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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 interlinked 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.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

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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 determining 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 intention of providing a clearer understanding of innovation 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 speaking 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 government, 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 inextricably 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 government reports all on the issue of reform and reorganisation, 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 reorganisation 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 management. 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, proliferated 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 fragmentation with corresponding difficulties in obtaining coordination.

In order to cure these ills, the Committee proposed 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 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 distinction between strategic decisions and their implementation 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 known, '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 Government 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 overlapping 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 unprecedented 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 1: A model of the policy making process

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 its 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 conservatism' - 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 its embodiment in over a century of local government history, nor the influence of central government 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 its development and its 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

1. Mechanistic Emphasis.

Much of corporate planning practice has been mechanistic. There has been too much emphasis on structural change and the introduction of new procedures 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 government. It is a double-edged problem; on the one hand, as Schon points out, "where we cannot help but perceive 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 uncertainty. 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. Centralisation.

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 disenchantment 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 consensual. It has in particular involved 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 widespread 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 management. He describes this as administrative 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, indicating 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 organisations, 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 alienation of the public from local government, apart from their wider remits of efficiency and internal coordination 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 government to allow for more sensitive and locally responsive 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.
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, however, 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 consideration 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 organisations.

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 intended 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 outdated 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 unnecessary 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
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**Figure 2**

**Classification of Area Management Scheme Objectives**

Source: Horn et al., 1977, p. 29.
has indicated the varying influences on the development 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, its 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 its 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 management, 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 government 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 translating 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 government owes as much to their perception and interpretation of change as to the prescriptions 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 perceptions 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 management 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 its 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 indispensable role, to local representative institutions exercising a free responsibility for appropriate sectors of governance, public welfare and social provisions"
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 government to democracy and democratic ideals, there are problems with this association. In this country democracy 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 introduction 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 developments 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Current Expenditure</th>
<th>Capital Debt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>£3,250 Million</td>
<td>£8,350 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>£13,000 Million</td>
<td>£25,000 Million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Local Authority expenditure, % of total P.E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 resources 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 individual councillors and officers. Greater sophistication 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 developing 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 government 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 development 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 professionalism 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) Professionalism and the corporate body.

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 government 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 transcendence 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 becoming 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 distinguish 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 administration 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 knowledge 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 façade hiding the perpetuation 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 intertwining of the political and technical; and organisationally, 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 prepared by the officers containing recommendations for action made by the officers. This situation is compounded 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 impenetrable control of senior politicians and chief officers.

These problems overlap with those of the technocratic 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, existing 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 utilitarian 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 alleviating 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 management 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 experiments 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 involve a claim on the financial resources of an authority" (Phillips, 1979, p.27). Because of this, the controversy 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 consensus 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 responsive. 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 relationship 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. SELSWICK
4. JESMOND
5. HEATON
6. SANDYFORD
7. WALKERGATE
8. ST. LAWRENCE
9. ST. ANTHONYS
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 concentrations 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/Pawdon/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

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.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
<th>Amount per Term</th>
<th>Central Stress Fund (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976/77</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977/78</td>
<td>£1,010,000</td>
<td>£45,000</td>
<td>£500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978/79</td>
<td>£860,000</td>
<td>£55,000</td>
<td>£200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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 limitations 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.P. 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 departmental 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 increased 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 background 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. The post of team leader must be a full-time post, 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/implementation 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 responsible 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: Brierley 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

- Sedgley
- Cosley
- Gornal
- Dudley Centre
- Kingswinford & Wordsley
- Pensnett
- Netherton
- Brierley Hill
- Stourbridge Centre
- Cradley
- Lye
- Halesowen Centre
- Lapal
- Pedmore & Norton

B: BRIERLEY HILL AREA

- Town centres
- Railway
- G.I.A.
- Proposed G.I.A.
- Major areas of private housing development

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

Legend:
- District Plan Area Boundary
- Area management area
- 0 1 2 3 miles
- 0 1 2 3 kms
- 0 1/2 1 1 1/2 kms
Figure 6

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AREA MANAGEMENT
IN DUDLEY

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 interdisciplinary 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 management 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. **The Area Management Research Officer.**

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 research.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1976/77 Small Projects Fund.</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental improvement of three sites</td>
<td>7,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of two summer playschemes</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1977/78 Small Projects Fund.</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three summer playschemes</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental improvement of five sites</td>
<td>4,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of play equipment at three sites</td>
<td>1,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services &quot;Link Opportunity&quot; scheme</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants to community centres for provision of equipment</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,340</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 something 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 recommendations 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

Source: Harrop et. al., 1978, p. 118
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 management'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 tasks were. If this is not defined, departments will
Figure 8: Reporting Structure of Dudley's Corporate Management System

Source: Harrop et al., 1978, p.121
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 commitment 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 discussion 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, Spurrer 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 UJMGOY. The present 'area organisation' in Stockport Metropolitan Borough originated 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 recommendations 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 Coordinator 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

Source: Harrop et. al, 1978, p.11
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AREA ORGANISATION IN STOCKPORT

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) Co-ordination of local services.

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 casework, 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 coordinator 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 coordinator'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 anc 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 non­party 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 pre­sent 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 cut­backs 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 relationship 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 relationship' 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 responsiveness 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, overall 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 influence 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. Its 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 its 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 management is pursued further in an attempt to establish how area management can help to change these prevailing 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 government. 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 demonstrates. 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 achievements. 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 Cheatham 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 reconciliation 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 Dussbury, 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 respond 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 resistance 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 management 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 therefore 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, coordination, streamlining service delivery, fact finding, contact with local people and the inception of recommendations 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 backgrounds 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 development. 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 reflects 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 divisional 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.
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 understanding of the problems and needs of a particular area. This factor is highlighted as being perhaps the most important aspect of the councillors contribution. 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, 1960).

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 what is 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 management 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-benchers 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 organisation 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 recommendations 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.36-91). "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 discrimination, 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, vigorously 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 willingness 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 administrative 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 strong 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 commitment 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 management 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 restrict 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 effectiveness 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 its 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 sustaining 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 departmentalism 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." (Spurrer, 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 other's 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 responsibility 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 department 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: Areas of Need - Personnel involved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Doon Valley</th>
<th>Kilmarnock</th>
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<th>Renton</th>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>A. Johnston (Ind)</td>
<td>R. Creighton (Lab)</td>
<td>J. Mackenzie (Ind)</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<td>P. Hainey (STP)</td>
<td>J. Hunter (Lab)</td>
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<td>U</td>
<td></td>
<td>J. Hodge (LAB)</td>
<td>R. Ledgerwood (Scot.Con)</td>
<td>Mrs. M. Parker (Scot.Con)</td>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>W. Goudie</td>
<td>J. Hunter</td>
<td>M. Haran</td>
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<td>O</td>
<td>Policy &amp;</td>
<td></td>
<td>R. Carson</td>
<td>J. Hemphill</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Resources</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>Rep.</td>
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#### Community Councils

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<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>A. Robertson (District-Planner)</td>
<td>R. Stuart (Region Education)</td>
<td>A.C. Murray- (Region-Architects)</td>
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#### Policy Planning

| Unit-Liaison | A. Newman | J. Pearson | E. Woldman |

See Over.
TABLE 4: Areas of Need—Personnel involved (contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Faifley, Hardgate/Sykeside/A</th>
<th>Greenend, Carnboe</th>
<th>Maryhill</th>
<th>Priesthill</th>
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<td>S. Ewing (SNP) F. Duffy (Lab)</td>
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<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>H. Duffy (Lab)</td>
<td>R. Gray (Lab)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A. Veitch (Con)</td>
<td>D. Hodge (Lab)</td>
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<td>M. Gouldie (Con)</td>
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<th>Mrs. C. Toal</th>
<th>L. McGarry</th>
<th>J. Craig</th>
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<td>Rep.</td>
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Community Councils

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Coordinator

- L. Russell (Region-Physical Planning)
- Evelyn Cairns (Region-Social Work)
- M. Davidson (Region-Planner)
- I. Irvine (Region-Social Work)

Policy Planning Liaison-Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E. Woldman</th>
<th>P. Mitchell</th>
<th>I. Hill</th>
<th>I. Hill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


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 representatives 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 its 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, duplication 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 management' 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 departments, 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 integrated into the structure of both Regional and District Councils, has executive powers and an area budget, and which will help to develop a strong commitment from both officers and councillors at the centre and the locality. 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
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 Departments 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 coordinator'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 responsibilities 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 request 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 politicians. 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 workload. 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 Group's 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 objectives.

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 management 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 Cheatham 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 information service, we play a valuable role in this respect and one which may even be enhanced by the prevailing economic situation." (Cheatham, 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 fragmentation 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 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 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 effectiveness 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 organisation. 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 significant 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 "'differentiation' 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 predominant 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 interfering 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 management, 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'être 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 therefore, 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 responsive 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 management can provide a vital step.
APPENDIX 1: Questions used in Case-Study interviews.

Case Study 1: City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Priority Areas Programme, 7.1.80.

Interviewee: Mr. David Roberts, City Planning Officer.

Group 1: 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 improvement 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 effectiveness?

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 increasing the contact with officers in a working situation?

24. Similarly, do you think area management will increase 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 professionalism 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 effectiveness 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 spending 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 departmentalism?

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 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 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 management 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 increased 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 conflict with wider local authority policy - in the that for example, local area commitment 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 successfully 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 EHLOGOV 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?
Group 2: 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 departmental 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 committed 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 deprivation (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 organisations.

6. Through the local member and officer teams and involving the community, review existing services to see that these meet local needs. (This is a very large and on-going task and will involve considerable 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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