



<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>

Theses Digitisation:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/research/enlighten/theses/digitisation/>

This is a digitised version of the original print thesis.

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study,
without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first
obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any
format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author,
title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND STRUCTURE PLANNING.

Innovations in British Planning.

Anthony Gwyn Bidgood.

Submitted as part of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy.

Department of Town and Regional Planning,

University of Glasgow,

March 1974.

ProQuest Number: 10800602

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10800602

Published by ProQuest LLC (2018). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

"If you persist in honest service, you will soon
be engaging in sabotage. Do you follow that?"

Paul Goodman, "The Grand Piano" 1942

Quoted by Colin Ward, "Paul Goodman and the
educative city" (Town and Country Planning, vol. 40,
November 1972)

Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks are due to the following for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of this dissertation:

Mr. Derek C. Nicholls and Miss Sheila T. McDonald, for their original encouragement;

Mr. Doug McCallum, my supervisor, for his especially valued help at all stages;

Various members of the City Architect's, Planning and Reconstruction Department in Stoke-on-Trent;

Mrs. Jo Barnes at the Staffordshire County Planning Office;

Hermann Hesse, Richard Brautigan, Aly Bain, Joni Mitchell, The Velvet Underground and McEwan's Export, for taking my mind off the subject whenever necessary.

Contents

- 1.....Introduction
- 8.....Theories of democracy and participation
- 19.....Reasons for participation
- 31.....The legislative background
- 42.....Case study
- 60.....Critique of participation in structure planning
- 78.....Building an alternative model of participation

- 87.....Appendices, bibliography

Introduction

2.....Purpose of dissertation

2.....Necessity for this study

3.....Case study

4.....Assumptions of this study

Purpose of dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation will be to examine the impact and respective requirements of the introduction to planning in this country of structure and local planning, and public participation in planning, especially as these relate to each other; to discover such conflicts as may become apparent between them, and to attempt to suggest avenues for the resolution of these conflicts. The study will examine the theoretical basis under which participation has been incorporated into the British planning system, with reference to the ideas of political theorists of the last two hundred years. The various laws relating to participation in planning, and the reports of the Planning Advisory Group and the Committee on Public Participation in Planning ('the Skeffington Committee')* in particular, will also be examined.

Necessity for this study

There has been little work published in this country on the application of participatory theories of democracy to planning, yet participation is being introduced piecemeal into the legislation, possibly with an inadequate understanding of either the process or the ends to which the process will lead. There is a danger that such grafting of aspects of one political tradition onto a structure derived from, and reflecting, another could increase the very tensions and delays in the planning mechanism which it is intended to mitigate. In the report of the Skeffington Committee there is little evidence of a rigorous theoretical awareness of the requirements, in political terms, of a participatory society; there are signs of confusion between, for instance, "participation" and "publicity", a two-way and a one-way flow of ideas. It

* H.M.S.O. 1965 (a)
H.M.S.O. 1969 (a)

is hoped that the study could help to clarify some of the issues involved, and to point out some of the shortcomings of the present system of participation in development planning.

Case study

In order to illustrate the way in which people are being encouraged to participate in the development planning process, the public participation phase of structure plan preparation of two local planning authorities, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, will be examined. There are several reasons for selecting these two authorities.

Firstly, they cover adjacent territory in the Midlands of England, and Stoke will become a District of the new County of Staffordshire after local government reorganization takes place this year.

Secondly, structure plan preparation is proceeding concurrently in the two areas, and the plans will be submitted at approximately the same time to the central government for approval.

Thirdly, there are significant differences of approach, in that the county has complied with the letter of the law, and instituted the bare minimum of "participation", whereas the city has done rather more, and indeed has a history of involving people in planning decisions, stretching back to pre-Skeffington days. Stoke can be criticised on some aspects of their participation programme, but this criticism is qualitatively different from that which, from the viewpoint of a proponent of participatory democracy, can be levelled at the Staffordshire authority for effectively bypassing the issue.

Assumptions of this study

Social studies cannot be said to be value free, because a human being involved with society is unable to study it, still less plan for its future well-being, without being influenced, albeit unconsciously, by his own prejudices and subjective judgements. There is very little in the writings of the most eminent of practising planners which could lead one to suppose that this position was accepted, or even considered, although no-one appears willing to assert that planning has an inviolate theoretical base which could serve as a platform for a value free science.

It would seem reasonable to suggest that, without any coherent theoretical base, planning expertise is procedural, and certainly based on accumulated assumptions and beliefs, rather than being scientific. As such it cannot be infallible: there is not a "correct" way to solve a planning problem, although some solutions "seem" preferable to others. It is profitable, therefore, to analyse planning as a political process, in as much as it makes choices, which are based on imperfect knowledge and derived from a subjective viewpoint, that affect people's lives. It seems sensible to suggest that, in a democratic country, planning should reflect the democratic nature of national and local politics, and planners have recognised this:

"Now let us consider the public, who are the consumers of planning. Because of the growing complexity of modern society, people on whose behalf decisions are made have become increasingly remote from the decision makers, and consequently they feel more and more frustrated at being left out of the decision-making process generally and planning decisions in particular; others know nothing about it ... Too much planning has gone on for too long behind the closed doors of town halls, and a vast gap has developed between the 'planners and the planned' ..."*

* Bor, Walter 1970 (a)

There is a fear that participation could lead to a state in which nothing is done to come to and implement decisions for fear of being anti-democratic. But

"... at the very heart of planning is the need to make decisions. The call for participation should not blind us to that. So we must devise a system of citizen participation that will remove the suspicion that 'everything is decided before we are told' but which realises that once the debate is over someone will decide."*

Surely, following the logic of "planning as a political process", that "someone", who decides, should be either the people as a body, or an elected representative or group of representatives of the people. Public participation should aim to retrieve for the people the realities of power at present held by the expert, accountable in practice not to the people but to himself; the expert would then work with the people and for them, rather than deciding their fate. As Walter Bor, president of the Town Planning Institute for the year 1970-71, remarked:

"Perhaps one of the most difficult problems public participation poses is the simple question: 'Who represents the community's interests?'.**"

Officials have power delegated to them by the representatives of the people. The power in theory lies with the representatives, indeed the "expert" is generally accountable to the representatives in the case of a crucial decision: this is recognised as being a political matter, too important to leave to officials who are not elected and not answerable to the people. However, nearly every planning decision is taken largely by the planner himself - this is the "technical" planning process, which runs rather like a machine. Raw material is fed in at one end (for instance applications for planning permission), power is applied in a prescribed

* Ashworth, Professor Graham 1973 (a)

** Bor, Walter 1970 (a)

manner (planning expertise and rules of thumb), and the finished product appears (the planning decision) at the other end. This is not political, says the planner, merely technical. However, there seems to be no coherent argument which will state that a technical question can be distinguished from a political question, whatever the degree of controversy surrounding it. If the planner is to sustain the myth, for such it is, of the "technical decision", he must show that a technical decision, such as that to allow the building of a house, is qualitatively different from a political decision, such as that to build an airport in a beautiful area of farmland. This would appear to be more a quantitative difference: in the latter case there are more interested parties, more generally at stake, than in the former case. But there is no qualitative difference - the process of analysis and decision follows the same course, although it is vastly more complicated in the case of the airport.

Most planners would agree that traditional planning, mainly physically oriented, is totally inadequate to meet the needs of modern society:

"It is scarcely surprising that there is social stress, but we delude ourselves if we think that it can be resolved purely within the context of physical planning."*

Despite the avowed shortcomings of planning, planners wish to solve their problems of communication and decision-making by means of a vast aggrandisement of the scope of planning as a profession. The Royal Town Planning Institute, according to Bor**, should be "the focus of all such activities" - including many government and economic functions on a national scale!

* Millar, J.S. 1972 (a)

** Bor, Walter 1970 (a)

The aim of this dissertation will be to suggest that a vast increase in the influence of town planning will not help in solving the problems which I hope to identify as crucial, mainly those concerned with involving people in the self-management of their own lives. Alternative ways in which the planning process, in terms specifically of local and structure plans, could work more effectively will be suggested. The main theme will be that an increase in the power and influence of the man in the street, rather than that of the "expert", could be beneficial; the questions of whether more planners are needed, and whether they should be listened to more, are regarded as secondary to the question of who has the right and the duty to make the necessary decisions and to carry them out. In a democracy the right, and the duty, falls on the people or their agents.

Theories of democracy and participation

9.....Introduction

10.....Classical theorists and participatory democracy

15.....Theories of representative and elitist democracy

Introduction

Democracy, as it has been understood, in the United Kingdom especially, for the last century and a half, derives from the ideas of four political theorists in particular: Bentham, James Mill, Rousseau and John Stuart Mill.

Broadly speaking, Bentham and James Mill espoused the view that the crucial feature of a democracy is that the people will periodically choose the representatives who will govern them, who will make and implement decisions on their behalf. Their ideas differed in important respects from conventional twentieth century democratic thought, yet it is from these two theorists above all that the latter derives.

Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, however, believed that democracy was primarily a means by which the individual could play a continuing part in shaping society, and in the process shape his own life. To this end the aim of these writers was, not just participation in politics, but a participatory society.

Thus there were two distinct strands of thought as to what constitutes a democracy, and two consequent strands of thought as to the purpose thereof. Bentham and James Mill, whose purpose was to develop a system of government for the state under which it would be justly and efficiently governed, have come to be known as theorists of representative democracy, while Rousseau, and to a lesser extent John Stuart Mill, considered that of possibly greater importance was the psychological impact of participating on the individual; they are known as the theorists of participatory democracy.

The conventional wisdom of the twentieth century political theorists was derived from the representative school of thought, although, as I shall indicate, there has been some misunderstanding of exactly what this implies. Onto this structure has been recently imposed, in some areas of politics, a frail

superstructure of participation, without any rigorous attempt to ensure that participation and representative democracy are compatible.

One of the principal areas in which participation has been introduced is planning; this is curious in that conventional political wisdom has regarded planning as merely a technical and administrative arm of government. If planning were a technical process, it is difficult to see where participation by a public ignorant of the theories and methodologies involved could be useful, and if planning were an administrative machine, participation would merely slow down its work-rate. Thus the introduction of participation into planning would seem to be a recognition that what is being dealt with is a political matter. Planning is an arm of government, whether local or national, which takes political, and therefore, as will be argued later, partial decisions which affect people's lives. The reasons for incorporating participation into the practice of planning will be dealt with later as well, but now the development of participatory thought will be considered.

Classical theorists and participatory democracy

Bentham considered that the interests of the individual lie mainly in security against bad government; this is in the interest of nearly everybody in the country, so that in this respect people in aggregate will tend to express the universal interest, and individual "sinister" interests will lose out. Freedom of thought and expression are essential, and everyone will influence everyone else over issues and ideals; this is not to say that each individual will influence others to the same extent; that would be unreasonable since some men are more intelligent and persuasive than others. Bentham realised that men are not ruled purely by reason, that passions have possibly a greater effect. Thus there was no

requirement that individuals should be rational. The individual merely chooses his representative, and if the representative does not support the policies that he would favour, he can choose a different one at the next election.

James Mill considered that people's sympathies are with one another, not with exterior parties whose interests come into competition with theirs. Educating the electorate would produce socially responsible voting, since in the process of education the working classes would take the middle classes as their "wise and virtuous" model. The universal interest, as suggested by Bentham, is the sum of individual interests.

The main concern of Rousseau was the psychological effect of participating on the participator; the interrelationship between individuals and the institutions that they comprise was an organic one, where those individuals were encouraged to participate in the governance of the institution. Certain economic conditions had to be fulfilled if the participatory society were to function correctly. Ideally it was a society of small peasant proprietors, with universal property ownership, and economic inequalities should not be so large as to create political inequalities. Independence and equality could be preserved only if interdependence existed; each citizen was to be "excessively dependent on the republic".

"... men are to be ruled by the logic of the operation of the political situation that they had themselves created, and ... this situation was such that the possibility of the rule of individual men was 'automatically' precluded."*

The concept of the General Will is of importance here; like James Mill and Bentham, Rousseau believed that nobody would vote for a policy that was not to his own advantage, but that the law would "emerge" from this process, such that it, not men, would govern.

* Pateman, Carole 1970 (a) p.23

"... how should it be that the general will is always rightful and that all men constantly wish the happiness of each but for the fact that there is no one who does not take that word 'each' to pertain to himself and in voting for all think of himself?"*

The important point is that everyone would, under circumstances of near equality, submit himself to the same conditions which he imposes upon others.

Rousseau considered that participation had a triple role to play. The central function was educative: "Rousseau's ideal system is designed to develop responsible, individual social and political action through the effect of the participatory process."** The learning process produced a public as well as a private citizen, so that, unlike any other political system, this one is self-sustaining; its operation produces the same qualities which are needed for its maintenance. The second role of participation was that it gives the individual control over his own life. No one is master over another, for everyone is his own master. "Quiconque est maître ne peut être libre."*** The third role is that of giving everyone a sense of belonging in society - an integrative function, increasing the feeling among individual citizens that they "belong" in their community.

These three hypotheses remain the basis for arguments in favour of public participation in political life to this day:

"Although Rousseau was writing before the modern institutions of democracy were developed, and his ideal society is a non-industrial city-state, it is in his theory that the basic hypotheses about the functions of participation in a democratic polity can be found."****

John Stuart Mill was the first of a number of writers who

* Pateman, op. cit., quote p.23 *** Pateman, quote p.27
 ** Pateman, pp.24-25 **** Pateman, p.22

have failed in an attempt to synthesise the ideas of representative and participatory democracy. He was in favour of some form of democracy, because even a benevolent despotism could not foster the characters of individuals as could be done by giving them some responsibility. Citizens did not need to be rational in order to participate; the best policy would inevitably be the sum of the "partialities" of individuals. An important point is that Mill stressed the dangers of centralisation; local participation was crucial, particularly so since it had a real educative effect on the individual much greater than that obtainable by participation in national affairs. Where he diverged from Rousseau's thinking, however, was in looking for an accountable ruling elite, believing that educated people should have a proportionally greater say in government; this would of course give them greater power, and would produce a predetermined elite, albeit an open one. The environment would no longer be the "strongly" educational one that Mill desired, and this contradiction he never resolved. In increasing the importance given to formal education, the possibilities for the informal "education for citizenship" espoused by Rousseau would inevitably be lessened. Possibly Mill's confused view of an "elite" reflected the reality of modern society's need for administrative competence, as compared with Rousseau's pre-modern ideal of society.

An important feature of Mill's later thinking was that his participatory concepts were extended to industry. He was an anti-centralist, and saw the government of the workplace by the workers as political participation in its own right. These ideas were taken up by a number of later writers, including, in this century, G.D.H.Cole. The three hypotheses of Rousseau* were accepted, and Cole pursued further the integration of these with a modern industrial society,

* see above, p. 12

following J.S.Mill's lead. The structures he suggested are less important, especially in the context of planning today, than the ideas with which he was dealing. For Cole's writings provide a bridge between Rousseau and present day realities. His theory was built on the principle of will and not force being the basis for social and political organisation, an argument of Rousseau's:

"I assume that the object of social organisation is not merely material efficiency, but also essentially the fullest self-expression of all the members." The individual is "most free where he co-operates with his equals in the making of laws." Society is "a complex of associations held together by the wills of their members."*

Association was based on the principle of function, rather than class or party; representatives, where they were necessary, represented people of their own backgrounds, and could be recalled at any time; thus they could not misrepresent. This constant participation, through the workplace or other organisation, allowed everyone to learn democracy. There is no necessary incompatibility between representatives making decisions and the participatory society, so long as these representatives do not have independent power such that they do not, in fact, represent.

Cole identified the fundamental evil in society as slavery, not poverty, and a servile industrial structure resulted in a servile political structure. Inequality was fatal to democracy, and Cole followed a principle of Rousseau, who said that "no citizen shall be rich enough to buy another and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself".** The "rationality problem" was solved, since the learning process tended towards rationality, and the representatives spoke the same language as those they represented. There was no need for representatives except where large scale operations

* Pateman, op.cit, as quoted p.36

** Pateman, quote p.23

were inevitable, and direct democracy would obtain at local industrial (or, by analogy, local government) scale. If the reserves in the average man were tapped, there would be greater efficiency as well.

To summarise the ideas presented, as they relate to the subject of this dissertation:

- the general will is always rightful;
- individuals and institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another;
- participation has primarily an educative function; it also has an integrative function, and aids the acceptance of decisions;
- there is feedback built in, and the system is self-sustaining.

Theories of representative and elitist democracy

Most political theorists of this century have not taken the view outlined above, and ideas have differed considerably on most of the vital issues; most importantly, the ideas themselves have not been properly understood, and only partially digested. Political scientists have claimed a value freedom which they manifestly do not possess, and, in comparison with the thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, suffer to an extraordinary degree from a complacency which leads to their constructing lengthy arguments to prove that the best possible system of government is that which already exists, at any rate in Britain and the United States. Earlier authors might in some cases be accused of an idealism verging on the utopian, but this imaginative and hopeful approach is surely more useful than one which sets out merely to defend an entrenched position. This condemnation is not meant to be applied to all political scientists, but especially to Schumpeter and some of those influenced by him.

Two writers of influence, Michels and Mosca, studied modern society empirically in the early years of this century, and came to much the same conclusion, that democracy as it was normally understood in an analysis derived from Bentham and James Mill, was impossible to attain in full. Michels (1915) studied the German Social Democratic parties, and his famous "Iron law of oligarchy" was formulated thus:

"... in the life of modern democratic parties we may observe signs of ... indifference. It is only a minority which participates in party decisions and sometimes the minority is ludicrously small."*

He believed that maximum participation was incompatible with large scale organisation, as did Cole, but whereas Cole's solution was to break down the large units into smaller ones of a manageable size, Michels could only suggest that an elite-based democracy was an inevitability. The events of the 1930's were to confirm for many people that participation on a mass scale was incompatible with democracy, and even with civilisation. Mosca (1939) wrote the following:

"In the world in which we are living, socialism will be arrested only if a realistic political science succeeds in demolishing the metaphysical and optimistic methods that prevail at present in social studies."*

As Hague has written, this is an interesting statement in that it establishes a claim to a scientific and objective empiricism, while adopting a subjective political stance. Mosca saw society as consisting of two classes - the rulers, and those who are ruled. The former were superior, or were the descendents of those who were; it was in this qualification that the danger lay, because the elite could become fossilised and out of touch. So the case was argued for free elections and majority rule, providing an open elite within which control would be exercised.

* both quotes from Hague, Cliff 1972 (a)

Schumpeter (1943) rejected the idea of democratic theory as a theory of means and ends, thus rejecting out of hand the whole of participatory theory; it was just a political method, without normative overtones. Democracy should certainly be modified if necessary to bring about the desired end. The "Classical Doctrine of Democracy", which conforms to none of the "doctrines" outlined above, was dismissed as unrealistic. The notion of the common good was rejected, because different people and groups made different demands on the political process, and as a consequence the general will was equally mythical. Individuals were not capable of independently reaching opinions on all issues (as Bentham had realised two centuries before) so that decision making was best left to the representatives of the people, or of part of the people. People no longer needed to hold opinions, only to vote occasionally. This was the meaning of democracy, and a tradition grew up of value free, empirical studies. Theories, during the period of the cold war, stressed stability as a defence against totalitarianism, a stability which was best served by a minimum of participation. Decisions were to be taken by competing and enlightened elites. This suggests, for the majority of the population who could not participate because they were not enlightened, an approximation to the totalitarianism it was supposed to oppose.

Using the guidelines laid down by Schumpeter, Berelson (1954) stated that the survival of democracy depends on limiting the intensity of conflict, restraining change, and maintaining stability, consensus, and a pluralist social order. This is a succinct statement of what Styles (1971), himself an elitist, has called the elitist-democracy approach.

Democratic elitist ideals are an essential complement to the end-of-ideology writings in the 1950's. The basic thesis was that the West had solved the problems of industrial society, so that the remaining issues were minor and could be solved by technical experts. The elites, of the Left and

the Right wings, were enlightened, agreeing on such issues as the welfare state, economic planning, some public ownership, and the mixed economy. The threat to the good society was only from politically motivated men, left-over ideologues, and the good society was the status quo. This view, held by a number of American theorists, was accepted in Britain by, among others, the Committee on Public Participation in Planning*, and thus has a persuasive force on this side of the Atlantic as well. However,

"As we have seen the end of ideology and democratic elitism are not the value-free describers of an inevitable and everlasting political situation which they claim to be; they are ideologies in their own right, ideologies of political complacency which justify and celebrate the status quo. Yet they are ideologies which currently have a strong appeal to planners - they flatter his professional vanity (after all he is one of the experts so vital to the life of the post-industrial society), yet reassure him of his political neutrality, while their empiricism and quantitative techniques bestow intellectual respect."**

* see below, pp. 37-39

** Hague, op. cit.

N.B. For discussion of Schumpeter and Berelson, see Pateman, op. cit., pp.3-8

For discussion of Styles, see Hague, op. cit.

Reasons for participation

20.....Introduction

20.....Models of local government

25.....Problems of planning

29.....Appropriate levels for decision making

Introduction

A discussion of the function of participation in local government planning must derive from the interpretation which is put upon the purposes of local government, and the functions of town and country planning within this framework. The consequences of assuming that local self-government is the most important aspect of local government are widely different from the consequences of considering that its primary function is the local administration of central policies. In planning terms, it is the difference between aiding communities to guide the evolution of their own physical environment, including an attempt to assess the social and economic effects of any policy, and a situation in which the function of the planner is seen primarily in terms of interpreting, in a fair and rational manner, the various planning, housing and highways acts, and applying them in accordance with central government dictates.

Models of local government

Money has suggested three possible approaches to the understanding of local government*, and examined the likely consequences of accepting each view. Local government existing as an administrative agency of central government would require for its operation on local involvement at all, although local staff and councillors could be used in deference to the notion that efficiency is enhanced by democracy. The best system of management would correspond closely to Weber's "ideal-type" model of bureaucracy, and any elected members would be assimilated into the system, rather than being put in charge of it. The local government system would tend to become ever

* Money, John 1973 (a)

more extensively and systematically bureaucratic. It is increasingly possible to provide a full range of central government services at the local level, so the need for local government constantly diminishes; even local representatives need not be elected. If this model were fully adopted, it would mark the final abandonment of local government in favour of local administration.

The sui generis model is what Money calls the "British Muddling Through approach, best suited to our own empirical political genius". Local government is what local government does. There is no division between local and central government functions and powers on a logical basis. A Weberian-type bureaucracy is again suitable for this model, which is apparently a "no change" policy; in practice, constitutional changes would occur via observable centripetal tendencies:

"The argument that larger local governments can be 'trusted' with more initiative is more than offset by the fact that unless they are given enough power to offer real resistance to central policies, their very size makes them more amenable to central control."

This would lead in practice to the loss of the local self-government element, no less than would the systematic application of the administrative agency model. Constitutional changes that occurred would be "pragmatic, tardy, unco-ordinated and implicit". This is contrary to government thinking as expressed by the Royal Commission on Local Government*, when it talks of "the need to sustain a viable system of local democracy". Closer central government control, in both of these models, would mean that the quality of local administration would depend more on the characteristics of the individual administrator than on the present mixture of professional tradition and political accountability:

* HMSO 1969 (b)

"We tend to entrust (our administrators) not with more responsibility than it is good for them to have, but with more responsibility than it is good for us as citizens to give up."

The natural rights model begins from the assumption that man has a right to a say in government, and that this is ideally expressed by actual participation, which can be realised most easily via local government. Participation in the administration of policies is second only to participation in their formulation, and local government allows more people to participate, providing a valuable training in the problems of democracy and government. This, of course, also takes place in industry and commerce in the form of trades unions, trade associations and many other bodies. This model requires the maximum feasible amount of direct democracy, which is not considered feasible with more than 30,000 people involved. This conflicts with recent trends towards larger authorities, but not with evidence about the relationships between size and efficiency in service administration. There is not the same necessity, with this model, to organise things along bureaucratic lines, but a bureaucratic administration may still be appropriate:

"There are widely-held but limiting assumptions about the relationships between local government and democracy, and there are similarly limiting assumptions about the relationships between public administration and bureaucracy. The problem is not bureaucracy as such, but the way in which it is used, and what it is used for."

The natural rights model would entail sweeping constitutional changes, as regards the concept itself, and as regards the appropriate structures. There would be a real devolution of power, but central government would still have overriding powers, to be used only sparingly.

Local authority organisations would have to meet the criteria of democracy and efficiency if they were to be acceptable. "The idea of democratic government is a doctrine of do it yourself"

but in practice it has often to be government by a responsible oligarchy, accountable to a majority of the people. This has led, via a confusion between democratic and majority government, to the argument that local government is anti-democratic if it frustrates the national will on an issue; thus some see local government as undesirable, preferring local administration of national policies. This can be countered by one who regards democracy as a means of helping the self-government of an individual or group. The individual has a public and a private identity, and each has rights; as a member of an interest group a person has rights too, and the value of a group's opinion derives from its existence as a group, not from its size. Money writes, further, that

"The fact that the (natural rights) doctrine is not normally discussed in a local government context is just another indication of the administrative frame of reference which has encompassed so much of the debate on local government."

The necessary conclusion is that a devolution of certain central government powers of supervision and approval should be considered in order to exclude government from some areas of local decision making, such that any intervention would have to take the form of a specific invasion of autonomy at the local level by the action of Parliament, as could yet happen in Scotland if planning procedures are bypassed in order to secure sites for oil-related development.

There is considerable debate as to the relationship between efficiency and democracy at the local government level. Some have considered them, frankly, as alternatives, while others see them as totally separate and unconnected issues. It can be suggested that efficiency in local government cannot be possible without democracy, so long as the end of local government is the maximum possible realisation of the democratic ideals of equality, liberty and self-direction. Rather, efficiency in this context is the economy with which resources are used in implementing those policy decisions democratically arrived at, at the local level. It has little or nothing

to do with the implementing of national policies, which is a separate issue. That this argument is central to the major concerns of local government is evidenced by management studies and organisational theory, which have suggested that organisations coping with change need to be flexible and non-hierarchical, entailing a high degree of participation. This assumes that change is effective only if actively desired, and is actively supported when there has been a share in the formulation and implementation of policies. It is those who believe that democratic ideals are naive in the "real" world of local government who are themselves naive. Burns and Stalker, writing about the work situation, characterised the non-hierarchical "organic" system as follows, differentiating it from the bureaucratic "mechanistic" system:

"The lead in joint decisions is frequently taken by whoever shows himself most informed and capable, i.e., the 'best authority'.

A second observation is that the area of commitment to the concern is far more extensive in organic than in mechanistic systems. Commitment, in fact, is expected to approach that of the professional scientist to his work, and frequently does. One further consequence of this is that it becomes far less feasible to distinguish 'informal' from 'formal' organisation. The emptying out of significance from the hierarchic command system, is countered by the development of shared beliefs about the values and goals of the concern."

The authors add a coda to this, however:

"We have endeavoured to stress the appropriateness of each system to its own specific set of conditions. ... The beginning of administrative wisdom is the awareness that there is no one optimum type of management system."*

* Burns and Stalker 1961 (a) p.122

Problems of Planning

Planning operates within the local government framework; as such the same choice of operational model, serving the same choice of ends, exists for planning as does for the whole of local government. Planning began as a response to a problem in local administration - the terrible state of housing and drainage, especially, around the turn of the century in most of Britain's major cities - but has long since been assimilated into national legislation as a local arm of central government administration. This corresponds with Money's view of local government as an administrative agency, and such recent innovations as regional and sub-regional planning (albeit non-statutory) by the various Regional Planning Boards and Councils, not directly responsible to any electorate, and the Highlands and Islands Development Board, with its powers to spend its money where and how it chooses without reference, necessarily, to local opinion, re-affirm the trend which Money noted towards the abandonment of local government in favour of local administration, whether by design (the "administrative agency" model) or by evolution (the "sui generis" model).

The dangers inherent in this process are numerous, apart from the hypothesis that efficiency (the most effective implementation of policy) is desirable and that it is a function of democracy, which would be increasingly denied were this process to continue unabated.

There is the problem of partiality. A group of people put forward all, or most, of the ideas which will be considered in the planning process. This group has had largely the same or similar education and training, whether as planners, engineers or architects, has a similar class background, and so naturally reflects its own interests and projects them onto others. A position accepted by this group because of its homogeneity can be seriously challenged by people

outside the group; the real world situation is essentially heterogeneous - the more so the larger the decision-making unit - and a consensus may be hard to achieve, even impossible, yet this is no reason to suggest that the consensus view of one group should prevail. In a democracy, this is not acceptable; even Schumpeter and Berelson would wish their elite to be responsive through the ballot box to the mass of the people. When planners have this power, despite nominally being the servants of the elected politicians, situations can easily arise wherein people who oppose the plans of the planners can be labelled as non-conforming, as acting against the public interest, and therefore against their own interest. Thus the decision maker may see his position as being one in which he can and must dictate to people what their own interest is. This does not necessarily impute any Napoleonic conceit on the part of the planner, but is merely a consequence of his occupational situation. He has the information, the resources to obtain more information, the training and the status to make the decision, de facto. *with incentives...*

Another problem is that of planning ideology, which has hitherto had several components. Importantly, there are the "do-good" approach, derived from the concern with public health and welfare upwards of seventy years ago, and the "idealist" approach, derived from the Utopian ideas of Ebenezer Howard, and traceable back through William Morris to Samuel Butler and Jonathan Swift. These have become combined in the conventional wisdom of planning in the garden city and new town movements, which assume, most importantly, that the planner knows what is good for people - he has a vision of an ideal world which he wants to spread as widely as possible. That people would not wish, perhaps, to live at low densities with birds and trees and grass around them is because they have not been educated to appreciate them. Once they have been privy to this truth, they will thank the people who gave them a new life. This reflects all the aspirations of the middle class group whose idea the garden

city was, but the fact that it does not necessarily suit the majority of the population (although, equally, it may do so) should be recognised. Indeed until very recently there was no attempt to find out, even in the abstract, what kind of planning would suit which groups of people, let alone to allow them to participate, or be consulted at least, when the physical fabric of the environment is to be altered and renewed. Planners have assumed knowledge of people's requirements; for instance they have accepted that certain housing standards need to be met, with regard to the number of hot water taps in a dwelling unit, the height of the ceiling, and other such details; they claim that land uses must be segregated, producing longer journey-to-work patterns, and, partly as a consequence, that mobility within a town is of prime importance in planning for its future, as compared with, say, compactness. The relationship between cost and the utility of projects has sometimes been insufficiently explored. All these result, at least in part, from the professionalisation of planning, the institutionalisation of its ideologies, and fundamentally from the partialities of the planners as individuals and as a group. The articulate sections of society have largely agreed with planning ideology, so one should not automatically assume that it is invalid or undesirable. It should, though, be constantly criticised in a constructive manner.

Where the central government can legislate as to how the process of planning should work, and for what ends it should plan, and can give very persuasive advice in the form of circulars on every detail of practical planning, the planner is in a very strong position, a position where the legitimacy of his action is very difficult to challenge, not only by the public, but even by the local representatives as well. Professional status, the background of an ideology of action with a respectable pedigree, and a formidable battery of national laws together give the planner the self-confidence to act with authority. In theory the planner is subject to

the will of the people via their elected representatives on the local council or corporation, but this can tend to be merely a rubber stamp, providing another form of validation for the action of the planner.

Rein* suggests four possible legitimating factors for the planner: expertise, bureaucratic position, consumer preferences and professional values. In practice the four almost always conflict, but in the British context it would seem to be the "consumer preference" factor which causes the most friction. I have suggested that the planner would try to maintain that he is controlled by the representatives of the people, and thus represents their preferences, but this can be true, in certain cases, to a minimal extent only, and should by no means be regarded as equal to the other three as a legitimating factor. Participation has the potential to fill this gap, but should not be seen as a way of fulfilling the aspirations of the planner for the very reason that planners need to know what groups other than their peer group desire, in order to modify the direction of their thinking. Participation must provide a power base for all those groups and individuals who may, or may not, disagree with the premises on which the ideological basis of planning has depended. As Sherry Arnstein** reported, a student poster in Paris in 1968 read as follows:

"Je participe
 Tu participes
 Il participe
 Nous participons
 Vous participez
Ils profitent"

It should not be for the profit of the planner that participation occurs, but for "me, you, him, us". The advantage to the planner is incidental and will not necessarily occur.

* Rein, Martin 1969 (a)

** Arnstein, Sherry 1969 (a)

Planning reflects the divisions which exist within society, and it is hard to harmonise and integrate the disparate elements of the population clamouring for influence in the context of local government planning. The planner has first to realise that his own aims are not necessarily those which are suited to a particular situation, then to attempt to be influenced from as many quarters as possible.

Appropriate levels for decision making

There remains the question of the decision: who should make it, and on what basis? At present the planner makes it, within the very tight limits (in some fields) of the legislation. There is much room for controversy about whether the final decision should, in practice, remain in the hands of a non-elected professional man, or whether some democratic mechanism should have the final say. This could be local government, in the shape of the elected representatives, but they already have the power nominally, even though they choose to delegate it for the more routine issues - those issues which directly affect individual citizens in a personal manner. It would seem preferable to institute some form of participatory democracy, an ongoing process of involvement under which every decision would be scrutinised by those affected by it and by anyone else who had an interest. One fact should not be lost sight of, one which the defenders of the status quo have been quick to seize upon; this is that a decision does have to be made at some point, and it might often happen that those involved would not agree with each other on the best policy. This should not, I hope, prove insoluble, given good will on the part of government and the professions involved.

Another problem would be that of over-riding interest, such as the need for a motorway or an airport. Everyone, one assumes, would want these particular items sited as far as

possible away from his own house. This would be a case for a national decision, and in fact there is a good case for a hierarchy of reserved powers for national, county and district decision, with all other powers devolved to the smallest unit of government, such as the ward or parish. This would allow meaningful participation at the most local, and at the district level, which would necessarily include decision implementation as well as decision making, yet would not necessitate the time wasting so characteristic of present attempts to graft the functions of a participatory democracy onto a representative system. This profound change in British planning, with its anti-centrist ideology, would necessitate changes in local government generally, but need not be disruptive of national government or national (economic) planning; on the contrary, it should have more time to concentrate on that which belongs to its concern alone. To quote from Pope Pius in 1931:

"It is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate associations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social and never destroy and absorb them.

Those in command should be sure that the more perfectly a graduated order is preserved among the various associations, in observing the principle of subsidiary function, the stronger will be the social authority and effectiveness and the happier and more prosperous the condition of the State. Thereby (the centre) will more freely, powerfully and effectively do all those things which belong to it alone because only it can do them: directing, watching, urging, restraining, as occasion requires and necessity demands."*

* Encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno", quoted in Schumacher, E.F. 1973 (a) pp.228-229

The legislative background

- 32.....Introduction
- 33.....The Planning Advisory Group
- 35.....The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act
- 37.....The Skeffington Report

Introduction

Before the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act*, there was very little in the way of a legislative basis for public participation in planning. Interested parties had, of course, the right to object to proposed developments, although it was up to the planners to decide whether an issue was controversial enough, or could become so, as to require publicity. As regards Development Plans prepared under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act**, there was no obligation for a local planning authority to consult members of the public or interested organisations before producing their plans or amending them. This Act stated that plans were to be produced by the local authority; when they were complete, they were to be submitted to the Minister, at which time a notice of submission should be published in the London Gazette and a local newspaper, stating where the plan or amendment could be inspected. Only at this stage would objections and representations be considered by the Minister, who might hold inquiries or other hearings***. Copies of the plan or amendment were to be on sale to the public at "a reasonable cost". The Minister had the power to consult anyone he liked, and to amend or reject the plan as he saw fit. The Act gave to anyone the right to question the legal validity of the plan or amendment, and to question the legal validity of its actual making. However, this was the limit of individuals' rights:

"The plan shall not otherwise be questioned." (II,11,(3))

* H.M.S.O. 1968 (a)

** H.M.S.O. 1947 (a)

*** The 1962 Town and Country Planning Act (H.M.S.O. 1962 (a)) was not a substantial revision - it merely said that the Minister must hold such hearings, thereby enacting the practice which had become formalised over time.

The Planning Advisory Group*

The Planning Advisory Group was set up in May 1964 by the Minister of Housing and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Scotland in order to review the planning system. It concentrated on development plans, which it regarded as the key feature of the system, and stated its first objective thus:

"... to ensure that the planning system serves its purpose satisfactorily as an instrument of planning policy and as a means of public participation in the planning process." (1.1)

The other three aims were:

- to improve the technical quality and policy content of local plans,
- to get the level of responsibility right; matters of local land use were to be settled locally, and
- to simplify planning administration.

The present system of development control was thought to be basically sound, but too much subject to the vagaries of management; the level of performance had to be increased, and the main defect was development plans, where delegation was needed. People's views should be taken into account before the adoption of the plan; objections would relate to general policy and principles in the case of urban or county plans, and to matters of detail in the case of local plans.

This discussion was the first occasion on which the British planning establishment was forced to consider public participation as a possible tool for regular and routine use within the planning process, but the report (known as the "PAG" report) considered that their task related primarily to physical planning, as opposed to social or economic or corporate planning. One of the consequences was that the public

* (Report) H.M.S.O. 1965 (a)

were to assist the planner in specifically land-use planning - local planning. One purpose of the local plan was:

"to help the public understand and take part in the detailed planning of their town." (5.8)

yet the actual procedures suggested by the report were little changed from those of the 1947 Act development plan: the draft plan would be put on deposit in the area, would be "explained" at public meetings, and would perhaps be revised when the comments, representations and objections of the public had been analysed. The differences were basically to be twofold; the plans would not have to be submitted to the Minister for approval, but would have to conform to the urban or county plan, which set out the broad strategy for the whole district. There was no specific commitment to seek public participation in the making of those plans which were not detailed land-use plans - the urban and county plans. The aim here was merely to produce "a soundly based, forward-looking plan, and to secure public support for its implementation." (2.37) Later, the PAG Report considered organisation:

"For the kind of planning we envisage it is essential to mobilise the full range of skills that are available locally and nationally. There will be increasing scope for the specialist, the consultant team, academic research, the able practitioner with relevant skill and experience. All those with a contribution to make must be ... fully assimilated into the planning team." (7.46)

Thus despite the first objective of this report, to allow public participation in the planning process, when the question of how to improve the development plan system was pursued further, the public somehow got left out. Planning was a matter for experts, and efficiency should be sought by utilising a variety of skills. The process should be publicised and explained in a public relations exercise, but participation was not seen as an integral part of the system; rather its purpose was to stimulate public interest and to gain acceptance of the plan by appearing willing to revise

it in minor ways to accord with public wishes. This would strengthen the legitimacy of the planners' actions without forcing them to look at their own ideology in a critical manner; it would also aid them in any confrontation with the Minister or the local elected representatives. There was no expression of any desire to permit the people a degree of influence over the basic logic of the plan, the overall goals and objectives. However, the PAG Report did bring the concept of participation into planning discussion, and its proposals led directly to the first legislative action in favour of participation - the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act.*

The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act

This Act made it incumbent upon the local planning authority to involve the public at various stages of plan making, and allowed, though not explicitly, even more to be done if the authority wished. Local authority planning was divided by this Act into two parts: structure and local plans. The former covered the whole of the area of one or more planning authorities, and set out the broad strategic basis for the planning of this large area for the future; the latter provided detailed land use planning for a smaller area.

The general intention of the legislation was that the structure plan should first be produced, and then the local plans would be prepared afterwards, within the framework laid down by the structure plan. Only the structure plan would be submitted as a matter of routine to the Minister, although he could ask to see local plans as well, and control them in

* H.M.S.O. 1968 (a) Although the 1967 Civic Amenities Act (H.M.S.O. 1967 (a)) recognised the existence and usefulness of unofficial community groupings in dealing with the problems of conservation areas.

much the same way as he controlled structure plans, if he so wished. The bare minimum of public participation, as laid down in the 1968 Act, and not subsequently varied in any other Act on either side of the Border, was as follows, and applied to both local and structure plans:

- the report of survey had to be publicised, and with it a list of the matters proposed for inclusion in the plan;
- people should be made aware that they could make representations, and given an opportunity to do so;
- the authority must consider the representations made within the prescribed period;
- copies of the draft plan should be made available, stating the time within which representations should be made, not later than the time of submission of the plan to the Minister in the case of a structure plan, before adoption or submission to the Minister, but not before the Minister has approved the relevant structure plan, in the case of a local plan.* The time within which representations must be made should again be stated;
- with respect to a plan submitted to the Minister, an explanation of the steps taken to involve the public must be given;
- the Minister can direct that more consultation must take place, in the case of a structure plan, or stop the implementation of a local plan until more consultation has occurred;
- the Minister, in the case of a structure plan or submitted local plan, or the local authority in other cases, should hold a public inquiry to consider objections.

Apart from these provisions, the Minister was also given a variety of discretionary powers, aimed at ensuring that the public should have every opportunity to be aware of their rights, and of the progress of the plan.** These powers were so framed as to enable the Minister to guide the development

* This procedure has been slightly modified in Scotland: /

** Appendix "A"

/ see below, p. 40
see below, p.

of the public participation process by means of circulars, the use of which has avoided the need for changes in the law, despite the fact that, in 1968, it was yet to be seen in practice how participation would work out; possibly there was a recognition that different authorities might require different forms of participation.

The Skeffington Report*

Flexibility was also necessary because the Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning ("The Skeffington Report") had not yet been published, and its recommendations had to be considered before the procedure was routinised. When "People and Planning" was published, in 1969, it was seen that, possibly because its remit had been a narrow one,

"... to consider and report on the best methods, including publicity, of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their area." (I,1)

the Committee had mainly concerned itself with techniques of participation, and considered little theoretical material in the process. Skeffington considered the subject from a position which more nearly reflected the views of elitist theorists of democracy than it did the "classical" approach. For instance, planning is not seen as a political sphere, and participation in goal setting is unnecessary in this country, where the aims are implicit and accepted.**

Participation should stop short of the preparation of alternative plans by laymen, and of actual decision making. Its function was seen more as a protective one, to make the elite more responsive. This is the function that democratic elitists

* H.M.S.O. 1969 (a)

** Some of these ideas are taken from Hague, who deals with Skeffington at greater length. (Hague, C. 1972 (a))

recognise participation by voting as having.* Homage is paid to the idea of self-development via participation, but the emphasis here is on educating the public on environmental issues, rather than seeing participation as an education in democracy. There is no reference to the problems of inequality, although the Committee was concerned with the so-called "non-joiners" in society. The favoured remedy was to appoint community development officers, employed by the planning departments of local authorities. There seems little reason to suppose that this would lead to a greater equality of power, and the concept has not, in the event, been enacted in any of the subsequent Planning Acts, although a number of local authorities have appointed community development officers, often financed via the central government's Urban Programme. The Committee ignored also the theoretical importance of the local level in participation:

"The community fora had no teeth, and the same sort of process was envisaged for the structure plan participation as for the local plan. Thus the very real potential offered for direct democracy in local planning issues was left aside. Thus, consciously or otherwise, Skeffington tried to compromise between the ideals of participatory theory and the requirements of elitist democracy."**

At the end of the Report, the main recommendations were summarised. Although most of these are self-evidently sensible, they do not go sufficiently far enough to enable real participation, in the sense of individual self-government, to begin to occur; they also have a certain naïveté in places:

"Community development officers should be appointed to secure the involvement of those people who do not join organisations." (IX,vi)

"People should be encouraged to participate in the preparation of plans by helping with surveys and other activities as well as by making comments." (IX,viii)

* See above, pp. 15-18

** Hague, op.cit.

It is not clear how a local government employee could "secure" the involvement of non-joiners, unless by this he meant merely the giving of information, and for the public to help with surveys and other activities would not mean that they had any influence on the planning process, except to remove some of the workload from the planners.

The Skeffington Report did reflect an awareness in leading circles that participation was a topic worth considering, but it has the flaw, not unexpectedly, of being too hesitant. This may in part be a result of having considered almost no theoretical material in a situation where practical experience was largely lacking, but it has resulted in a situation where its recommendations have been largely superseded within five years, and none has been legislatively enacted. There has been only one change since the 1968 Act in the modus operandi of public participation, and that, in intention, was more procedural than fundamental, besides deriving little or nothing from the Skeffington Report. This was the introduction in 1973 of the Examination in Public* on structure plans, to replace the public inquiry based on the formal hearing of objections. The main changes involved here may be summarised thus:

- an independent Chairman and a panel replaces the Inspector, and the proceedings will not be so formal; people will sit around a table, to establish the best atmosphere for an intensive, "probing" discussion;
- representations for and against the plan will be heard, rather than merely objections;
- the matters for discussion will be chosen by the Secretary of State (now once again the Minister), as being relevant to the structure as opposed to the local plan level;
- people appearing before the panel will be chosen for their knowledge or the likely effectiveness of their contribution;

* H.M.S.O. 1973 (a)

- the role of organisations has been recognised - they can represent their members' interests lucidly and with a degree of authority that an individual might not be able to achieve. The purpose of these changes was twofold - to establish a broad basis for development control, and to avoid wasting time discussing at this stage issues which were either irrelevant or related more to local planning. It was recognised that certain issues pertained to both local and structure planning:

"It is no part of the new arrangements to discourage any one from making an objection to a structure plan if they would consider themselves prejudiced at the local plan stage by not doing so. Safeguards to prevent such prejudice are incorporated in the new arrangements."*

This point will be considered at greater length in a later section; the question of whether local plan preparation will prove to be constrained to an unacceptable degree, especially as regards public participation, is crucial to the success of the new development planning system, and has not yet been satisfactorily answered. The recent Local Government Act for Scotland provides a possible solution, by allowing local plans, usually where necessary because of the time taken to prepare a structure plan in a situation of local urgency, to be prepared before the relevant structure plan:

"A district planning authority shall not prepare a local plan for a part of their district before a structure plan has been approved in relation to that part unless they have first applied for and obtained the consent of the regional planning authority to that effect, and such consent may be withheld or withdrawn where a structure plan is in course of preparation or any decision is likely to be taken shortly by any authority and that plan or decision is likely to have a substantial effect on the contents of the local plan, but otherwise such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld."**

* op.cit. section 4.6

** H.M.S.O. 1973 (b) IX,176,(3)

It might appear logical for the present system to work in such a way that the local plan should be prepared after, and in the context of, a structure plan, but this does not take into account the problems of participation, democracy and legitimacy that have been outlined above.* It seems inevitable that involvement on the public's part will be the greatest at the most local level, yet this part of the statutory planning process is to be the last to occur, always in England and Wales, often north of the Border; almost inevitably, it would seem, conflicts between individuals and authority will be institutionalised, rather than avoided by consultation at an early stage on particular issues, before any options are conceived by the planners and the local representatives. This will be considered later at greater length.

* pp. 25-30

Case study

43.....Introduction

43.....Previous history of participation

46.....Structure plan participation in Stoke-on-Trent

53.....Structure plan participation in Staffordshire

56.....Differences of approach between City and County

58.....Adequacy of the participation programmes

Introduction

The reasons for using as an illustrative case study the local planning authorities of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire were summarised in the first, introductory section, but they are worth repeating here.

Firstly, they cover adjacent territory in the Midlands, and Stoke will become a District of the new County of Staffordshire after local government reorganisation takes place in April of this year.

Secondly, structure plan preparation is proceeding concurrently in the two areas, and the plans will be submitted at the same time to the central government for approval.

Thirdly, there are significant differences of approach.

Previous history of participation

Staffordshire has not used public participation in the planning process before, except for such instances as the law has always demanded - public inquiries into contentious development applications and the like. It would seem that there is little point delving into the history of public involvement in planning in the county, for the simple reason that nothing out of the ordinary has occurred.

Stoke-on-Trent on the other hand has tried to involve local people in a number of decisions, when it was thought possible to gain some planning and community advantage by so doing, for at least five years. Each of these attempts involve the public has been in response to a legal requirement, but the city has consistently done more than the law, interpreted by an old-style planning authority, would demand of it. Two examples will, I hope, serve to demonstrate this.

The General Improvement Area (G.I.A.) Section of the City Architect's, Planning and Reconstruction Department has used

public participation since 1969, as demanded by the Housing Act.* This Section operates at Action Area level, and had a total programme of 5,600 dwellings for improvement. One small area in which the programme has been carried through is Penkhull, on top of a hill overlooking the centre of Stoke, in which all 900 houses have now been improved. The first stage was a social survey, carried out in August 1971, by canvassers visiting every front door; there was an 80% coverage at this stage. An exhibition was held for one week in a local primary school, showing the council's preferred scheme; this was flexible, however, and suggestions were welcomed. A show house was also improved in the centre of the area, to demonstrate what was possible. The idea of the survey and exhibition process was to find out what the residents thought was wrong with Penkhull, and to gain their confidence. There was a good deal of publicity via a series of broadcasts on Radio Stoke, and articles in the *Evening Sentinel* (the Potteries' evening paper). With both of these media the city has built up good links. One third of the citizens of Penkhull were at the public meeting called in the area by the planners. They wanted back alley treatment, with proper surfacing. An approach to individual households was then needed, in order to secure their agreement to the proposed improvements, to allow them to decide on the exact treatment for their own house and yard, and to acquire the land necessary for the back alley improvements. This took six months. Thus the whole public consultation process involved a number of phases - publicity, a social survey, an exhibition and show house, a public meeting, and individual consultations.

Mr. John Cornell, of the G.I.A. department, considered that there were problems with participation in an area such as Penkhull, where the people are predominantly of one class

* H.M.S.O. 1969(c)

(comfortable working class, like the terraced houses), and there are no natural leaders. He thought that street committees might be a good idea, that it would help the planners to get their ideas across, and would facilitate feedback. But this should not be allowed to get out of hand: "one must beware of the tail wagging the dog, in public relations (sic) exercises." At present, the radio and newspapers appear to provide the best publicity. A difficulty in Stoke, as elsewhere, is that the fabric of many houses is so rotten that they have to be pulled down merely because it would not be worth improving them for a ten or twelve year lifespan; people, of course, do not necessarily see this, and consider that their houses do not need to be pulled down. Mr. Cornell considered that houses below a certain standard should be pulled down; the only question is When? If they are substandard they should disappear as soon as possible, assuming improvement is not considered to be a possibility. Another problem concerning public participation in improvement areas is that its extent appears to depend very much on the weather. In Northwood, a similar area to Penkhull, only 20% of the people turned up to a meeting such as the one which had attracted one third of the Penkhull residents. It was held on a frosty and foggy November day. In response to a question about the effect of the Structure Plan on the Improvement Areas, Mr. Cornell replied that he thought it would prove to be too general to act as a constraint.

The only public participation actually carried out in the city of Stoke-on-Trent before late 1969 was in the Reclamation Section. It took the form of publicity, showing what was being done, and why. It could not be called "involvement". From 1970 onwards, the emphasis has been more and more on public meetings, as the best medium for two-way communication about planning at the local scale. An early example was the reclamation project for three adjoining pieces of land at Burslem, known as Scotia Bank, Scotia Marl Hole and Bycars Field - a total of 70 acres. All houses in the area were

leafletted, and Radio Stoke was used, to explain the possible alternatives. Exhibitions and meetings were held at five or six places around the scheme, their purpose being mainly to ensure that "one's own ideas were not unacceptable, rather than to obtain new ideas". This took place in 1970, since which the weight put on participation has increased as its success has become apparent.

Structure plan participation in Stoke-on-Trent

My investigations of the participation process in the city of Stoke are hampered by the fact that the Statement of Public Participation is not yet available, so my knowledge, especially of the later phases of the participatory programme, is limited.

The first stage of the participatory programme for the structure plan occurred in February 1973, when a series of meetings was held to explain the purpose of the structure plan, and to ask for comments on the broad issues involved. Next followed a series of public exhibitions, held at various points throughout the city during a six week period in March and April. 3,200 adults visited these exhibitions of which 1,079 completed "objectives" questionnaires*. A number of schoolchildren also completed questionnaires, and their results were analysed separately; questionnaires were also handed to those who visited the February meetings. The exhibitions consisted of upwards of twenty boards, explaining the nature of structure planning, summarising the problems of the city and suggesting solutions to groups of problems. For instance, in the case of housing, there was a photograph of a typical terraced street, together with photographs of different types of housing in the city - high-rise flats,

* Appendix B

low-rise flats, maisonnettes, semi-detached and detached houses, and improved terraced houses. An accompanying text explained each possibility and outlined in brief such difficulties as might present themselves. There were maps of the whole city, such as a map of derelict land, and maps of certain areas, notably the area in which the exhibition was being held. A good point was that no attempt was made, by means of "artists' impressions", to glamourise certain possibilities. The only illustration that was not a map, diagram or photograph consisted of a sketch of one possible scheme for the centre of Hanley - the main shopping centre.

The questionnaire used at these meetings and exhibitions consisted of a list of 33 possible objectives, grouped into six broad subject headings: recreation and social facilities, physical environment, shopping, transport, industry and employment, and housing. The instructions were perhaps rather detailed, but the evidence is that those who did take the trouble to fill them in did so without too much trouble:

"Here is a list of 33 possible objectives. Carefully read through the complete list. Then choose eight objectives which you think are the most important, and put a tick in the Top Priority box against each of them. Now decide how important you think each of the other objectives are, grading them as second priority, or low priority, or indifferent, or against. There are notes opposite to help you."

These notes were useful. To give an example of two questions in the shopping section: "12. To make adequate provision for small shopping centres in housing areas. 13. To encourage the retention of corner shops." The notes applied to these two objectives were as follows:

"12. This would enable City residents to have a small selection of shops within 10-15 minutes walk of their homes, selling food and goods in everyday use.
13. This would be an attempt to retain corner shops, but to be successful higher prices might be charged."

This questionnaire was constructed by an ad hoc group within the Structure Plan team, consisting of ten people "including a psychologist", based on pilot surveys carried out at the beginning of the year to ascertain the issues about which people were most concerned. There is evidence of some dissatisfaction within the planning team about the format of the questionnaire, but the blame was laid on the students who designed it, at the North Staffordshire Polytechnic, Department of Graphic Design and Printing. Apart from those handed out at meetings and in exhibitions, a random sample of 3,400 individuals from 1,150 households throughout the city was also asked to fill them in. By the end of April, 270 forms had been returned from 180 households. The other 970 households were contacted again during May, with a greater degree of success, this time, 656 forms were returned from 384 households. Thus there had been a response from about 50% of the households contacted, 0.5% of the city's population. The questionnaires were analysed in great detail, some of which, such as the data broken down into 17 socio-economic groups, and disaggregated by area of the city, was not made public.

All the objectives were listed in order of preference as regards three groups, the idea being to attempt to produce a draft plan which would satisfy each one of them. These groups were the postal random sample, the general public inside the city, and the general public outside the city. Fairly consistently, the following objectives produced the greatest number of top and second priorities:

- to improve the city's image,
- to attract more jobs,
- to cut down pollution,
- to improve district centres, and
- convenient public transport.

There was one objective - more high-rise flats - which was consistently opposed, but three other objectives were also generally disapproved of:

- hypermarket development,
- development in attractive landscape, and
- restrain car use in rush hour.

The objective of retaining corner shops also found a good deal of opposition, but it is not possible to know how much of this is due to the warning, on the questionnaire form itself, of the possibility of higher prices at such shops.

The report of structure plan participation to the city's Reconstruction Committee* did give details of the views, obtained via the random sample, of certain groups within the city, stating objectives which these groups favoured less than, and more than, the general sample. Thus 36 councillors who replied were especially concerned with the clearance of substandard housing, increasing community facilities, and restraining car use in the rush hour, and not so bothered about cutting down pollution and enabling easy access to shopping centres. The 22 members of the city's Environmental Studies Group were concerned to improve housing design, to preserve attractive areas, and to restrain car use in the rush hour, but less interested in local shopping and in more detached and semi-detached housing. School children were concerned to cut down pollution, to increase sports facilities and to increase job variety, but were not interested to any great extent in public transport or home ownership. Students wanted to restrain car use in the rush hour, to build on reclaimed land, to clear substandard housing (curious in that many of them find cheap accommodation in old houses) and to develop the shopping centre of Hanley, but not to improve district centres, to encourage home ownership, or to attract more jobs.

Results were also analysed in terms of age-group. Those under 30 were concerned more with clearing substandard housing,

* City of Stoke-on-Trent 1973 (a)

cutting down pollution and increasing job variety, but not with building on reclaimed land or improving older housing. The over 60 group wanted especially to improve older housing and public transport, but were not concerned by pollution and did not want to clear substandard housing. Women were interested in small shopping centres near homes, but men "showed no large differences from the total sample". Car owners showed no interest in public transport, but wanted to provide for maximum car use, easy access to shopping centres, and to encourage home ownership. Non car owners' interests were almost diametrically opposed! Some details were given of broad socio-economic groupings and their interests. Managerial, professional and technical workers were interested in the development of Hanley, job variety, housing design and home ownership, but not sports facilities, district centres or community facilities. Clerical workers wanted to cut down pollution, but were not interested in detached and semi-detached housing, or district centres. Skilled workers were concerned about more jobs and substandard housing clearance, semi-skilled workers with district centres and access to shops, but, unlike the unskilled workers, were not interested in public transport or the attraction of more jobs. Unskilled workers also wanted increased open space, but they were less concerned about the city's image, district centres or more use of water space.

It is the Stoke planners' contention that it is not enough simply to find out, in the abstract, what people want. Thus they implicitly reject the notion of a unified public interest. These analyses were intended to provide the maximum of data which will bring out the views of groups within the city.

"It is important to realise that the summarised viewpoints (in aggregate) represent the view, on average, of the whole random sample. While it is very useful it should be noted that because it is an average viewpoint it may hide the attitudes of, for instance, a group of people who are strongly in favour of one objective but only form a minority overall. It is very necessary in preparing the

structure plan to be aware of minority viewpoints in the City. Also where an objective is controversial or where two objectives are incompatible, this will reduce the overall prioritisation of the relevant objectives. However, planning decisions still have to be made on these objectives and for this it is useful to know which bodies of opinion support or oppose a particular objective."*

This appears to tend towards an approach based on the concept of the general will, an aggregate of the individual wills of the people concerned, as a basis for decision making. However it was conceived, the planner can only gain thereby, because objections to individual planning proposals could be circumvented by a procedure whereby those groups most likely to be opposed to a certain proposal could be brought into the discussion, and a way round the difficulty found.

Possibly with this in mind, the planners approached 100 organisations within the city to obtain their views on the structure plans. It is regrettable that only nine replies were received, but if these approaches had been followed up it is probable that a larger number might have wished to contribute. The draft plan was then prepared, taking the objective preferences into account, utilising the information on socio-economic groups and area preferences which was not made public, and which I was not permitted to obtain myself.

The final stage of participation in the preparation of the structure plan occurred in the period from November 27th to December 14th, 1973, in which consultations were held on the draft plan, involving a series of exhibitions and public meetins. Another questionnaire** was provided at this point, with simple for/against choices on 34 objectives in six broad categories: physical environment, employment, population and housing, transport, the city centre and district

* City of Stoke-on-Trent 1973 (a)

** Appendix C

centres, and the plan as a whole. People were also asked for their age group and approximate address. To give an example, in the section on the city centre and the district centres, people were asked to indicate whether they were for or against the following three policies included in the draft plan:

"To create a dynamic City and sub regional centre the plan proposes to strengthen the links between Hanley and Stoke. Within this area it will then be possible to develop separate areas for Shopping, Commerce, Higher Education and Government.

A bus shuttle service between Stoke and Hanley is proposed to promote this improved linkage and the integration of bus and rail services.

The viability of the other district centres will continue to be encouraged with traffic management and pedestrianisation schemes in the main shopping centres."

The public were also given space to comment on this, and on the other, groups of proposals. They were given until January 11th to comment or to return questionnaires, and a separate comments sheet was provided. The only serious opposition to the Draft Plan on an area basis came from the Lightwood (Longton-Meir) area, where the Plan proposed building houses for 5000 or more people during the next ten years. It is not known whether these objections will have any effect on the approval of the Plan by the Minister, or whether the Plan has, in fact, been modified.

The planners in Stoke consider that, despite the fact that the detailed implications of the structure plan only become apparent when the local plan is prepared, this will act as no sort of constraint on public wishes at the local plan stage. I asked how people reacted to the diagrams of structure plan proposals. which are deliberately not on an Ordnance Survey base. Once oriented, they can pick out an amazing amount of detail, which is surely what these plans were meant to avoid. The planners' view was that such avoidance was not possible, that people will always read in details, whether

they are there or not. I then asked about the decision on the choice of strategy. There were seven strategies, ranked in different orders against the public's wishes, depending on the method used. The planners appear to have chosen the evaluative methods which produced the most "reasonable" or "balanced" result. Did this reflect their own wishes, or those of the public? It was probably a bit of both - choosing a strategy which conflicted with the wishes of as few people as possible, yet provided a reasonable basis for growth and change. This was nearer to being a "political consensus" solution than a "technical optimum" solution.

Structure plan participation in Staffordshire

In August 1971 the initial statement was made that the county had decided to proceed with the preparation of a structure plan. There was a formal statement, with an invitation to submit representations or information by the end of December 1971, including a press announcement of the aims of the new development plans. County district and parish councils, and parish meetings in the smaller villages, were asked to comment: some parish councils asked how they might contribute, so a set of notes was sent to each parish. 104 replies were received, as follows:

- county district councils, 7; this was disappointing, and most of the comments were about local issues;
- parish councils, 65; this was encouraging, and much of what was received will be used in the local planning process; some preferred to reserve comments until they had seen the draft plan, but there was much general strategic comment;
- other organisations, 10; few, but useful on the whole;
- individuals, 22, of whom 5 were from Stafford; this was disappointing, mostly about local matters; there was interest in the conservation of Stafford and Lichfield and the expansion of Burton. The whole exercise was limited, but useful, especially the parish councils and meetings.

It gave an idea of what people consider important, always assuming the people who do contribute can speak for the others, of course.

The next phase of public participation did not occur until almost two years later. In the period from May to July 1973, the draft plan was presented for twelve weeks, instead of the statutory six, and further comments were taken into account, in practice, until December 1973. Exhibitions and meetings were presented at nineteen towns and villages. There was a statement of the main problems and issues, a presentation of alternative strategies, and an explanation of the suggested preferred strategy, with an emphasis on the area in which the display took place. It was made perfectly obvious which was the preferred strategy, and an attempt was made to convince the public that this was the best one. This would not have been so bad if there had been some attempt to find out, as was done in Stoke, what people's priorities were, but let it be remembered that at this stage the Staffordshire planners had had only 22 representations from individual members of the public. At this stage, to attempt to persuade in favour of one strategy could only be an attempt to get the planners' ideas accepted, rather than showing any real intention to ascertain or implement the wishes of the public. The only parts of the county in which this could be said to have been done was in the smaller villages, where the people had made their feelings known right from the start at the parish meetings. There were twenty boards at each exhibition, but the response from the public was disappointing. The questionnaire handed out had only four questions on it:

"We should like to know what you think about the draft Structure Plan. We should particularly appreciate your views on the questions listed below. There may be other matters on which you would like to comment and we should be glad to hear of these too.

1 What issues do you feel are particularly important in planning the future of Staffordshire?

2 Do you feel that the draft Structure Plan provides a satisfactory basis for the future development of the county?

3 Do you think that any changes should be made to the draft plan?

If so, what would you like to see changed and why do you feel that these changes are necessary?

4 If there are any other comments you would like to make on the policies and proposals contained in the draft plan please do so.

It would help us in analysing comments if you would indicate in which town or village you live."

These questions were very general in nature, and would be very hard for anyone to answer constructively. The exhibitions were publicised by adverts and features in newspapers, posters, 33,000 A4-size handbills, and (in the northern half of the county) on Radio Stoke. An attempt, not too successful, was made to interest secondary schools, but the response here was not encouraging, either, possibly because the schools had examinations to think about at that time of year (early summer).

The total attendance at public meetings was 881, and at the exhibitions, 3,749. At a series of smaller village meetings with a "mini-exhibition", 701 people attended. The low response to the meetings and exhibitions was explained by suggesting that more interest might have been shown if there had been general opposition to the plan. Or, perhaps, if people had understood it, and what it meant for their future?

The written response was as follows:

- public	328, but 1500 separate comments;
- parish councils and meetings,	43;
- district councils,	22;
- adjoining local planning authorities,	11;
- organisations, local,	44;
regional,	13;
national,	5;

- government departments, 5.

The total number of replies was therefore only 471.

The revisions to the draft plan arising out of the participation exercise, and revised economic and population forecasts, can be summarised as follows. In terms of strategic policies and proposals: the danger of urban sprawl in the south were emphasised; land resource conservation was given greater weight; specific rural development policies were spelled out, including the provision of land for local housing needs; there were reduced population forecasts; and local growth was to be planned when and where needed, rather than being specified in the structure plan. In terms of subject policies: housing areas were revised, to give an "impressive choice"; industrial site provision was not to be reduced; public transport would be strengthened; green belts would be enlarged and their strategic function defined clearly; and future expansion of the North Staffordshire Polytechnic was to be concentrated at Stoke, rather than being split between Stoke and Stafford.

The way in which Staffordshire carried out its public participation programme in the preparation of the structure plan was certainly well-meaning, but the county showed little sign of being interested in the wider possibilities of the process, if they even understood that there were such possibilities. Their approach was paternalist, inducing spasmodic "involvement", and always under control.

Differences of approach between City and County

Briefly summarised, the differences of approach to participation in structure plan preparation between the city of Stoke-on-Trent and the county of Staffordshire can be said to be as follows. Staffordshire showed relatively less interest in individual opinions as compared with the opinions

of organisations than did Stoke. In fact the latter can be criticised for failing to elicit a response from more than nine organisations. Some follow-up to the first request might have proved successful. If the two participatory programmes are compared, one striking difference is the intermittent nature of the county's participation exercises; since they were preparing their plan for two years or more, as compared with the city's one, it seems strange that they were able to involve people to such a limited extent. Apart from the introductory meetings and exhibitions, Staffordshire did nothing to make people aware of the plan for a great length of time - until the presentation of the draft plan, in fact. Stoke had a series of meetings and exhibitions over a period of several months in the spring and summer of 1973, and publicity continued throughout via the media.

In comparing the questionnaires issued by the two local planning authorities, it becomes obvious that Stoke were interested in people's views on each stage of the process, and in each aspect of policy, except methods of participation itself; on the other hand Staffordshire, with their four questions on the draft plan, showed very little evidence of a desire to obtain information and ideas from anyone who would not normally have, for instance, written to the local paper or to the county planning officer about planning matters - in short, the type of person whose ideas would be heard in any case. A problem with the first Stoke questionnaire was that it was rather complex, which might have put some of the less literate members of society off, when otherwise they might have replied. It is difficult to reconcile the competing demands for simplicity in a questionnaire and the need for meaningful answers. The compromise reached in the Stoke case would appear to strike the balance fairly well. The response was good, unlike the Staffordshire case, and, again unlike the county, there was considerable scope for the detailed analysis and categorising of results, which provides some

guidance, not only for this structure plan, but for future planning of various kinds. It also can prove helpful in that it gives an indication of which groups are likely to object to which types of proposals, allowing consultations to take place to avoid future problems. None of this will be possible in the case of the county's questionnaire.

Another crucial difference is that Stoke tried to involve people from an early stage in the planning process, enabling them to claim, if they so wished, that they have produced a plan which satisfies technical criteria without ignoring the desirability of a political consensus solution. Staffordshire used their public relations and propaganda power to persuade the public in favour of their technical solution, and made no attempt to obtain a political consensus. The validity of this approach is questionable, as was shown in the Stoke Report of Survey, and the Written Statement of Policies and Proposals*, by the way in which a series of evaluative processes had been used to select the best of their alternative solutions for the draft plan. It was found that different, perfectly respectable, evaluative processes produced different results, so a compromise solution was chosen in the end, since a technical solution without any other input is only as good as the method of evaluation and the original data.

Adequacy of the participation programmes

Neither authority did more, really, than consult. No power was transferred to individuals or groups outside the council offices and chambers. In both cases, it is interesting that participation was seen as a legitimating factor for the planners.

* City of Stoke-on-Trent 1973 (b) & (c)

This is especially true in Stoke, which in April becomes a district of the county of Staffordshire. The city hoped that participation would, if extensive and successful enough, lead to a situation in which the county could not challenge its plans, structure or local, because they had been developed with massive public support, something the county could certainly not claim for its own plans.

It is important to bear in mind that participation is a relatively new art in British planning. Staffordshire showed fairly successfully that, either they did not understand it, or they wanted to avoid too much contact with the public, for fear of delays or arguments, or because the public could not really be expected to have ideas on planning. It is ironic that it was in Staffordshire that the most successful single item of public participation occurred - the parish meetings in the smaller villages, at which a lot of useful material was collected. It is a pity that the possibilities of such useful collaboration were not followed up in any of the larger centres. Stoke tried conscientiously to involve the public in a way that the letter of the law did not demand, but the spirit of the law did. They have proved that participation does not necessarily cause delays, at least in the preparation of structure plans, and that useful results can arise from such a programme. The final decision still rests with the planner, however, whether in Stoke or Stafford. This is not participation as G.D.H.Cole, John Stuart Mill or Rousseau would have understood it - a continuing role in the self-government of a community. Possible methods of achieving such a situation will be considered in the final section.

Critique of participation in structure planning

- 61.....Introduction
- 64.....National and regional plans and structure planning
- 66.....Corporate planning and structure planning
- 68.....Local planning and structure planning
- 72.....The examination in public
- 73.....The time factor
- 75.....Participation in goal-setting
- 76.....The incrementalist approach to planning versus The Plan

Introduction

In criticising the new development planning process, three questions must be answered. What are development plans meant to achieve? How well does the legislation and the local government structure allow them to do this, in the abstract? And how well do they work, in practice? These plans must be set in the context of the current changes in the planning system in England and Wales, of which Layfield* considers that four are of particular importance:

- the new system of development planning,
- the growth of public interest and involvement in "land planning",
- the widening horizons of development control, and
- the increasing complexity of the measuring and projective techniques used by the planners and others.

The Development Plans Manual**states that the purpose of the new system of development planning is twofold:

- "to produce plans set in the national and regional context and fitting more smoothly with the plans of neighbouring authorities." There should be a continuous flow of information between local and regional planning organisations, and plans must be prepared in the light of national and regional policies; and
- to produce plans that are not just land use plans, dealing with problems of movement and communications, housing policy and other issues including "the creation of a good environment in both town and country."

Plans can obviously be integrated with the plans of surrounding authorities, as Staffordshire took especial care to do, and with the regional and national plans, because consultations with all these bodies have to take place when the structure plan is being prepared. There is, besides, a limited

* Layfield, F. 1972 (a)

** H.M.S.O. 1970 (a) Introduction

number of plans which will have to be integrated with a structure plan, unlike the public participation situation, where there are as many interests as there are individuals to be consulted.

As to these plans being more than mere land use plans, this is a case of involving other local authority departments, of which, again, there is a limited number. But "the creation of a good environment in both town and country" is so abstract that it cannot be said to be an operational goal. It is an unimpeachable desire, but it implies certain things which may not be quite so simple to attain: the act of creation implies, first, that a good environment does not yet exist, and, second, that the plan and its implementation can lead directly to it, or at least facilitate its creation. The phrase "good environment" is in itself dangerous until one has some measure of agreement about what this means. Is it the planners' ideal? Is it the ideal of the people - as expressed by the general will? Or is it no sort of ideal, but the best compromise that can be attained with restricted resources in a limited amount of time? Yet still the question of who decides on the direction of "creation" has not been answered. Since the people and their participation was not mentioned in the Introduction to the Manual, the decision is presumably the planners', with or without some assistance from the councillors.

In fact, the articulation of the desires of the people in the local authority area may well coincide with the planners' intentions, for a number of reasons. Firstly the planners themselves have to use the area in their daily lives, and so they see the good and the bad in the area in their role as members of the public. Secondly, the councillors may push for the inclusion of matters which they know to be dear to the hearts of many people in the area. Thirdly, the public participation exercises, if conducted in a spirit of humility and interest by the planners, should provide a lot of

information about people's wishes. These three reasons would suggest that the new-style structure plans should be a reasonable compromise between the possible and the desired, on the part of the public. But each of these reasons need not apply necessarily - the planners may live outside the area, and may not be serious about public participation, and the councillors may not be too interested in public wishes themselves, given the non-competitive nature of local elections in many places.

Layfield suggested five requirements for structure plans which,

"though perhaps obvious, are not always easy to remember:

- (i) the plan must concern itself with the policy and structural decisions of the local planning authority, and not, save in quite exceptional instances, involve itself in details;
 - (ii) the relationship of those policies to one another must be made clear;
 - (iii) both the policies and their interrelationships need to be expressed in words which can clearly be understood by all - the use of jargon and obscure wording is almost invariably a sign of inadequate thinking;
 - (iv) the framework the plan provides must be such that it enables those concerned with land, in both public and private ownerships, to understand the approach that the local authority will take in general to the future development of land in its area; and
 - (v) the structural provisions of the plan must be for a period long enough to provide a stable basis for development control and yet not so long as to determine land patterns for an excessive period.
- Plans which meet these requirements are urgently needed. The task of creating them, however, is a formidable one, And, I confess, the prospect of success is not entirely an encouraging one."

Perhaps a sixth requirement should be added - that the public should not only understand the plans, but have a considerable influence on their formulation, and finally to approve their contents in a positive manner. The attitude in the Manual and in the legislation itself, is regrettably ambivalent towards this point. Participation is accepted as a "good thing", per se, but is at the same time regarded as a potential nuisance.

Structure planning, and participation in the process, will now be examined in relation to various relevant topics, as follows:

- national and regional plans and structure planning,
- corporate planning and structure planning,
- local planning and structure planning,
- the examination in public,
- the time factor,
- participation in goal-setting, and
- the incrementalist approach to planning versus The Plan.

National and regional plans and structure planning

The Minister would be unlikely to approve a structure plan, however much public support it had, if the plan conflicted in any important way with previously expressed national plans - such as might happen in a situation where a local authority wanted a piece of land for housing which featured in national planning as a site for an army barracks or an airport. It is normally true, though, that national planning, whether economic or physical, would deal with matters so general, at the local scale, that it should be possible to produce a structure plan without, in most cases, much of a constraint being imposed on the land use pattern. Such constraints would, though, be more or less absolute. They can be seen in the plan for Stoke-on-Trent in the line for the Derby Way, a proposed motorway joining Derby to the M6. Although the planners were presumably at liberty to vary the line slightly, there was really only one route that was reasonably direct and required a minimum of demolition of houses. Thus the plan could not reasonably provide for new housing, or a park, or an industrial site, along this line, and indeed the draft plan has not done so.

The matter is a little more complicated in the case of a regional or sub-regional plan or strategy. These will have

been prepared by bodies consisting, in the main, of local authority representatives, who have agreed on a broad overall strategy for the best development of the region, and, except in cases where the strategy has proved outmoded, the structure plans of the component planning authorities will be expected to conform with regional and sub-regional agreements; these have of course been produced in order to facilitate the development of the region within the guidelines of national policy, in conjunction with central government officials, and accepted by that government. In the case of the West Midlands, the plan* envisaged considerable growth (of up to $\frac{1}{4}$ million population) between Stoke and Stafford. This appears to have been superseded by events, and growth in the region is to be concentrated around Burton, Tamworth, Lichfield, Sutton Coldfield and Redditch, in a broad sweep, and to the west at Telford New Town. Thus no such major development appears in the draft structure plans for either Stoke or the county of Staffordshire. The regional strategy, however, is normally accepted by the local planning authority, because they had a hand in framing the regional and sub-regional plans in the first place. Indeed these plans can be a powerful weapon for the local authority planners, who can use them as yet another constraint in cases where the public might disagree with the broader aspects of their policy. There is little evidence of this having happened in Stoke or Staffordshire, but in the case of Solihull, on the southern edge of the Birmingham conurbation, it would appear to be the case, as Peter Hall has found:**

"The fact is that now as in the past, the people of the region do not speak with a common voice. When, following the requirements of the new procedure, Solihull's planners consulted their citizens on alternatives, they found that, unsurprisingly, the local preference was for no growth. In the event, the Solihull plan goes over the citizens' heads:

* West Midlands Regional Study, 1971 (a)

** Hall, Peter, 1974(a)

its planners have provided for the growth they agreed with their neighbours in the regional and sub-regional plans - even if Birmingham says it is the wrong sort. But after April 1. when the West Midlands Metropolitan County takes over structure planning responsibilities while Solihull becomes a metropolitan district, the result is surely likely to resemble the long standing wrangle over housing land between the Greater London Council - especially when under Labour control - and that of the outer London boroughs."

It may be that, in areas where no major growth or decline is envisaged, such as in most of Staffordshire and the whole of Stoke, these problems are not likely to be as acute as the case of Solihull, where housing land is under great pressure, in this affluent suburban borough, for overspill from the conurbation. The potential for conflict, let it be remembered, is always there, given a situation of rapid change.

Corporate planning and structure planning

Corporate planning is a procedure by which a local authority formulates, considers and reviews the policies of all its departments on a fully integrated basis. It generally involves also taking into account the objectives and policies of all the local and central government agencies and public services in the surrounding area. It has not as yet been adopted by many authorities, and this includes Stoke and Staffordshire, but it applies in Coventry, as Peter Hall reports:*

"The most startlingly individual of the (West Midlands structure plans) is Coventry's. Here the aim from the start is to integrate the physical structure plan inside a wider corporate planning framework. In consequence, though like other authorities Coventry has a preferred physical strategy (one based on concentrating investment in areas of need), this is only part of a much wider process of choice among strategies, which also takes into account social priorities and available resources. The preferred

* op.cit.

corporate strategy opts for a medium level of investment in education, and in community health and well-being, with a special stress on meeting the needs of the disadvantaged and of particular client groups (such as children). Here the Coventry planners have reaped the reward of their pioneer work in developing corporate planning strategies from the mid 1960s onwards. Only here are physical plans, financial consequences and the wider objectives of the authority all related in a coherent framework."

This is excellent in itself, allowing the local authority to plan ahead - in the widest sense - while promoting the efficient use of resources. What it does not do is give any indication, necessarily, that public wishes will be served any better than by any other system. Indeed it is yet another example of a situation whereby the planners acquire one more legitimating factor; they can, in an authority which practises corporate planning, state that their preferred strategy should be followed because it conforms with the corporate plan, which in turn, of course, conforms with the regional and national strategies. Coventry has a period of intensive public participation on an annual basis at the time the corporate plan is reviewed and amended, but, since these are in no way statutory documents, there is no reason why another authority, or Coventry itself, should not decide that participation is unnecessary and a nuisance. Perhaps legislation should be introduced to ensure that participation in these plans is not taken lightly by authorities in future. McLoughlin and Thornley* considered that corporate planning could be a valuable tool; the corporate plan was inherently less likely to be oriented towards the physical framework of the town or region to the exclusion of other aspects; also it was more practical in that it concerned itself with the allocation of resources, rather than attempting "an expression of the aspirations of the community" - a difficult task for a

* McLoughlin and Thornley 1972 (a)

structure plan which the Manual regards as basically a land use plan. Furthermore, the structure plan is dogged by departmental boundary problems, where the public sees only issues. The corporate plan may be more appropriate here as well, since it can cut across departmental boundaries as a matter of routine.

Local planning and structure planning

The old-style development plan was replaced by the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act by the combination of structure and local plans which obtains today.

"Sir Desmond Heap remarked that they were valuable if it was thought to be an advantage to replace one plan by two and so have two plans for the price of two."*

This is an extreme view, but there is probably a grain of truth in it, at least as far as public participation is concerned; it remains true that issues of, for instance, development control, are likely to have to be dealt with at both structure and local plan level wherever they involve more than the actual site itself - as they may well do if transport, waste disposal, noise and other factors are taken into account.

The structure plan consists of a "written statement, illustrated diagrammatically, of the local planning authority's policies and proposals for change on a large scale",** including setting the broad outlines for the local plans, which comprise a map on an Ordnance Survey base, a written statement, and other diagrams and illustrations where necessary, and possibly including "a fuller technical justification for their proposals".

* Layfield, F. 1972 (a)

** all unidentified quotations in the following section are from the Development Plans Manual: H.M.S.O. 1970 (a)

The timescale of the structure plan will be anything from fifteen to thirty years, so flexibility is of the utmost importance; the local plan will generally be for a much shorter period, such as five to ten years, and even here a degree of flexibility will be called for.* Local plans should complement one another, and augment the structure plan, their primary function being to apply the strategy of the structure plan. They are "concerned with details of implementation", which suggests that they are more or less adjuncts to the structure plan, technical appendices rather than plans in their own right.

Although a local plan cannot be put on deposit until the structure plan is approved, local authorities "may carry the preparation of local plans up to and including the point of public participation". But these local plans may be rejected and the work involved beyond the survey stage thus wasted if the structure plan is rejected or amended. This would appear to be a deliberate disincentive to carry out public participation on local plans, beyond the stage of goal-setting, until the structure plan is accepted, by which time the planners' ideas on the local plan may regrettably have become more rigid than was the case before. It is interesting, incidentally, that the local plan is supposed to draw attention to detailed planning issues "in terms that will inform property owners and developers how their interests will be affected and where their opportunities lie". There is no mention here of those who rent accommodation, residential or commercial, or those who use and must use an area for work or recreation.

"The requirements ... about publicity and participation ... must be met by the local planning authority ... before finally

* see Appendix D for list of local plan functions and types

determining (the structure plan's) content for submission to the Minister". The only statutory effect of this follows from the Minister's power to return a submitted structure plan. But "no doubt the case will be rare", and may lead to resubmission in a modified form. These controls are likely in practice to be weak, because the amount of participation specified is not great, and should not prevent any authority whose planners do not choose to take public participation seriously from going through the motions of participation without allowing it to alter their opinions. This may be done simply by giving information which is hard for the layman to understand - as in the case of the Staffordshire draft structure plan "key diagram", which is not easy to distinguish from those of the less favoured alternatives.

Local plans are prepared and adopted by the local planning authority unless the Minister decides otherwise, but a device to safeguard the public interest has been included, whereby the Minister must receive a report of the participation stages of each local plan, before adoption actually takes place. There is likely to be such a number of local plans being produced, however, that one would not expect the Minister to be able to control every situation. This would not in any case be desirable, because one potentially good feature of the new system is the increased scope for purely local decision making. What is needed is not more control from the top, but more from the grass roots, from whence there are too few sanctions against an unpopular planning authority, and even they operate via the local council, sometimes effectively democratic, sometimes not.

According to the body of democratic theory derived from Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, the most meaningful participation will occur at the smallest levels of aggregation of society, a position which, if accepted, would indicate that local plans are the most convenient vehicle for this to occur in the spectrum from national and regional plans through to development

plans. The legislation in fact allows a greater degree of participation in these plans than in any other. Structure plans have almost the same degree of publicity, representations and objections demanded by the legislation as do local plans, but the structure plan no longer has the traditional type of public inquiry procedure attached to it; the examination in public examines only those features of the plan which the Minister considers to be important, whereas at the local level any organisation or member of the public may bring up any topic, whether or not the authorities consider it to be relevant - an important safeguard in a situation in which relevance has tended to be defined in the past by those exercising power, rather than by those affected by a plan. But to bring an issue to the notice of the Inspector at a local plan public inquiry may not be soon enough. As Layfield* has pointed out, individual development can no longer be viewed in a purely local context:

"the local plan must 'conform generally to the structure plan'. Unless the structure plan fails in its purpose, much of the guiding material for the local plan will be found there."

Public participation may mean that inquiries are relatively less important, so it is crucial to be involved at an early stage. Another problem perceived by Layfield is the development of ever more sophisticated techniques of projection and measurement:

"It is a new art to cross-examine a computer, and so far I have not found anyone who can do it."

Access to programmes and results is needed, and early preparation will be vital - but the whole process will cost the objector a great deal of money. There should be an end, as well, to bottom-drawer plans:

* Layfield, F. 1972 (a)

"Recently, I have attended at least three inquiries outside London where a crucial element in the planning authority's decision - which was stated to rest on the development plan's provisions - was in fact an undisclosed policy document or plan. In each case the relevant document came to light by chance and in the face of much opposition. If that attitude is not improved, the new structure planning procedures will be greatly harmed."

I believe that professional and public opinion will in the long run force an improvement in the disclosure of information, but it is surely far better that it should occur willingly and soon."

Another problem, which did not exist before the reorganisation of local government, is that of the division of responsibility between district and county authorities. In the case of Stoke, it had total responsibility for its planning before reorganisation, but in the future responsibility for planning will be shared with the new county of Staffordshire. Peter Hall* foresees inevitable problems in the future:

"Structure planning does not remove conflict, or necessarily resolve it. And the new county-plus-district system of local government, which divides planning responsibilities, could transfer the conflict to the juncture between structure and local planning, where it could become a sorry tangle indeed."

Neither Stoke nor Staffordshire has produced any local plans yet, so their performance in this respect cannot be evaluated.

The examination in public

The introduction of this examination of structure plans relies greatly on two tacit assumptions,

- that the plans have been widely publicised and a full response elicited before the plan was finally made, and
 - that the plans will not concern themselves with details.
-

* Hall, Peter 1974 (a)

Failure on either of these two counts will undoubtedly lead to what Layfield calls "familiar delays". As regards the former, it will be some years, at least, before many members of the public know enough about planning to realise the importance of making their views known in the preparation of a structure plan; and it is admitted, as regards the latter, that many issues of detail will have to be considered at structure plan level, because their ramifications lie outwith the scope of local plans only, and members of the public might easily be adversely affected if they left all consideration of matters of detail until the local plan stage.

The Secretary of State made the bold distinction between "relevant" and "irrelevant" representations. This should certainly expedite the examination if it can be successfully applied, but, again, if it cannot, the delays caused by this new system will be as bad as those of the old system. A legacy of bitterness in the public mind would also be caused by any attempt to define for them what was relevant and what not, especially if it turned out at a later local plan inquiry that it was now too late for a certain matter to be taken into consideration. This is why the Minister, through the Chairman of the examining panel, has the power to indicate that certain matters should be considered at the outset in the local planning process. It is to be hoped that this proves sufficient. Sound knowledge of everything that led up to the structure plan's adoption will certainly be necessary at local plan inquiries.

The time factor

The whole structure planning process is intended to speed things up, leaving the details to be tidied up later. But this could leave a situation where either there were no real choices made at the structure plan stage, or the arguments would only begin at the local plan stage, when the

implications of the structure plan would be realised by those affected. The former would be pointless, echoing Heap's phrase about "two plans for the price of two", and the latter would cause unnecessary bitterness, as people came up against the planners and their structure plan - a formidable combination at a local plan inquiry. Concern has been expressed by many involved in the practice of planning that public participation could lead to delays in producing and implementing plans, which would contradict one express purpose of the 1968 Act, to speed up the planning process. But participation may save time and reduce friction,

"if it takes place at a stage when it is quite clear that the Local Planning Authority has genuinely not made up its mind about the contents of the plan, and if the material presented to the public eye displays real alternative possibilities. Publicity of the old kind designed to advocate a choice already formally determined by the Local Planning Authority is likely to prove disastrous."*

In the current Circular** relating to publicity and public participation in the preparation of development plans, the central government showed that it accepted the need for the public to be involved right from the early stages:

"If the policies to be embodied in the plans are to be understood and generally accepted, and if the proposals in them are to be implemented successfully, the authorities must carry the public with them by formulating, for public discussion, the aims and objectives of the policies and then the options for realising these aims and objectives. Giving the public the opportunity to participate in the formative stage will, when handled with skill and understanding, not only make the plan a better plan but also do much to improve relationships between the planning authorities and the public. Participation is a two-way process.

(It) should not be a formalised and rigid process but should be flexible enough to meet all types of

* Layfield, F. 1972 (a)

** D.O.E. 1972 (a)

local need.

What is absolutely essential is that three things should be known from the outset, (1) that the authority is encouraging comments, (2) the way in which such representations are to be submitted and (3) what timetable the authority has laid down for receiving representations.

Participation in depth does not need to be limited in time. The overall time taken on plans is important: constructive participation should help both to improve their quality and relevance, and to keep the period for preparing and approving them within an acceptable timetable."

This Circular freely admits that, at the present time, not enough is known about how to involve people in strategic planning:

"Past experience of participation, which is for the most part concerned with planning of a more detailed kind, or with specific projects, does not provide a very clear guide to the most effective methods of involving the public in the broad strategic planning with which structure plans are concerned."

The benefits obtained by taking extra time and effort over the participation programme must be offset against the need to produce the plan within a reasonable length of time. The longer the period of public uncertainty about the future of a particular proposal, the greater the degree of blight that may occur, increasing the diseconomies attaching to the type of participation involved in the development planning process.

Participation in goal-setting

Two questions immediately present themselves, when considering public participation in the early stages of plan preparation: is it really possible for the public to take part in the process of goal-setting in the present political environment, and who will participate - the more articulate elements of society only? In order for the process to work at all, it would seem that most of the alternative goals

which the public would have to consider would come from the planners. These could be platitudes, such as "a good environment", which could be criticised very little, and could have no effect on the final plan; they could be more particular, such as "better car access to the town centre", the type of goal which could perhaps be criticised only by those people who have been educated enough to think of the adverse consequences of such a policy - worse bus services, perhaps, or wholesale clearance of buildings. Finally, there could be goals, such as "more high-rise flats", which would be certain (as in Stoke-on-Trent) to be unpopular, thus demonstrating, by comparison, the popularity of the other goals. This presents a bleak picture - the reality is not necessarily so bad. For instance, in Stoke people had the choice of five policies concerned with shopping, or eight to do with housing: policies which did not necessarily conflict, but which were almost always real alternatives. However, there appears to be a danger that the goals presented to people could be purely spurious, while offering an appearance of choice. This did not happen in Stoke, nor, for a different reason, in Staffordshire; in the latter case, people were simply not asked to give an indication of the goals they favoured. There was no formal participation between the announcement that the plan was to be prepared, in 1971, and the presentation of alternative strategies, in 1973.

The incrementalist approach to planning versus The Plan

Democratic theory, as outlined in an earlier section, would suggest that participation in politics, or, by inference, in planning, should be as continuous as possible in order to succeed. Involvement over a long period will have an educative effect on the participants, thus slowly increasing the significance of the contribution that they are able to make. The corporate planning approach used in Coventry includes an annual cycle of participation, a crude approximation

to continuous participation, but a great advance on the system used in structure planning, where the plan is unlikely to be revised more than once in a decade. In the situation in which planning finds itself at present, with so many rapid changes in the forecasts for national and regional growth, transportation policy and many other fields, an incremental approach wherever possible would seem to make sense. This would mean that no decision would be taken now which would be better taken in a year's time, and no policy should be incapable of swift alteration if an unforeseen change in circumstances occurs. In a situation of major investment, decisions have to be taken which will affect planning for many years, but this is not true of most planning issues. If planning can occur incrementally, there is every chance that the public could become involved on an everyday basis. The factors acting against this tendency are numerous; local councillors would feel that some of their power was disappearing, planners would have to change their whole method of working. Most crucially, though, the legislative base for town and country planning would have to undergo yet another major revision, in this case more in the nature of a revolution. "Planning" would have to replace "The Plan", by which I mean that there would no longer be documents produced every few years which could control development for years to come. Planning would be a continuous process of review rather than a series of statutory edicts, with insufficient flexibility in a situation of rapid change. It is not true to say that this would mean the abolition of all indications about what was, or was not, to be allowed in the future: there would be a series of policies accepted about every issue and for every area, but these could be changed where and when necessary, by a process including a considerable amount of public involvement. This possibility, among others, will be considered in the next, and final section.

Building an alternative model of participation

79.....Introduction

79.....Summary of present problems

81.....Suggestions for an ideal system

83.....Practicalities of change

86.....Conclusion

Introduction

This section will attempt to summarise the problems that exist today with respect to participation in planning, especially development plan preparation, to posit an ideal type of solution to them, and then to suggest ways of aiming towards this ideal. Possible future problems will then be examined, and it will be made plain that no simple panacea for the ills of planning today does, in fact, exist.

Summary of present problems

Plans are, at present, essentially rigid in conception, although the new structure plans do allow for some degree of fluidity by their emphasis on generalities. Local plans, prepared within the framework of structure plans, set out the detailed policies of the planners, and apply for shorter periods, in general, than do structure plans. However, rigidity is still a feature of the system, with its emphasis on plans as documents, diagrams and maps rather than on the process and goals of planning itself. Thus the emphasis is on a fixed object rather than an evolutionary framework. The structure plan is seen as a masterplan, in the same way that the old development plan was - the lack of detailed expression does not change this. Plans set constraints, not only for the public who wish to participate, but for the planners in the future as well. Some constraints may well be necessary - some large projects have to be planned and implemented over a long period, and it is difficult to see how this might be avoided. The problem is to reduce the number of projects which are thought to need planning well in advance to that number for which this is really unavoidable.

Another problem is the tendency of planning towards uniformity. This is not confined to planning, but applies increasingly to every aspect of government. In planning, however, it tends

to produce a physical environment which everywhere develops towards the same artificial ideal - an imperfect ideal because it is moulded by the avaricious capitalist as much as by the omniscient planner and politician. Conformity to an ideal handed down from above might, debatably, be desirable in some fields, but in planning it necessarily stifles creativity in the very area in which man in previous centuries has expressed his unique genius for moulding his environment in the most concrete and lasting manner. Did the Fosse Way conform to the Highways Regulations?

A third problem of planning today is the non-accountability of the planner for his actions. This is linked to the problem of ideologies and has been sufficiently covered in a previous section. The planner has an ideology of change, and the fact that he is responsible as much to his own hubris as to anyone else for what he does is the cause of many of the problems of "public relations" encountered in planning today. A degree of democratic control of the planner direct from the people, as opposed to the present hit-and-miss method of control by a local council which may or may not be in agreement with the people, could force the planner to consider more than the "technical" and legalistic matters which concern him at present.

The average planner is also partial towards one type of social group, the group from whence he came and by whom he was educated, largely middle class and suburban in orientation. This means that, with the best will in the world, he cannot know what concerns other sections of society - unless he makes an attempt, at least to listen, and preferably to ask questions and gain the confidence of all sections of the community.

Suggestions for an ideal system

The ideal system of planning, as I see it, would necessarily involve a complete overhaul of the whole concept and practice of local government, in line with certain principles. For this reason, among others, these suggestions are unlikely to be implemented, except incompletely and piecemeal.

Planning should be a process, a framework for change (or equally for conservation), not a series of fixed plans which constrain action for many years. This process would necessarily be flexible, in that its incremental nature would allow a reversal of policy at any point with a minimum of difficulty; any decision taken, except those comparatively rare ones relating to major and long term investment, would be a small one, committing few resources, and those for as short a time as possible. This would be a learning process, constantly susceptible to modification, and thus very suited to a time of mobility in society and uncertainty in world economic conditions. A requirement would necessarily be the maximum input of ideas and decision making power from members of the public.

Devolution of responsibility should take place wherever possible, so that higher levels of management and government can find the time and energy to deal with those matters that are of overriding significance, such as national economic planning, or agricultural research, or any one of a hundred other topics which are not, and could not sensibly, be locally based. At the lowest levels, the increased (or newly introduced) scope for decision making would allow the use of techniques of direct democracy, which has previously been identified as a learning system, and as the only type of government (or self-government) which does not tend inexorably towards its own destruction. Rather direct democracy constantly reinforces its own stability and democratic nature. It is regarded as unlikely that direct democracy could function in units

of more than 30,000 population, so what is needed for the larger levels of aggregation is a delegate system, whereby control is maintained at all times by the grass roots; this could occur by the power of instant recall of a delegate by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority, or even a simple majority, of those who elected him - or, more crudely, simply by his annual election.

There would be different levels of responsibility for different purposes, such that no decision should be taken at a higher level than is strictly necessary. In planning terms, nothing would be decided by a regional plan which could be better left to a structure plan, and nothing by a structure plan which could be dealt with more satisfactorily by a local plan. Local planning would, with its greater range of powers, be able to develop a greater range of diversity in its expression over the whole spectrum of planning issues. It must, though, be controlled to a much greater degree by means of direct democracy in the form of public participation. Every planning decision at the local scale would have to come up for public discussion, and nothing could be pushed through against public wishes, except, of course, for such decisions as needed to be taken at a higher level in the interests of the wider community.

This would take care of the problems, previously identified, of the non-accountability of the planner, and his partial and righteous ideology. If each decision had to be taken by the local people rather than by the planner, then he would become more of a professional advisor than is the case at present. At higher levels of aggregation, the planners could be controlled by means of delegated members of the community, rather in the way that councillors supposedly control the activities of planners now, but hopefully more effectively, since the delegate's base in the community would inevitably be firmer than is the case today with many a councillor. Thus at all levels, planners would tend to become public servants in fact as well as in fiction.

Relationships between the different levels of responsibility and between adjoining areas might well prove difficult. There would need to be a fixed set of responsibilities for each level, with all residual responsibility accruing to the smallest level, whether a street or something larger, such as a ward. Inevitably, though, there would be disagreements, and it would seem logical that a higher level should be able, perhaps by means of a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of delegates, to override the wishes of a lower level in rare cases. The question of adjoining areas is a difficult one; it seems likely that boundaries would have to be arbitrary, or at any rate purely physical, since sociologists have not succeeded in attempts to define communities or neighbourhoods in geographical terms. Once the boundaries had been decided, though, it would be necessary to institute a series of checks and balances to ensure that the policies of an area did not adversely affect those of a neighbour. One way would be to allow for delegates from one area to take part in the discussions, and even to vote as a minority interest, in the adjoining area. Another way would be to define boundary zones, rather than lines, in which decisions would have to be taken in consort by those in the areas around.

Practicalities of change

The ideas outlined above are more in the nature of utopian model building than practical possibilities. But it is of importance to have some idea of the ends towards which one is aiming if one is suggesting possible changes. The crucial area in which it would seem possible that planning could become more democratic is in local planning. Instead of the present system under which structure plans are produced before local plans, an ideal situation for democratic purposes would be the reverse. Of course, in practical terms this is not easy, since the structure plan does genuinely have a co-ordinating function as regards local planning, which it does

better than a conglomeration of local plans probably could. But if the emphasis were on this co-ordination instead of being on structuring the local plans, the latter would be able to become more democratic, because they would have more in the way of real issues to deal with. Thus it would seem that local and structure plans ought to be produced concurrently, so that the one can influence the other. A problem here is that of manpower in the planning department - in order to carry out both tasks at the same time, either more staff would be needed, or the process would take considerably longer. Neither is politically acceptable at present, so a third possibility presents itself: the plans should have less scope, but they should be produced more often. Structure plans to suggest guidelines for the next 15 or so years may well be necessary, but it should be made legally clear that they should cease to be statutory documents after five or so years from the date of approval, remaining purely advisory, so that constant revision would have to take place. This way, local plans could be prepared which contradicted the dictates of the structure plans, to take account of changing circumstances or of public participation; these local plans could then be implemented alongside a structure plan revision. This approximates to the incremental approach to decision making mentioned above, and could involve more or less continuous public participation; if and when this proved to be a success, some actual power devolution might actually be allowed to take place.

It is difficult to propose changes just at the time when the new system is getting under way, because it must be given a chance to work. It is easier to suggest modifications in the medium future - to make plans cyclical, with a participatory revision process every few years - thus providing feedback in order to facilitate the recycling of the structure plan.

Possibilities for the improvement of information-gathering, at least, exist in two recent innovations - corporate planning and community councils. The latter were introduced in the Local Government Act, 1972, or at least local authorities were given the authority to introduce them if they felt they would be useful. They were given no planning role, but their task of ascertaining, co-ordinating and expressing community views to the authority could be usefully extended to planning matters. Corporate planning, in Coventry at least, includes an annual review of policy, with a built-in participatory phase, and the extension of this could help to bring people and planners closer together. It might, though, conflict with a desire to devolve actual power to more local levels, since it deals with a citywide or countrywide scale of operation. That problem and its possible resolution is one that is impossible to forecast at present, but some way around it could surely be found.

In order to achieve a situation of popular, incremental decision making, it is important to start somewhere and I suggest that street committees, as mentioned by Mr. Cornell in Stoke in another context, could usefully take over certain responsibilities, on sufferance for 10 years or so. These could include such matters as the control of advertising displays, some development control including changes of use, housing management, and perhaps traffic management in residential areas. If and when these devolutionary trends were shown to be a success, more devolution could occur. Power must be transferred in fact; possibly the sanction of intervention from above might be used in cases of incompetence, but generally decisions would be made and implemented locally. Local knowledge about such matters as development control could be very useful. Local authority planners would actually work for the people in these small areas, with their salaries paid for as at present, rather as the National Health Service operates in that respect.

One problem that is not necessarily resolved by these methods is that of minorities, whether of old people, or of immigrants, or of the rich. How are their interests safeguarded? There is no reason to suppose that these people would suffer from their minority status any more than they do at present, indeed a situation where the decision making unit was small, even in the restricted planning sphere which has just been discussed, and in which decisions were taken by direct democratic means, the individual or small group would count for more than in the present system. Besides, in this learning situation, there is every reason to suppose that tolerance would gradually grow over the years.

Conclusion

It is less easy to suggest concrete proposals for change than it is to point out the faults of the present system of development planning, and public participation in planning in general, but to criticise these faults, and I hope I have done this constructively, is a very necessary prelude to any attempt to change the system. There needs to be a much greater awareness of the problems, such as the antinomy between order and freedom, which are inevitably involved when participation is introduced into a present-day governmental system. There is no panacea which will resolve the paradoxes raised by the twin desires to improve the technical standards of the planning process, while involving the public to a greater extent. The attempts, above, at suggesting new ways of conducting the practice of planning at the local level are necessarily fluid and inchoate, although I hope they are not totally impractical.

Appendices, bibliography

A: 88.....Appendix A:

Town and Country Planning Act 1968, part I, section 13.-(1). Supplementary provisions as to structure and local plans.

B: 89.....City of Stoke-on-Trent, Structure Plan. First questionnaire, Spring 1973: Choice of objectives.

C: 92.....City of Stoke-on-Trent, Structure Plan, Second questionnaire, Autumn 1973: Comments on Draft Plan.

D: 95.....Development Plan, A Manual on Form and Content, section 2.5: Component plans.

96.....Bibliography.

Town and Country Planning Act 1968

Part I, section 13.-(1)

Supplementary provisions as to structure and local plans.

Without prejudice to the foregoing provisions of this Part of this Act, the Minister may make regulations with respect to the form and content of structure and local plans and with respect to the procedure to be followed in connection with their preparation, submission, withdrawal, approval, adoption, making, alteration, repeal and replacement; and in particular any such regulations may -

- (a) provide for the publicity to be given to the report of any survey carried out by a local planning authority under section 1 of this Act;
- (b) provide for the notice to be given of, or the publicity to be given to, matters included or proposed to be included in any such plan, and the approval, adoption or making of any such plan or any alteration, repeal or replacement thereof or to any other prescribed procedural step, and for publicity to be given to the procedure to be followed as aforesaid;
- (c) make provision with respect to the making and consideration of representations with respect to matters to be included in, or objections to, any such plan or proposals for its alteration, repeal or replacement;
- (d) without prejudice to paragraph (b) above, provide for notice to be given to particular persons of the approval, adoption or alteration of any plan, if they have objected to the plan and have notified the local planning authority of their wish to receive notice, subject (if the regulations so provide) to the payment of a reasonable charge for receiving it;
- (e) require or authorise a local planning authority to consult with, or consider the views of, other persons before taking any prescribed procedural step;
- (f) require a local planning authority, in such cases as may be prescribed or in such particular cases as the Minister may direct, to provide persons making a request in that behalf with copies of any plan or document which has been made public for the purpose mentioned in section 3(1)(a) or 7(1)(a) of this Act or has been made available for inspection under section 3(2) or 7(2) of this Act, subject (if the regulations so provide) to the payment of a reasonable charge therefor;
- (g) provide for the publication and inspection of any structure plan or local plan which has been approved, adopted or made, or any document approved, adopted or made altering, repealing or replacing any such plan, and for copies of any such plan or document to be made available on sale.

City of Stoke-on-Trent, Structure Plan

First Questionnaire, Spring 1973

Choice of objectives

Changes in the City are being planned. These changes will affect where you live and work, how you shop, how you travel. And the cost of many of these improvements will be paid from your rates.

These changes will affect your future, and your children's future, so they've got to be right. And because our opinions may not be the same as yours, we need your help to decide which of the many possible changes are the most important ones.

To help you help us we have prepared a list of 33 possible objectives which could form the basis of any new plans for the city. We need you to help decide which of these are the most important - and in case you think we have left out changes you would like to comment on, there is space for you to add these. We have not asked for your opinions on changes in education, and health, and welfare, as improvements to these essential services will take place anyway.

By giving your opinions of these changes you will be helping your city council to plan the new Stoke on Trent. But we know that filling in forms like this is no substitute for meeting you, or for you meeting us, so we've arranged an exhibition which will be coming to your part of the city. We will be there to discuss your wishes, and help you to fill in this form if you need us to.

Details telling you when and where your nearest exhibition is will be published in the local press, and on the radio, and included on posters.

Please come. Remember, it's your City we're planning.

(Next was a series of notes to explain the implications of each of the objectives - approximately 1000 words in all. For examples, see page 47)

Objectives

Here is a list of 33 possible objectives. Carefully read through the complete list. The choose eight objectives which you think are the most important, and put a tick in the Top Priority box against each of these. Now decide how important you think each of the other objectives are, grading them as second priority, or low priority, or indifferent, or against. There are notes opposite to help you.

Recreation and social facilities

- 1 To increase the amount of open space and create more walkways linking different parts of the City.
- 2 To increase the number of both indoor and outdoor sports facilities.
- 3 To make more use of canals and other water areas for recreational purposes.
- 4 To increase the number of community halls and facilities in residential areas.

Physical environment

- 5 To preserve attractive landscape, streets and buildings.
- 6 To allow some development in attractive landscape areas for housing, offices or light industry.
- 7 To improve the City's image by reclaiming derelict land and demolishing dangerous unsightly buildings.
- 8 To cut down noise and fumes, and cleanse polluted streams.
- 9 To use some reclaimed land for buiding purposes.

Shopping

- 10 To promote the development of Hanley as the principal shopping and entertainment centre.
- 11 To encourage the improvement of shopping facilities in Tunstall, Burslem, Stoke and Longton.
- 12 To make adequate provision for small shopping centres in housing areas.
- 13 To encourage the retention of corner shops.
- 14 To allow the development of very large supermarkets away from town centres.

Transport

- 15 To pedestrianise and improve the appearance of the main shopping centres.
- 16 To enable people to reach shopping centres easily either by car, or public transport.
- 17 To provide roads and parking for maximum use of cars in the rush hour.
- 18 To restrain car use in the rush hour and encourage the use of public transport.
- 19 To provide a convenient public transport service for people who cannot or do not wish to drive.
- 20 To reduce the danger and inconvenience caused by traffic in residential areas.

Industry and employment

- 21 To attract more jobs to the City so that people will not have to leave the area to find work.
- 22 To increase the variety of jobs available.
- 23 To reduce the length of the journey to work by locating employment nearer to housing areas.
- 24 To encourage the provision of additional jobs for women nearer their homes.
- 25 To separate intrusive industry from residential areas.

Housing

- 26 To build more flats over 5 stories high.
- 27 To build more flats less than 5 stories high and terraced housing.
- 28 To build more detached and semi-detached housing.
- 29 To retain and improve older terraced housing.
- 30 To clear substandard housing at the fastest possible rate.
- 31 To improve the landscaping and design standards of housing areas.
- 32 To encourage the trend of home ownership.
- 33 To encourage the provision of rented housing accomodation.

To help us work out the results of this survey we need you to fill in the following details. It is not necessary to include your name.

Your address

Your occupation

Your sex

Your age (group)

Are you married?

Does your family own a car?

If there are any objectives missing from the list on the previous page which you would like to comment on, please write them in the space below. Include aims you would support, and also any you are against. Please grade them as you did before.

(3 spaces)

Thank you for your help. We hope you have found the objectives interesting, and will come along to the exhibition and discuss them with us.

City of Stoke-on-Trent, Structure Plan

Second questionnaire, Autumn 1973

Comments on Draft Plan

Your April preferences provided the basis for several alternative plans from which one was provisionally chosen as the preferred strategy which seems to best meet your priorities.

THE CITY COUNCIL WANTS TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF THE DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN AND THE POLICIES AND PROPOSALS IT CONTAINS SO THAT IT CAN BE MODIFIED IF NECESSARY.

The following questions enable you to express your opinions on the plan as a whole and its separate sections.

Please indicate your support (or otherwise) for the proposals in the Draft Plan by ticking in the appropriate boxes. (For or Against)

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Plan provides a Green Space strategy which incorporates

1. No development in areas of good landscape and Green Belt.
2. Protection of sites of special scientific interest.
3. Continued land reclamation with the provision of more recreational areas linked by walkways.

There are also complementary policies to

1. Retain and conserve the best parts of the built-up area.
2. Improve the City's general appearance.

Steps will be taken to eliminate or minimise sources of air and water pollution.

Future mineral working will only be tolerated at minimum damage to the environment.

Waste disposal sites will be similarly strictly controlled.

Do you have any comments on or wish to make any specific changes to the proposals in this section of the Plan?

EMPLOYMENT

The Plan aims to encourage additional and more varied employment an both manufacturing and offices by making new sites available.

To reconcile these policies with environmental considerations the Plan attempts to

1. Provide new industrial sites as close as possible to existing and proposed main roads.
2. Guide new commercial development into the Hanley-Stoke axis.

Improvement, relocation, or even demolition of industrial and commercial uses.

Do you have any comments on or wish to make any specific changes to the strategic employment sites proposed in the Plan?

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The housing proposals will reduce outward migration from the City by

1. Releasing land for new housing development (15,000 houses).
2. Accelerating the ongoing programme for clearance (12,000 dwellings over 20 years).
3. Accelerating the ongoing programme for improvement (Up to 10,000 dwellings in Area Improvement).
4. Putting back new housing on cleared areas (3,000 houses).

Most new housing will be built at low densities, i.e. detached and semi-detached houses.

The plan also aims to avoid building houses in areas of high landscape value.

In addition the proposed major new residential areas are all accessible to public transport routes.

Do you have any comments on or wish to make any changes to the strategic housing sites proposed in the Plan?

TRANSPORT

The Plan will provide for a better balance between public and private transport in Stoke-on-Trent.

The Plan aims to complete the planned primary road network by the mid 1980's composed of the following main new links in addition to the 'D' Road

Derby Way
Berry Hill Link
Hanley Ringway (C Road)

Improvements will also be made to the secondary road network which

1. Reduce through traffic in residential areas.
2. Improve access to industrial and commercial zones.

Bus services giving direct access to the City core from the suburban areas will be developed.

It is also proposed to re-open certain local railway stations.

To complement improved public transport facilities all day commuter car parking in the City core will be restricted in favour of greater short stay provision for shoppers and business users.

Do you have any comments on or wish to make any changes in the proposals in the Transport Section of the Plan?

THE CITY CENTRE AND THE DISTRICT CENTRES

To create a dynamic City and sub regional centre the Plan proposes to strengthen the links between Hanley and Stoke. Within this area it will then be possible to develop separate areas for Shopping, Commerce, Higher Education and Government.

A bus shuttle service between Stoke and Hanley is proposed to promote this improved linkage and the integration of bus and rail services.

The viability of the other district centres will continue to be encouraged with traffic management and pedestrianisation schemes in the main shopping areas.

Do you have any comments on or wish to make any changes in these proposals?

THE PLAN AS A WHOLE

Do you feel that overall the draft City Structure Plan provides a satisfactory basis for the future development of Stoke-on-Trent?

If not please explain why. (Use a separate sheet if required)

Do you consider that there are any other important issues which should have been included in the Plan?

If so please specify. (Use a separate sheet if required)

To help us work out the results of this survey will you please fill in the following brief details

Your address (approx.)

Your age (group)

Development Plans, A Manual on Form and Content

Section 2.5

Component plans

It is because the development plan has to express such varied information that the Act requires its division into structure and local plans. Structure plans (chapters 3,4,5 and 6) will be of two kinds, county structure plans for administrative counties, and urban structure plans for county boroughs and important towns in counties. Local plans (chapter 7) will be prepared for parts of areas covered by structure plans. They will be:

district plans, for parts of towns with urban structure plans, and for parts of counties, i.e. for towns too small for an urban structure plan, and for rural areas (all dealt with in chapter 8);

action area plans for relatively small areas which will be subject to comprehensive treatment within a short period of time (chapter 9);

subject plans, dealing with limited aspects of planning only (chapter 10).

Each component plan will fulfil a specific group of the development plan's functions and each will complement the others; together they will provide a comprehensive basis for the whole planning system. The relationships between these component plans, the types of area they will be prepared for and the functions they will have are illustrated by the diagrams at the end of this chapter.

Approximately 23,000 words.

Bibliography

This bibliography contains works referred to in the text, and works quoted from. It would be impossible to give a complete list of people and publications that have influenced me and given me ideas, so this is not intended to be a comprehensive list of these.

ARNSTEIN, S. 1969 (a) A ladder of citizen participation

J.A.I.P. vol.35, 4.1969.

ASHWORTH, G. 1973 (a) R.T.P.I. Presidential address.

BOR, W. 1970 (a) T.P.I. Presidential address.

BURNS & STALKER 1961 (a) The Management of Innovation.

Tavistock 1961.

CITY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT 1973

(a) Report of the City Architect, Planning and Reconstruction Officer to the Reconstruction Committee, Friday 20th July, 1973. Structure Plan Public Participation - Report on Questionnaire Returns.

(b) Structure Plan, Report of Survey.

(c) Structure Plan, Written Statement of Policies and Proposals.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT 1972 (a) Circular 52/72, 12th

June 1972 (Welsh Office 104/72) Town and Country Planning

Act 1971: Part 2, Development Plan Proposals: Publicity

and Public Participation.

HAGUE, C. (a) (unpublished paper) Participation and Democratic Theory.

HALL, P. 1974 (a) The new 'structure plans': the West Midlands case. New Society, vol.27, 21.3.1974.

H.M.S.O. 1947 (a) Town and Country Planning Act.

H.M.S.O. 1962 (a) Town and Country Planning Act.

H.M.S.O. 1965 (a) The future of Development Plans - Report of the Planning Advisory Group.

H.M.S.O. 1967 (a) Civic Amenities Act.

H.M.S.O. 1968 (a) Town and Country Planning Act.

H.M.S.O. 1969

(a) People and Planning - Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning.

(b) Report of the Royal Commission on Local Government.

(c) Housing Act.

H.M.S.O. 1970 (a) Development Plans - A manual on Form and Content.

H.M.S.O. 1973

(a) Structure Plans, the Examination in Public. D.O.E./W.O.

(b) Local Government (Scotland) Act.

- LAYFIELD, F. 1972 (a) Changing Aspects of Planning. Estates Gazette, vol.221, 4.3.1972.
- McLOUGHLIN & THORNLEY 1972 (a) Some problems in structure planning: a literature review. C.E.S. I.P. 27.
- MILLAR, J.S. 1972 (a) T.P.I. Presidential address.
- MONEY, J. 1973 (a) The need to sustain a viable system of Local Democracy. Urban Studies, 10.1973.
- PATEMAN, C. 1970 (a) Participation and Democratic Theory. Cambridge University Press.
- REIN, M. 1969 (a) Social Planning: The search for legitimacy. J.A.I.P. vol.35, 4.1969.
- SCHUMACHER, E.F. 1973 (a) Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered. Blond and Briggs.
- WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL STUDY 1971 (a) A Development Strategy for the West Midlands.