. In general, the scheme is not circumscribed

and has the opportunity to develop its own form and direction. At first sight this type of approach would appear to be advantageous in terms of being flexible and able to develop to suit the needs of the area. Although this has been true to a certain extent, in practice there have been many problems associated with this type of approach. Spurrier and Duesbury suggest that "the D.O.E. were right in not defining precisely what area management should be at local authority level, but that the continuation of this flexible approach is inappropriate at the local authority level itself (Spurrier & Duesbury, 1980). They suggest that because of this, objectives, purpose and tasks were not defined and neither officers nor councillors had a clear understanding of the objectives or what the project was supposed to achieve. This problem was compounded by the fact that the initial work in setting up the organisation of the project was carried out by more senior officers who were subsequently not involved in the working of the scheme. The new officers brought in, from lower grades, to operate the project were given no clear indication of their roles in the area management scheme.

Therefore, there was no continuity of operation and initially they were concerned with the basic work of defining problems, objectives and roles. This may seem advantageous in that it leaves them scope to develop along their chosen line. When one considers, however, that the officers had little time to devote to area management and that because they were from lower grades, they had little or no power to set up a scheme which could actually effect the work of the authority, this was a difficult and perhaps frustrating task. This lack of definition had repercussions on

gaining the involvement of the main-line departments.
"Because it was not clearly set out that departments
should not only send a representative along to the
Area Management Officers' Team meetings but should
also cooperate with projects defined by the team, they
didn't bother" (Spurrier and Duesbury, 1980). Although,
an advantage is perceived in terms of the evolutionary
approach allowing the Team to learn from their mistakes
and adapt, overall the lack of clear definition has
been a major problem.

The Dudley scheme, in keeping with its evolutionary
character, did not have a set of formally laid down
objectives. Over time, however, the aims have developed
and can be listed under four headings:-
1. The development of an area perspective in the
   corporate management system with a view to
   securing a more sensitive response to local
   needs.
2. The creation of opportunity for greater
   involvement of members on local issues.
3. Examination of opportunities for better use
   of existing resources.
4. The development of community involvement in
   local government.

The rest of this section will be devoted to a brief
examination of the impact of these objectives.

Upon reorganisation Dudley introduced a corporate
management system strongly influenced by the recommend-
ations of the Bains Report. The system is shown
diagrammatically in figure 7, and although it has a
number of interdisciplinary elements it is still divided
along functional lines. In general terms, Spurrier
suggests that "although the corporate system appears
elaborate it doesn't work as well in practice. The

Figure 7 : Dudley's Corporate Management System


```
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │   COUNCIL    │
                    └──────────────┘
                            ┌──────────────────────┐
                            │   POLICY AND         │
                            │  RESOURCES CTTEE     │
                            └──────────────────────┘
            ┌──────────────────────┐
            │  COUNCIL COMMITTEES   │
            └──────────────────────┘
    ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
    │              MANAGEMENT  TEAM                         │
    └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

		CENTRAL CO ORDINATING TEAM		

LOCAL PLANS GROUP

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS	INFORMATION SYSTEM & RESOURCE GROUPS	PROGRAMME AREA TEAMS
EDUCATION		EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH		ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
HIGHWAYS AND PLANNING	SUBJECT PLAN GROUP	HIGHWAYS AND PLANNING
HOUSING		HOUSING
LEISURE AND RECREATION		LEISURE AND RECREATION
SOCIAL SERVICES	OTHER WORKING PARTIES	SOCIAL SERVICES
		INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY

DEPARTMENTS

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

ENGINEERING

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

FINANCE

HOUSING

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

LEISURE AND RECREATION

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL SERVICES

structure is there but perhaps the corporate attitude
is lacking; this is not a cynical view but one that
has developed from working in the system" (Spurrier,
1980). He goes on to suggest that there is a lack of
strong central guidance within the local authority
and because of this, some departments go into area
team meetings and talk corporately but then go back
to their departments and think departmentally.

Therefore, the corporate management process is,
according to Spurrier, suffering **from** problems, and
furthermore, the area management scheme is felt to
be isolated from the corporate system. Indeed, the
number of linkages which must be developed in order
to integrate with the overall corporate planning
system is considerable. This can be seen in figure 8,
which shows the multiplicity of corporate elements in
existence in Dudley. Even if the area team limits its
linkages to the modal parts of the system such as the
Programme Area Teams, this still implies a volume
of work and liaison, beyond the scope of area manage-
ment's present manpower and resources.

The reasons for this 'isolation' are firmly
grounded in traditional attitudes and departmentalism
within the authority. Indeed, INLOGOV suggest that this
'isolation' "was felt to be symptomatic of the scepticism
surrounding the scheme which led to it only being
tolerated providing it did not interfere with the
departments and committees" (Harrop et al, 1978, p.117).
Duesbury and Spurrier state that "the isolation arose
in the first place because of the complete lack of an
early definition of what the project's purpose, objectives
and taks were. If this is not defined, departments will

Figure 8 : Reporting Structure of Dudley's Corporate Management System
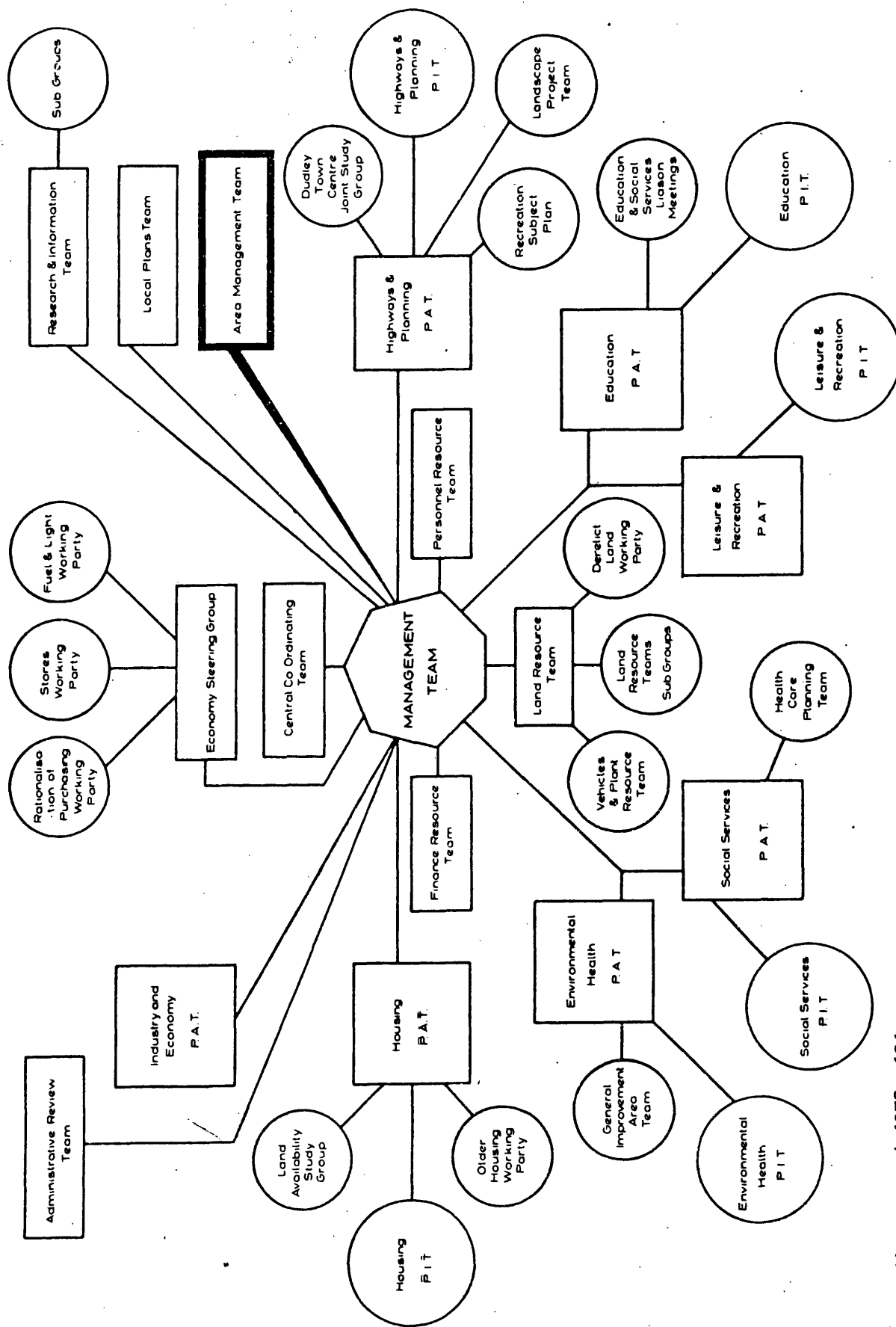
not go out of their way to discover what they are and how they can help, they just don't feel they have the time to leave their normal departmental duties. It should have been clearly set out that departments should cooperate to a much greater extent than simply sending a representative to team meetings" (Duesbury & Spurrier, 1980).

This, however, tells them to cooperate, but it does not tell them how to do it. Therefore, even clearer definition may not be enough, especially in view of other factors operating at the same time. As the interviewees suggest, "when these criticisms and problems are raised at meetings, everyone appears to recognise them and agree that something should be done, but again nothing happens as soon as officers and recommendations return to the departments. In many ways the project has always been seen as marginal to the work of the authority by the senior officers and councillors: the people with power to change things" (Duesbury & Spurrier, 1980).

This marginality has been emphasised because the project was concentrated on one area. Why should officers and councillors with an obligation to the local authority as a whole give special treatment to one area? Although those that work on the scheme do not hold these views, those that do, tend to be officers and councillors with most power or authority. Indeed, Duesbury notes that "there are no officers working on the project who are higher than third tier, thus they have little influence over decisions-making or policy-making. The only influence they have is through the production of reports on the area which highlight problems and where current local authority or departmental policy is failing to tackle them. Of course, the departments have no obligation to do anything about this". Even this process faces

difficulties, however, because "there appears to be
an inbuilt mechanism in senior officers, members and
departments which make them suspicious of groups
within the authority which really have to shout to
make themselves heard - in a way they feel threatened
by this." (Duesbury, 1980).

The interviewees suggest that if the scheme was
"for real" it would have to be an integral part of the
local authority with executive powers, because at the
moment "there are subtle ways of avoiding the area
management project. Both officers and councillors often
by-pass the project and go straight to departments
if there is a problem requiring action" (Duesbury &
Spurrier, 1980). In short, therefore, the development
of an area perspective in the corporate system has
proved to be a difficult task.

Furthermore, the INLOGOV report (1978) mentions
that progress towards objectives two, three and four
above has been extremely limited indeed. Member commit-
ment to area management has been somewhat limited.
Nothing has been done specifically to frustrate the
scheme, but little has been done to actively promote
it. Area management has had a very marginal effect on
council spending in the area, and in terms of community
involvement, no existing areas of local authority
decision-making have been opened up to community
influence as a result of area management. Again this
lack of progress is closely linked with the problems
discussed above.

Finally, in view of the lack of progress and bleak
picture of area management, painted above; is it the
case that this approach has failed to increase sensitivity
and responsiveness to local needs and problems? Both
Duesbury and Spurrier agree that area management "has

increased sensitivity and responsiveness, but only
in Brierly Hill, not in the rest of the borough"
(Duesbury & Spurrier, 1980). The impact which the
area management scheme has had in the Brierly Hill
area has been primarily through the expenditure of the
project fund. This has provided tangible benefits for
residents in the form of improvement of vacant sites
and provision of recreation facilities, which would
not otherwise have been possible. Indeed, Duesbury
stresses the importance of these small projects
which 'matter to the local people'. "Local authorities
invariably think in terms of grandiose, borough-wide
policies, but the smaller more tangible projects
mean a lot more to the community. The project has
begun to impress this factor on councillors and officers".
(Duesbury, 1980). There has also been an additional
local input, through the Working Party, into certain
local authority decisions such as planning permissions,
which may have had an effect on the nature of the
decisions taken. Not only this but, the area management
scheme like the corporate planning system has increased
sensitivity to local needs by giving both officers and
councillors a broader appreciation of problems within
the authority as a whole and in Brierly Hill. "Simply
being in inter-departmental meetings together and
hearing and discussing the different points of view
leads to a better understanding of problems and thus
gives a firmer basis from which to respond to the
needs of the area" (Duesbury, 1980).

Similarly, improvements have been occurring in
terms of community involvement within the project.
Brierly Hill is apparently the best area within the
Borough for community groups and associations because
of the work of the old Brierly Hill Urban District, who

were extremely active in setting these up. This
has provided a good base for the development of
community involvement and the project team members
have taken advantage of this by talking to these
groups about the project and finding out what they
perceive to be the problems, what their views are
and what they want to see in their area. This has
provided regular links and a forum for discussion
within the area.

This has developed further in the last year with
the setting up of three ward based community dis-
cussion groups - the contact with the community
groups has been formalised. The three members for
each ward plus officers from the project team invite
local people along to these meetings, especially the
representatives of the community groups, to discuss
the area and its problems and the D.O.E. has provided
each group with £2,000 to establish work on small
projects in the ward. Often there is nothing the groups
can do to tackle perceived problems, but "at least we
tell them personally, in the area, which at least
makes the work of the authority more personal and less
anonymous. In other words, the area management scheme
has increased sensitivity and responsiveness mainly
through the provision of links with the local authority
so that people can put their case." Indeed, Spurrier
suggests that "the project has affected most of the
service departments in this way" (Spurrier, 1980).

Therefore, although major problems still exist
in terms of the traditional attitudes and practices
within the local authority, area management is beginning
to have some impact. Indeed the previous discussion
suggests that resistance to change is the key factor to

the 'failure' of area management in Dudley. Duesbury and
Spurrier state that they do "see the project as a way
of changing traditional attitudes, but it is similar to
corporate planning, in that they are both innovations
and as such will take a great deal of time to become
accepted" (Duesbury & Spurrier, 1980).

Section 3 - Case Study 3 : Stockport Metropolitan Borough.

The 'area organisation' in Stockport is the longest
established of the several area management schemes which
are being monitored by INLOGOV. The present 'area
organisation' in Stockport Metropolitan Borough origin-
ated in the acceptance by the pre-reorganisation
Stockport County Borough of a number of proposals made
by the management consultants, Booz, Allen and Hamilton
in 1971. In line with their proposals, a Housing and
Community Services Committee and Division was set up
and a number of area-based sub-committees established
to discuss in detail the local amenities for particular
parts of the borough.

Local government reorganisation in 1974 resulted
in an expanded authority which included the areas of
the old Stockport County Borough and four urban districts.
In the discussion as to what type of management structure
should be adopted, it was felt that the potential
problems of remoteness from residents that could arise
in a larger authority should be tackled by coordinating
decentralised services at a local level and providing
a contact point for the public. It was also thought
that the public would benefit from the support that
could be given to the constituency role of elected
members by a continuation and expansion of the area
committee system.

Thus a new element was added to the area organisation

which it was felt would help to achieve and integrate
such aims. The new authority was divided up into three
areas, each of which had an area office, housing an
Area Coordinator and his staff. This was an area-based
officer team which had not been present in the previous
area organisation in Stockport County Borough. The
authority is divided into eight Area Committees, whose
boundaries fit within the three administrative areas:
three in the North Area, three in the East and two in
the West. (see figure 9). These committees are nominally
full committees of the council but do not have any
budget or executive powers. They cover two to three
wards and all the councillors from those wards sit on
the committee, along with one to two county councillors
who are full members of the committee. The terms of
reference allow them to consider the operation of all
the local authority's services within their area, the
proposals of other committees that would affect the
area and any aspect of council policy or administration
that would relate to the area. They may make re-
commendations and proposals to any other committee of
the council and are given the opportunity to comment
on all local planning applications and many council
reports. The area committee's minutes are automatically
considered by the General Purposes Sub-Committee of the
Policy and Resources Committee. The relevant Area Co-
ordinator who is directly responsible to the Director
of Administration, prepares the agendas and, with other
staff from that division, services the committees in
his area. Officers from all divisions may be asked to
attend the area committees as the agenda dictates.
The organisational structure of area organisation in
Stockport can be seen in Stockport can be seen in
figure 10.

Figure 9 : Stockport M.B.
Area Organisation - Geographical Areas

Legend:

□ Town Hall
+ Area office
● Advice centre
⎯ Area co ordination zones (3)
–··– Area committee zones (8)

Source: Harrop et. al, 1978, p.II

NORTH
HEATON REDDISH
TIVIOT DALE
HEATH BANK
CHEADLE
WEST
BRAMHALL
WERNETH
EAST
MARPLE
STEPPING HILL
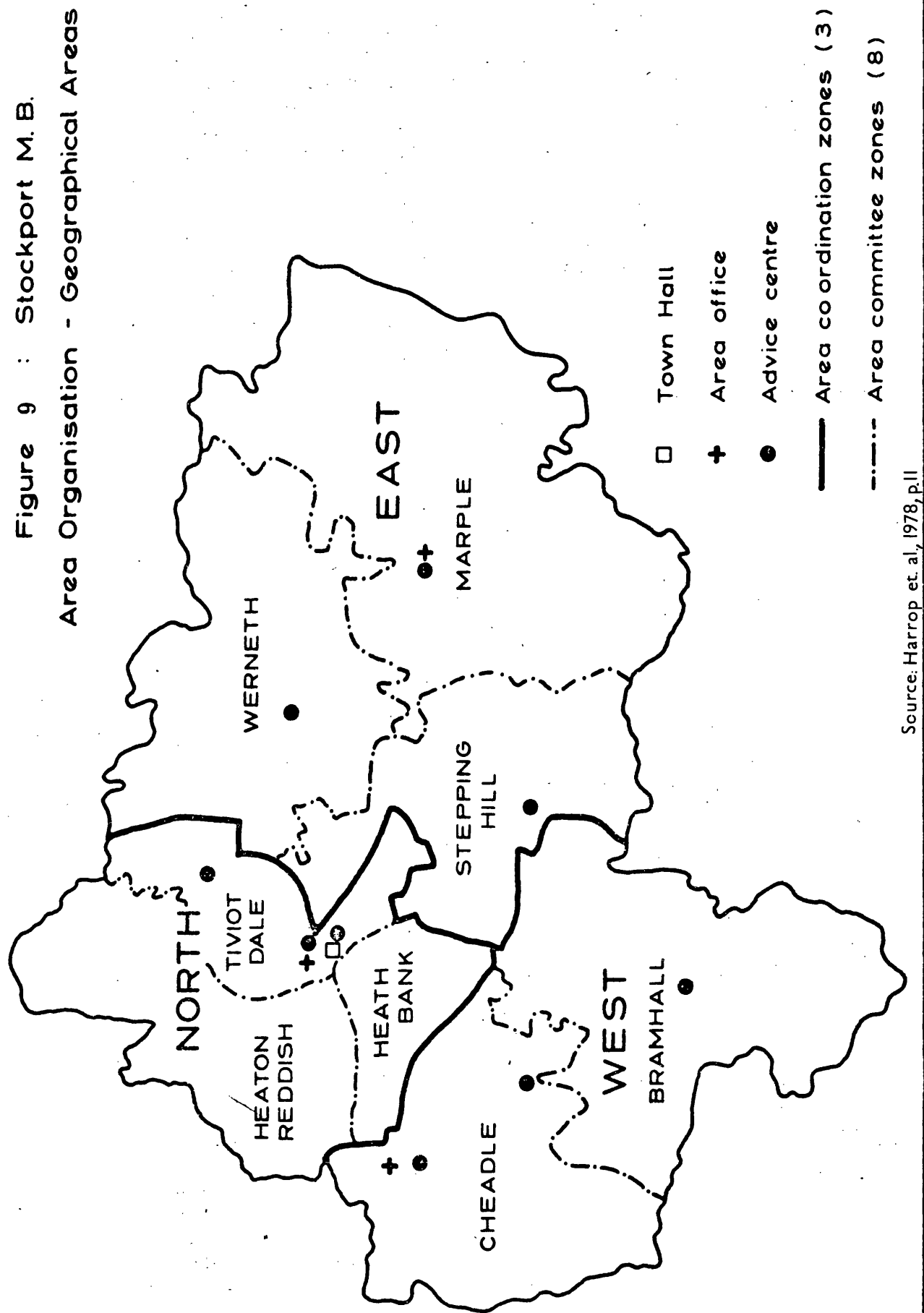
Figure 10   ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AREA ORGANISATION
IN STOCKPORT

COUNCIL

POLICY AND
RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

MANAGEMENT
BOARD

GENERAL
PURPOSES
SUB-COMMITTEE

DIRECTOR
OF
ADMINIST-
RATION

DIRECTORATES

SERVICE
COMMITTEES

AREA
COMMITTEES

AREA
CO-ORDINATORS

AREA
OFFICERS
MEETINGS

COMMUNITY
COUNCILS

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
OFFICERS

INFORMATION
OFFICE
STAFF
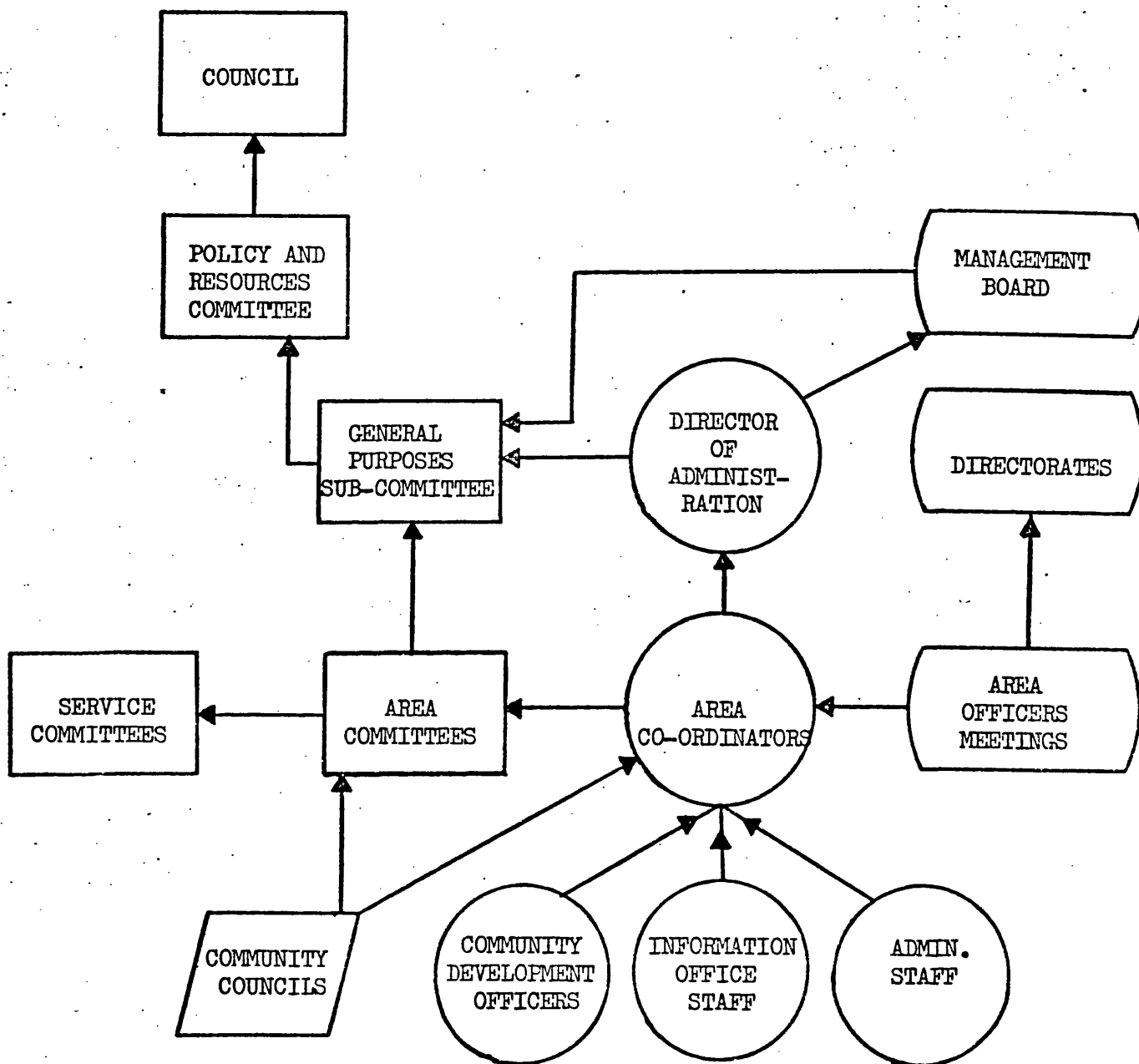
ADMIN.
STAFF

Source: Horn et. al., 1977, p. 10.

KEY

⟶   Indicates direct reporting relationship on area management
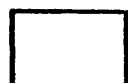
☐   Political groups   ⬡   Administrative groups

▱   Community groups   ◯   Staff

The area organisations operation and objectives
can be considered under four headings:-

a) <u>Co-ordination of local services</u>.

The area co-ordinator is responsible for providing
certain services within the remit of the Administration
Division, his responsibility for other services extends
only to aiding the co-ordination of certain area-based
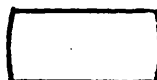services. These services include social services case-
work, housing management, some environmental health
functions, community development, education advisory
service, parks, libraries, refuse collection, building
maintenance and highway maintenance. The operational
boundaries of such services generally coincide with
those of the three co-ordinators' areas, or with some
combination of the eight committee areas in the case
of social services casework. The area co-ordinator is
intended to achieve co-ordination by personal contact
and calling meetings of relevant officers. He is not
entitled, however, to interfere with the professional
direction of a central divisional director.

It would appear that this objective has been one
of the most elusive. Indeed, this was found to be the
case in a review of the area organisation for the
Management Board, carried out by the Director of
Administration in 1976. This review recommended no
change for the area coordinators, although it was
felt that their 'members services' and 'public contact'
roles had turned out to be more effective than their
coordinating function. This was attributed to a
variety of reasons by the report -

1. A lack of general agreement with regard to the
need or scope for coordination of service delivery.
2. The conflict built into the management structure
in respect of the area co-ordinator's role vis-a-vis

that of the chief officer.

3. Unwillingness of some staff to be coordinated.

4. The varied pattern of decentralisation among the
services.

5. Varying degrees of delegations within service
divisions.

This objective has not been very effective because it
attempts to alter traditional departmental operation.
Indeed Ian Cheetham suggests that "within Stockport
Metropolitan Borough Council there is still a fair
degree of functionalism in its approach. I think this
is a problem that the area coordinators face in
particular, no-one really sees what our function is
in terms of the mainstream work of the local authority
and it is difficult to gain acceptance from the
departments" (Cheetham, 1980).

b) Information and Advice Services.

     These are the responsibility of the area co-
ordinator and the area committees within his area.
There are now three information and advice officers
in each of the three areas (see figure 9) and they
are staffed by information officers under the co-
ordinator's direction. They supply information and
advice on the full range of local authority services,
stock all forms used by the authority and provide a
complaint and advice service as necessary. They are
generally accepted as providing a useful and successful
service. Indeed, any development which makes it
easier for local people to make contact with the local
authority must be considered an important step towards
making the authority more sensitive to local needs and
problems.

c) Community Development.

     Each of the area coordinator's staff teams include
at least one community development officer (C.D.O.),
whose major role is to encourage citizen participation

through the formation of and liaison with Community
Councils (of which there are now 21). The area co-
ordinator, C.D.Os, and area committees also maintain
contact and consult with other local groups and
voluntary associations. The council applies certain
criteria by which it will determine whether a Community
Council should be 'recognised' or not. These include
statements as to their non-party political nature,
their intentions to work with the authority to ensure
all available resources are brought to bear for the
benefit of the community, and their intention to pre-
sent the local authority with a representative community
view on matters on which it is consulted. Annual public
meetings are held at which all residents over eighteen
years may vote and stand for election. A recognised
Community Council is entitled to a special relationship
with the council which will include the right to meet
with the relevant area committee every six months, and
to receive copies of all agendas and reports of area
committees together with council minutes. They can send
representatives to the area committee when matters of
particular importance to them are being discussed and
also receive some financial aid from the council.

The striking feature is the formal nature of
community involvement. This may be a result of the length
of time that Stockport has been tackling this objective,
and, in contrast to the previous case studies, the
machinery is, at first sight, impressive. The actual
community development function has been hard hit
by the need for saving and cut-backs in local authority
expenditure. After 1974, the area organisation made
savings by having the number of community development
staff cut back from 9 to 5 and by reducing the staffing
and opening times at some of the nine information and

advice centres. Furthermore, the review of area
organisation in 1976, recommended that the number
of community development staff be reduced from five
to one, and this was to be achieved by redeployment
and natural wastage. Despite this loss of the
community development function, the community councils
are still in existence and provide an invaluable means
of strengthening community involvement. On the other
hand, the nature of the community councils in practice
leads one to question how far this is the case. For
a start, some of the councillors are not happy with
the community councils and feel threatened by their
existence. Indeed, "evidence suggests that the re-
lationship between such bodies and local elected members
is generally fraught with some difficulty because of
the potential for competition between them" (Humble &
Talbot, 1977, p.64). The area organisation has not
totally succeeded in overcoming some of the suspicion
in the minds of members about these organisations.

Not only this, however, but the 'special relation-
ship'mentioned above, poses problems for the community
councils because it restricts their involvement to that
which suits the local authority. The authority provides
an annual grant of approximately £200 per community
council on the one hand but on the other there is a
requirement to follow certain set objectives and
procedures. This leads one to ask who the community
councils are going to benefit.

Despite these perceived problems the impact of
community councils can be considered in two respects:-
1.   The impact on the local authority itself.
      Community Council members see their major
      impacts as being individual improvements

in local services such as roads, housing
repairs and environmental improvements.
Much less frequently do they claim any
influence over major policy issues or the
provisions of major new facilities, although
this has happened on a few occasions (for
example, the opening of a new railway halt
in the middle of a large, modern council
estate in the north and the allocation of
land for housing as opposed to industry or
services in a central area of Stockport
town). Even when they do feel that they have
made an impact on such decisions they are
also aware of the many other factors at work
and are uncertain as to the precise influence
that they had.

2. The impact of community councils within their
own areas. A number of community councils
provide local welfare and social activities
such as fund raising for local causes, play
groups, youth clubs, festivals, old peoples
visiting schemes.

There is no doubt that the introduction of
community councils with area organisation has increased
the sensitivity and responsiveness of the local authority
to local needs and problems. The overwhelming impression,
however, is that it is limited by the formal, standardised
approach to their involvement; in short, it is re-
sponsiveness on local authority terms.

d)   Corporate Planning and Management.

In addition to the above activities it is also
felt that the area organisation has a role to play in
facilitating corporate management at the operational
level of decentralised services. This has been attempted
in several ways:-

1. The area coordinators have been given the opportunity to report to the Chief Officers' Management Board twice yearly. They may use those opportunities to raise issues of a corporate nature that relate to their areas or the working of the area organisation.

2. The Area Officer Working Groups which the area coordinators chair and convene, offer some opportunity for considering local policies and procedures in a corporate manner and for the results of any such deliberations to be placed before the area committee.

3. The area committees themselves, the community councils and other local organisations have been encouraged to make a contribution to the annual corporate planning and budgeting process by giving statements of their perception of priorities for local council action, to the relevant service committee, after consideration by the area committee.

Before we look at these developments in area management, it is essential to discuss the corporate system as whole. Figure ten indicates that Stockport introduced a corporate planning system which was strongly influenced by the Bains Report, with a Policy and Resources Committee, Corporate Planning Unit and Chief Officers' Management Board. Ian Cheetham states that "I think Stockport has a reasonable corporate management system in terms of organisation and procedures. To what extent that means the authority is truly corporate, I would question because I am very much of the opinion that corporate management is a question of attitudes rather than structure" (Cheetham, 1980, my emphasis). He goes on "I think Stockport was one of the leaders

in the corporate management field and this gives some
indication of the willingness, both administratively
and politically to adopt a corporate approach". He
supports this by suggesting that "the management board
as a group would come to a different decision than
individual chief officers would if you approached
them on a one off basis" (Cheetham, 1980).

Furthermore, Stockport's corporate budgetary cycle
is probably one of the most developed in the country.
Indeed, the budgeting process emphasises the input
from every section of the community. "It is essential
to design procedures that deliver community views
directly into the council's policy-making and resource-
allocating machinery. This means developing systems of
policy-making which, while retaining a balanced, over-
all approach to needs, are capable of accommodating
injections of ideas derived from local experience".
(Hambleton, 1975, p.979). This is exactly what Stockport
has attempted to do, and Hambleton goes on to examine
the 1974-75 budgetary cycle describing how the listing
of problems in their areas by community councils and
members were fed into the cycle. He concludes that
"the attempt to integrate community views into the
policy-options statements for the programme committees
was an innovation which enhanced the status and in-
fluence of community priorities" (Hambleton, 1975, p.983).
Ian Cheetham, commenting on this process suggests that
"the area committees have never really made a meaningful
contribution to policy formulation and that in relation
to the 'principal issues exercise' (described above by
Hambleton), it was not policy issues which were raised
by the local people but it was the more mundane problems
like, street cleaning and refuse collection which were
highlighted - consequently, this type of exercise has

not been tried again" (Cheetham, 1980). Although area committees and local people still have some say in this process it has become more limited since then with a corresponding increase in central direction.

Despite these efforts to develop a corporate attitude within the Stockport system, it is still faced with traditional attitudes towards corporate management in the form of departmentalism. Cheetham argues that "each of the area coordinators, in terms of our role being a corporate one, find the level of cooperation that we get from various divisions varies quite markedly. Some departments such as Planning are willing to cooperate because area committees are actively involved in deciding planning applications and that it recognises the value of this. On the other hand there are some divisions which are extremely defensive towards our role and give little cooperation." He continues, "in many ways I have had to concentrate on this problem, in that the north area, being the older urban nucleus of the town, requires a more corporate approach because it has more comprehensive problems. This has increased my awareness of the lack of corporate approach from a number of chief officers and departments in my area" (Cheetham, 1980).

Furthermore, "in Stockport, we do not produce a corporate plan for the local authority as a whole, we produce a corporate policy and separate policy options for each committee, so even corporate management is based on functionalism" (Cheetham, 1980). He suggests that to achieve the level of cooperation and integration needed to produce a true corporate attitude, both to the local authority as a whole and to area management, would require a fundamental change in the philosophy of local government. It's implications for the professional

is that each chief officer has got to give firstly, priority to his role as a corporate manager and secondly to his department, and this development is extremely unlikely at the moment.

Summary of Findings.

The three case studies discussed in this chapter have indicated the variety of approaches that are possible within area management schemes in local government organisation. Despite this variety, however, each scheme provides some general conclusions which are extremely important in terms of the success and future development of area management. Firstly, each scheme examined suffered considerably from structural and organisational problems which have restricted the impact of each area-based approach. For example, the part-time work and the consequent lack of commitment from the officers involved in area management in Newcastle and Dudley appears to have militated against a more significant impact. On the other hand, area coordinators in Stockport, although full-time workers, have suffered because of their lack of executive power, especially in terms of their coordinating function. Secondly, despite these problems, each scheme has, in it's own way, improved the responsiveness and sensitivity of each local authority to the problems and needs of local areas.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the major reason for the problems that each scheme has faced and their limited impacts, has been the existence of traditional assumptions and attitudes in local government, especially as regards functionalism and the predominance of a departmental attitude.

These factors must therefore be borne in mind before we can move on to the next chapter which is

concerned with more specific aspects of area management.
Indeed, the final factor and its effect on area manage-
ment is pursued further in an attempt to establish
how area management can help to change these pre-
vailing attitudes within local government.

CHAPTER 5.

Case Studies 2: The Officer and Councillor
in Area Management.

The conclusions of chapter four indicated that the
major restricting factor in the development of a more
responsive local authority was the existence of
traditional departmental attitudes within local govern-
ment. In view of earlier findings this factor appears
to be personified in the attitudes of both councillors
and officers towards area management. This is not a
startling new discovery, however, and the problems
associated with these attitudes have been recognised
for some time. Therefore the task now is to examine
in more detail, the nature, effects and implications
of this restrictive factor on area management, with a
view to establishing how this approach can perhaps
tackle these problems. Unlike the last chapter,
this one will identify a series of themes arising from
the case study material, and the three area management
schemes will be discussed together under each theme
with the intention of highlighting similarities,
differences, differing impacts and most importantly
the lessons to be learnt.

The idea of responsiveness to local needs is an
attractive one and one which many people involved
with local government would agree with in principle.
It is, however, difficult to achieve in practice, as
the experience of the area management schemes demon-
strates. Obviously, changes external to the authority
(e.g. central government policy) and specific features
of the area management scheme have been important in
shaping the course of area management and its achieve-
ments. However, a recurrent and underlying theme has

been the influence of the attitudes of both elected members and officers towards area management. Too often the picture has been one in which there has either been resistance to, or lack of positive support for, the aims and activities of area management. Such attitudes relate to the perceptions of those concerned of how area management will affect the existing organisation and management system of the authority, the values which underline it, and the position of particular individuals within that organisation.

The conclusions to the first interim report of the Inlogov monitoring project suggested that the structures established did not fundamentally challenge the existing bases of decision-making. (Horn et al. 1977, p.68). "It has subsequently become clear that, despite its lack of budget and executive powers, area management has been perceived as a significant challenge to the interests of certain groups or individuals within the organisation, particularly those currently in positions of power". (Harrop et al. 1978, p.200).

THEME 1. Is there a dichotomy between local authority and local area commitment embodied in area management?

Ian Cheetham suggests that in Stockport's case there is definitely a dichotomy between local authority policy making and local area commitment. On the member side he cites the influence of political factors in creating this dichotomy. "I have seen members of the majority group (Conservative) agreeing with some local issue in an area committee but towing the party line and supporting overall council policies elsewhere.

It is difficult for a member in this situation to
point out that local authority policy as a whole may
conflict with the needs of a local area" (Cheetham, 1980).
Therefore, political reality may militate against the
reconcilliation of local area and local authority
commitment to provide a more sensitive response to an
area. He also suggests that it exists at the officer
level as well in that those working at the local
level often discover a mismatch between the requirements
of an area and their departments' policies. He sees
his role, as area coordinator, as minimising the
conflict arising from these difficulties. He sees this
to be an important function in the survival of area
management in that, "if the area coordinator or his
staff are seen to be questioning overall policy often,
it is a sure way of being alienated by the senior
officers or politicians. You are more likely to be
respected if you indicate to them that you will be
supportive to their roles and to the central group".
(Cheetham, 1980). In other words, even though the needs
of a local area conflict with overall local authority
policy, a sure way of achieving nothing is by pursuing
and highlighting this.

Similarly, Dudley appears to be in the same
situation. In Dudley, the dichotomy has only become
apparent on a small scale which has provided no real
problems as such, but "a problem does exist in that
the chairman of the Area Management Working Party is
also the acting chairman of the Education Committee.
In the Working Party meetings he is always very
sensitive about cutting across education departmental
policy. For example, the Education Department have a
policy of not fencing schools, mainly for financial

reasons, but the area management scheme has identified
a need in a local community to fence its school to
prevent vandalism. Therefore, an obvious conflict
exists, and puts the chairman in a very difficult
position, does he attempt to change council policy or
does he accept it?" (Spurrier and Duesbury, 1980). In
Newcastle however, Roberts suggests that there is no
dichotomy and little conflict between the two. "The
policy of the Policy and Resources Committee is one
of positive discrimination in favour of the Priority
Areas, and this is exactly the task of the area-
based scheme. Therefore there is no dichotomy between
local authority policy and local area commitment. There
are conflicts, however, with the main line committees
in that they still see their task as catering for the
needs of the whole city and find it difficult to re-
spond to the identified needs of the Priority Areas."
(Roberts, 1980).

The three case studies therefore indicate that
conflicts have arisen. Kenneth Spencer suggests that
"a balance between overall local authority and local
area policy is needed, but that at the moment, the two
are reconciled nearer to the centre of power than in
the middle." (Spencer, 1979). The reality is that the
policies of the local authority as a whole are taking
precedence, despite some obvious problems at the local
level. Area management does indicate where mismatches
occur between the two, therefore why does it appear to
have so little influence over the development of a
two-way process which can reconcile the two. Obviously,
it comes back to traditional attitudes within local
government. Spencer suggests that "it is easy to make
decisions centrally and there is a great deal of re-
sistance to changing this situation....Many local

authorities see area management as creating a lot
more work, but this is not the case"(Spencer 1979.)

Despite this however, all four of the officers
interviewed in the case studies agreed that area manage-
ment has began to change attitudes, although in a very
limited way. The fact is that area management has began
to highlight mismatches in the impact of policies.
At the moment because of the marginal nature of many
of the schemes these mismatches can be ignored or paid
lip service. "There is no doubt however, that area
management can be powerful if it is backed by local
politicians, officers and people." (Spencer, 1979).
The scope for influencing local authority policy there-
fore exists today and can only be enhanced by the
integration of area management into the decision-
making processes and by the granting of executive
powers, so that overall decision-making can become more
responsive.

THEME 2. - The Role of the officer in area management:-
problems or improvements?

The role of the officer in area management is
an important one. The last chapter indicated how
officers in the three area management schemes are
deployed and what their official functions are. In
general, they are responsible for most of the work which
the area-based schemes are supposed to tackle, co-
ordination, streamlining service delivery, fact finding,
contact with local people and the inception of re-
commendations for their particular area. In short, the
work of the officer provides the basis of any area-based
scheme in local government.

Despite this crucial role, however, the role of

the officer in area management has been circumscribed
to such an extent that the impact of this approach in
the three local authorities has been extremely limited.
The major reason for these comments is due, basically,
to the way in which area management is perceived by
local authorities. The officers role is seen to be
important but the approach as a whole is, it would
appear, perceived to be marginal to the work of the
authority. This is perhaps understandable in Dudley's
case in that the scheme does claim to be experimental
but this shouldn't be the situation in say, Stockport
or Newcastle if official definitions and organisation
is anything to go by.

The main manifestation of this marginality is the
part-time nature of the officers role in area management.
In Newcastle, for example, all the officers involved
in the Priority Areas Programme are part-time in
that work in area management is over and above their
normal departmental work. Dave Roberts suggests that
"in this situation it is extremely difficult to
generate the enthusiasm and commitment to tackle problems
and objectives on an area basis if officers still carry
out most of their work within a department run on
functional lines. The lack of time to devote to area
management is especially acute for the Team Leaders who
have the responsibility of coordinating the work of the
other officers and attending area and public meetings
plus carrying out their normal departmental duties.
In theory, it is possible to work in this situation if
both jobs are tightly defined, but I have found that
the area management side of my work is taking up more
of my time and therefore, the planning side of my
work suffers as a consequence." (Roberts, 1980). This
situation has been clearly recognised in the latest

proposals (Newcastle Metropolitan Council, 1979 C)
which recommend that the post of Team Leader must be
full-time, as mentioned in the last chapter.

Similarly, in Dudley, the **area** management officers
team have "managed to overcome their departmental back-
grounds and worked well together as an inter-departmental
group, but the part-time set up has made it difficult
for the officers to put commitment and enthusiasm
into it. The agenda for the meetings are prepared by
the Project Leader and the Research Officer, while the
only obligation on the other officers is that they
attend the meetings. Some officers may be committed
to the approach but others are there because their
departments send them. This tends to militate against
a consistent and constructive input into area management
from the officers involved. Plus there has been a large
turnover in representatives from the various departments
over the last four years and this has militated against
a continuity which would have benefitted the operation
of the team." (Spurrier and Duesbury, 1980). In short
the whole operational set up appears to be designed
to restrict the officers input to area management.

Even where officers work full-time in area management
their role is limited by a number of constraints, not
least by the operational problems mentioned before. In
Dudley, for example, the area management Research Officer
is the only full-time worker on the scheme and it is
interesting to note that this post was set up with
the aid of a Department of the Environment grant.
"It was thought at the start of the project that because
it was experimental, research would be a vital element.
In practice, however, only a small part of the job has
been involved in research. The fact that the Research
Officer is the only full-time member of staff has meant

that the incumbent is inevitably responsible for
much of the day-to-day running of the project. Not
only this, but the post was only contracted out on a
yearly basis and the very temporary nature of the post
has made it relatively unattractive." (Duesbury, 1980).
Indeed, the post was only filled for two thirds of
first two years of life of the project. A researcher
was appointed in September 1976 and left at the end of
April 1977. The post was then vacant for some months
and filled again in September 1977; by the end of March
1978 the post was vacant once more, though filled again
in May by Keith Duesbury who is still there, although
his contract ends at the end of the area management
project this year. The high turnover of staff has had
an unsettling effect on the project: the long gaps
between appointments have slowed the project's work,
and the turnover has resulted in a number of areas of
work being started and never finished. Despite these
limitations, however, Mr. Spurrier, the Project Leader
in Dudley suggests that "this post has been essential
because of the part-time nature of the rest of the
officers. A full-time input is necessary both in terms
of work-load and commitment." (Spurrier, 1980).

On the other hand, however, the Area Coordinators
in Stockport have been more successful in asserting
themselves in their full-time capacity. They have
responsibility for the co-ordination of local services,
Information and Advice services and community develop-
ment. These are tangible activities which clearly
define their roles within the local authority. Despite
this, however, the coordinators are still limited in
their roles by the very fact that they are not part
of the orthodox management structure which is based

on departments. Indeed the attitude of other officers
in the authority towards Area Coordinators also re-
flects some difficulty in fitting them into this
management structure. Some Officers are quite
antagonistic to their role, while others are more
sympathetic and recognise the difficulty of such a
role in the local authority. These attitudes become
all the more important when it is considered that in
his coordinating role, which is perhaps his most
important function, the Area Co-ordinator is not
entitled, to interfere with the professional direction
of a central dividional director.

In this situation one may ask what happens if in
the course of the Co-ordinators work, he identifies a
problem or issue which conflicts with council or
departmental policy or his attempts at coordination
conflict with the views or policies of a Chief Officer.
Ian Cheetham comments 'if I have my way that conflict
never materialises. If I see a conflict developing
between my role and a chief officer who may be subject
to my coordinating authority, I will discuss it with
him and if I can't bring it to a satisfactory conclusion
between ourselves I will back down every time. Area
Co-ordinators have no executive authority as such and
if we attempt to use strong-arm tactics to achieve
coordination it is a sure way of alienating ourselves
from the normal working of the local authority."
(Cheetham, 1980). In short, despite the Area Co-
ordinator's wide ranging functions in Stockport his
role is still limited by the prevailing attitudes
within the authority. Indeed, Cheetham summarises
this when discussing how area management has improved
the officers role in local government. He suggests that
"via the area system in Stockport, it has been easier

for officers from different departments to get together
due to the communication available through the co-
ordinators and which would not otherwise have been
possible, but I still think that in all departments,
the officers principle responsibility is a vertical
one and the lateral responsibility required in the
area organisation is secondary. Furthermore, I would
not try to fight this because it is such a strong
element of local government and if you actively move in
on areal direction the divisions are going to see it
as a threat and react against it." (Cheetham, 1980).

Nevertheless, all of the interviewees in the
three case studies were agreed that their respective
area based schemes had at least begun to introduce
area based information and bias to decision-making
in the local authorities. The officers involved have
also benefitted simply by working together to whatever
extent, as this has given them a broader appreciation
of problems not only within an area but also within
the local authority as a whole. Furthermore it has
produced a better understanding of different depart-
mental views between officers.

The fact remains however, that the way in which
area management has been perceived, in terms of an
experiment or something which basically supplements
the traditional operation of local government, has severely
limited the role of the officer in area management.
No executive authority has been made available and in
most cases the makeshift nature of officer organis-
ation in area management has led to a general lack of
commitment to an area approach and frustration where
the area bias only goes as far as the departments will
allow.

THEME 3. - The Role of the Councillor in Area Management: Problems or Improvements?

Despite the problems discussed in the last section, the success or effectiveness of the officer's role in area management depends ultimately on the role of the councillor. It is the councillor who provides the important political backing to area management and thus legitimates the work of the officers. "The role of the councillor is critical if area management is going to be successful." (Duesbury and Spurrier, 1980). Ian Cheetham (1980) agrees and suggests that "the councillor is an essential element of an area management scheme."

In an authority without area management the councillor's role is based on his attendance of traditional service committee meetings. Although elected on a ward basis with a mandate to take action on problems which occur on an areal basis, he is immediately placed in a situation based on functionalism. He can still pick up and take action on local problems, but to do this he must attend the relevant service committee meetings which can be a very time-consuming business. Kenneth Spencer comments "councillors tend to be parochial and be concerned mainly with their ward, that is they have an area rather than a policy perspective. A few become interested in policy, but these tend to be councillors who have risen to positions of power and influence within the council." (Spencer, 1979). Indeed much has been written about the different roles that Councillors adopt, and the dichotomy between constituency and policy oriented councillors (see Gyford, 1976; Dearlove, 1973, Darke and Walker, 1976; and Newton, 1976). Spencer continues "area management can ease this parochialism by allowing councillors the

opportunity to work on an area basis. It not only puts their parochialism to good use but also helps them to appreciate and understand the process of policy-making." (Spencer, 1979).

It appears to me that there are two main reasons why the role of the councillor in area management is essential:

1. The councillor does legitimate the work of the officer and **can**, where circumstances require it, provide the executive authority or perhaps pressure to **produce** action from the council.

2. The councillor has knowledge of his ward and the tendency in general to relate to his ward rather than policy in general. Therefore, the councillor is a resource in terms of discussion and decision-making on an area basis, and can thus enhance the effectiveness of area management. Conversely, because of the prevailing functionalism in local government the area approach can in turn enhance the councillors role.

Ian Cheetham agrees with the first contention when he suggests that "in Stockport, the area system has absolutely no executive authority. If you, as an Area Co-ordinator, want to achieve something you have two options, either depend on your personal relationship with a director in gaining the necessary cooperation, or you can convince the councillors on an area committee that your proposals are good or essential for their area. The first option can only

go as far as the director wants it to go, but the second
option can probably produce enough pressure to persuade
the Director or the Council to take action on that
issue."(Cheetham, 1980).

Each of the case study schemes, have councillors
actively involved in the area management approach.
Stockport and Dudley have established committees or
groups composed only of council members; in Stockport's
case these are formal committees while an informal
working party exists in the latter's case. The
situation in Newcastle is somewhat different since
joint member/officer groups were instituted.

Although, the interviewees tend to stress the
legitimating role of the local councillor, they are
all agreed that the councillor's contribution to
area management is an important one. The exchange of
knowledge and information between officers and
councillors leads to a high level of discussion and
debate which in the long run produces greater under-
standing of the problems and needs of a particular
area. This factor is highlighted as being perhaps
the most important aspect of the councillors con-
tribution. Despite the usefulness of the councillor
to area management the interviewees tended to emphasise
how this particular approach had enhanced the role of
the councillor.

In the first place, the ability of the councillor
to make a contribution such as that described above
would not be possible without the introduction of
area management. In particular area management has
enhanced the ward role of the member, he is now better
able to represent the interests of his ward. Ian
Cheetham suggests that "this is definitely the case
in Stockport. Without the area committee system,

the councillor on a normal service committee is
faced with the dichotomy of whether he is there
as a representative of his party or of his ward. In
general the ward role will always be the one that is
subjugated by the party role."He continues "the
area committee system operating now means that this
conflict does not arise, the councillor is there
primarily on ward terms. Obviously, the party political
element does arise from time to time - party politics
is the name of the game - but its influence is far more
limited than on a normal service committee." (Cheetham,
1980).

Dave Roberts suggests that "councillors tend to
be a lot better informed. Most of the councillors like
working with the priority teams, especially the back-
bench councillors, because it gives them access to
officers and information which they wouldn't normally
get. Even the main line committee chairmen like it
because they can avoid seeing the Chief Officer and go
straight to the officer concerned with a particular
project or problem in their ward to find out what is
happening. Furthermore this contact can be made on
a day to day basis" (Roberts, 1980). Indeed Roberts
goes further and stresses the importance of the two-
way process between officers and councillors, mentioned
before, and states that "we, as officers keep the
members very much informed about whats happening in
their area, and the councillors keep us informed on
what is happening within the Labour group, ward Labour
party and the ward itself. The result is much more
informed basis on which the local authority works
and makes decisions." (Roberts, 1980). Similarly
in Dudley, Keith Duesbury suggests that "area management

has enhanced the role of the councillor, especially
by way of the Ward Groups which have provided greater
contact with representatives of the community."
(Duesbury, 1980).

Another method of enhancing the role of the
councillor has been the development of informality
in committee meetings and in contact with officers.
The formal nature of service committees have long
been criticised for restricting discussion and the
input, to the decision making process, of back bench
members - "In short it is difficult to discuss issues
satisfactorily in committee." (Spurrier, 1980). In
each of the area management schemes, the interviewees
were of the opinion that not only can the area committees
and groups provide the forum for this discussion but
that their informal nature further enhances the process.

Ian Cheetham suggests that "the area committee
meetings are much more informal than service committees
and that, because of this, discussion is fuller and
more complete and tends to be more informative because
the members feel more free to ask questions." (Cheetham,
1980). Informality was seen to be a key aspect of the
area management project in Dudley. However, "in general
the councillors have not responded to the more informal
groupings set up within the project. Initially, the
Working Party meetings were supposed to be informal
with councillors sitting round the table with officers
and members of the public, but this has not happened.
These meetings have tended to be as formal as service
committee meetings. Even at the ward groups, the
councillors still sit at the front with the officer on
the right and public in front. In my opinion this
has not aided discussion or analysis of the problems

involved." (Duesbury, 1980). Similarly, the informal
nature of meetings and contact between officers and
councillors in Newcastle has been noted.

This informality is seen not only as a means of
generating more meaningful discussion however, it is
also seen to be a method of bringing back-bench
councillors into the discussion. Indeed, area manage-
ment has been seen to be an approach which can specifically
resolve the problems that back benchers face. These
problems, discussed in chapter three and also within
this section basically lie in their difficulty of
providing a meaningful contribution to the decision-
making processes of local government. Perhaps, more
specifically, problems lie within the distinction between
constituency and committee councillors. "The former
tend to concentrate on local ward matters and often
have difficulty in communicating their views in the
normal committee meeting, while the latter concentrate
on general policy within the local authority and thrive
in the committee situation. Because of this, these
councillors tend to dominate discussion with the
consequence that decision-making may reflect this
bias and lack the essential, specific local knowledge"
(Spurrier, 1980). Area Management has been seen as a
means of providing the opportunity for a balance
between both viewpoints to become the basis for
decision making.

Area management in Stockport "has improved the
back-bencher's position in so far as he is no longer
there as 'lobby fodder' and it does give him the
opportunity to voice his opinion." (Cheetham, 1980).
Similarly, in Dudley, "area management does allow more
comment and views to come from more councillors, which

can only make the council more democratic." (Duesbury
and Spurrier, 1980). Furthermore, they suggest that
examples of this are a common feature of Working
Party meetings, " the chairman often tries to railroad
items through by suggesting that they are the rightful
province of other service committees and it is for them
to decide. Because of the nature of these meetings,
however, back benchers can and often do pull him up,
saying that it is their right to comment and express
views and recommendations on any business that comes
to the Working Party". (Duesbury and Spurrier).
Therefore, there is evidence that the back bencher's
role in local government has been enhanced by area
management.

These advantages must be seen in perspective,
however, in that in all three of the area management
schemes the councillors have little executive power.
Their role is mainly advisory, apart from limited
delegated powers such as handling local area budgets
and deciding on planning applications. Nevertheless,
the evidence does suggest that decision-making and
discussion at the local level through area management
is more democratic.

Furthermore, this statement is supported by the
fact that area management does make both officers and
councillors more accountable to the public in the
local area. Ian Cheetham suggests that "area organis-
ation in Stockport has undoubtedly increased the
accountability of both officer and councillor. For
example, Community Councillors often attend meetings
and if no action has been taken on issues or re-
commendations brought up by them they have the
opportunity to press for action. This opportunity
is also open to other community representatives who
often use the channels provided. In this light it has

enhanced the process of local democracy." (Cheetham, 1980). Similarly, Dave Roberts suggests that "in West City Priority Area, the regular public monthly meetings provide the opportunity for local people to challenge both officers and councillors and press for action on particular issues." (Roberts, 1980).

This section has indicated clearly that the role of the councillor in area management is essential. It can offset, to a certain extent, the problems that the officer faces in area management by providing political support. The main conclusion, however, must be the significant effect that area management appears to have in enhancing the role of the councillor in local government. Indeed Kenneth Spencer suggests that "the creation of a more assertive and inquisitive back-bench councillor in the future will be the main growth and development point in area management." (Spencer, 1979). In short, bearing in mind the limited extent of area management in local government today, the approach appears to give more councillors a greater opportunity to represent their wards and has begun to open out the local democratic process.

THEME 4 - The need for commitment in area management.

The previous three themes have indicated problems and benefits which may occur with the introduction of area management to a local authority. The extent of these problems and benefits however, depends on the amount of commitment given to the approach, both political and administrative. Conversely, the problems and benefits may, in turn, cause a certain amount of commitment to be given to an area management scheme. Indeed, the importance of the attitudes of both members and officers in terms of commitment was stressed in an INLOGOV report. (Mason, 1977, p.86-91). "Unless such commitment exists then it may prove difficult to ensure

that area management is fully implemented and receives
the support and priority necessary to achieve its
objectives." The level of initial commitment to the
idea of area management varied considerably between
the local authorities in the case studies. In Stockport
and Newcastle, for example, area management was introduced
on the initiative of the local authority itself, rather
than simply as a response to the Department of the
Environment's consultation paper, as was the case with
Dudley. This reflects considerable political support
for the approach, particularly in Newcastle. This is
evidenced by three things:

1. Considerable resources have been allocated
   to the scheme, as mentioned in Chapter 4
   Section 1.
2. The scheme was fully implemented, and a
   full programme of spending agreed upon
   in its first year of operation.
3. The scheme has actually been extended since
   its inception to encompass another two
   areas and to involve non-majority party
   members.

   Dave Roberts agrees with this assertion and states
that "there is widespread political commitment amongst
the more important councillors such as the majority
party group leader and committee chairman. Not only
this but the commitment from councillors in general
is relatively high and vitally important to the success
and even the survival of area management, because if
the councillors do not support it then it will not exist
for long." (Roberts, 1980).

   It is important to recognise, however, that even
where substantial political commitment exists, it will
not always be unequivocal. Councillors may have different
attitudes towards different elements of area management,

and towards the values which, underlie- its different
objectives. For example, although in Newcastle there
is widespread support for the idea of positive dis-
crimination, which underpins the Top Priority Programme,
fewer councillors are happy about the increased public
involvement which the scheme allows. Similarly, the
last chapter indicated that problems arise when Priority
Area recommendations conflict with service committee
policy. Nevertheless, in Newcastle a great deal of the
commitment to area management is mainly a response to
the active party political element in the Top Priority
Programme. The Labour Party, which is the majority
group in Newcastle, vigourously promoted this programme
and thus subsequently the strong party line has so far
prevailed.

Even where political commitment exists it is not
necessarily the case that there is commitment to area
management within the administrative structure. In
Newcastle, Roberts suggests "officer commitment to
area management varies considerably throughout the
local authority - there is a great deal of commitment
from the team leaders and also a fair amount from other
team members, but there is opposition from some people
in the local authority who see it as a threat to them,
especially some of the chief officers". (Roberts, 1980).
The feasibility of a scheme is heavily dependent upon
the availability of manpower resources and the willing-
ness of administrators to collaborate. Senior officers
have considerable discretion over the way their
departments are organised and manpower distributed.
They are often unwilling to allocate significant amounts
of officers' time to projects such as area management
which are not seen to be central to their department's
work. Further, some chief officers may feel that area

management represents an unacceptable encroachment
upon their professional responsibilities, and actively
oppose its development. The end result is a lack of
commitment on the part of senior officers and the
inability of area management to change departmental
policies and practices.

These findings are very similar to the situation
in Stockport, where Ian Cheetham states that "there is
absolutely no question about the political commitment
to area management, and indeed, the fact that the area
system covers the whole authority has helped to increase
the amount of commitment by involving all of the
Borough's Councillors. On the officer side there is a
significant amount of commitment from those involved
but there are certain individuals who have major
reservations about the approach and these tend to be
the more senior officers." (Cheetham, 1980). Therefore,
while it is true to say that political commitment is
of paramount importance, it is also true that administr-
ative commitment plays an important part in ensuring
the ultimate success of an area management approach.

"In Dudley, the level of political and administrative
commitment to the Brierly Hill scheme has been relatively
low". (Duesbury and Spurrier, 1980). The scheme was
promoted initially by a few enthusiastic officers and
the former council leader and enthusiasm had to be
generated amongst the rest of the authority. This was
slow to develop for a number of reasons: relevant
councillors and officers were not fully involved in
the formative stages of the project; the wide and
flexible nature of the scheme's aims made it appear
unclear and potentially threatening both to those
involved and to those outside; and the climate in the
authority was, for much of the time, one of retrenchment

rather than experiment and development.

In recent years however, there appears to be greater commitment to the area management project and this appears to have been engendered by the development of the Ward Groups. "People were not interested in 'airy-fairy' experiments, and these groups now allow them to get to grips with the real problems." (Spurrier, 1980). Despite this however, "although commitment is high amongst the officers and councillors working in the project, there is little or no commitment from those outside the project." Indeed, Spurrier notes that "The main reasons for the lack of commitment from the senior officers and councillors is that the project only covers one area within the authority, and there are no leading councillors on the Area Management Working Party." (Spurrier, 1980).

This section has indicated that despite the difficulties that many of the area management schemes have encountered in generating and sustaining central political and administrative commitment, they do have the enthusiastic support of many of the officers and members involved in them. This can create a groundswell of support for a scheme which can exert pressure on senior officers and politicians to be more positive in their commitment to an area approach. However, in attempting to tackle problems through area management, it is commitment at the top, among chief officers and senior politicians, that really counts.

THEME 5. – Politics and Area Management : A determining Factor?

The last theme began to indicate the effect that local politics and the party political system has on the operation and success of area management. This theme

will explore this topic further and indicate its pervasive effects on area management.

Both Newcastle and Stockport have been shown to have strong and consistent political backing for their area management schemes. In many ways this strong support has arisen from a stable political situation within the local authorities. Indeed both authorities have had one ruling majority party over the period that the schemes have operated - Labour in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Conservatives in Stockport. When it is also considered that both majority parties were instrumental in the initial establishment of the area management schemes, the str°ng political commitment is hardly surprising. The simple fact that these two parties have clear majorities on their respective councils ensures that their will prevails on decisions concerning area management. Despite the problems which councillors face in area management (mentioned in a previous theme), 'towing the party line' is still the major determining factor for any councillor whatever his status.

On the other hand, the political situation in Dudley will perhaps give an example of the problems that can arise. The area management scheme was set up by a Labour administration, however after only one month of the project being formally established, a Conservative administration was elected with a clear majority in May 1976. "The Conservatives were not involved in the planning and setting up of area management and were thus suspicious of it, especially since the area chosen was a Labour stronghold." In the event, the scheme continued, but the new political leaders have remained sceptical and not provided any positive force for the development of area management. Delays have also been caused because changes in political

control led to problems of political balance on the
Working Party. Although the Labour Party lost control
of the Council it retained a majority on the Area
Management Working Party; this led the controlling
group to alter the composition and chairmanship of the
Working Party in their favour. Nonetheless, on occasions
the use of this forum as a platform to challenge the
authority of the majority party has jeopardised the
stability of the project. Another factor until these
elections in Dudley, was the delicate balance which
existed between the two parties. The evidence from
Dudley and also that from the area management scheme
in Liverpool indicate that it is exceptionally difficult
for the approach to survive in this situation. Indeed,
the Liverpool scheme was disbanded in September 1977,
basically because of the problem arising from the
precarious balance of power which existed between
the political parties.

Therefore, strong political backing to area
management through a majority political party commit-
ment would appear to be a prerequisite for the success
of this approach. Furthermore, another political factor
is perhaps important in enhancing the success of area
management and that is the choice of boundaries for
the areas within a scheme. In both Newcastle and
Stockport, Ward boundaries have been used to define
the areas. Both Ian Cheetham and Dave Roberts agree
that the choice of boundaries is difficult because
although ward boundaries help to develop the political
backing, making it easy for the councillors to relate
to these areas, communities affected by the area
management scheme do not always follow ward boundaries.
Despite this problem, they are both agreed that the
advantages to be gained from the ease with which

councillors relate to ward boundaries are more
important to the successful operation of area
management.

This is supported by the evidence from the Dudley
scheme which relates to one part of the authority
and is defined by a Planning District boundary.
According to Spurrier and Duesbury, this choice of
boundary has been problematical in that "the area
covers three wards but not completely - Brockmore and
Pensnett Ward has only two-thirds of its area within
the scheme and Brierly Hill and Quarryhill wards are
almost completely within the scheme. Councillors are
thus faced with the problem of perhaps discriminating
in favour of part of their wards at the expense of the
rest. In practice Councillors have found this a difficult
problem to cope with." (Spurrier and Duesbury, 1980).

In this light therefore, because of the importance
of the Councillor and his attitude towards area manage-
ment the use of ward boundaries is perhaps the most
appropriate way to define the areas to be covered
by this approach.

THEME 6 - Professionalism and the Career Structure : their
         influence on area management.

In view of the comments made in chapter three
concerning the pervasive nature of professionalism in
local government, and the support for this provided
by the case studies which have indicated that in the
three local authorities examined the strong influence
of departmentalism still remains and appears to re-
strict the success of both corporate planning and area
management. It is now appropriate to test the hypotheses
set up in chapter three as follows:-

"Because of the career structure and
professionalism within local authorities,
the effectiveness, and perhaps success,
of area management will be restricted or
impaired."

The findings from the case studies suggest that
in coming to a conclusion, the distinction between
part-time and full-time professionals in area management
is important. In Newcastle Dave Roberts suggests that
"there is no recognised career structure as such
within the local authority and neither this factor nor
professionalism have restricted the success or effective-
ness of area management." However, he does admit that
"there may be a fear of missing promotion by working on
Priority Area Teams, but in general this is not the
case due to the high degree of commitment from the
officers involved in the Programme." (Roberts, 1980).
Indeed, in discussing professionalism, Roberts emphasises
the importance of commitment; because he is committed
to the Priority Areas Programme he does not feel that
professionalism poses much of a problem. Furthermore,
the fact that the officers working on the programme
are still attached to departments lessens this problem.
Similarly, in Dudley where the main officers working in
area management are part-time and still have predominantly
departmental duties, professionalism and the career
structure were not seen to be major problems. Duesbury
and Spurrier did note however, that these factors may
have had an indirect effect, "we felt that some officers
were reluctant to participate in the project because they
didn't want to conflict with their departments over
policy and therefore, spoil their promotion chances."
(Duesbury and Spurrier, 1980).

Therefore, professionalism and the career
structure appear to pose few restrictions on the
success or effectiveness of area management in terms
of part-time officers. On the other hand, the situation
for full-time workers is different. Indeed, Ian Cheetham
notes that "in Stockport, internal promotion is quite
a feature in this local authority and an implicit career
structure exists. By taking on the full-time job as
area co-ordinator, I took a risk because I was stepping
outside this career structure. Furthermore, this
risk may deter officers from taking on this type of
job. Therefore, the situation may arise where area
management is staffed by officers of a lower calibre
than those in the main departments. Indeed, I have tried
to recruit potential coordinators such as post-graduate
economists and planners with a marked lack of success."
(Cheetham, 1980).

Similar problems have arisen in Dudley where the
Area Management Research Officer is the only full-time
officer. Indeed Theme two in this chapter indicates
a large turn-over in officers filling this post mainly
because of it's temporary nature. This problem is
exacerbated by the fact that "the Research Officer does
not relate to the career structure of the local authority
and when the Project ends this year my contract also
ends. The local authority have no obligation to re-
employ me." (Duesbury, 1980). In this insecure situation
it is hardly surprising that there has been a large turn-
over of officers with the consequent problem of sus-
taining commitment towards area management.

There would thus appear to be a clear distinction
between the effects of professionalism and the career
structure on part-time and full-time officers in area

management. Perhaps, the comments of Kenneth Spencer provide a useful summary of the implications that professionalism has on area management. "There is a fear of missing out on promotion by working in area management - if you are an area coordinator, you are effectively at the top, where do you go after that. If careers are based on professions then you must stick with it if you are interested in a career. Furthermore, professionalism tends to work in mutual support mechanisms and if the area approach implicit in area management looks like threatening a profession, then a closing of ranks will occur. There would appear to be no long term career prospects for area managers." (Spencer, 1979).

This then appears to be another manifestation of traditional attitudes and practices blocking the development of a different, but perhaps more relevant form of local government organisation. That is, 'dynamic conservatism' preserves the prevailing depart- mentalism which appears to be fundamental to local government. Therefore, although there appears to be few problems with part-time officers being restricted by the career structure or professionalism, the evidence from previous sections suggests that the part-time nature of the work itself restrict its effectiveness. Full-time officers working in area management overcome these restrictions but then suffer, as a consequence, from the problems of professionalism which again restrict the effectiveness of this approach. Therefore, the conclusion must be that for the best results officers working in area management should do so in a full-time capacity with a career structure that is somehow clearly related and integrated with the local authority as a whole.

Bearing in mind the major organisational problems discussed so far which stem from, and consequently reproduce, the traditional, functional local government attitude, there have still been some advances made in breaking down this cycle. For example in changing the attitudes of councillors and officers working in area management and in improving the councillor's role in general. In view of this and what was said in chapter three regarding the crucial nature of the relationship between councillor and official it is now essential to look at the effect of area management on this relationship.

In general, each of the interviewees felt that existing relations with councillors in their respective local authorities were good, indeed Dave Roberts notes that "even before the Priority Areas Programme came into being there was a great deal of informal contact between officers and councillors which did a lot to create mutual understanding and a good working relationship between the two groups." (Roberts, 1980). Nevertheless, problems were noted in some of the other authorities. For example, in Dudley "councillors tend to be suspicious of the corporate system and because of this there has been little or no delegation of authority and duties to officers. Indeed, the Planning Department had to fight hard for the right to deal with small planning applications as a delegated power." (Spurrier and Duesbury, 1980). Similarly, in Stockport, Ian Cheetham notes that there are two main problems which he finds make his relationship with the councillors within his area difficult "Firstly, two of the area committees within my area are opposition controlled

and because the majority party take little notice
of most of their recommendations, frustration sets
in. This inevitably puts a strain on our relationship
as I can do little to ease this problem. Secondly,
because the North Area Office is in the Town Hall
complex, the councillors may go straight to a Divisional
Director with a problem rather than coming to me and
this certainly does little to enhance our relationship.
This is a problem that the other two area coordinators
don't have as their officer are decentralised from
the main complex." (Cheetham, 1980).

Despite these problems however, the interviewees
in Stockport and Dudley both agree that area management
has improved the relationship between councillor and
officer. "In Dudley, area management has certainly
improved the relationship, especially between those
on the Working Party and officers. It has broadened
our involvement in Council business - in normal
circumstances I would be involved in small scale
environmental matters especially in conversation with
councillors, but we now talk about all kinds of
council activity. Furthermore it has involved lower
tier officers with members, which did not happen before
and this can only aid the democratic process in the
long term and create a better understanding of the
system from both sides." He continues "the further
development of area management in tackling the problems
of other areas in the local authority would improve the
relationship between councillors and officers immensely,
especially between those who work outside the project
area at the moment." (Spurrier, 1980). Ian Cheetham
agrees with this and says that "my member contact is
high - they come to me for information and to find out

what's happening and I, in turn, receive information
from them. Therefore, a regular two-way process occurs
which facilitates mutual understanding of each others
position in the council and the problems of particular
areas. Furthermore, I would like to see the area
coordinators playing a more positive role in relation
to members in terms of support services like some
research facilities that they could use for basic fact
finding. This would strengthen both the area system
and the role of the member and in the long run, the
democratic system itself." (Cheetham, 1980).

Dave Roberts suggests that there is no great
difference in the relationship now but that "area
management does provide the opportunity to develop
the relationship further. For example, Les Russell
is a new councillor on my area team and the Programme
allows us to spend a lot of time together, him getting
to know the ward through me, and me getting to know
what his views are and what he is interested in."
(Roberts, 1980).

Therefore, in general area management appears to
have enhanced the relationship between councillor and
officer, in particular the opportunity arises to
develop closer contacts which can only serve to increase
the understanding of the problems and needs of areas.
It is this understanding which must be used as the
basis for policy-making, therefore any improvement
in this process should in theory be a step towards
a more sensitive and responsive local authority.

To conclude this theme, the words of Kenneth
Spencer may again be appropriate. "The mere fact that
contact between the two groups is increased tends to
improve relationships, especially as an understanding
develops between the two. This process, however, is

generally looked at unfavourably by senior officers, because it tends to lessen their control over junior officers. Senior officials can be put in a difficult position if he issues some policy or directive and his juniors come back at him with a statement like - 'my member or group of members indicate that this is wrong or should be carried out via a different policy.' Again conflict is the end result." (Spencer, 1979). Therefore, we appear to have come full circle and arrived back at the inevitable resistance to change within local government. Nevertheless, at least an understanding of the nature of this resistance has been gained and this can provide the basis for an increase in pressure for change which may in time produce the elusive responsive local authority.

Summary of Findings.

This chapter has provided a great deal of information concerning more specific aspects of area management organisation and operation. This information is invaluable, not only in evaluating the success or effectiveness of area management at the present time, but also in pointing to directions for future development.

In order to follow up this latter point a list of the main findings may be instructive.

1. The problems associated with the dichotomy between local authority policy and local area commitment may be solved if area management schemes are integrated into the formal organisation of a local authority and are given executive powers to influence the policy making process.

2. The officers role in area management is important but is circumscribed by its general part-time nature and even where officers work in a full-time capacity,

the insecurity and marginality of the post and the
lack of executive power leads to frustration and less
than effective area management.

3.   Area management enhances the role of the councillor
and conversely the councillor is important to the
success of area management. It also leads to greater
accountability for both councillors and officers.

4.   Commitment is important to area management, both
administrative and political, and from the centre and
locality. Without this commitment area management has
little chance of making an impact on the work of the
local authority.

5.   Ward boundaries provide the most appropriate means
for defining areas to be covered by area management
and a stable political situation with a safe majority
party would appear to be a prerequisite.

6.   Full-time officers would appear to be necessary
for the success of area management but they suffer
from the problems of professionalism. Therefore, area
management should have a career structure which is
integrated with that of the local authority as a
whole.

7.   Area management does enhance the relationship
between officer and councillor in local government and
can provide a firmer basis for local authority policy
as a whole.

This information and summary can now be used
to advocate proposals for the further development of
Strathclyde Region's current area-based approaches
to deprivation.

CHAPTER 6.

The Development of Area Management in Strathclyde Region.

This chapter outlines proposals for the further
development of an area management approach to the
problems of Strathclyde Region. These proposals are
based on the evidence and findings from the three
case studies discussed in the last two chapters.

For the past four years, Strathclyde Regional
Council have been tackling the problem of urban
deprivation within the region on an area basis. This
developed from the conception of deprivation introduced
in the Regional Report (1976 A). This report recognised
firstly, that the alleviation of deprivation was,
together with the creation of employment, the major
strategic objective of the council. Secondly the
1976 supplement volume to Strathclyde Regional Report
entitled "Urban Deprivation" stressed that although
deprivation was widespread throughout the region,
particularly bad areas where deprivation was especially
concentrated were identifiable. Concentrations of
deprivation were identified by ranking social and
economic indicators and by a cluster analysis of 20
census and local authority indices. For instance 67%
of Strathclyde's Enumeration Districts (E.Ds) were in
the worst 5% on at least one of the following indicators,
unemployment, overcrowding and unskilled workers.
Of these E.Ds some 10% were ranked within the worst
5% on all three indicators. These findings led the
"Urban Deprivation" volume to conclude "that concentrations
of deprivation were more common in Strathclyde than in
most British conurbations". (Strathclyde Regional
Council, 1976 B, paragraph 1.25).

The worst 114 areas identified in Strathclyde
were recommended as "areas for Priority Treatment"
(A.P.Ts) and the need for an area based approach to
deprivation was stressed. On the 13th October 1976,
Strathclyde Regional Council recommended that 'special
consideration' should be given to 45 of the original
114 A.P.Ts. The initial analysis was done on the basis
of 1971 census data. The Deprivation Officer Group used
the 114 areas as a starting point but refined these
with up-to-date, subjective information by the
Departments of Education, Police and Social Work and
arrived at these 45 areas. The region recommended that
departments should, in their revenue and capital budgets,
make proposals for improvements in these areas. In its
expenditure on Urban aid, the council indicated that
schemes proposed for these areas should receive higher
priority in the selection process. In April 1977, the
council decided to develop this approach further by
promoting in a limited number of areas within the 45,
a coordinated area management approach involving the
local community and all relevant agencies. Since then
a commitment has been given by six District Councils
to act jointly with the Regional Council in the new
initiative in the following areas.

Maryhill - Glasgow District Council

Priesthill - Glasgow District Council

North West Kilmarnock - Kilmarnock and Loudoun
District Council.

Doon Valley - Cumnock and Doon Valley District Council

Greenend/Sykeside - Monklands District Council

Faifley - Clydebank District Council

Renton - Dumbarton District Council

An area coordinator has been appointed by the
Regional Council and the respective District Council for

each area. A list of his/her main duties is outlined in
Appendix 2, but it is worth stressing the duality of
the expected role.

- he/she is a local government officer (seconded
  from either a regional or a district department)
  responsible to the two chief executives and
  the elected members and charged with the re-
  sponsibility of providing a level of service
  which is improved in quality, more corporate
  and more responsive to the needs and aspirations
  of the community

- he/she is an advocate on behalf of the community
  and as such, in close liaison with local district
  and regional members would be responsible for
  bringing the community's influence to bear on
  the policies of departments and the respective
  councils

Table 4 reveals the principal officers and councillors
involved in each area initiative in 1978.

The Multiple Deprivation Sub-Committee of the Policy
and Resources Committee (Regional Council) has a major
task, the overview of all seven initiatives. In addition,
one member of the Policy and Resources Committee has
been nominated to have a specific responsibility for
each of the seven areas (see table 4).

The Director of Policy Planning has been given
overall responsibility within the Management Team for
all seven areas. Each Regional Director and head of
department has nominated a senior officer of his de-
partment to be responsible for the delivery of services
across the seven areas within this management team.
The Departments represented are: Architects, Education,
Estates, Finance, Firemaster, Leisure and Recreation,
Industrial Development, Chief Constable, G.G.P.T.E.,

TABLE 4 : <u>Areas of Need – Personnel involved</u>.

	Area	Doon Valley	Kilmarnock Loudoun	Renton
C	District	A. Johnston (Ind)	R.Creighton(Lab)	J.Mackenzie (Ind)
O		P. Hainey (STP)	J. Hunter (Lab)	
U		J. Hodge (LAB)	R.Ledgerwood (Scot.Con)	
N				
C			Mrs.M. Parker (Scot.Con)	
I				
L	Region	W. Goudie	J. Hunter	M. Haran
L				
O	Policy & Resources Rep.	W. Goudie	R. Carson	J. Hemphill
R				
S				
	Community Councils	4	1	1
	Coordinator	A.Robertson (District-Planner)	R. Stuart (Region Education)	A.C. Murray (Region-Architects)
	Policy Planning Unit–Liaison	A. Newmen	J. Pearson	E. Woldman

See Over.

TABLE 4: Areas of Need-Personnel involved (contd.)

Area	Faifley, Hardgate/ Duntocher	Greenend, Sykeside/ Carnboe	Maryhill	Priesthill
C O U N C I L L O R S District	J.Green (SNP) H.Duffy (Lab) A.Veitch (Con)	T.Clarke (Lab)	S.Ewing (SNP) R.Gray (Lab) D.Hodge (Lab) M.Gouldie (Con)	F. Duffy (Lab)
Region	A. Worthington	Mrs.C.Toal	L.McGarry C.McGrath J.G.Rennie	J. Craig
Policy & Resources Rep.	A. Worthington	C. Gray	J. Gray	D. Walker
Community Councils	2	1	5	1
coordinator	L. Russell (Region- Physical Planning)	Evelyn Cairns (Region- Social Work)	M.Davidson (District Planner)	I. Irvine (Region Social Work)
Policy Planning Liaison- Unit.	E.Woldman	P. Mitchell	I.Hill	I.Hill

Source: Strathclyde Regional Council, 1978A, Appendix 5.

Roads, Sewerage, Social Work, Water, Physical Planning, and Administration.

Finally, each area coordinator has formed an area team to work with him/her towards the objectives for the area. He/she will draw on the member/officer resources described above, voluntary organisations in the area and other agencies both national and local. The structure of the team will evolve to take into account the differing natures of the seven areas, and these area teams are supposed to consist of represent- atives from all council departments both Regional and District. There are no formal guidelines which determine the nature or timing of the team meetings but the councillors from both Region and District take part.

Thus the structure of Strathclyde's Initiative Area Programme resembles, in many ways, the structure of the area management schemes studied in this dissertation. It is particularly similar to the Newcastle scheme with it's joint officer/councillor team at the local level, a number of areas within the scheme and the main objective of tackling the problems of urban deprivation. However, the Strathclyde Programme has rather wider objectives, indeed, Strathclyde sees area management tackling the following problems and needs:-

"1. Problem of Local Authority structure and inability to respond to real needs/problems of the Community.

2. Lack of liaison between Departments, duplic- ation and overlap of services.

3. Need for a more co-ordinated approach to tackling problems at the local level.

4. It embodies a concept of local teams
    of officials from various departments
    working with local people/organisations –
    getting to know the Community's real
    problems and tackling them" (Strathclyde
    Regional Council, 1978 A, Appendix 5).

Strathclyde goes further and suggests that the
main task is to improve delivery of all services and
foster community regeneration, and that the appointment
of a management team from various departments (Region &
District) will improve coordination at the local level.
"In this way real needs of the community are identified,
existing local authority resources are identified,
duplication and overlap are eliminated, the skills and
expertise of local people are harnessed, and solutions
to local problems tackled" (Strathclyde Regional
Council, 1978 A, Appendix 5). It seems, therefore that
the objectives of the Initiative Areas Programme are
more ambitious than those of the Newcastle scheme,
and perhaps resemble those of area management in
Stockport.

In the light of the findings of the previous two
chapters, the aim now is to discuss this organisation
and structure to pick out possible problems and note
those already effecting the initiative. It may then
be possible to recommend a number of proposals which
may make 'area mangement' in Strathclyde more effective
in the future.

The corporate management systems of both region
and district would have to be exceptionally well
developed in order to achieve the ambitious objectives
of the Initiative Areas Programme. The evidence from the
case studies would suggest that this situation is unlikely

to occur. The more likely picture is one of a corporate
set-up in both region and district with chief executive
officers, policy and resources committees and so on —
but a picture in which departmental and functional
attitudes prevail. In this situation the achievement
of objectives such as improving the liaison between
departments, duplication and overlap of services and
the creation of a more coordinated approach to tackling
problems at local level is unlikely. This assertion is
supported by the nature of the initiative areas
operational structure and organisation.

It may be postulated that because the Initiative
Area Programme and the schemes examined in the last two
chapters are similar in organisation, they will suffer
from similar problems. The Strathclyde scheme is not
truly integrated into the local authority structure.
Although the seven initiatives are directly responsible
to a sub-committee of the policy and resources committee,
they have no formal direct relationships with the main-
line service committees and departments. Although the
latter are obliged to have representatives on both the
senior officer management team and the area team they
are not obliged to cooperate. This is emphasised by
the fact that the area coordinators have no executive
authority over departmental work. They chair the area
team meetings and may have some authority over the
third or fourth tier officers representing their depart-
ments, but this in no way means that the departments
have to respond to this. This situation is similar
to that in the area organisation in Stockport, where
the coordination and improvement of the delivery of
services to the areas, suffered because of the lack
of executive authority on the part of the area co-
ordinator. Indeed if he is seen to be putting too much
pressure on the departments this is more likely to

generate antagonism from senior officers. This situation can only be exacerbated by the duality of the area coordinator's role, mentioned earlier: how far can he/she be an advocate for the community before this role conflicts with the other role as a local government officer? The organisation appears to provide a sure recipe for conflict from this dichotomy between overall local authority policy and local area commitment.

These difficulties may be further compounded by the fact that area coordinators are seconded from either a regional or district department and this may restrict their role as advocate of the community if it is likely to produce conflict with their parent department. In this situation, they may feel their future careers would be jeopardised if the conflict was allowed to develop. Similarly, the other representatives of departments on the area team are part-time and have their normal departmental duties over and above their area work. The case study evidence has shown that this situation has done nothing to make area management effective, or to develop commitment from the officers involved.

This commitment must also exist at the higher levels of the local authority, both region and district: the power or authority required to coordinate and improve services within an area ultimately lies with the chief officer of each particular service. The Management Team under the leadership of the Director of Policy Planning are in theory the means by which the commitment is produced. Again the evidence would suggest that chief officers are committed to the work of their own departments and that management teams have been remarkably unsuccessful in overcoming these departmental attitudes.

Finally, the 'area management' scheme operating
in Strathclyde is a joint region-district initiative
and there may be possible problems in this direction.
It is difficult enough coordinating one authority's
services, thus the problems in coordinating the services
between and within two local authorities must be immense.
This being the case, clear guidelines and responsibilities
must be laid down to enable the two local authorities
to work together successfully.

At this stage, therefore, I would like to put
forward proposals for the further development of the
Strathclyde scheme which in my view would solve or
at least ameliorate these problems to produce a more
effective and responsive approach.

The starting point must be that local authorities
do tend to foster traditional functional attitudes
and if the Initiative Areas Programme is to effectively
tackle problems on an area basis it must actually have
the power and commitment to challenge these and produce
corporate policies for the areas involved. The structure
of the scheme as it exists, provides an adequate basis
from which my proposals may be developed.

The case studies suggested that the importance of
political backing and the desire and willingness to
make this type of Initiative area scheme a success
cannot be overemphasised. At the Regional level, there
is no question of the desire to tackle the problem of
urban deprivation in the form of the initiative areas
approach. The fact that the Regional Council has a safe
Labour majority would also appear to ensure a stable
political backing, which was seen to be important in
the Newcastle and Stockport schemes. At the District
level, this stable political commitment may not be as

easy to establish especially in Glasgow District which
has such a volatile and precarious political situation,
but the fact that the sub-areas of these districts will
benefit in many ways may help to overcome any problems
arising from this.

The main emphasis in my proposals lie in the design
of an 'area management' scheme which is fully <u>integrated</u>
into the structure of both Regional and District Councils,
has <u>executive powers</u> and an <u>area budget,</u> and which will
help to develop a <u>strong commitment from both officers
and councillors at the centre and the locality.</u> This
'area management' scheme will have three major objectives:-

1.   To tackle the problems of urban deprivation.
2.   To make local government more responsive and
     sensitive to the needs of the area.
3.   To strengthen the role of the elected member
     and to increase his accountability.

Figure 11 illustrates the organisational features of the
proposed scheme. There are four main organisational
elements, the Area Coordinator, an Initiative Area
Team, a Central Joint Area Committee and an area office.

The area coordinator will remain the central figure
in the scheme as a full-time area based officer responsible
for the achievement of the objectives and the work of
the approach in general. It is felt that his/her
position at the moment is restricted by the fact that
he/she is seconded from a council department either regional
or district. For this reason it is proposed that area
coordinators should be attached to the Policy Planning
Department of the Regional Council. At the moment this
department is facing reorganisation and is being transferred
into the Chief Executive's Office. In this light, the

RELEVANT DISTRICT COUNCIL

DISTRICT POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DISTRICT SERVICE COMMITTEES

DISTRICT SERVICE DEPARTMENTS

DISTRICT/REGION LIAISON COMMITTEE

CENTRAL INITIATIVE COORDINATING GROUP
CHAIRED BY AREA COORDINATOR

FOUR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN (TWO FROM REGION AND TWO FROM DISTRICT).

TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEES (ONE DISTRICT AND ONE REGION).

SENIOR OFFICERS FROM THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION,SOCIAL WORK,HOUSING AND PLANNING.

INITIATIVE AREA TEAM
CHAIRED BY AREA COORDINATOR

RELEVANT REGIONAL COUNCILLORS
RELEVANT DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

TWO REGIONAL OFFICERS (EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK).

TWO DISTRICT OFFICERS (PLANNING AND HOUSING).

STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL COUNCIL

REGION POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REGION SERVICE COMMITTEES

REGION SERVICE DEPARTMENTS

AREA OFFICE

RESIDENTS   OF   THE   AREA

KEY

→ DIRECT REPORTING RELATIONSHIP
⇢ POSSIBLE REPORTING RELATIONSHIP

FIGURE II: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSED AREA MANAGEMENT SCHEME FOR STRATHCLYDE REGION.

area coordinators should therefore be attached to
this office. and the present coordinators may be
transferred if they wish. If not they may return to
their parent departments and the Chief Executive
should appoint a new coordinator from his own
department. The area coordinator should have some
delegated powers in respect of his coordinating
function. These powers should allow him/her to
exert influence over council departments both
Regional and District with authority from the Chief
Executives of both authorities.

Perhaps the most important organisational element,
through which the area coordinator can develop his
role, is the Initiative Area Team (IAT). At the
moment, the area teams appear to be too cumbersome
since they involve the representatives from all council
departments, both regional and district, which makes
organisation difficult. The problem of their part-time
nature was also noted and it is suggested that because
of these two factors the councillor's role may, in
turn, be inhibited. Therefore I suggest the following
proposals:- The Initiative Area Teams will be joint
officer/councillor teams. Two officers from the district
authority representing the Housing and Planning Depart-
ments and two officers from Strathclyde Region's
Education and Social Work Departments would make up
the officer component of an IAT (see figure 11).
If all departments were represented on the IAT it
would become unwieldy for effective discussion, the
above four representatives would be able to deal with
most of the issues likely to arise at IAT meetings.
Officers from other departments, however, could be
co-opted onto the IAT when necessary.

An important feature of the officer component is
that they would work on a full-time basis in area
management. They would become part of the area co-
ordinator's Initiative Team working in the area all
the time and thus they will hopefully develop a strong
officer commitment to area management within the area.
While the Area Coordinator is responsible for the
overall policy of the area approach, the other officers
will still work with their relevant council department
and liaise closely with these, but on an area basis.
The simple fact that their responsibility is to an
area rather than to a department, on a full-time basis,
will produce the commitment which was found to be so
crucial in the case studies. The ward district councillors
and regional councillor for the area would make up the
other half of the IAT.

The area itself should be defined by ward boundaries
so that the councillors find it easier to relate to,
and do not have problems in perhaps discriminating in
favour of one part of their ward at the expense of the
rest.

All meetings of the IAT, held at least once a
month, would be in public at well advertised meeting
places within the area. Perhaps a different local
school, public hall or similar meeting place could be
used for each IAT meeting, since this maximises the
possibility of attracting as many local people to the
meetings as possible. A rotating system of meeting
places covering the whole area encourages all local
residents to attend at least some of the IAT meetings.

The IAT should have some delegated responsibilities
and executive authority to carry out parts of their
work in the area. For example, responsibility for major

development control affecting their area could be
delegated. The other aspect of these delegated re-
sponsibilities is the spending of an area budget,
and this would be determined at the IAT meetings.
It is felt that these factors would increase the
commitment of the officers, councillors and the
public to area management and prevent the feelings
of frustration which were found to be so prevalent
in the case study schemes when no executive authority
was delegated.

The area budget is an important component of the
scheme and if it is to instill the necessary commitment
from the officers, councillors and the public it
should be quite sizeable. I would tentatively suggest
that the initial figure should be at least £50,000.
In view of the similarity of this figure with that of
Newcastle, it is felt that much greater interest will
be shown by local community groups and residents in the
area management scheme if they know that as a result
of decisions taken at IAT meetings money will be
spent within their area. It is the IAT's responsibility
in front of the public meeting, and after having
discussed proposals made by the public, to determine
how this money should be spent.

The elected members retain sole voting rights on
all issues at IAT meetings. Although the public are
allowed to propose how they think the area budget
should be spent, only the local councillors are allowed
to vote on such proposals. The important point is that
the elected members have to vote in front of the public
meeting. This increases their accountability to their
electorate:- they can be questioned by the public as
to the reasons why they voted in a particular way. In
addition, the public can ask questions relating to

any aspect of government services affecting the area, during the course of the meetings.

Similarly, the officers on the IAT can be questioned by the councillors or by the public on any aspect of local government responsibilities affecting the area. These officers must therefore 'be on their toes' and have a clear idea of the area's problems as their accountability is also increased. At IAT meetings the public could requestion officers about progress or lack of progress on proposals or promises made at previous meetings. The whole emphasis behind the IAT is to combine within it, the advantages of the Priority Area Teams in Newcastle with those of area committees in general. The PATs developed close working relationships between officers and councillors, and area committees appeared to enhance the role of the councillor and local decision making.

A third organisational element in the area management scheme is the area office, which would be set up at an easily accessible location within the area. The office is important in its own right, and is also essential in providing the back up information and services for the IAT meetings. It would operate on a full-time basis and would be open to the public on every working day. This situation will be made possible since the area coordinator and his four full-time officers should work in and from this office. It's function would be to act as an information centre on local government services affecting the area and as a complaints referral service. All complaints received at the office would be referred to the relevant officers within the office or to the relevant district or regional service department and to the Initiative

Area Team. The aim is to develop a 'one door approach' and to provide a focal point within the area where people can go for information and make complaints regarding local authority services.

The area office should have an administrative assistant to handle the information and complaints-side and a clerical assistant to handle the paper work arising from the area work. Depending on the information required or the problem, the public can either see the administrative or 'information officer' or be referred to the relevant full-time officer within the office. The object is to create a personal atmosphere in which the public are not inhibited by the normal anonymous face of local government. Important tasks for the clerical assistant are, compilation of IAT minutes, their distribution from the office and publicising IAT meetings. So, even if people have not attended these meetings they can still keep in touch with issues and decisions which may affect them.

The setting up of the area office with the area coordinator and the four officers may encourage their departments to decentralise some of the routine area work. In Glasgow this process has already begun with the housing department which is being decentralised into 15 area offices. In the two initiative areas in Glasgow therefore, a possible development could be a combination of the housing area office with the general area office to form one.

The case studies stressed the advantage that area management had in improving the relationship between councillors and officers and this will hopefully develop in the IAT. In relation to this another

important feature of the area office is that it is a
focal point where officers and councillors can meet
on an informal basis and thus understanding between
the two groups may develop even further. In this
light, the area coordinator is responsible for the
production of agendas for the IAT meetings and they
will be produced on the basis of the contact between
the officers, between the officers and public and between
the officers and the councillors. This process may
lead to a more sensitive response to the problems
and needs of the area.

The officers based in the area office will obviously
carry out routine departmental work which affects the
area, but major tasks will be research into the problems
and needs of the area and the collation of information
on these. Their tasks may be carried out using a joint
approach, which recognises the interrelationships
between the problems in a deprived area. The increased
understanding which is the outcome of this approach
will provide a firmer basis to the decision-making
process.

The problems faced by full-time workers in area
management must be noted; the officers working in the
seven initiative areas must feel secure in their job
and their future. For this reason, both coordinators
and officers must have a clear idea of where they
stand in the career structure of their respective,
parent departments, even if a special grade has to be
established to accommodate them. This factor is
difficult to cater for and a great deal of thought
along these lines is required before these proposals
could be implemented effectively. Nevertheless, it
is essential that the officers are not isolated from
the normal working of the local authority.

A final aspect of the function of the area office
could be its use for councillors' surgeries, both
regional and district. This of course would be left to
the discretion of the councillors involved, but if it
was utilised there is no doubt that this factor would
strengthen the area office's role as a focal point in
the community. The whole idea behind the interacting
influences of the Area Coordinator, Initiative Area
Team and the Area Office is to produce a process
which is responsive and sensitive to the problems
and needs of the area; provide a strong commitment to
the area from both officer and councillor alike;
improve the councillors representative role in his
ward and perhaps most importantly pool the resources
of officer, councillor and the public in a combined
effort to tackle the problems of the area.

This situation is all very well but of little
use if it is not integrated into the working of the
local authority and if there is no commitment coming
from the top to balance that from the bottom. Figure 11
indicates how these two factors are catered for. The
fourth element in the organisational proposals, the
Central Initiative Coordinating Group (C.I.C.G.) can
produce the necessary commitment from the top. This
group will be chaired by the area coordinator and
consist of senior officers and polticians. It is
suggested that the senior officers be representatives
of the same four departments represented on the IAT
and that they be of Depute Director grade. An important
feature of the task of the Regional Officers is that
their work will be almost completely involved with area
management. They will be members of each of the seven
Central Initiative Coordinating Groups and their work
will be virtually completely area based. There may be

administrative difficulties in this organisational
feature in terms of staggering the Group meetings,
to facilitate the involvement of the officers from
the Education and Social Work Departments but these
can only be solved in implementation. The officers
from the district departments will obviously only be
involved in their own area meetings but again officers
from other relevant departments can be co-opted if
necessary.

The Political side of the group will be made up
of senior councillors including committee chairmen
and representatives of the Policy and Resource
Committees from both region and district. It would be
difficult for the regional councillors to attend every
coordinating group meeting, therefore, I would tentatively
suggest the following organisation - one representative
from each of the Regional and District Policy and
Resources Committees with individual Regional Councillors
taking responsibility for each of seven initiative
areas. Two committee chairmen from both Region and
District should also attend each of the G.I.C.G.
meetings: again this could pose problems for Regional
Councillors in terms of a lack of time to attend all
these meetings and so I would suggest that two committee
chairmen or vice chairmen should take responsibility
for each of the seven groups and thus share the work-
load. This would also have the advantage of allowing
most of the senior councillors from the regional
council to actually take part in area management in
one way or another and this real involvement can only
help to develop a commitment towards area management.
The two district representatives would be selected at
the discretion of the local authority.

Each of these group meetings should be held in
public, three or four times a year and preferably
within the area. The area coordinator should chair

the meeting and prepare the agenda, and the purpose
is to examine the progress of area management in general
and to discuss major issues which arise out of the IAT's
work. This group should have no authority over the
IAT's delegated powers unless there are problems,
or decisions which have become controversial issues.
Indeed as far as the area budget is concerned the
Multiple Deprivation Sub-committee of the Regional
Council's Policy and Resources Committee will be
responsible for its oversight. The Groups ultimate
function, however, is to ensure that the necessary
coordination and cooperation between departments is
being provided at this more central point within the
Councils, in other words at the point where cooperation
is essential.

Figure 11 outlines the main direct reporting
relationships (in solid black lines) of the area
management scheme. After the area coordinator has
presented IAT proposals to the Policy and Resources
Committees at both Regional and District level it is
then up to these committees to recommend to the relevant
service department and committees that extra resources
be given or policy changes be made concerning the area.
These recommendations will also be discussed through
the existing District/Region Liaison Committee so
that district and region can work together to look
at the problems of the area concerned.

The important feature, however, is the two-way
reporting relationships between the C.I.C.G. and the
committees and departments of region and district
and the IAT itself. Reports and minutes emanating from
the C.I.C.G. will be circulated to these different
bodies with recommendations and perceived problems,
and comments from them are expected in return. The

Policy and Resources Committees can also authorise
the C.I.C.G. with some authority in gaining from
the committees and departments involved the necessary
cooperation required for the achievement of the areal
objectvies.

Finally, one of the most important features of the
area management scheme would be the informal relationship
which could develop between members of the IAT and the
region and district service committees and departments
(shown by a dashed line). Each councillor and officer
on the IAT can relate back to their particular service
department or committee their experience of the problems
of the area concerned and perhaps help stimulate an
area dimension in departmental or service committee
decision-making. Therefore the purpose of the C.I.C.G.
and the resulting reporting relationship is to first
establish a serious commitment to area management from
both administrative and political sides at the level
where the power and influence lies, and secondly to
ensure that area management is fully integrated into
the working of the local authorities to such a degree
that it cannot be considered marginal.

These proposals are very tentative in nature,
but I do believe that they could begin to tackle the
problems that are likely to arise through the existing
organisation of the Initiative Areas Programme. Two
general points should be noted however. Firstly, these
proposals if implemented, would obviously be experimental
but I would strongly suggest that the resulting scheme
should not resemble the experimental nature of the
Dudley area management project. The purpose and nature
of the proposed area management scheme must be clearly
set out indicating the different responsibilities of
the various officers, councillors, service committees

and departments, in formal organisational terms.
Obviously there must be some room for flexibility
and adaptation but unless there are certain formal
definitions at the start, the resulting scheme may
consequently suffer from problems similar to those
in Dudley.

Secondly, critics of area management will claim
that the proposed scheme is too expensive to set up
and run in the present economic climate. This may
be a valid criticism but I would answer this with two
inter-related factors. In the first place the Regional
and District councils are clearly politically committed
to tackling the problems of urban deprivation. In this
situation, if they want to make a real impression on
these problems then extra resources are clearly needed
in those areas which suffer the most. Secondly, the
actual savings which may be made in the long run
through a corporate approach at the local level must
be borne in mind. John Stewart notes that the economic
situation casts a new light on the corporate approach
"If corporate management was once an ideal, challenging
local authorities to a new conception of their role,
it has now become a harsh necessity. Local authorities
can no longer afford the waste of separatism. They
cannot regard the land, buildings or staff as the
prerogative of one department, to be deployed solely
according to its own requirements....corporate manage-
ment has to be sharpened in its impact to meet the
requirements of an era of restraint" (Stewart, 1977, p.7).
In this light I would therefore suggest that the proposed
area management scheme would indeed sharpen the local
authorities impact on the problem of the areas in
question and consequently save money in the long run.

Furthermore, the evidence from Stockport would suggest
that it would be in the council's interest to endorse
the scheme; Ian Cheetham notes that "the public spending
 cuts will most certainly increase the commitment to
area management because the area system is the number
one buffer to public complaint. As we run the inform-
ation service, we play a valuable role in this respect
and one which may even be enhanced by the prevailing
economic situation." (Cheetham, 1980).

     The proposed development of the Initiative Areas
Programme in Strathclyde has been designed to tackle the
problems which were found to hinder the area management
schemes examined in chapters four and five. The lessons
from these, embodied in the proposals will hopefully
produce a scheme which is firstly integrated into
local authority structure, has wide-ranging commitment
and the ability to really tackle the problems of
selected areas on a corporate basis. Secondly, the
proposals are also designed to reap the benefits from
councillors working on an area basis with an enhanced
representative role. This development will provide
the initial steps towards a more responsive, sensitive
and democratic local authority.

EPILOGUE.

The term area management has numerous interpretations
and is attributed with the possibility of achieving many
wide-ranging objectives. The important point, however,
is that whatever the objectives, be they minor or major,
area management involves change in the local authority,
in both attitudes and organisation.

It must be remembered that the main function of a
local authority is to provide a range of services and
to maintain these at a statutory level in the interests
of the community. If we acknowledge however, that this
function has, in general, not been performed to a very
efficient or, more importantly, effective degree, as
the evidence in the early chapters would suggest, then,
change is required to remedy the problems embodied in
the traditional form of local government organisation.
Corporate Planning and management was seen as a means
of making the necessary improvements, and of breaking
down the traditional barriers to a more effective
organisation, for example, departmentalism and the frag-
mentation of services. The claim was that Corporate
Planning could overcome these difficulties to produce
a local government structure which could look at the
problems of the local authority as an interrelated whole
and consequently produce policies which could tackle
them on this basis. The evidence of this dissertation
suggests that corporate planning has failed to solve
these difficulties, not just because of a failure in
certain aspects of the technique but more importantly
because the change involved in corporate planning
clashed with traditional attitudes prevalent in local
government. The perceived threat to existing interests
was enough to produce the resistance to this change.

Similarly, we have seen that area management evolved

from this concern to tackle the traditional structure
of local government, to produce on an institution which
was effective and responsive to the needs and problems
of the people within an authority. The case studies
illustrated that although the schemes examined had
achieved some improvements in the responsiveness of
their respective authorities, the main findings stressed
the resistance to area management when change, embodied
in the approach, was required. The simple fact is that
area management requires a change of attitude and
organisation in Local Government which challenges its
traditional norms. This conclusion has not been arrived
at through the examination of area management simply
as a technique or an organisational method, but by
studying the people who work in Local Government who
are ultimately responsible for the implementation and
interpretation of this approach: the officer and
councillor. Although area management can erase the
problems which were described in chapters one, two
and three, it cannot, in the form it takes today,
tackle the more important and persistent problems of
professionalism, departmentalism and attitudes in
Local Government. Until these are tackled, responsive
Local Government will remain elusive.

It has been argued that area management schemes
which embody only minor objectives do not require major
changes in either organisation or attitudes. This may
be the case at first, but both officers and councillors
find that despite limited objectives, the nature of area
management is such that they tend to become more involved
with their respective areas to the extent that out of
minor objectives, major issues, which indicate where
council policies are failing, arise. Area management
introduces a process which can question the effective-
ness of council policy and suggest improvement. It is
within this process however, that the problems lie.

It is precisely because area management questions the
effectiveness of council policy that it is perceived
to be a threat to the existing structure and organ-
isation. Indeed, the INLOGOV report (Harrop et al 1978)
suggests that despite its lack of budget and executive
powers, area management has been perceived as a signific-
ant challenge to the interests of certain groups or
individuals within the organisation, particularly those
currently in positions of power. This is because area
management, by its very nature, tends to challenge a
number of fundamental organising principles which
underpin local government.

Firstly it challenges the principle of uniformity,
which often underlies the provision of local authority
services. The concept of area management suggests that
the local authority should be more responsive to local
needs, by enabling different levels and different types
of services to be provided in different areas, and by
allowing different priorities in the use of resources
and different policies to be applied in different areas.
Indeed, Kenneth Spencer recognises this " 'differentation'
in policy as a major achievement of area management...
bringing to light the need to have different levels
of policy response within a local authority". (Spencer
1979). Within the political system area management
therefore potentially threatens the power of leading
politicians, such as party group leaders and committee
chairmen, to determine overall council policy and
priorities in resource allocation. Area management
provides a legitimate mechanism whereby back-bench
councillors can question policy and resource allocation
decisions, particularly as they are applied to specific
localities. It thus exposes conflicts of interest, both
between the various localities within the authority, and

between the needs of a particular locality and those
of the authority as a whole. Within the administrative
system, area management demands differential responses
to the needs of specific areas, as opposed to provision
being based on either national or professional service
standards.

Secondly, area management challenges the predomin-
ant functional basis on which the local authority is
organised. The objectives of area management suggest
that at times, assessments of the need for services in
particular areas determined on a functional or service
basis, should be subordinated to the overall needs and
priorities of those areas. This is contrary to the
interests of those who see their primary responsibility
to be the development of a particular service and gaining
the necessary resources to achieve that development,
notably service committee chairmen and chief officers
of service departments. Since the functional structure
of local authorities is based on professionalism, area
management is unlikely to be supported by those who
value professional expertise highly and who consider
that current "best practice" within the profession
should be the primary criteria in determining future
service provisions. In particular, efforts to promote
inter-departmental co-ordination may be seen as inter-
fering with the proper professional responsibilities
of particular service and are liable to be resisted by
those in senior positions within service departments,
particularly chief officers.

In the third place, area management runs counter
to the formal hierarchical system of responsibility
on which the administrative structure of the authority
is based. By giving officers an area responsibility as
well as a service responsibility, and by fostering
direct contact between lower tier officers and elected
members it questions the officers formal administrative

loyalty to the department. Chief officers are unlikely
to welcome an organisational innovation which challenges
their authority to determine the nature of service
provision and the work to be undertaken by lower tier
officers within the department, and which reduces their
ability to control information provided to politicians
by their departments.

Finally, by facilitating public involvement and by
enabling more information about the local environment
to penetrate the local authority system, area management
challenges the tendency of the organisation to reduce as
far as possible external influence on its operation.
Area management provides a channel whereby information
about local needs and priorities and the operation and
effects of services can be fed into the local authority
by those at the interface with the local environment,
such as field workers and local councillors: that
information may question existing policies and service
organisation. The greater the involvement of the public
in decision-making, often afforded through area manage-
ment, may result in a similar questioning of existing
practice and may provide a force which exerts pressure
on the local authority and which it finds difficult
to control. By creating uncertainty and by disturbing
the normal decision-making processes of the authority
in this way, area management threatens those who seek
to create stability within the organisation and, more
generally, the ability of the local authority to
manage its environment.

Thus, by challenging certain basic organising
principles underlying local government, area management
is seen to threaten the interests of certain individuals
and groups within the organisation, particularly those
politicians and officers who hold key power positions
within the existing management system. In this situation,

the proposals for the development of area management
in Strathclyde Region would appear to be doomed to
failure from the start. The raison d'etre behind the
proposals is that they should challenge existing local
government organisation and attitudes because this
appears to be the only way that resistance to change
through "dynamic conservatism" can be shown to be
misplaced and to be preventing the development of a
responsive and sensitive local authority. At the
moment, existing organisation of area management serves
to support this maintenance of the 'stable state'
because its very nature appears to have inbuilt
mechanisms to ensure that the change implicit in area
management does not go too far. For these reasons there-
fore, it is only by highlighting the problems through
a direct challenge that people in local government
will really sit up and take notice. Indeed, even in
existing area management schemes the councillors and
officers who are directly involved realise their value
and therefore a start has been made in changing and
adapting attitudes. The aim now is to press home the
challenge and make the subsequent benefits widely known,
especially those that relate to the creation of a re-
sponsive local authority and to the strengthening of the
role of the councillor and ultimately the local Democratic
Process. It is only when people cannot avoid change that
change is likely to occur.

     At the moment, the process by which decisions are
made and policies formed appears to be standing on its
head. Decisions and policies are made at the centre and
if these are challenged by findings from area management
which indicate mismatches between local area needs and
council policies, the tendency is to view this as a
threat on the authority of the centre. What should
happen is that the information from area management

should constitute part of the decision-making process.
The findings should be fed into the process so that
decisions and policies can be modified to meet the
needs of different areas and they should be incorporated
to improve policy as a whole. Local Government must
become able to adapt so that instead of reacting
negatively to the need for change and resisting it,
it must be able to handle the calls for change, be
they internal from the local area, or external. Local
authorities need to find out why there are calls for
change in the first place and react accordingly to
adapt its organisation or policy to meet this situation.
This is the challenge that must be faced and one that
is tackled in the proposals for area management in
Strathclyde. In short, the process of change in
local government is something towards which area manage-
ment can provide a vital step.

APPENDIX 1 : <u>Questions used in Case-Study interviews.</u>

<u>Case Study 1 : City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.</u>

<u>Priority Areas Programme, 7.1.80.</u>

Interviewee: Mr. David Roberts, City Planning Officer.

<u>Group 1</u>: Description of area management, in terms of
structure organisation and objectives.

1. Can you give me any information on the structure,
   organisation and objectives of area management
   (Priority Areas) in Newcastle?

2. Has Newcastle adopted a corporate approach for the
   authority as a whole, and if so how does it relate
   to the Priority Areas Programme?

3. Do you think it is important for the Priority Areas
   Programme to be an integral part of the local
   authority structure, if so, why? Does this situation
   exist in Newcastle at the moment?

4. Do you think area management has increased sensitivity
   and responsiveness to local needs and problems, if
   so, in what way?

5. A common criticism of both area management and the
   corporate approach is that too much emphasis has been
   placed on the setting up of the formal structure to
   the detriment of the more important processes by
   which the structures operate and the ability of area
   management to change activities and attitudes within
   the local authority. Do you perceive this as being a
   problem in Newcastle's scheme?

6. Do you think it is possible, in the Newcastle context
    for the Priority Areas Programme to really change
    activities and attitudes within the local authority?
    Or are these objectives not considered to be important?

7. Does the organisation and/or the structure of area
    management in Newcastle enhance or restrict the
    success of its objectives? If it is restricted,
    how could this be improved?

8. I read in the INLOGOV report that a criticism has
    been raised in terms of area teams only supplementing
    the work of main line committees. Do you see this
    as being a problem? If so, do you think aspects
    of policy-making and resource-allocation should be
    devolved to a greater extent?

9. Do you think area management in Newcastle has
    transcended departmental and service boundaries,
    if not, why not? Do you think this will occur in
    the future?

10. Or has area management been seen to feed into
    departmental work?

11. Do you think it is feasible and/or desirable to
    extend the Priority Areas scheme over the whole
    city, in order to perhaps enhance management and
    local democracy?

Group 2: The roles of officer and councillor in area
         management.

12. What is your official role in the Priority Areas
    scheme?

13. Do you find that a dichotomy exists between wider local authority policy and commitment to the local area on the part of both officer and councillor? If so, does this lead to problems and tensions?

14. If a gap between central policy and local area commitment does exist, do you think it is possible for the two extremes to meet constructively in the middle, in other words, is there some middle course which can combine these two aspects?

15. Do you find that your roles in area management conflict with wider local authority policy?

16. Do officers in the area teams work in area offices? If not, do you think if they did, their role would be more effective and the Priority Area Programme more successful?

17. Has area management changed the relationship between officers, if so, how?

18. Do you think the Priority Areas Programme has improved local democracy, for example, in terms of election turnouts and degree of representativeness etc?

19. You have placed a fair amount of emphasis on public participation in Newcastle. In view of the problems with this approach do you not think that area management has been more successful in enhancing the role of the elected member and that you should give this more emphasis? Or do you think there should be a balance between the two?

20. What has area management done to enhance the
    role of the councillor if anything, and how
    does it compare with the previously existing
    situation?

21. Councillors are often criticised for dealing
    too much with detail. Do you think that area
    management, or Priority Areas, can help
    councillors to bridge the gap between concern
    for detail and involvement in policy? Indeed,
    is it possible to combine the two, and would
    you say, if so, that this provides an improve-
    ment in local democracy?

22. It has been suggested that because of the
    introduction of Ombudsmen, aid centres, community
    groups and the like, the role of the councillor
    as watchdog is being usurped. Do you think area
    management can redress this situation and increase
    the councillor's representativeness and effective-
    ness?

23. It is often suggested that problems arise in
    terms of officers and councillors speaking a
    different language, if you like, for example
    officers being far too technical etc., do you
    see this as a problem in Newcastle? If so do
    you see area management improving this by in-
    creasing the contact with officers in a working
    situation?

24. Similarly, do you think area mangement will in-
    crease the accountability of councillors to the
    public? If so, is it desirable?

25. How important is commitment to area management
    and its success?

26. Do you think there is enough commitment to the Priority Areas programme:-

a) firstly on the part of the local authority as a whole,

b) secondly, on the part of the councillors and officers.

27. How important do you think the strong political commitment, which Priority Areas appears to have received, has been to the success or even the survival of the scheme?

28. Do you see the cuts in public expenditure affecting this commitment in the future?

Group 3: The relationship between officer and councillor.

29. Do you think the use of political areas (the wards) in Newcastle as opposed to, say, planning districts, has enhanced the success of area management? If so, how?

30. How does the relationship between officer and councillor work or operate in practice?

31. Has the Priority Areas Programme improved the relationship between officers and councillors ? If so, how? Have there been any problems, and how does the situation compare with the previous system?

32. In general terms, in what ways can this relationship be improved even further?

Group 4: Officer career structure in area management.

33. Can you give me any information on the officer career structure and how it relates to the Priority Areas Programme?

34. Have you found that it is difficult to reconcile your local area work with the wider profession- alism in the local authority as a whole, especially in terms of attitudes?

35. Has the **career structure** in Newcastle local authority restricted the success or effective- ness of area management? If so, how?

36. Is there a fear of missing promotion, for example?

37. After team leader/co-ordinator, what is your next step? Do you have to go back into a particular departmental career structure?

38. Do you think it is important to the success of area management to have a career structure which is integrated with that of the local authority as a whole?

Group 5 : General/miscellaneous.

39. Is the Priority Areas Programme really an area management scheme or is it just a means of spend- ing money more discriminately on the basis of need?

40. Has the Priority Areas Programme had any impact in changing attitudes in your local authority, for example, in terms of breaking down depart- mentalism?

41. Have you encountered problems or tensions between the Priority Area Programme and the advent of the Partnership cash from central government? What effect do you think this has had on the Priority Area Programme in Newcastle?

42. What do you see as the main achievements of area management in Newcastle, and how do you see it developing in the future?

Case Study 2: Dudley Metropolitan Borough.

Brierly Hill Area Management Project   23.1.80.

Interviewees: Mr. J. Spurrier, Area Management Project Leader.

Mr. K. Duesbury, Research Officer.

Group 1 : Description of the area management scheme in terms of its structure and organisation.

1. I read that Dudley has a fairly well-developed corporate system of management. In you opinion has it really improved management in the local authority? If so, how?

2. Do you think departmentalism has caused problems in the functioning of local government in Dudley:-
   (a) before reorganisation,
   (b) since reorganisation.

3. Has the corporate structure managed to produce a structure and policies which transcend departmental boundaries? Has the new approach helped to achieve this goal?

4. It is often suggested that corporate management causes a greater degree of centralisation in the work of the authority, do you think this has been the case in Dudley? Do you see area management as a response or corollary to this situation? If not, why did area management in Dudley come about?

5. It states in an INLOGOV report that it was
   felt that the Area Management Project tended
   to be isolated from the corporate system. If this
   is the case how or why has this happened? How
   do you see this situation being improved?

6. Do you think it is important for an area manage-
   ment scheme to be an integral part of the local
   authority structure? Or do you see it as being
   essentially marginal?

7. Again the INLOGOV report states that "it has been
   felt all along that any area management scheme
   which was developed should be unconstrained by
   precise detail." In retrospect, how do you view
   this type of approach? Is it desirable, or should
   there be a much clearer definition of what area
   management is or should be about?

8. The Area Management Project was described as an
   evolutionary scheme. Again in retrospect, has this
   type of approach been successful? Do you think
   this type of approach is possible at all in local
   government? (For example, note the problems members
   come across in not having a clearly defined
   approach and with little idea of what was to be
   achieved.)

9. In retrospect, do you still see the purpose of
   area management to be a means of adapting local
   government in terms of organisation and attitudes
   or is it a forlorn hope?

10. Do you think the area management scheme has in-
    creased sensitivity and responsiveness to local
    needs and problems? If so, in what ways?

11. Do you think that the allocation of a project
    fund was an advantage or a disadvantage; in
    the sense that much emphasis has been placed
    on concrete projects which may not be in keeping
    with the development of area management as an
    approach to local government.

12. Does the organisation and/or the structure
    of the area management scheme in Dudley enhance
    or restrict the success of its objectives?
    If it is restricted now could it be improved?

13. The INLOGOV report states that the main line
    committees don't really pay much attention to
    the Area Management Project. Why do you think
    this is the case? Do you think that the committees
    feel threatened by the scheme?

Group 2 : The roles of officer and councillor in
          area management.

14. Have you found that the roles of both councillor
    and officer in the area management scheme con-
    flict with wider local authority policy - in the
    that for example, local area committment may
    conflict with policy for the city as a whole?

15. In terms of the area management officers team,
    the last INLOGOV report stated that they met
    in the Council House, but there was pressure
    to hold meetings in Brierly Hill, has this
    happened? What are the perceived advantages of
    meeting within the area?

16. Have the area management officers team worked
    together successfuly or not? Have they been able
    to overcome their different departmental backgrounds
    to concentrate on one area?

17. Has the area management scheme changed the
    relationship between officers in any way?
    If so, how?

18. I noted that the officers have very little time
    to devote to area management in their part-
    time capacity. How detrimental has this been
    to the success or effectiveness of the scheme?

19. Similarly, have objectives been difficult to
    fulfill because of the part-time nature of
    the officers team?

20. Would you have preferred to see something like
    officers working full-time in area management,
    working in an area office with some community
    development function, as a better approach to
    an experiment in area management in Dudley?
    If so do you think this may develop in the
    future?

21. This position of Area Management Research Officer
    intrigues me. Why do you think this job was
    initiated? How exactly has he related to both
    the working party and area management team,
    and what problems has he faced?

22. How necessary has this position been to the
    development of area management in Dudley?

23. From the INLOGOV report this post appears to
    have been beset by problems. Have you been
    affected and frustrated by these problems?
    How would you see this situation being
    improved?

24. How important has the role of the councillor
    been to the operation of the area management
    scheme?

25. What sort of influence has the working party had on policy making - have they had any real influence?

26. What has the area management scheme done to enhance the role of the local councillor, in terms of for example, representing his area more efficiently and effectively?

27. Councillors are often criticised with dealing too much with detail. Do you think that the area management scheme has helped councillors to bridge the gap between concern for the local area and involvement in policy work?

28. Do you think it has improved the back-bencher's position - giving him greater access to information and being actively involved in decision-making?

29. It is often suggested that problems arise in terms of officers and councillors speaking a different language - for example, officers being too technical. Do you see this as a problem in Dudley? Has area management done anything to ameliorate this state of affairs by increasing the contact with officers in a working situation?

30. Similarly, what has area management done to increase the accountability of both officers and councillors?

31. It states in the INLOGOV report that the main impact of area management has been primarily through the expenditure of the project fund. Why has this been the case? Do you think this has been to the detriment of the experiment?

32. What effect has the low level of commitment had on the operation and success of the area management scheme? How will it affect any future developments?

33. Has the fact that members don't receive attendance allowance for their work on the working party influenced this low level of commitment?

34. What sort of commitment is there from the officers?

35. Do you see the cuts in public expenditure affecting this commitment and even the scheme's survival in the future? If so, how?

36. The INLOGOV report tends to stress the negative effect of the political nature of Dudley council. How has this developed since then? How do you think it will influence area management in the future?

37. Has the use of a planning district for the area management scheme as opposed to, say, a ward boundary, been detrimental to the operation or success of area management?

Group 3 - The relationship between officer and councillor in general, and its influence on area management.

38. How does the relationship between officer and councillor work or operate in practice - is there a good working arrangement between the two? What problems dominate this type of relationship?

39. In general terms, in what ways can this relationship be improved even further?

40. Has the area management scheme improved the relationship between officers and councillors? If so, how?

41. Despite the short life of the officer/member study groups, did they do anything to improve the relationship between the two?

42. How important do you think this type of joint group is to the development of area management?

43. Do you see the further development of area management as a means of further improving the working relationship of councillor and officer?

Group 4 : The officer career structure in the area management scheme.

44. Is there an identifiable career structure within the local authority as a whole, based on departments for example? If this is the case do you find it difficult to reconcile local area work with the wider professionalism in the local authority as a whole, especially in terms of outlook and attitudes?

45. Are the officers' career prospects affected in any way by their work in the area management scheme?

46. In terms of your post as Research Officer, how do you relate to the career structure of the local authority as a whole, and what problems have arisen because of this?

47. Do you think 'that the area management scheme in Dudley would have been more successful if your job had been integrated into the common career structure of the local authority?

48. In terms of your career what would be your next step after working in area management?

Group 5 : General/miscellaneous.

49. What has been the effect of the area management
    experiment relating to only one part of the
    borough on the success of the scheme? What would
    the benefits have been if more areas or the
    borough as a whole were under area management?

50. What do you see as the main achievements of the
    area management scheme in Dudley?

51. What do you think will happen in the future?
    How would you like to see it develop?

Case Study 3 : Stockport Metropolitan Borough.

Area Organisation 30.1.80.

Interviewee : Mr. Ian Cheetham, North Area Co-ordinator.

Group 1: Description of the area management scheme in
         terms of structure and organisation.

1. It would appear from the INLOGOV report that Stockport
   has a fairly well developed corporate system of
   management. In your opinion has it really improved
   management in the local authority? If so, how?

2. Do you think departmentalism has caused problems
   in the functioning of local government in Stockport:-
   (a) before reorganisation
   (b) since reorganisation

3. Has the corporate structure managed to produce a
   structure and policies which transcend departmental
   boundaries?

4. It is often suggested that corporate management
   causes a greater degree of centralisation in the
   work of the authority, do you think this has been
   the case in Stockport? Do you see area management as
   a response or corollary to this situation?

5. It would appear that the concept of area organisation
    or management has been closely associated with the
    corporate system since the consultants report in
    1971. In practice is the area management regarded
    as an integral part of the local authority structure
    and work or is it viewed as being marginal by
    certain departments or people? Do you think it is
    important for an area management scheme to be an
    integral part of the local authority structure?

6. In view of the fact that area management has been
    established for a very long time, do you see it as
    a means of adopting local government in terms of
    organisation and attitudes, or do you see it to
    be there to achieve a limited range of objectives?

7. Do you think the area management scheme has increased
    sensitivity and responsiveness to local needs and
    problems? If so, in what ways?

8. Does the organisation and/or the structure of the
    area management scheme in Stockport enhance or
    restrict the success of its objectives? If it
    is restricted how could it be improved?

9. In practice how do the area co-ordinators and area
    committees relate to the main line committees and
    do they have any real influence over them? Do you
    think that the main line committees feel threatened
    by the scheme?

10. One of the main arguments in favour of area
    management is that it provides an opportunity to
    tackle urban deprivation by discriminating in favour
    of an area or areas; but this does not appear to be
    the case in Stockport. Why do you think this is so
    and as a consequence what do you see as the main
    differences between your scheme and others in the
    rest of the country?

<u>Group 2</u>: The roles of officer and councillor in area
management.

11. Have you found that the roles of both officer and
councillor in the area management scheme conflict
with wider local authority policy - for example,
local area commitment may conflict with policy
for the borough as a whole?

12. The INLOGOV report refers to the Area Co-ordinator
and his team as an area-based officer team. Could
you tell me which officers make up these teams
and if they are inter-departmental in any way?
Do they work together successfully, (and if
necessary do they overcome their different depart-
mental backgrounds)?

13. Very little is said in the reports about the area
officers team or working groups. How do they
operate in practice, and are all departments
represented? Do they work together successfully
and are they capable of overcoming their different
departmental backgrounds to concentrate on one area?

14. How much time can the officers in this team devote
to area management? Do you find there are problems
relating to the fact that you work full-time on
area management while there are other officers
part-time?

15. What kind of input to the area management scheme
comes from this officers team? How important is
it to its success?

16. As Area Co-ordinator, how do you relate to other
departments which have decentralised their
activities, for example, housing and social
services? What has been the effect of the changes
mentioned in the INLOGOV report, for example the
housing staff moving out of the north area office?

17. Have you been able to produce a real inter-
    departmental approach to problems in the area
    organisation and have you been able to overcome
    departmental boundaries through the scheme?

18. Has the area management scheme changed the
    relationship between officers in any way?
    If so, how?

19. The report mentions the fact that there is a
    conflict built into the management structure in
    respect of the Area Co-ordinator's role vis-a-vis
    that of the Chief Officer. Why is this the case?
    How does this conflict materialise in practice?

20. Again the unwillingness of some staff to be co-
    ordinated is commented on in the report. Why
    is this the case? How does it occur in practice?

21. Similarly, the varied pattern of decentralisation
    among the services appears to have caused problems.
    How can you as area co-ordinator overcome these,
    if at all?

22. It seems to me, from the literature on the Stockport
    scheme, that a structure has been introduced which
    could facilitate the real development of an area-
    based inter-departmental approach to the local
    authority's work in terms of different departments
    working together at the local level, perhaps
    breaking down a mainly functional outlook. But
    in terms of its use and objectives it appears to
    stop short of this. How do you view this type of
    statement? Is something like this likely to develop
    in Stockport?

23. How important has the role of the councillor been to the operation of the area management scheme?

24. What sort of influence have the area committees had on policy making, if any?

25. Has the area management scheme done anything to enhance the role of the local councillor, in terms of, say, representing his area more efficiently and effectively?

26. Do you think it has improved the back-bencher's position in giving him greater access to information and being actively involved in decision-making?

27. It is often suggested that problems arise in terms of officers and councillors speaking a different language - officers being too technical, for example. Do you see this to be a problem in Stockport? Has area management done anything to ameliorate this state of affairs by increasing the contact with officers in a working situation?

28. Similarly, has area management done anything to increase the accountability of both officers and councillors?

29. It would appear that there has been a fair amount of commitment in Stockport to area management in the past. Is this still the case? Are officers and councillors still commited to this approach?

30. Do you see the cuts in public expenditure affecting this commitment in the future? What do you see as their effect, generally?

31. In retrospect, how do you think the particular political situation in Stockport has influenced the development of area management? Has it influenced the form or structure?

32. How were the boundaries of both the administrative areas and area committees decided upon? Have they affected the operation as success of the area management scheme?

Group 3 : The relationship between officer and councillor in general and its influence on area management.

33. How does the relationship between officer and councillor work or operate in practice - is there a good working relationship between the two? What problems dominate this type of relationship?

34. In general terms, in what ways can this relationship be improved even further?

35. Has the area management scheme improved the relationship between officers and councillors? If so, how?

36. Do you see the further development of area management as a means of further improving the working relationship of councillor and officer?

Group 4: The officer career structure in the area management scheme.

37. Is there an identifiable career structure within the local authority as a whole, say, based on departments?

38. Are the officers' career prospects affected in any way by their work in the area management scheme:

a) firstly, on the part of the full-time staff -
   area. co-ordinators, community development officers,
   information and office staff and administrative
   staff.

b) secondly, the officers in the area officers
   team.

39. In terms of your post as area co-ordinator how
do you relate to the career structure of the local
authority as a whole? What problems have arisen
because of this?

40. Do you think that the area management scheme in
Stockport would have been more successful if your
job had been integrated into the common career
structure of the local authority?

41. In terms of your career what would be your next
step after working in area management?

Group 5 : General/Miscellaneous.

42. What advantages do you think are gained by having
an area management scheme which covers the whole
local authority, as opposed to only one area, as
has happened in other authorities?

43. What do you see as the main achievements of the
area management scheme in Stockport?

44. What do you see developing in the future?

APPENDIX 2.

The Main Duties of Area Coordinators in Strathclyde.

1. Ensure that the attitudes and approach laid down
   in the council's red document on multiple de-
   privation (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1976C)
   are understood and accepted by all staff working
   in an area. The coordinator, in addition to
   helping with the delivery of services, is
   particularly concerned with fostering the human
   regeneration of the community.

2. Get a local team together and establish in parallel
   a member team from local district and community
   council representatives.

3. Chair the officer team and arrange for the servicing
   of this team.

4. Be in constant contact with the district and regional
   members involved.

5. Maintain contact with interested groups and organis-
   ations.

6. Through the local member and officer teams and in-
   volving the community, review existing services to
   see that these meet local needs. (This is a very
   large and on-going task and will involve consider-
   able work for all members of the team, very probably
   in addition to their day-to-day service delivery
   responsibilities).

7. Arising from the above, set up machinery for local
   public involvement in service delivery and in
   particular plans.

8. Handle urban aid application for the area.

9. Maintain contact with both Chief Executives.

10. Maintain contact with the community council.

11. Generally to be a receiver of complaints and
    initiator of problem solving and where appropriate
    become a stimulus to action in a trouble-shooting
    role.

Source: Strathclyde Regional Council, 1978 A.

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