

Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision: Concepts and Practice

by

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Abstract

Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision (UORP) seems to interpret the concepts of leisure and recreation as ‘activity’, but a more comprehensive conceptual framework has many more components. This has important implications for UORP. As one instance of this, an ‘experience’ definition of recreation, should matter to UORP, as the same ‘activity’ can create a variety of ‘experiences’, in different settings, for different people. It is argued that if UORP provided ‘experiences’, this would actually form a clearer, more appropriate and reliable basis for UORP.

This thesis aims to increase the understanding of the concepts of leisure and recreation in the context of UORP and to emphasise the need for a more comprehensive conceptual picture as the basis of UORP. To achieve this, the research carries out a multi-level, hierarchical investigation: the first level, the conceptual level, examines the meanings of leisure and recreation in historical, academic and philosophical contexts. It emerges that the multi-dimensional concepts of leisure and recreation evolve with time and they are not synonymous terms; they are similar concepts, but, with distinctions. Both leisure and recreation may be approached as ‘activity’, as ‘social matter’ and as a ‘holistic concept’. But significantly for UORP, and distinctively, leisure is defined as ‘time’ and recreation as ‘experience’ and as ‘outcome of experience’.

At the second level, the operational level, the research tests the propositions made and the issues raised at the first level by studying the practice of UORP. This is done through a postal questionnaire survey of Metropolitan local authorities (covering attitudes and opinions) and case studies of Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, as provider, and Saltwell Park, as specific urban outdoor recreation place.

The research concludes that leisure and recreation have a weak link to UORP which is preoccupied with ‘activity’. There is no significant input from other definitional aspects such as ‘time’ and ‘experience’, which could provide a sounder, overall basis for UORP and a conceptual link in resolving certain contemporary issues such as the ‘problem’ of vandalism, ‘perceived decline’ (and revival) of parks and making future Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision more efficient, creative and flexible. Proposals to improve practice are made on the basis of the findings of the empirical research.

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Dedicated to the loving memory of Tahsin Aydin (1937-2001)

Deeply honoured to have known you...

Abbreviations

CURS	Centre for Urban and Regional Studies
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DoE	Department of the Environment
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
ETRA Select Committee	Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee
GLC	Greater London Council
GMBC	Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
ILAM	Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management
INLOGOV	Institute of Local Government Studies
LGA	Local Government Association
LPAC	London Planning Advisory Committee
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
NPFA	National Playing Fields Association
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance number 17
SC/SSRC	Sports Council/Social Science Research Council
TRRU	Tourism and Recreation Research Unit
UORP	Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision
UGST	Urban Green Spaces Taskforce
UPF	Urban Parks Forum
UPP	Urban Parks Programme

PART I – INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Research subject

This research, basically, is about urban outdoor recreation provision (UORP) and how this relates and links with concepts of leisure and recreation, in terms of its underlying principles and philosophies. The focus is on UORP. However, this is a broad field and the research will focus on urban parks in particular; also the research concentrates on the provider's side of UORP, not on user's. The main provider of UORP, in Britain, is local government.

The General Household Surveys, carried out by the Office of National Statistics (1998), consistently have been reporting over the years that walking is the most popular out-of-door leisure and recreation activity¹, mostly taking place in parks and open/green spaces. According to a recent joint report by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR), English Heritage and the Countryside Agency, the total area of parks and open spaces in Britain is around 143.000 hectares (HLF et al, 2001), which is a very large area. Apart from saving precious urban land from further development, open/green space also has value for money. In comparison to some urban recreation facilities, such as indoor leisure/sports centres, parks and open spaces are cheaper to have access to and for actual use; in fact, they are normally 'free' at the point of use.

According to Veal (1994), outdoor recreation in natural areas takes place in national and country parks, in forests, on the coast and on footpaths and, through the phenomenon of driving for pleasure, throughout the countryside, while urban outdoor recreation takes place primarily in parks, playing fields and playgrounds of urban settlements (Veal, 1994). In broader terms, urban outdoor recreation can take place on those land and water areas not covered by buildings (Gold, 1980), which are collectively called urban open space. In this

¹ According to the 1998 General Household Survey, 'Living in Britain', walking is the most popular activity, with an estimated 68.2% of the population undertaking at least one leisure walk of 2 miles or more per year (Office of National Statistics, 1998).

group are the parks, commons, playing fields, children's playgrounds, golf-courses, cemeteries, canal paths, river embankments, urban woodlands, urban farms, allotments, community gardens, disused railway lines, city squares, plazas, pedestrianised streets and so on. However, the open space referred to in this study is the open and green space and mostly in the form of public parks in urban settings.

Parks alone make up the largest segment of public sector expenditure for outdoor recreation which covers the provision, management and expert staff costs of relatively large urban land for the use and enjoyment of the public, by local governments. This is justified in the context of 'public good'; through the significant opportunities and services that parks provide for urban populations. The contribution of parks to the overall quality of life in urban areas is considered to be great. Greenhalgh & Worpole argue that 'successful parks':

"....fulfil many complex urban needs,....By and large they are local facilities; people use them frequently; they mostly walk to them; and they are accessible to all ages, and all walks of life. Many people take pride in 'their' park, and it is often the meeting place and focal point of that elusive notion of 'community'. Few other institutions or facilities possess this openness and flexibility. Parks are often a source of local continuity and 'sense of place' in a rapidly changing urban scene" (Greenhalgh & Worpole, 1995 in Comedia/Demos, 1995).

1.2 Research problem and implications: re-visiting the conceptual bases of UORP

What prompts this research is the pre-supposition that, in UORP, there is, or rather, seems to be much emphasis on the 'activity' definition of leisure and recreation which tends to interpret leisure and recreation just as 'activity' and does not reflect a wider conceptual picture. This is a limited understanding and seems to form the context and influences the content of policies, plans, research and consultation practices, both prior to provision and future management and maintenance of urban open/green space. Quite often, the questions in user surveys and questionnaires enquire what activities users would like to engage in and, in line with this, what facilities they would like to be provided in a given recreation place, such as urban parks. This research comes from an awareness of a large volume of scholarly work concerning the meanings of leisure and recreation, and which describes, along with 'activity', some other aspects of leisure and recreation which seem very significant for UORP. These aspects, if integrated into UORP practice, could be of great use, especially for the planning and management of urban outdoor recreation resources by public authorities, as well as the delivery of high quality UORP services as expected under the current 'Best Value' practice by

local government. Local authorities have been functioning under a persistent climate of financial constraints and budget cuts, and under increasing pressure to achieve more with less. As Godbey notes, they have been:

“...maintaining, conserving, incrementally changing, retrenching, protecting, substituting, or optimising” (Godbey, 1985).

Therefore, it probably becomes all the more important, for the public sector provider, to clarify what it is to provide and why and with what objectives it is to be provided or managed. A clear understanding of what services and why they are to be provided would reinforce attempts to deliver more efficient and satisfactory services. But to do that, the provider needs to understand firstly, what leisure and recreation are, through which the nature of provision can be determined and the objectives of provision can be established and measured.

But why not a conceptual basis of ‘activity’? Is it not sufficient?

Take the activity of walking for example, as the most popular, leisure and recreation ‘activity’ in Britain. Let us consider the following:

Walking in the woods; walking on the beach or in the open landscape; walking uphill or downhill; in a crowded city centre; a historic setting or a modern setting. Walking alone; walking with family or with friends or walking one’s dog. Walking alone in the woods; walking with family or friends in the woods. Let us add to these, some other variables such as day, night, rain, sunshine, hot and cold. And also some social variables such as education, gender, age, social class, income and so on.

Now if we make some combinations of these conditions in relation to walking, the simple activity of ‘walking’ becomes more complicated to comprehend. Consider the following two: walking in a quiet woodland and walking in a crowded city centre. The physical activity is, broadly speaking, the same, but the feelings, senses, emotions, aspirations, satisfactions, fulfilments and experiences the activity creates, in different physical settings and under the influence of different variables, are not. ‘Activity’, this research presumes, can facilitate extensive and varied experiences, which creates a different and wider conceptual context for the planning, provision and management of urban outdoor recreation resources and facilities. If this approach is to be integrated into the UORP process, urban outdoor recreation resources, such as parks, may need to be re-evaluated for more flexible, comprehensive and

imaginative policy responses.

This constitutes the starting point for this research and, in fact, the backbone of our inquiry. So the research starts with a problem that:

In practice, UORP's conceptual basis seems to be limited in scope and incomplete. The apparent 'activity' focus alone cannot form a sound basis for UORP; the 'activity' aspect can be a significant part of the wider leisure and recreation conceptual framework, but does not seem to be the whole of it. This needs to be explored from both the conceptual and operational viewpoints.

1.3 Research issues and questions

In line with the above, there appear to be two main groups of issues to be investigated and questions to be answered by this research.

- Firstly there are issues arising from definitional and conceptual problems. How leisure and recreation are defined inevitably shapes the nature of leisure and recreation related service provision. The public sector urban outdoor recreation provision, as it is the focus of this thesis, appears to operate with a 'ballpark' notion of leisure and recreation. This constitutes the extension of research concern from the conceptual framework into the practice/provision sphere of the leisure and recreation matter. The 'ballpark' notion seems to be largely concerned with the 'activity' aspect or 'activity' definition. It looks as if this can be traced in plans, legislation, policy and research documents, public consultation practice, planning, design and management aspects. At the outset, this research is aware that there are, in fact, numerous definitions and interpretations of leisure and recreation concepts, apart from 'activity', which seem unacknowledged by practice. The question arises: what are these phenomena called 'leisure' and 'recreation'? Are we talking about the same things with arbitrary use of interchangeable terms or are they distinct concepts? If distinct, how do they relate to each other? How did they evolve and become to be understood in the way they are? What is the emerging conceptual picture? And what is the significance of this for UORP? This study will seek to explore and analyse the underlying conceptual dimensions and evaluate the possible implications of the emerging picture in relation to planning, provision and management policies and practices of UORP. Leisure and recreation concepts appear to have the potential to provide a positive input into

UORP practice and it is the task of this study to explore just what that input can be.

- Secondly is the need to view UORP in the context provided by the changing society and as fulfilling differing roles, while these changes occur. The majority of today's urban outdoor recreation places such as municipal parks originate from the industrialisation and (rapid) urbanisation period. Leisure and recreation concepts which prevailed then and shaped the planning, design and management rationale of these parks, have probably taken on new dimensions today, which, this study doubts, are not reflected in the underlying principles and basis of today's UORP. The decline of urban parks, since the mid-1970's, has been frequently pointed out by a variety of sources (ILAM, 1991; Comedia/Demos, 1995; HLF, 1995; ETRA Select Committee, 1999; DTLR, 2001) which describe many of them as deserted, neglected, unused, misused or vandalised places. Today's users are probably using parks in a different way from the users of the Victorian era. It is likely that the users of urban parks (and non-users) today, probably have different attitudes, aspirations and expectations in relation to leisure and recreation and relevant resources. So, how are these evaluated and reflected in relevant policies? In fact, how does UORP operate? What are its main characteristics, underlying philosophies and principles? What are the problems? What is the attitude towards leisure and recreation concepts, how are they understood? How is all this reflected in an urban park? Is there a need for re-visiting the conceptual basis of UORP? Can this provide an input for creating and managing 'successful' parks?

1.4 Aim and Objectives

Aim

The basic aim of this research is to increase our understanding of leisure and recreation concepts in the context of urban outdoor recreation provision and to emphasise the need for integrating a wider, more comprehensive conceptual picture as the basis of UORP.

Objectives

In order to achieve this aim, the following tasks have been carried out:

1. To establish what leisure and recreation are: this should provide a critical overview of how leisure and recreation have been/are approached from historical, institutional and

academic perspectives. This overview seeks to establish how the two concepts evolved; what they are and how they relate to one another;

2. To explore the current status and practice of UORP by local government as the main provider, and to identify the philosophies and principles underlying provision;
3. To provide an insight into the understanding of the concepts of leisure and recreation by a scrutiny of UORP process, relevant plans and policies, urban recreation resources and practitioner's views;
4. To examine and compare the current practices and understandings of UORP by local authorities (objective 3) and the basic philosophies and principles of UORP (objective 2) against the conceptual framework of leisure and recreation (objective 1), in order to identify the strengths and shortcomings of the present practice, if any. This is intended to form the basis for integrating an increased, improved understanding of leisure and recreation in UORP (objective 5);
5. To emphasise the need for integrating an increased understanding of leisure and recreation into the UORP process and develop proposals;
6. To specify areas of future research for further improvement of our understanding of leisure and recreation in relation to UORP.

1.5 Scope

The above stated aim and objectives define the boundaries and scope of this research. In line with this, the research pays a great deal of attention to concepts, philosophies and definitions of leisure and recreation. However, it does not develop a new theory of leisure and recreation. It never sets out to do so. It is significant to note that the concept of 'play' on its own terms is not included in the scope of this study, since it is dealt with in many of the existing theories of leisure and recreation.

As this study basically questions the nature of the link between UORP and concepts of leisure and recreation, the broad field of urban outdoor recreation becomes a major part in it. The research specifically concentrates on local authorities as providers and the institutional, administrative, planning, provision and management aspects. The overview of the techniques

and approaches, which govern UORP, is also a significant part.

At the empirical research level, an urban park is taken as a case study of the urban outdoor recreation places for this study. The emphasis is on the shaping effects of the concepts of leisure and recreation on parks; the governing philosophy behind their provision, planning, design, management and maintenance. This study does not provide an exclusive treatment of the physical and aesthetical design of urban outdoor recreation place; such space is only examined in its ability to enable the investigation of the issues raised and propositions made and establishment of the link between concepts and practice.

The very important factor of ‘users/visitors’ in relation to urban outdoor recreation places and resources will be treated as a highly relevant issue, but no specific research will be undertaken on users here, as the focus is placed on the provider or providing institution with the task of delivering efficient and quality services.

From the title of the thesis, one may well ask why attempt to deal with leisure and recreation together? Why not only deal with urban outdoor recreation provision? A first, pragmatic answer is because those who work with the recreation concept soon get confronted with the leisure concept; it is almost impossible to completely separate recreation from leisure. As for the field of urban outdoor recreation, this is simply how the field has established itself with the term ‘recreation’ rather than ‘leisure’, possibly arising from the effects of specific efforts to provide physical recreation/playing fields outdoors, during the inter-war period (World Wars I and II). But whether there is actually a ‘leisure’ concept, in its own right, within UORP, is one of the issues remains to be addressed through this study.

1.6 Research methodology

In order to achieve the aim and objectives and address the research issues and questions outlined in 1.2, certain methodological procedures need to be employed.

1.6.1 Research rationale, design and flow

The whole research is structured around the stated aim and objectives as well as the leading research questions (Figure 1.1). It is based on a methodology of hierarchical, systematic and rational thinking. In line with this, the study combines two (distinct) types of research: the informative, descriptive part and the exploratory, empirical part.

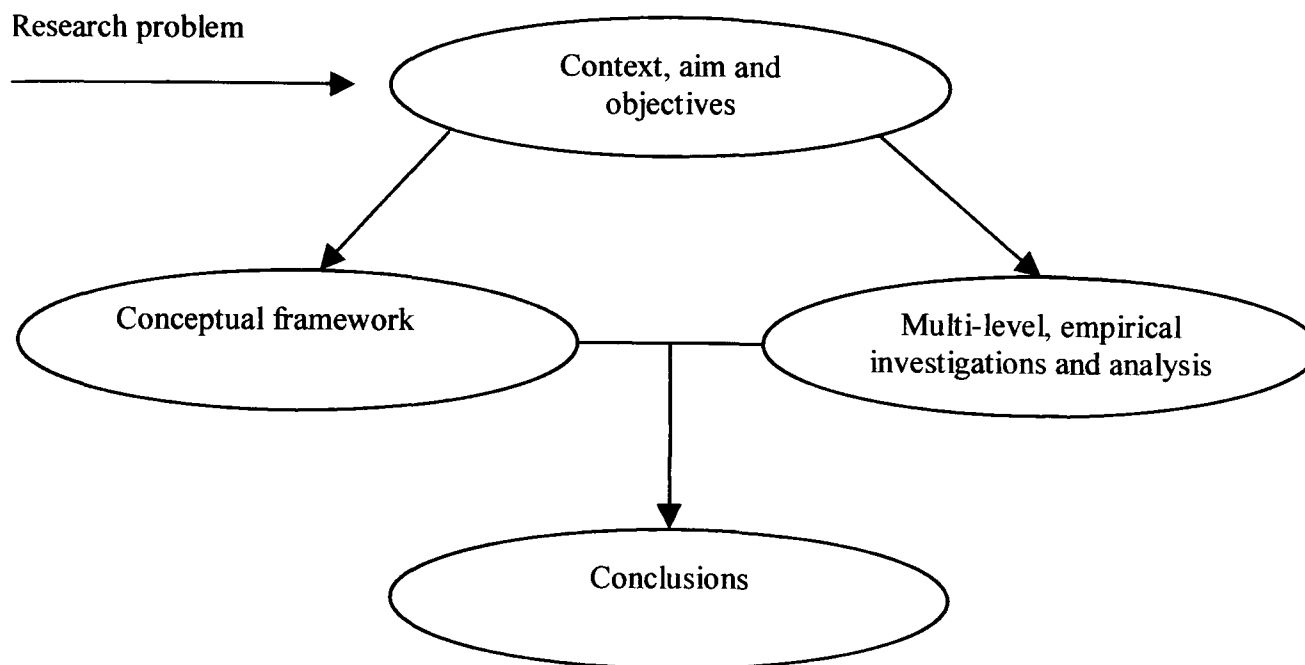


Figure 1.1 A basic outline of research rationale

As Figure 1.1 shows, in a simplified manner, the main aim and objectives of the study and the conceptual framework provide the context for the multi-level approach to the study of practice as a basis for drawing conclusions and making recommendations. The study is divided into four main parts. They are:

1. **Introduction:** sets the scene, describes and puts the research topic in context and defines the research problem.
2. **Conceptual framework:** reviews and examines the philosophies and the variety of meanings associated with the concepts of leisure and recreation; outlines the nature of the relationship between them and analyses the emerging picture in the context of UORP.
3. **Operational framework:** starts by exploring the current status of UORP; looks into the institutional framework, the underlying techniques and principles of UORP and then empirically investigates the meanings and interpretations of leisure and recreation within the UORP system and the way in which UORP operates.
4. **Conclusions:** digests and evaluates research findings of 2 and 3 and re-emphasises key research findings and outlines future work.

This, **introduction**, tries to describe what the research is about. The motives behind the

chosen topic were explained as arising from the presuppositions that UORP appears to prioritise the ‘activity’ definition of leisure and recreation and that this is a limited conceptual view. A wider conceptual framework does not seem to be acknowledged, and it seems that this must have implications for UORP and emphasises a need for increasing our understanding of leisure and recreation, in the context of UORP. This introduction chapter also identifies the aim and objectives of the research and describes the methodology and methods to be employed in order to meet the aim and objectives.

In section two, the actual research process starts with establishing the **conceptual framework** of leisure and recreation. This contains an extensive literature survey on how leisure and recreation are understood and this takes historical analysis, institutional and academic dimensions. The data gathered is analysed in the context of the individual meanings of the two concepts and how they relate to each other. The resultant conceptual mapping provides the basis for further analyses for the subsequent chapters.

In the third phase, the **operational framework**, the research firstly provides an insight into the current status, governing philosophies and principles of the UORP, through a literature survey and from official/governmental document analysis. Secondly, a survey is undertaken in order to examine the current status of the local authority UORP practices and to examine the issues raised and propositions made in the previous sections of the thesis. The overriding aim here is to explore the ways in which leisure and recreation concepts are approached and the contexts in which they are placed. For a more detailed and in depth analysis, the survey is limited to metropolitan borough and city councils which already represent heavily urbanised areas with their inner cities and limited number of open/green spaces. The survey takes two distinct forms:

1. A postal questionnaire survey sent specifically to metropolitan borough and city councils to explore the status and main philosophies and principles of the metropolitan local authority UORP practices, and of course, interpretations of leisure and recreation concepts.
2. A case study of Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council (Gateshead MBC) and Saltwell Park in Gateshead, which will enable the research to test theoretical propositions and issues raised in earlier chapters, in a real-life context and provide a more in-depth

treatment of the issues explored by the questionnaire survey. At this stage, a range of methods was used including interviews with officers of Gateshead MBC (as well as Newcastle City Council and Sunderland City Council prior to that), and analysis of policy and relevant document analysis.

The fourth and final section, **conclusions**, first provides a summary of the research and its key findings and basically proposes a more comprehensive approach towards leisure and recreation by considering a wider conceptual framework as the basis of UORP. As the next step, future areas of research are highlighted.

1.6.2 Research methods

A combination of procedures are employed to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge; collection, analysis and interpretation of data and generalization of findings. They are: literature survey with content analysis, official, governmental document analysis, questionnaire survey, case study and interviews. They are detailed briefly below, as they are described in more detail in relevant chapters:

- Literature survey and document analysis: this approach is used to produce a critical overview of leisure and recreation in their conceptual framework as well as the analysis of the status and rationale of UORP. Literature review and analysis, in fact, has been used in every section of the thesis. The literature analysed include academic textbooks (national and international), research reports, articles from research journals/periodicals, conference proceedings, governmental documents (parliamentary, ministerial) and documents and plans of agencies and local government.
- Questionnaire survey: This was a postal questionnaire which was conducted in order to explore the current status and conceptual approaches in UORP as carried out by the metropolitan local authorities. The following districts were included in the survey: Greater Manchester (10 authorities), Merseyside (5), South Yorkshire (4), Tyne and Wear (5), West Midlands (7), West Yorkshire (5), Inner London Boroughs (14), and finally, Outer London Boroughs (19), 69 authorities in total. The questionnaires were addressed to the directors of leisure services departments and were then, according to the feedback from respondents, passed onto the corresponding sub-departments and responsible officers. A total of 22 questions were in three parts: the existing situation, conceptual

approaches, and recommendations for future planning and provision. The response rate was 49.3 % with the help of follow-up letters and completion over the phone. The questionnaire survey was carried out in 1997.

- Case study analysis: This actually included two related case studies: a study of Gateshead MBC, as a public sector provider, and a study of Saltwell Park, as an urban open/green space setting. These two can be considered as a single, embedded case study, providing a more detailed analysis of issues and propositions and allowing the research to examine them in a real-life situation.
- Interviews: Two groups of interviews were carried out: the preliminary interviews were conducted informally in order to guide and inform the scope, context and content of survey stage of research; and then a series of interviews carried out as part of the case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park. The input from the interviews, in general, has been very valuable in terms of informing the whole empirical research process, discussion of the issues at stake, determining of the variables shaping the nature of UORP, gauging of officer's attitudes towards leisure and recreation concepts and the philosophy behind UORP together which are expected to reflect the attitude and culture of the organisation.

1.7 Structure of thesis

The thesis is structured in four distinct parts, which is in line with the distinct character of the research tasks involved and consists of ten chapters (Figure 1.2 illustrates the research structure and hierarchical stages in detail). Following this chapter, which forms Part 1, the thesis is organised as follows:

Part 2 Conceptual Framework

This part firstly examines the conceptual picture of leisure and recreation. Chapter 2 is an historical account of the leisure and recreation concepts, presented through an historical review and identifying certain turning points in history that have created new meanings or added new twists to old ones. Chapter 3 then looks directly into the concepts; into the underlying philosophies and the variety of meanings which leisure and recreation take and related to the results of the preceding historical account. Chapter 3 outlines the wider conceptual frame of leisure and recreation, which then forms the content of the further research agenda as well as starting to form a basis for

research proposals in Part 4.

Part 3 Operational Framework

In this part, chapter 4 provides an insight into the institutional framework of UORP and emphasises the role of local government as the main provider. This is then followed by a chapter 5 on local authority UORP practice which provides a brief history of urban open/green space provision; an overview of the current status of UORP; its basic principles and governing philosophies.

At this point in the thesis, new propositions are made and new questions are asked, in the way in which theories are developed and research is operationalised. So, the research here takes an inventory of what has been said and with what degree of certainty they have been said; and in line with this, identifies the issues which need to be further explored, tested or verified. The next step is identifying the suitable scientific methods to achieve this. This is the task of chapter 6, the methodology chapter, which describes the methodology and methods to be employed for the empirical research. The first level is the questionnaire survey of metropolitan local authorities in relation to their UORP practice and attitudes towards leisure and recreation concepts and chapter 7 contains the findings and evaluation of this. Chapter 8 and 9, the case study of Gateshead MBC and case study of Saltwell Park respectively, follow the lead from chapter 7. The case studies investigate research issues further and in more detail. This allows analysis of the issues, also views are confirmed or modified and related back to theory and concepts as related to the research propositions.

Part 4 Conclusions

This part, in chapter 10, brings together all the strands of key findings and conclusions with implications for UORP. It summarises the research process and emphasises its main conclusions. This part, through chapter 10, also provides recommendations in the light of conclusions and highlights future research areas.

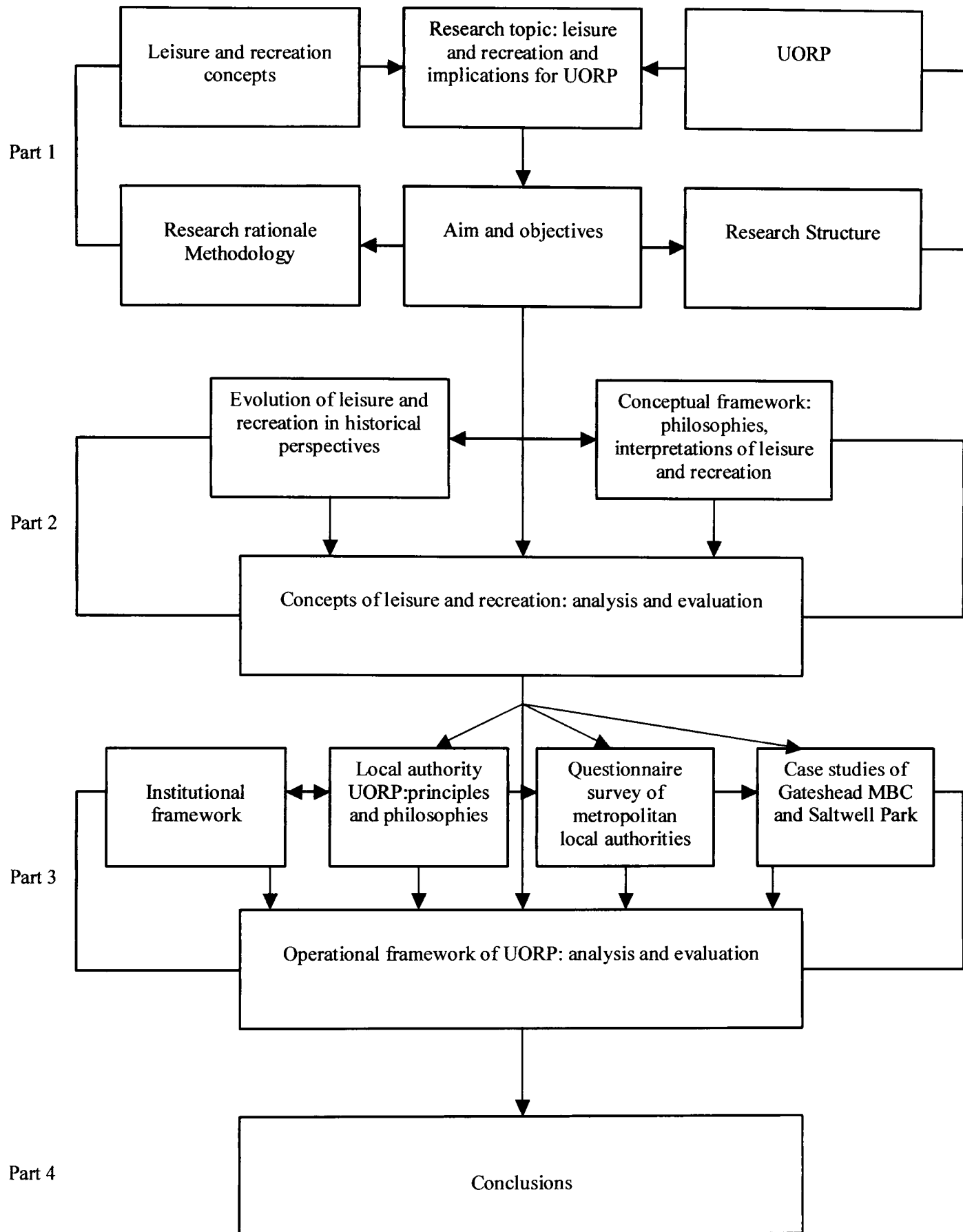


Figure 1.1 Research structure and flow

Chapter 2 - Evolution of leisure and recreation: historical perspectives

2.1 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to examine how leisure and recreation have evolved and been shaped by the events of the past. Although the chapter primarily focuses on the industrialisation and urbanisation period and its shaping impacts on leisure and recreation, it is imperative to note that, prior to this era, leisure and recreation phenomena did exist. They are not the sole product of the industrialisation period. Leisure and recreation experiences of the pre-industrial societies could go as far back as ten to fifteen million years before our time, if the first ‘homo’ species –‘hominids’- is to be taken into account. This can be divided into the early ‘homo’ species period, ‘homo habilis’, ‘homo erectus’, ‘homo sapiens’ (‘palaeolithic age’), ‘neolithic age’, ancient civilisations period, the Greeks, the Roman period, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment periods (Chubb & Chubb, 1981; Shivers & de Lisle, 1997). Following discussion of this, the chapter proceeds with the industrialisation and urbanisation period, which is considered to be a significant period for humanity in terms of the social, political and economic developments. Concepts of capitalism, modernity and post-modernity can be all linked to industrialisation and they are relevant to an understanding of leisure and recreation in the context of this study.

2.1.1 Methodology

Shivers points out that:

“One of the most illuminating methods for understanding the present is to view it from a historical perspective in order to appreciate its progression from distant origins to contemporary form” (Shivers, 1997).

Yin appears to be more sceptical about historical analyses, as he suggests that:

“...histories are limited to events in the ‘dead’ past and therefore seldom have any contemporary sources of evidence, such as direct observation of a phenomenon or interviews with key actors” (Yin, 1994).

Although the history of leisure and recreation is a maturing field of inquiry, it presents significant leads in order to better understand leisure and recreation phenomena. We should

note at the outset that histories of leisure and recreation predominantly narrate institutional and public aspects of these issues, whilst private and individual dimensions, along with women's experiences, remain largely un-investigated.

In order to examine how leisure and recreation have evolved and been shaped by the events of the past, leisure and recreation are related firstly to the pre-industrial era and then to the periods of industrialisation and urbanisation. The overriding aim here is to outline and highlight what events have contributed to the way we understand leisure and recreation today so this chapter is a compilation of developments and legislation, relating to leisure and recreation, taken from a wide range of historical literature.

The review is limited to the history of the western world with a leisure and recreation focus (and with reference to public green/open space development in urban areas, where relevant). The analysis of the industrialisation period is selective in concentrating basically on the English situation. Despite the fact that the majority of the review literature is British, cross-Atlantic references also provide a valuable source of historical information, especially on certain aspects, such as the leisure and recreation life of the primitive/pre-historical cultures, ancient civilisations and historical developments in Europe.

This research acknowledges the disciplinary, professional and ideological biases running through some historical literature. On the basis of the research traditions followed, such specific histories can be divided into three major groups: pluralist, neo-Marxist and feminist accounts (as will be seen in the remainder of the study, this is in fact also true for the study of leisure and recreation). All accounts provide facts as well as value judgements. This research aims to make greater use of the factual accounts and tries to provide as neutral an insight as possible.

For the sake of simplicity, there has been no distinction made between leisure and recreation terms at this stage of the study and they are mentioned together as two similar entities. However where and when necessary, conceptual components of leisure and recreation or terms adopted by historians, such as 'leisure ethic', 'free time', 'activity', 'rational recreation', 'disruptive recreation', will be mentioned in their own right. The open/green space provision and agencies involved, among which are the central government, local authorities, voluntary and commercial sectors are only briefly touched upon here as they are

the subject of chapter 4.

2.2 Leisure and recreation in pre-industrial societies

2.2.1 Prehistoric period

2.2.1.1 Species of ‘homo’/‘hominid’: the early hominid

The prototype of human species on earth can be traced to as far back as ten to fifteen million years (Friedle & Pfeiffer, 1977; Kottack, 1978; Pfeiffer, 1985; Shivers, 1981; Shivers, 1997), even fifteen to twenty million years before our time (Bucher et al, 1984). These prototypes were the earlier ‘hominids’ (members of the ‘hominidae’ family), which were animal-like creatures in appearance, not very different from a gorilla or a chimpanzee. The early hominid -or as more widely known the species of ‘homo’- is believed to have had very little leisure and recreation. Living a very short and brutal life, and under constant survival pressure, almost all activities and engagements of the ‘homo’ man and woman were directed towards survival which included hunting, gathering and preserving of food, finding water, defensible dwelling, protection from wild animals and other natural causes of distress or threat to survival.

This was to go on for millions of years. The early hominids probably lived a life of constant fear and vigil to stay alive. After millions of years of struggle, which had been coupled by a genetic mutation (evolving brain, development of bipedalism-walking upright) through which a better adapted, longer-lived ‘homo habilis’ originated approximately 2.5 million years ago, leisure and recreation probably were to become a larger part of human life.

2.2.1.2 ‘homo habilis’

The earliest human ancestor ‘homo habilis’ could extend his/her survival skills to inventing functional tools possibly during leisure and recreation, possibly accidentally during survival activity - historians are not precise in terms. Shivers argues that:

“....leisure is an essential factor in any such invention. Without the time to think about a given problem and its possible solution, i.e., to play with ideas, it seems improbable that tools could have been shaped for specific use” (Shivers, 1981).

In a later work, the same author says that:

“While there is no scientific evidence of when prehistoric hominids possessed leisure, certain speculations can be made about the effects of free time on human development. During the time of Homo habilis, free time was available and tools came into being” (Shivers, 1997).

In both studies, Shivers clearly associates leisure with ‘free time’. According to Bucher et al:

“There could hardly have been much differentiation between work and leisure; prehistoric people simply did not have the time. So whatever time out they took was spent to reinforce those skills directly related to survival. Thus their leisure activities were basically utilitarian” (Bucher et al, 1984).

To Bucher et al, prehistoric man and woman needed to devote most of their time to staying alive. Attacks by men and savage animals, shortage of food and water were still a major threat to survival for habilis. Apart from that, habilis had to adapt to changing environmental conditions brought about by a global cooling and a subsequent aridity, which caused change in diet and behaviour. If there was any time left over after sustenance activities, and if such time can be associated with leisure and recreation, it was mostly to be consumed in upgrading further skills for survival. So, the notion of ‘free time’, in its general sense and as part of the prehistoric life is questionable.

Significantly however, habilis was to develop a level of communication, coordination and social skills between themselves (mainly in relation to hunting). Although life was still an act of struggle, habilis benefited greatly from his/her still developing, larger brain capacity in the form of creating and utilising tools for hunting and butchering animals, division of labour, having more control over his/her environment and hence more security. It is plausible that this would have enabled habilis to relax, to an extent, the incessant preoccupation with staying alive. If Shivers’s argument is to be re-advocated, this limited relaxation should suggest that some form of leisure and recreation must have taken place.

2.2.1.3 ‘homo erectus’

Homo erectus who lived approximately one million years ago, eventually replaced homo habilis (Shivers, 1997). Erectus achieved one thing that expanded opportunities for leisure and recreation: making fire. This enabled erectus to warm and illuminate his/her cave or shelter as well as to cook food, which altogether resulted in significant physical, psychological and social changes: total dependence on the sun for light and heat came to an

end as erectus was now able to use a source of light and heat at his/her disposal. Hunted and gathered food did not have to be consumed raw in a fearful and hurried manner and on the spot, it could now be brought inside, cooked without a rush and eaten with reasonable peace. Night hours did not have to be spent sleeping, it could now be used for other purposes, maybe for social interaction/oral communication (speech was already developed). Erectus was to break the nature's rhythm to an extent and adapt a more flexible approach to the rhythm of his/her own life.

Although the life of erectus is significant in terms of the implications of creation and utilisation of fire for human development in general, it is within the following era of homo sapiens that any tangible evidence of relaxation, enjoyment and opportunities for leisure and recreation can be traced.

2.2.1.4 'homo sapiens'

Approximately a hundred thousand years ago came the appearance of a more intelligent human species, 'homo sapiens', who looked very much like the modern humans. This corresponds with the period known as the 'palaeolithic age' or the 'early stone age' (Pfeiffer, 1985). These were more advanced than their predecessors, being much better hunters, possessing better tools, and thus having more control over 'hostile' creatures and more security. Apart from being good hunters, Some Palaeolithic people were artists too, because they had more opportunity, residual time, confidence and experience for expressing themselves. Opportunity and time was now available for enjoyment, this was the time apart from the time occupied by activities of survival and sustenance. Drawings and paintings - mostly of hunted animals- on the walls of the caves in which they lived, also reliefs on rocks and sculptures discovered from this era, exemplify this. Female 'homo sapiens' for example had worn her hair in elaborate hairstyles, which must have had taken some considerable time. Also noteworthy is the use of tanned hides for clothing, and decorative pieces on clothing, such as fasteners and belts.

Apart from artistry -functional or aesthetic- sapiens was to improve his/her social skills and specialise in certain aspects of life. In that era, it was only biologically/physiologically convenient that the female should take care of infants -she is believed to be consumed with childcare and domestic chores- and the male should use his physical strength in improving his

tool manufacturing, hunting and provisioning skills. In a way, this was cooperation rather than abuse or exploitation as would be seen in today's society. Hunters were also given the task of drawing or painting of their hunting experiences. Sapiens carried out hunting in a more planned manner, with more social cooperation.

Homo sapiens despite his/her intelligence and developing skills for the betterment of life, was not quite able to explain the world he/she lived in and perhaps was still worshipping the cave bear.

2.2.1.5 'neolithic age'

The following period, which is the 'neolithic age' or 'new stone age', from around ten thousand years before our time, witnessed some more notable developments as far as leisure and recreation matters are concerned. Invention of the wheel facilitated transport and mobility; invention of bow and arrow accompanied the development of the hand axe for hunting and fighting (Friedle & Pfeiffer, 1977; Shivers, 1997). Polished stone instruments were introduced to everyday life activities. Metal fabrication followed the utilisation of stone for utensils. Copper, bronze, brass and iron were smelted for diverse functions. Pottery and weaving and widespread cooking of food and fishing as a supplementary means of obtaining food were other characteristics of this period. Trading also started with the neolithics in the form of exchanging salt, gold and jade, bronze weapons and so forth. Music probably has its roots in this particular period as the discovery of some flute-like instruments, made of bone and hollow branches, suggests. This implies that neolithics had the time and opportunity for unwinding and enjoying themselves. The neolithics also had increased control over their environment, and more opportunities for leisure and recreation since tools and specialisation made work easier. The artefacts they left are often elaborately embellished, which is a manifestation of increased availability of discretionary time and a valuing of effort which is not utilitarian.

A form of agriculture was to develop along with domestication of animals in this period. Agriculture as a method was the answer for feeding more efficiently the rapidly growing population of the pre-historic world, as meat supplies often reached points of depletion. Long time observation and finally understanding of the dynamics of planting and harvesting enabled neolithics to grow crops such as wild barley and wheat, which later would be

followed by vegetables and fruits. This, in time, gave way to further invention of specific tools for preparing the soil, ploughing, planting and harvesting. Farming settlements in the form of tribal villages grew along with their inhabiting populations, which required the application of intensive methods for more food production and also animal husbandry. Communal living imposed on settlements some sort of social regulation, new customs and codes to facilitate an overall order, as well as reinforcing communication, cooperation and more specialisation. In relation to further specialisation, a new form of occupation came about as a result of surplus food production. Not everybody had to work in ploughing the soil, reaping the harvest or attending the animals, some had to keep the inventory and records of accounts of exchanged or bartered goods and labour. As such, the formation of social classes based on the nature of work and division of labour in a commune living has its roots in this era. Social class issues were to become a matter of great importance for centuries, for every section of the social class spectrum.

The roots of cultural development of humankind are thought to have been embedded in the ‘neolithic age’. Bucher et al state that:

“In fact, up to the early eighteenth century the peasants of Europe led a life that was similar to that of neolithic man 10,000 years ago....When early humans were able to use fire at their own discretion and could pass along that information, when older generations could instruct younger craftsmen on the handling of sharpened stones, wooden implements, and eventually metals, when food was cultivated rather than gathered, leisure abounded and human culture took a giant stride forward” (Bucher et al, 1984).

This period is also associated with the development of some variety of religious beliefs, of a priest class and tribal and societal rites, which in themselves may be associated with ‘non-essential’ activity. Religion was largely in the form of taboos, superstitions, cults and rites in the neolithic age. This could be seen as the beginning of the ‘ritual culture’. Ritual culture has implications for understanding leisure and recreation, which is broadened in the scope of the following section.

2.2.2 Ancient civilisations

The ancient civilisations period (rising around 4000 B.C), which includes the settled and agriculture-based Sumerian, Akkadians, Babylonians, Hittites, Assyrians, Syrians, Egyptians, Israelites and Mesopotamian dynasties bring political, economic and religious implications to

the leisure and recreation scene:

First of all, further development of agriculture played a greater part in division of labour and the formation of social classes and growth of larger settlements which were to become city-state civilisations. This had implications for leisure and recreation: those who carried out the intensive work on the land had relatively less free time than the rest of the population. Kingship, aristocracy especially in the form of military and civil leadership, and priesthood made up the first 'leisure' classes. Kings and priests came into existence as a result of the need for leadership in governance, social stability and warfare since conflicts and invasions were a real threat to food resources. King-priests were given a divine status and even venerated as descendants of the gods. As such they could not be involved in menial work, but instead governed, led warriors and hunted for pleasure. This was a form of social class system reinforced by division of labour. There was now a land working labouring class; a trading, merchandising, art-performing middle class and the well to-do, governing, ruling, power holding upper class. With time, kings only engaged in governance and military duties whilst priests became kings' deputies and had more power and influence over religious activities. Both internal threats (in the form of social unrest) and external threats (in the form of foreign invasions) reinforced the existence of kings, priests and the aristocracy. Kings, along with the aristocracy, later indulged more in reading, appreciation of art, riding, pleasure hunting, archery, feasts and banquets. The common peoples' pursuits of pleasure on the other hand included dancing, singing, drinking, gaming, wrestling, boxing, hunting and fishing. Dancing, for example, is believed to have its roots in religious rhythmic movements. Pagan festivals, such as harvest celebrations were also part of the pursuits of the ordinary people. However it was the kings and priests who introduced rituals, ceremonies, taboos, symbols and codes of conduct for the masses. According to Rojek, a ritual in 'traditional societies':

“...is the method for diverting surplus energy. Repetition and regularityare mechanisms for expressing qualities of performance which involve the social totality....Traditional society has no concept of individual choice....Our conventional understanding of leisure as personal freedom, choice and self determination has no place in traditional society....The thrust of the culture is to compel the individual to conform.... Play and work are woven into the seamless religious fabric of the tribal order....Play is rarely an end in itself....Play forms take the tribal members away from the cares of everyday life, but they also insist on returning the individual to everyday normality” (Rojek, 2000).

His argument, which makes references to those of Eliade (1957), Evans-Pritchard (1976), and Sahlin (1985), suggests that individuals of the traditional society are only permitted to engage in self-expression, bodily pleasures and emotional catharsis within the boundaries of the tribal order. As such, 'freedom' becomes an issue of relativity as it is licensed by the standards of what is 'acceptable' in a traditional society.

Pieper, a Catholic philosopher, in the meantime, regards religious celebrations and festivals as:

'...the origin of leisure and the inward and ever-present meaning of leisure' and they have great spiritual and therapeutic value for individual" (Pieper, 1952).

On the other hand, Parker (1976) agrees on the similarities between some forms of play and some aspects of religion with historian Huizinga (1949, in Parker, 1976) who notes that both (the make-believe and the holy) are symbolic and make use of pageantry, special costumes and language. As such, leisure and religion can both offer unbounded imagination, personal well-being and self-realisation.

As mentioned above, leisure and recreation engagements of this era took many forms such as hunting, fishing, banquets, music, drama, dancing, arts and crafts, sculpture, horseback-riding, horse racing, wrestling, boxing and archery. Also pleasure gardens -formal and geometric- were constructed including decorative and functional features such as plants and pools. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, built 70 feet above the ground, have been a subject of admiration with their terraced arrangement giving the illusion of being suspended in the air. During this period, advanced building, construction (e.g. the pyramids) and commerce increased the wealth of the kingdoms.

Ancient Israel, despite never being politically significant, demands attention in terms of religious implications for specific devotion of time to appreciate and praise God. Israelites were monotheists, with the Sabbath as the day for prayer and study of the Old Testament and also an opportunity for ceasing all necessary toil and duties for rejuvenation and even recharging of one's physical and mental abilities (Shivers, 1997). This appears to be very close to some of the contemporary definitions of leisure and recreation, in the context of demarcating one's time in terms of essential or necessary activity and obligation on the one hand and non-essential, pleasing, restful and recreational activity on the other. This

demarcation of 'time' is further explored in chapter 3.

2.2.3 The Greeks

The 'leisure ethic' or 'leisure ideal', probably was first introduced with the Greeks, whose civilisation reached its peak around 500 B.C. Such 'leisure ethic', however, was primarily the privilege of only about 20% of the population, 'the citizens', who were isolated from work and owned personal slaves. The 'work' of the citizens involved administrative and military obligations and trade. Their leisure and recreation was facilitated by the work of their slaves. Leisure was a means for the citizens to educate themselves and develop cultural faculties through music, poetry, drama and philosophical contemplation. Aristotle, having been a keen lover of music and contemplation, is often quoted as having posed the question of leisure in relation to how it should be occupied:

"That is the principal point, with what kind of activity, is man to occupy his leisure"
(Torkildsen, 1999).

This lies at the heart of the Greek 'leisure ethic' which proposed the intelligent use of any free and discretionary time, as the main purpose of life. Such occupation of time was to be beneficial to both society and the individual, which only referred to the citizen. Education was a perfect means to shape a citizen's character and values to achieve this leisure ideal or leisure ethic.

"To the ancient Greeks, education was the ultimate justification of human life and human communities" (Goodale and Godbey, 1988).

As such it was only natural to educate children as well as adults to become good, ideal citizens. The English words 'school' and 'scholar' are originated from the Greek word 'schole' which meant freedom or opportunity for learning and developing one's spiritual/intellectual faculties. For the rest of the population, for the non-citizens, the picture of work, leisure and recreation emerges differently: Women, for example, were automatically excluded from citizenship and viewed as not worthy of education. They led an isolated life despite having (relative) freedom and privacy in their home to engage in arts, writing and various crafts. Slaves or manual workers were seen as naturally incapable of 'schole', as their duty simply consisted of working for citizens so that they would have the time and opportunity to be able to pursue their 'leisure ideal', which somehow fused leisure and work,

in the sense of perception of freedom, learning and self-development.

The Greeks provided a wide range of facilities and opportunities for leisure and recreation. Gardens, open spaces especially open-air amphitheatres, elaborate sports (athletic) facilities and gymnasiums were among them. Competitive sports were performed professionally and before spectators. The Olympic Games have their roots in the ancient Greeks' approach to and organisation of play and entertainment. One point needs clarification though; such entertainment was organised and controlled by the elite despite participation by others, which can be paralleled to Rojek's idea of conforming to the tribal order and codes of conduct set by traditional societies.

The open space provided by the Greeks for civic use in the cities was no ordinary open space; the Greek 'agora' served the citizens in a multitude of ways. The Agora was an organic place, not planned, not designed, it was rather a product of the form of its use; it could be a place for philosophical debates, a venue for theatrical performances or for sports.

2.2.4 The Romans

During the Roman period (around 265 B.C.-A.D.395), leisure and recreation experiences changed character to the extent that they were no longer aesthetic or self-developmental, instead they took the form of lavish entertainments, at least as experienced by the elite. Slaves were not only used in labour but also in entertainment. A large, middle urban class, which developed from the great expansion and wealth of the empire, had considerable free time. Being politically powerful, they were kept content with free food and entertainment (as opposed to 'bread and circuses for the masses'). The aristocracy experienced and enjoyed a 'life of leisure' which was literally better than ever before. Public festivals and feasts, public entertainment for instance, through chariot racing and parades became very popular. Public baths, the Circus Maximus and Colosseum arena are distinct governmental public provisions of the Roman era. Leisure and recreation events were organised for the masses mainly to divert spectators' attention from their miseries and curb any potential for a general revolt. Demands for more and different types of entertainment reached excessive peaks and could take some barbaric forms as in the case of bloody spectacles involving large numbers of ferocious animals and professional gladiators who fought to the death.

During the Roman era, wealth steadily increased and so did leisure. But this seems to have

contributed into the downfall of the empire. Some historians put forward arguments that the catastrophic end of the Romans was ordained by their inability to cope with ‘degeneracy’ of their leisure and recreation behaviour, as ‘civic responsibilities’, governmental functions, and control were lost and the elite occupied themselves simply “in eating, drinking, flashy clothes, expensive furniture, handsome slaves and gambling” and in doing so, going to most absurd lengths (Sickle, 1974 in Kraus, 1978). Kraus agrees that:

“...a major reason for the downfall of Rome was that it was unable to deal with mass leisure; its citizens grew physically weak and spiritually corrupt. Although they were great engineers and builders, soldiers and administrators, the ancient Romans did not have the coherent philosophy of life of the Athenians” (Kraus, 1978).

The Romans simply did not have a ‘leisure ideal’ or ‘leisure ethic’ and did not regard leisure as an opportunity for intellectual cultivation or fitness of the body through sports and gymnastics. The current concepts of ‘problematic leisure’, ‘irrational recreation’, ‘disruptive recreation’ seem quite relevant to how leisure and recreation were experienced during the Roman period.

2.2.5 The Middle Ages

As for the following period of the Middle Ages (approximately A.D.500-A.D.1350), one discerns a considerable difference in attitudes to leisure and recreation. After the fall of Rome, which was seen as a failure to cope with limitless leisure and recreation desires, and with the help of the spread of Christianity, the Church became a predominant figure in expressing approval and disapproval of people’s leisure and recreation behaviour. The Catholic Church preached self-deprivation, abstinence from worldly pleasures and hard work as a virtue that can be summed up in the adage: ‘work, do not despair’. A hedonistic way of life was strongly condemned. Monasteries were to be established and expanded for the practice of the ideal of asceticism. Hard work and religious duties filled many people’s lives for centuries during this era. The church frowned upon, and at times prohibited, those popular entertainment forms such as spectator sports, acrobatics and dancing. On the other hand, the church sanctified the Sabbath as a day of rest and also established some other days as religious festivals (Chubb & Chubb, 1981). Social drinking, gambling, vigorous dancing, animal baiting and other forms of betting were still practised, especially by the peasantry, vassals and serfs, with the excuse and opportunity of religious processions, festivals and

wakes. After the chores of the land and harvests peasantry enjoyed themselves in eating, drinking, singing and dancing. The religion of Christianity in fact did not completely destroy all forms of entertainment. Some old rituals were still in place and some were just given new meanings and forms. Singing and dancing, for example, were still a part of religious ceremonies. Peasantry enjoyed miracle and morality plays on the village green as well as dancing, weight-throwing, a rudimentary form of football, bull-baiting and cock-fighting.

“The privately owned open ‘common land’ within or adjacent to the villages that was used to contain farm animals at night or in time of danger became regarded as semi-public land available for community activities. During the early Middle Ages, these activities were primarily religious festivals. Later, village commons were used for dancing, games, and various types of travelling performances” (Chubb & Chubb, 1981).

The advent of chivalry brought another dimension to the variety of leisure and recreation. This was the knightly contests and tournaments enjoyed by ladies and lords. Hunting and banqueting continued with addition of masques. In fact for the feudal owners, landed gentry, noble ladies and lords, in other words for the aristocracy, the Greek ideal of leisure re-emerged with pleasure-seeking in such pursuits as reading, singing, playing musical instruments, for which most were tutored. On the other hand, members of crafts and guilds were placed somewhere in between the aristocracy and peasantry, and produced admirable architectural styles and craftsmanship, such as the gothic cathedral. Their work was to become a source of pleasure and enjoyment for others, but probably not in the Middle Ages.

The Catholic Church during this period increased the number of holy-days -saints’ days and replaced the Greek and Roman holy-days and festivals with those of its own. Sunday became the official day of rest to enable people to practice their religion. The Middle Ages also witnessed the development of territorial rulers and Courts.

2.2.6 The Age of Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment

With the increasing power of the European monarchs and a supporting noble class, the church became less influential and central in people’s lives and thereby the Renaissance and Reformation movement started a new age (1350-1700). Renaissance is a transition period between the medieval and modern worlds. Interest in the arts; literature, drama, music, painting, ballet and also humanities was re-awakened which can be all traced back to the Greek and Roman times. Professional artists performed music, dance and drama in theatres.

Such pursuits were supported and sponsored by the royalty and elite. Education included intellectual and creative involvement in the arts, literature, music and science. The church this time was to sanctify the predominant worldly attitude and added its wealth to the patronage of the Arts and often commissioned 'works of Art'. During this period a new upper class, alongside hereditary aristocracy, emerged and acquired wealth primarily through foreign trading and banking. Balls, banquets, hunts and masques continued to be arranged. The Renaissance was a period of liberal thought which paved the way for a series of scientific and geographical discoveries as well as artistic developments. Many ideas were expressed and scientific inventions were made in medicine, astronomy, mathematics and philosophy. Columbus, da Vinci, Michelangelo, Descartes, Boticelli, Rembrandt, Rousseau, Machiavelli, Bacon, Locke, Spinoza, Voltaire, Shakespeare, Moliere, Alberti, le Notre are among many other renowned names of the Renaissance and the following Enlightenment period. However, the working class did not take part in such intellectual and creative engagements unless they had an outstanding talent or intellect. They mostly indulged in activities like drinking and animal baiting.

'Play' was regarded as a tool for learning, especially for children. Nevertheless play had to be in the form of wholesome, good and useful activities in order to contribute to an 'ideal' character development, which is not very different from the Greek 'leisure ethic'.

The greed for pleasure by the extravagant upper class, the casual and cruel entertainment through cruel sports and excessive drinking by the lower class, and also an increasingly corrupt church once again were to force religious institutions into action which found harsh expressions in Luther's and especially Calvin's philosophies and formed the basis of the Protestant work ethic. The Protestant reformation movement had already made its impact in parts of Europe and then in America, during this period. In a way, in similarity to the Middle Ages, even children's play was frowned upon since it was seen as justification and reinforcement of idleness. The Protestant work ethic was to have a profound effect on people's attitude towards work, leisure and recreation in the following years as well as today.

The next section explores the further events and developments of the 19th and 20th centuries in the context of the industrialisation and urbanisation period.

2.3 Leisure and recreation in the industrialisation and urbanisation era

The simple reason why the industrialisation period stands as a turning point in the history of leisure and recreation is that it is during this period that leisure and recreation came to be conceived in a new way which was, increasingly opposed to the concept of 'work' as we understand it today and in association with the concept of 'free time'. The following review aims to illustrate that work in the urban industrial world became no longer dictated by seasonal cycles, the rhythm of agricultural production or the nature of the task in hand, but by temporal and mechanical regimentation, in factories and then in offices, in order to maximise profit, located in towns and cities of increasing size.

2.3.1 The industrial revolution

In Western Europe, the industrialisation and modern, large-scale urbanisation period began during the late eighteenth century and extended into the larger part of the nineteenth century. Large numbers of people began moving into towns and cities. The major incentive for such migration was the location of employment in factories, the vital components of the industrial era. Conzen (Whitehand, 1981) mentions a set of pre-conditions preceding this revolutionary history of machines, inventions and technology in Britain. These were the existence of some technical, economic, social conditions that included an early transition from a raw wool export economy to a self-processing one. The textile, cloth-making industry was the first to flourish. Also an increasing variety of crafting activities, relative proximity to the sea of nearly all-important regions and centres of production and innovation potential in the population, were factors which promised well, not only for agricultural improvement but also for mechanical developments in industry. The definitive political union and the emergence of a form of government conducive to the growth of an industrial-capitalist economy suitable for manipulation by those who possess the capital, were other factors which facilitated industrialisation. Enlightenment and scientific knowledge through the Renaissance, and an already established work ethic by the Protestant reformism should probably have been added to the list of pre-conditions prior to the industrialisation years.

Invention of the steam engine and textile machines in the late 1700's triggered the 'industrial revolution' in real terms. Steam engines, locomotives, steamboats and also the telegraph became available to encourage further rapid development in this period, as they enabled and

improved exchange of goods and information as well as providing mass transport opportunity. The industrial developments in Britain, in the mid-nineteenth century, gathered further pace and expanded to other parts of the world. The strengthening economy reached beyond the national boundaries and those of colonies of the British Empire; Britain was to become the pioneer of the mechanised industrialism and the 'workshop of the world'.

In the meantime, similar revolutions followed in America and continental Europe. These were also socio-economic, political changes.

2.3.2 'Work', 'non-work' and 'time'

At the turn of the nineteenth century, factories were already spreading at an accelerated rate along the rivers where waterpower was freely available for use. Skilled craftsmen were employed to design the manufacturing process of goods. Soon there occurred a great need for further specialisation and substantial manpower for production of specific products. The tradition of working for one's self or in a state of feudal dependence, as had been the case for a long time, was to change radically. Workers which included men, women and children - cheap labour- spent very long hours on transforming a given raw material into a designed, manufactured product. Their labour was closely scheduled by the employer. All work activity at the factory was oriented towards maximum productivity and profit.

In the rural-agrarian, pre-industrial world, work and leisure almost intermingled, the boundaries between the two were fluid, workshop and tavern existed side by side, production, work, drinking, bargaining, passing the time could happen together (Clarke & Critcher, 1985). Work at the factories of the urban-industrial world was entirely different; it was inflexible, segregated, specialised and scheduled; it took place within fixed periods of 'time' and was no longer the 'task' in hand as in pre-industrial societies. What is vital in understanding the new character of the industrial work is that it brought more capital to the entrepreneur in short time periods. 'Time is money' was both true for the profit of the factory and for the wages of the workers. Relevant literature cites the practice of bonus systems for 'beating the clock', keeping of time-sheets, clocking-in and clocking-out times, time-off's and the like (Clarke & Critcher, 1985), which are good illustrations of how time was considered in terms of cost and benefit for the industrial production. 'Efficiency' of work mattered greatly to the entrepreneur. Both sides of the employers and employees were conscious of

time. And time was regimented to allow work to be organised, productive, efficient and profitable.

The industrial notions of time and work have implications for understanding the way leisure and recreation are understood today. The ‘work and leisure’ dichotomy, with leisure as ‘free time’ or ‘discretionary time’ are conceptual components which are often used in describing what leisure is. Although the work concept of today is a different one than that of the industrialisation period, it is during this time that work segregates leisure as a separate sphere of one’s life. Work is regarded as a discipline, a responsibility in itself and not mixed with leisure, which is a private affair. When work time finishes, leisure time starts, and as such, work and leisure do not mix.

Clarke and Critcher oppose the suggestion that leisure was created by industrialisation, as they state:

“It is simply inadequate to suggest that industrialisation created leisure, which has subsequently reached today’s level. In fact, industrialisation in Britain began by *destroying* leisure. When leisure re-emerged, it was given very particular social forms, which need to be understood as the outcome of a continuous struggle between dominant and subordinate groups. If leisure was an achievement, it was achieved not by some abstract process called ‘industrialisation’ but by the struggles, conflicts and alliances of social groups” (Clarke & Critcher, 1985).

2.3.3 Leisure and recreation in industrial cities

On the one hand, cities had already existed before industrialisation and, on the other hand, there were still villages after this period. However, rural dwellers during this era, moved, at an increasing rate, to cities (which grew around factories), to obtain factory jobs to fulfil their dreams of prosperity as they were increasingly impoverished with the enclosure (privatisation) of the common land through the increasing use of Enclosure Acts². Hough notes that, this migration of people from the countryside to the urban areas:

“....did more than create poverty and slums....The skills and knowledge of the countryside and traditional patterns of rural life were replaced by the living and working patterns of the

²There were a number of Enclosure Acts. The first one was in 1793.

city. The psychological and physical separation between urban and rural environments widened as cities grew larger, more industrialised and more remote from the rural areas with which they had originally been connected” (Hough, 1984).

Cities were to become increasingly crowded and cramped; housing unsanitary; heating and lighting inadequate. And when contaminated water became a part of this list, epidemics were to spread, making the urban environment an unfit one. On the other hand, land -either rural or urban- was no longer cheap, wages were the only source of income for many. Working was necessary for those who had already left their small towns and villages. Working hours continued to increase and the Protestant work ethic helped justify between 14 and 18 hours a day –as the invention of gas lighting extended work into the night. Originating from a rural society, people living in these conditions expressed their frustration and resentment by excessive drinking which resulted in absenteeism from work, especially on Mondays which was known as ‘Saint Monday’. Workers played mass football games and indulged in gambling, boisterous entertainment through blood sports, such as animal baiting and cockfighting. Such ‘irrational’, ‘inappropriate’ or ‘disruptive’ forms of behaviour, which were in effect a display of a popular leisure culture of the working class deprived of time, space, adequate income and fulfilment of desires, prompted the Rational Recreation Movement (TRRU, 1983). The immoral, irrational and at times half-savage leisure and recreation behaviour (not much different than the Roman era) was unacceptable from the point of view of civic responsibilities, profit in factories and administrative control over the social order. Having witnessed through the American and French revolutions that informal gatherings were conducive to expression of widespread misery and breeding resentment and thus a potential cause of social disintegration, the state had to intervene. The newly established police force took part in the suppression of such unacceptable leisure and recreation behaviour; however they were answered with resistance and retaliation. As a result, the conflicts increased.

The ruling classes, the church, employers and government were to recognise that the working men, women and children needed to engage in some kind of activity for renewal, rest, and relaxation. This would improve their fitness for work and provide recuperation, re-creation for work which would result in a well-ordered, healthy population. It was accepted that attempts to suppress disruptive forms of recreation had not been successful. As such, a new strategy was to be put into practice which is known as the ‘rational recreation movement’. As such, certain forms and norms of leisure and recreation, the majority of which originally

belonged to the life style of the elite, were introduced in the portfolio of leisure and recreation activities among which were walking and breathing fresh air, to be undertaken in specially provided parks and walkways, bathing in disinfected water, in public baths, and reading books, in libraries. Government action and interventionist legislation for new kinds of leisure and recreation provision included the 1833-1834 Select Committee on public walks, 1846 Baths and Wash Houses Act, 1849 Museums Act and 1850 Public Libraries Act. Much provision was facilitated by local philanthropic donations by newly rich industrialists as in the case of donation of land for parks and books for libraries. In the meantime, newly established trade-unions were able to exert influence (although limited) on the government to protect workers from excessively long working hours and the Ten Hours Act (Factories Act) of 1847 came into being. With this Act, working hours for the factory worker were reduced to ten hours a day. And in addition to that, when the Saturday half-day holiday was officially accepted, increased non-work time enabled those workers to have the opportunity to have some level of relaxation and recuperation for work. Also in mid-1800's 'muscular Christianity' preaching by the church –that physical fitness was compatible with Christian teachings and values- encouraged the development of a movement towards public health. Protestants supported the idea of fitness and 're-creation of the mind and body' through physical activity such as walking, rowing and skating. The 1859 Recreation Grounds Act and the 1870 Education Act are examples of the official sanction of recreational physical activities. Today's approach to the concept of recreation as an act of re-creation of the mind and body has resonance with this physical fitness movement.

Between 1873 and 1896, which is called the great depression period, spreading epidemics once again accentuated the unhealthy conditions of the working population in the urban habitat. This prompted a series of health-related Acts (1875, 1890 Public Health Acts) as well as two open space Acts (1887, 1890 Open Space Acts). It was by now a widely held belief that bringing nature into the crowded cities would improve the mental and physical health of the people –and thus efficiency and profit margins in factories- as well as the aesthetics of the city. This was supported among influential people, including those at governmental level. After concerted efforts towards provision of public open space, parks of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century (which were mostly private residential squares in wealthy cities, among them garden squares of London and the crescents of Bath) were now being augmented by specially designed public parks and open spaces by the local authorities. This occurred in

most of the industrial areas such as Liverpool, Newcastle and Birmingham. They were regarded as places where the urban population could experience the sense of nature, enjoy fresh air and the beauty of flowers and shrubs, and through all this, recuperate for work. Walking in the open air and listening to bands, perhaps observing a lake, would be refreshing and restful. This was an international development and among the early park provisions were the Royal Parks in London, Central Park in New York, the Boston Commons and Mount Royal Park in Montreal (Laurie, 1979). Also Kensington Gardens in London, the Tuileries and Versailles gardens in Paris and the Tiergarten in Berlin were to be opened to public during this period.

The laissez-faire approach became superseded by the accelerating rate of governmental acts, policies and practices. The local state was enabled to become increasingly involved in the provision of public goods, facilities and services. There is a range of different readings into this involvement, one of which suggests that state provision of parks, baths, museums and libraries is no more than an act of social control and an attack on popular culture in order to increase industrial profits. Clarke & Critcher, for example, suggest that:

“It was during this period that what we have come to see as a discrete area of human activity called ‘leisure’ became recognisable. But contrary to the account offered by sociological orthodoxy, it did not develop in any simple linear fashion, as an aspect of industrialised progress. It was enforced from above as a form of social control, by magistrates, clergymen, policemen, mill owners, poor law commissioners. Its rationale was in the end, despite religious camouflage, that of the economic system. It concerned, most simply, the taming of a workforce. There may even be in qualitative terms a loss here: leisure becomes demarcated from work as a reaction to, and compensation for it. This antithesis of work and leisure, from which so many contemporary accounts begin, is not a given social fact, but an historical creation. That people may gain in leisure satisfactions they do not derive from work is not a psychological but an historical phenomenon. The form industrialisation took in the mid-nineteenth century ensured that what was an artificial imposition would be taken for granted by succeeding generations, including some of its most influential scholars of leisure” (Clarke & Critcher, 1985).

In relation to this, Clarke and Critcher do not seem to clarify if leisure and recreation satisfaction were/are to be derived naturally from work and work related activities as opposed to the ‘artificial creation’ of a work-leisure dichotomy by industrialisation.

Towards the end of the 19th century, a number of agencies related to leisure and recreation

were set up, one of which was the National Trust which was founded in 1895 (Blackie, 1979). The Council for the Protection of Rural England-CPRE was another agency which was set up during the industrialisation period.

The Commons, Open Spaces and Footpath Preservation Society, founded in 1865, was to deal with the issue of public enjoyment, recreation, on the one hand, and preservation and protection of the natural resource on the other. This is still relevant since the conflict over recreation and conservation still remains. Undoubtedly, there is a clear distinction between the provision of open spaces with urban areas and the walking or rambling activity, which has caused a struggle between landowners and the 'right to roam'.

2.3.4 Leisure and recreation as service and planning areas in the twentieth century

2.3.4.1 Foundation and maturing of Welfare state reformism

The beginning of the twentieth century saw further involvement of the state in the introduction of social, economic, political and industrial welfare policies. These ranged from the Unemployed Workman's Act (1905), which later secured dole payments for those who were not able to work; to providing school meals for children (1907) and old age pensions (1908), which can be seen as reformist, laying the foundations of the Welfare State (Haywood et al, 1989).

At the beginning of the twentieth century in Britain, the town planning movement was already underway and oriented towards the control and regulation of urban development. The 1909 Town Planning Act acknowledged recreational open space as a land use category (Travis, 1979). In parallel, the garden city movement was introduced by Ebenezer Howard, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

However, the first and second world wars were both to cause a pause in the rapid development of leisure and recreation and open space provision initiatives. But in their aftermaths such activities were to intensify again. In the early 1920's for example, increasing availability of car ownership provided more mobility and access for people. Establishment of the Forestry Commission, which took place in 1919, is relevant as its remit partially covered leisure-and recreation-related services in the form of forest and woodland parks provision. World War I had an impact on campaigns aiming at the improvement of physical and mental

welfare of the population. The Second World War had similar impacts. The only difference was a stronger emphasis in such campaigns, in the inter-war period, when the fascist movement was spreading in Europe and it was believed that sports and physical recreation in the open space would have helped protect (especially young) minds from such influences. Ironically this was not much different from the Nazi emphasis on physical and mental strength of the young population. It was the potential threat of physical and moral deterioration as a result of the war that led to the next expansion of open space provision. In Britain it was already institutionalised under the name of the Central Council for Recreative Physical Training in 1935 (Blackie et al, 1979). The name of the Council utilises the recreation aspect (re-creation of the mind and body) of the recreation concept. Later the Council changed its name to 'the Central Council of Physical Recreation'

In the inter-war years, the first open space standards were to be introduced by the National Playing Fields Association-NPFA, as the chief association among its kind, in 1925. The Association recommended 2.4 hectares (6 acres) of playing space per 1000 population which was reviewed in 1955 and 1971 with the changing conditions (Torkildsen, 1999). In 1955 it was reaffirmed officially with the involvement of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, as a total of 4 hectares (10 acres) including school playing fields, woodlands, common land, ornamental gardens, golf courses. In the late 1960's some attempts, by the Sports Council and some individual researchers, were made for alternative standards to that of the NPFA. Today the NPFA recommendation of 6 acres per 1000 population is still widely used and referred to as the immortal 'NPFA 6 Acre standard' (Torkildsen, 1999).

In the first half of this century, taking holidays was encouraged by the 1938 Holidays with Pay Act. As such, time available for leisure and recreation as well as places and resources continued to increase. Another development was the 1944 Education Act through which physical training in schools was encouraged. Still, truly significant attempts for laying a foundation for leisure and recreation services were not to be made until the 1960's.

In the second half of the twentieth century, there were fresh approaches to town and country planning with implications for leisure and recreation. The impact of Michael Dower's article 'Fourth Wave: The Challenge of Leisure' (Dower, 1965) was considerable. In identifying the importance of the increasing leisure time and the ways in which people make use of it, he suggested a new planned system for each town containing the idea of provision of a

continuous park system and then linking it into the countryside (TRRU, 1983). This period also saw the development of the 'green belt' concept and McHarg (1969) was advocating the ecological functions of open space by putting the emphasis on conservation. It was as if there was a search for a philosophy, a governing principle to guide such developments.

A discernible change in this period was the increasing variety of resources for provision, which was the outcome of post war recognition of the multiple functions of urban open space, including both aesthetic amenity and ecological functions. The foundation of the Institute of Landscape Architects in 1929 and the subsequently increased role of landscape planners and architects in planning and design studies had already contributed to the versatile use of resources, innovation and variety in urban design. New styles of development created many new leisure and recreation places, among them shopping malls, plazas and pedestrianised walkways which were mostly combined with 'landscaped areas'. Another group of catalysts, widening the resources for provision, are developments in education and the continuing growth of physical education. More and more schools were provided with playing fields and grounds aiming at the physical education of school children which gradually became mandatory for local authorities and schools following a number of Education Acts and the Housing Act (the 1918 and 1944 Education Acts are especially worth mentioning). Thereby another form of provision, for children's' and youth's recreation, started to grow. Numerous forms of sports, especially football and athletics were particularly encouraged. Such a broadening and variety in the resources of urban settings for people's leisure and recreation can be related to the practices of a maturing 'welfare state'.

During the 1960's, a 'consumer revolution' took place with wealth and ownership of consumer durables spreading down to the less affluent. Vacuum cleaners, washing machines, refrigerators, electric irons and other 'labour saving devices' further increased opportunities for leisure and recreation in the time sense. Surplus production was to pave the way for the manufacturing economy to be gradually taken over by the service economy.

Later on during this period, increasing interest was shown in indoor facilities for sports, music, and film watching (despite the increasing availability of TV) but also for leisure and recreation in the countryside. Indoor facilities were to be technically improved and massively increased in numbers which contrasts with the decline in the use and provision of urban open space and parks. New shopping areas and commercial centres also seemed to be very popular

in use terms. Like any other commercial product, leisure and recreation products were subject to competition. As the urban areas were built in higher densities and land became more expensive, some leisure and recreation places provided by the public sector lost priority over more profitable uses. Open space provision requires relatively large amounts of land in the precious urban space and as against other more commercial forms of provision provided by the private sector, such as pubs, clubs and cinemas. The decline of the urban park among other competitive forms of uses in urban areas such as housing, commercial services, etc., together, as Myerscough (1974) noted, sharpened the sense of a lost rural life and drew some people –often more affluent, to the countryside. Greater wealth, mobility and more discretionary time enabled them to access and enjoy the countryside. Driven by the desire for a closer and more satisfying contact with nature, it was the pressure groups, in the first place, such as the Ramblers Association, who made considerable efforts in order to gain access to the countryside much of which was private enclosed land. Campaigns to secure better access and provision for recreational pursuits achieved statutory recognition with the passing of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in 1949. There were also developments in fields of sports and the arts. In 1960, The Wolfenden Committee, which was set up by the Central Council for Physical Recreation in 1957, recommended a powerful advisory group on sport, in their report entitled ‘Sport and the Community’. Accomplishment of this recommendation took place in 1965 and the Sports Council was established with the primary aim of advising on matters related to sports and physical recreation. An Arts Council had already been established in 1948 before that. The White Paper on ‘Leisure in the Countryside’ in 1964 is of importance from the point of view of its proposal for the replacement of the National Parks Commission by a Countryside Commission, with new powers for the creation of country parks. First the Countryside Act (for Scotland), and then the 1968 Countryside Act were passed after which the Countryside Commission with responsibilities for better access, recreation provision, protection and conservation, was established.

Meanwhile, discretionary time further increased with more general acceptance of the two-day weekend. This, along with higher income, greater car ownership and a better access to countryside resulted in a new surge in demand to be met by local authorities. The two new bodies the Sports Council and the Countryside Commission, provided leadership and grant availability for new provisions. In the meantime, in 1974 local authorities were re-organised and most of them created specific leisure and recreation departments.

2.3.4.2 Restructuring of welfare state

During the late 1970's and beyond, the welfare state was to weaken and struggle with economic and social problems following an oil embargo from the oil exporting countries. Not only the budgetary cutbacks of the 'new economic realism', but also an ideological debate caused a shift in the implementation of social welfare policies. The validity of the welfare state as the direct provider of services was in question. Perhaps in the eyes of the politician, planner and manager leisure and recreation were gradually losing their acceptance as the right of the individual and being re-interpreted as a social and economic tool to achieve social stability, as delinquency, hooliganism and urban riots started to trouble authorities. And when financial resources were limited to provide quality services and achieve social order, the individual, family, voluntary groups and even commercial groups were encouraged to take part in provision of leisure and recreation services -for themselves. This prompts the question of leisure and recreation concepts as social constructs and control mechanisms, which is the point frequently argued by Clarke and Critcher (1985).

Urban open space was to become outdated and would not respond to social needs. Budgetary cuts exacerbated the situation. Politically and socially sensitive issues such as housing and education received priority as opposed to urban parks, which were becoming a management issue. Special funding, was occasionally made available, but even this was not able to reverse the decline of many urban parks, which extended into the remaining decades of the last century. Planning and provision policies, today, still appear to be largely based on management, conservation and rehabilitation.

The state apparatus has never produced a specific leisure and/or recreation policy. The closest attempts include independent policies for sport and recreation (as in the case of 1991 PPG17 by the DoE and the 2002 revised version by the DTLR), countryside recreation, the Arts and so on. Leisure and recreation policies are fragmented. The reorganisation of local government in England and Wales, in 1974, leading to the consolidation of leisure and recreation services into special departments within local authorities, helped improve the fragmented nature of leisure and recreation provision throughout the country, nevertheless it did not result in a coherent leisure and recreation policy nor did it amount to an efficient and effective practice (Travis, 1979). At the regional level, the regional councils for sport and recreation deserve attention with regard to their interest in urban open space. But in terms of resulting actions,

they did not have any executive powers for implementing policies. As for the other agencies, the Countryside Agency, the Tourist Boards, the Arts Council, the Sports Council, they all act within different areas of concern. Contemporary issues surrounding the policy, provision and management of leisure and recreation services will be debated in chapter 5.

2.4 Summary and conclusions

The late 17th century and the 18th century witnessed a turning point in relation to leisure and recreation. During this period, leisure (time) was first very limited as a result of excessive working hours and there was to be a clear-cut distinction between work and leisure (non-work time). Recreational use of such leisure was problematic and often unacceptable, immoral, violent and at times brutal as, for instance, in the case of animal baiting. Cities were overcrowded; housing and infrastructure inadequate, which made the situation worse. Having experienced difficulty in controlling excessive and disruptive recreation behaviour of the working class, a new type of leisure and recreation provision was introduced which reflected middle and upper class values. This policy was successful for a number of reasons: firstly, wealth had already increased and then gradually was reflected in wages. So, new recreation forms could be afforded. Secondly, working hours were reduced, by law, which meant more discretionary time for leisure and recreation for the working men and women. In short, people now could spend more time on recreation. Thirdly, provision of resources and facilities enabled new forms of leisure and recreation to be introduced such as borrowing and reading of books in libraries. And significantly, for this study, urban parks and green spaces were created in increasing numbers in towns and cities, as part of a series of social reforms. Leisure (and recreation) was now becoming segregated (in both time and space; it did not occur during work hours and nor in the work place), it was specialised (new, specialised activities, e.g. swimming in public pools, football, strolling in parks) and institutionalised (from control-through-prohibition to control-through-licensing and regulation for major forms of organised leisure and recreation) (Clarke and Critcher, 1985).

The First World War was to strengthen the physical education ethic as approved by the religious lobby. Apart from that American influence brought cinema, cars, music and radio broadcasting which became very popular. Mass-trespassing attempts which were sloganised as 'right to roam', and the establishment of national organisations and pressure groups for both the enjoyment of natural resources and their protection, should be also listed as

significant events in this period.

The 'welfare state' years of the post-war period, until the mid-1970's recession, witnessed a growth in the number of welfare policies and public agencies responsible for leisure and recreation provision. Leisure and recreation were accepted and recognised as an area of public services. Middle and working classes, between 1960 and 1970, enjoyed increased opportunities for leisure and recreation with the availability of more time and disposable income. The manufacturing sector was gradually replaced by the service sector, with particular development in labour saving machines for the home. This led to job losses and redundancies. Multi-national investments grew considerably. Countryside recreation increased rapidly and sports, physical education became important policies both of which were supported by an agency framework which included the Sports Council and the Countryside Commission.

From the mid 1970's until our time, revision, rehabilitation, renovation and regeneration have been the key words of administrative policies and practices in relation to urban open space, which were further accompanied by an environmentalist approach. Economic and social depression led the way for concentrating on most problematic issues such as unemployment and urban degeneration (which was to be cured by urban regeneration in which leisure and recreation were regarded as parts of the panacea). In fact, leisure and recreation became tools for a revival/regeneration in both economic and social senses. Economically, commercial leisure and recreation would attract the investor in tourism and retail industry as well as the recreation seeker. Privatisation programmes included forests and water. In social terms, delinquency, vandalism and the negative impacts of unemployment were attempted to be overcome by certain activities such as sports as an effective and quick answer to target specific 'problem' groups. The much wanted time to rest and relax was now too often a case of people having too much time with too little to do. Voluntary provision of leisure and recreation activities also increased during this period as cutbacks in budgets prevented the public sector from reaching large sections of society. In short, the golden years of leisure and recreation, as provided by the state, were somehow over.

2.5 Conclusions

- **Leisure and recreation are human concepts**, they existed in human life long before our time. To understand leisure and recreation as they are today (and as they are likely to be

tomorrow) one should first understand how they were interpreted and evolved in the past and under what conditions. **Leisure and recreation are amorphous concepts, they can change with time and actions of the human actor.**

- **Perhaps the most striking difference between the pre- industrial and industrial societies lies in the concept of time for leisure and recreation.** Firstly, the pre-historic development years of human life experienced very little leisure (time), as time was, or had to be, primarily spent on survival and sustenance activities. Along with inventions of practical, functional tools and utensils utilising stone, wood and finally metals, and the cultivation of land for food production, leisure grew. On the other hand, agrarian settlements created labour and class division as well as governments and institutions, which eventually led to leisure division. Some (ruling classes) had more leisure than others (labouring classes) and the way it was occupied differed between them. **The demarcation of the boundaries of work and leisure in the pre-industrial societies was not as clear-cut as it was in the industrial society. Segregated spheres of work and leisure, in the ‘time’ and ‘space’ sense, are the product of industrialisation.** There was a sense of ‘work’ and ‘work time’ before, but it was rather dictated by the nature of the agricultural production instead of technology-assisted production and its components such as the factory itself, its office and owner. With the industrialised era, working time became fixed and structured in contrast to the seasonally determined working time of the pre-industrial period.
- **The reason why the industrialisation period is a landmark in the history of leisure and recreation is that they are constructed in a new way and given a distinct set of meanings during this era.** They were given a **time dimension**, along with a scheduled work in time scale and increasingly became a form of **socially acceptable behaviour**. As work in factories was intense, tedious and long, leisure and recreation were given more emphasis in terms of **rest and relaxation, recuperation, re-creation for work**, the ‘time’ concept, for those who worked in and also for those who owned factories, no longer revolved around seasons and day and night. Both work and ‘left over time’ after work were to be structured in time and thus ruled by the clock. If leisure is explained by some as **residual time** today, in other words as **time away from work**; as evenings, weekends, bank holidays and paid holidays, the process of industrialisation would help us

reason why leisure includes a strictly divided, 'left over time', element in it. This point is of course largely valid for those who experience such temporal division through paid employment. **The industrialisation period also gave an administrative-legislative dimension to leisure and recreation, they institutionalise.** Governments never included leisure and recreation in their administrative agenda to this extent before. It is due to the influences of this period that leisure and recreation gradually changed character to the effect that they had to be involved in official policies, strategies, legislation and research programmes. During this period, technology advanced and wealth increased. Machines and technology brought about other changes than crowds (in terms of cars and the mobility and movement concentrating into certain locations), pollution and waste. They also created other machines and technology to do the monotonous and repetitive work in place of people. Free time, as a result of mechanised work and the introduction of the Saturday holiday, increased for working men and women. Wages also increased. The end result was an increase in time for leisure and recreation. Leisure, as discretionary time away from work, and recreation as pleasurable and recuperating activities, became types of advertised and sold goods or commodities. Accompanied by technological advances, forms and places of leisure and recreation became numerous. Music halls, football grounds and pubs were being bought and sold. Leisure and recreation were endorsed as commercial goods.

- **Work and leisure as practised and experienced in today's post-industrial society appear to be the extension of the industrial creation of work and leisure pattern.** How we start work at 9 a.m. (approx.) and are released from it at 5 p.m. (approx.), how we are retired officially from it at a certain age, how we take annual paid holidays as well as two day weekend holidays, are all ramifications of this historically generated pattern of work and leisure.

Leisure as time and the variety of recreational, pleasurable, recuperating activities also increased remarkably. Such increase is not the mere effect of technology, but mainly of economic, social, political, and even ideological policies and practices.

- Leisure and recreation as an experience, and what it provides for people in the sense of recreation, renewal and recuperation, may be similar throughout the centuries. The feelings of fun, happiness, enjoyment, sense of satisfaction may not have been so different in the

past. It is imperative to acknowledge however that the ways and forms in which recreation is experienced might change with time. What would bungee jumping mean to a Sumerian for example? On the other hand some forms of leisure and recreation behaviour of the past are no longer acceptable in the civilised society, such as the popular Roman entertainment through the spectacle of gladiators fighting to the death. Similarly, slavery is not even a topic of conversation today and the Greek 'leisure ideal' can be pursued, if wanted, by anyone who wishes to do so, although it is somehow not applicable to the modern individual's way of life. **It seems plausible that it is not the form or type of activity or pursuit, but the nature of (recreational) experience or outcome of (recreational) experience, which can be the same throughout centuries.** This must matter to the planner and manager alike and the field of UORP.

- **Leisure and recreation, in historical perspective, involve a series of paradoxes: they can be socially, culturally and politically controlled or inhibited on the one hand; and facilitated, encouraged or supported, on the other. Acceptability of different forms of leisure and recreation behaviour seems to be defined by the current social, cultural and political standards.**

PART II - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 3 - Conceptual interpretations and philosophies of leisure and recreation

3.1 Introduction

Leisure and recreation concepts are complex rather than simple. Numerous studies from numerous fields have attempted to define leisure and recreation. The problem is not the lack of research but the enormous variety and fragmentation in describing what leisure and recreation are and, despite a great deal of research, any definitions of leisure or recreation are still a matter of debate. There is also obscurity over the nature of the relationship between them. Are we to take them into account as related, but distinct, concepts, or treat them as being synonymous, or separate them as different phenomena? These, along with the issue of what they are, remain questions to be answered. The definitional issues also occur for those who are operating in the field of leisure and recreation as planners, providers and managers as well as academics. But, looking at these issues from their points of view, why should we be concerned with semantics when there is a whole range of ‘real issues’ to be resolved in this field, such as budgetary cutbacks and how to deliver leisure and recreation services in the new millennium; in an environment where resources are getting less whilst tasks are getting harder? The answer is that every profession or field of inquiry needs a clear, consistent and reliable set of concepts and principles to guide their practices and inquiries. The leisure and recreation field is no different. Witt & Ellis, in reference to leisure ask:

“Why is deriving a definitive definition of leisure critical in the first place? Is definitional precision a necessity when we all know what the term means anyway? If we have a ballpark notion of what constitutes leisure, isn’t that enough?” (Witt & Ellis, 1985).

These authors reply:

“Just as medical services are dependent on whether health is defined as the ‘absence of illness’ or in terms of quality of life, leisure services will be fundamentally different in purpose and provision depending on how leisure is defined” (Witt & Ellis, 1985).

Goodale & Witt argue along the same lines:

“...if the field of recreation and leisure is to advance and mature, we must continue the struggle for clarity. Seeking clarity is a process that ultimately forms the basis for practice and evaluation of whether services or systems have met stated goals and objectives” (Goodale & Witt, 1985).

How leisure and recreation are defined inevitably shapes the nature of public and private leisure and recreation provision and delivery systems. However, this study presupposes that public sector leisure and recreation services operate with a ‘ballpark’ notion of leisure and recreation, but with almost no definitional statements in their specifically written policies and strategies. The ‘ballpark’ notion is that ‘leisure’ is a general term which encompasses free time and all those pleasurable activities undertaken during one’s free time and that ‘recreation’ is the name of these activities. However, the focus seems to be placed primarily on ‘activities’ and this seems to be major determinant of today’s UORP and these presuppositions are explored in another chapter in this study. This study would like to argue that leisure and recreation have a much wider conceptual framework than simply residual time and activity and there are a number of other significant aspects along with these which must have implications for the field of UORP.

This chapter studies leisure and recreation concepts in detail and tries to answer the following research questions:

- What is leisure?
- What is recreation?
- How do leisure and recreation relate to each other?
- What is the emerging picture of leisure and recreation for the purposes of this research?

As noted above, the nature of leisure and recreation in their own right is still a matter of debate. This causes different reactions among scholars; some adhere to definitional, philosophical work in order to achieve a degree of clarity - although at times further exacerbating the existing dilemma; some keep well away from what they call the ‘sterile definitional debate’ in order to make progress in other related issues - although their terms of reference may not always be clear, consistent and reliable. How leisure and recreation relate

to one another is not clear: questions of whether they are to be taken as more or less the same thing, as synonyms, or as different phenomena, to be distinguished, remain to be answered. If they are distinct but inseparable, the nature of the relationship between them has yet to be clarified. And in relation to the final research question, why do we want to know the answers to all these questions? What use can this information be for the practising professional? This chapter, in line with this, aims to present a synthesis of these conceptual arguments.

3.1.1 Methodology

The review largely draws on the British and American literature. Significant publications on leisure and recreation phenomenon have been examined in order to come closer to an understanding of what the two related concepts of leisure and recreation are. Some publications, such as that of Joffre Dumazedier, have been subject to secondary reading from translations. Similarly, the writing of Aristotle on leisure is studied from a variety of references. Leisure and recreation can be interpreted differently across different cultures. This research will only note those differences where relevant, however, and will not endeavour to detail why and how such differences occur.

The literature analysed are academic textbooks, research reports, research journals, conference proceedings, governmental documents (parliamentary, ministerial), statutory agency and local governmental policy/plan documents. The review spans a considerable time length: from Aristotle to Veblen (1899 –which was published later in 1925 and 1953) and recent publications such as Torkildsen (1999), Roberts (1999), Manning (1999), Pigram and Jenkins (1999), Rojek (2000) and Kraus (2001).

The literature review indicates a certain pattern of approaches to leisure and recreation. In other words there are some similarities which suggest that a classification of views into specific categories would be possible. Rather than quantification, this seeks to establish the specific categories of approaches to leisure and recreation and also what is said in these categories. The review also attempts to discern the key conceptual components that help explain leisure and recreation and this is crucial for the purposes of this study. The overriding aim in this chapter is always to extract and digest information which is relevant, significant and applicable for the field of UORP.

The concept of ‘play’ is not included in the review and analysis on its own terms, although it

is a concept relevant to leisure and recreation, especially recreation. However relevant theories of play are included in the analyses, as leisure and recreation are frequently explained in relation to the concept of play.

This study is not the first to categorise leisure and recreation views. Almost any literature on these issues attempt to do so, however brief it might be. Some determine their own categories, some provide a summary of others' work. There seems to be a general agreement on certain definitional aspects of leisure and recreation, such as time and activity. Beyond this point comes the disciplinary divide, which is broadened in the following section. This study provides its own analysis of the views of leisure and recreation which in part agrees with the general literature and in part takes a different standpoint in its grouping of the categories, such as the experiential/behavioural views of recreation. This particular area has attracted a great deal of research interest and required a different way of categorising for the purposes of this research.

3.2 Leisure and recreation: a field in search of conceptual clarity

Leisure and recreation are multi-disciplinary concepts. Although there is no established theory of leisure and recreation and no clear affiliation of the subject matter to a particular field of inquiry, we can still identify the disciplines and professions, which work with leisure and recreation.

One of the professions which have been long associated with leisure and recreation is education. For centuries, various educational methods have been employed to teach how to reach better health, greater fitness and individual and societal well-being. This brings another profession on the scene; the medical profession, employing different methods for achieving the physical and mental welfare goal. In doing so, however, medicine can have direct influence in the achievement process, whereas education aims at helping people to achieve a goal themselves. These two professions have long involved leisure and recreation in their service areas. However, there is a wide variety of other disciplines which are related to leisure and recreation. They can be listed as follows (in no particular order): Sociology, Psychology, Social Psychology, History, Anthropology, Religion, Economics, Politics, Philosophy, the broad field of Planning, Urban Planning and Design, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Geography, Surveying, Engineering, Botany, Horticulture, Biology, Forestry, Resource Management, Agriculture, Tourism, Business Administration have all brought leisure and

recreation concepts and issues under scrutiny for a better understanding within their own disciplinary interests.

Given the diversity of disciplinary concern, it is perhaps not surprising that leisure and recreation are studied from a variety of perspectives and within a variety of contexts. However this seems uncoordinated, inconsistent, confusing and without a unifying conceptual approach. There are also many sub-topics which are exclusively studied under the heading of leisure and recreation. Diversity of approach is desirable as long as structures are provided to allow a systematic development of knowledge in a given field. The great diversity of approach seems to have resulted in fragmentation of knowledge. Many researchers in fact have undertaken analyses and reviews and many have reported the diversity of approaches and prevailing ambiguity in the field (Brown, Dyer & Whaley, 1972; Burdge & Hendricks, 1972; Van Doren & Heit, 1973; Crandall & Lewko, 1976; Burton, 1980; Parker, 1980; Burdge, 1983; D'amours, 1984; Sessoms, 1984; Van Doren, Holland & Crompton, 1984; Burton & Jackson, 1989; Torkildsen, 1992, Torkildsen, 1999). As part of a survey, Burton & Jackson (1989) pointed out that researchers themselves believe that research into leisure and recreation is fragmented (61.5 %), rather than coherent (35 %), or united (1.4 %). The search for clarity and consistency goes on.

Leisure and recreation are a matter of multi-disciplinary concern, approach and contribution, but the precise manner and framework in which they should be studied, needs to be re-examined. Multi-disciplinary contribution is certainly desirable, however a leisure and recreation discipline perhaps, on its own terms, should function in a way that would process, digest and edit the large scale of information for the benefit of the fields (such as Tourism, Outdoor Recreation Provision, Sports) which operate with these concepts.

3.3 Views of leisure and recreation: main disciplinary perspectives

Three research traditions shape leisure and recreation research: the sociological tradition with an objective, situation-focused view; the psychological tradition with a subjective, individual focused view and, combining the two, the social-psychological tradition, with an holistic view.

For the sociologist, leisure and recreation are basically a social commodity shaped by institutional, societal, structural factors and means of production in a given society. The

Sociology of Leisure, according to Roberts, describes and explains, as its principal job, how people in particular social situations use their leisure (Roberts, 1970). Roberts emphasises that the job of sociology is not to judge the desirability of the leisure activities that are prevalent in a society, nor to advise people how they should best use their leisure time, the main interest of a sociologist is with the relationship between leisure and its social context. To Parker, the main concern lies with the interaction between individual behaviour and social structure: the relationship between leisure and its social context, including the social functions of leisure (Parker, 1976). The leisure and work dichotomy in this context is one area which is examined in close relation to leisure as a social construct. The social research tradition progresses in two main groups: the liberal/pluralistic tradition and the structure/control tradition. The liberal/pluralist view utilises ‘free choice’ and ‘individual liberty’ concepts in explaining leisure and recreation. According to this view, power is not concentrated on a single apparatus but distributed between a number of (plural) social agencies and actors; as such, individuals can make their own choices as to how they would like to consume their leisure. The structure/control tradition challenges this and argues that individuals are not free agents; they are only free within the freedom zone that is demarcated by power relations and structural framework of a society. So, leisure and recreation are the product of complex power relations.

To the psychologist, on the other hand, leisure and recreation are a matter to be viewed as an integral part of life with the emphasis on the individual. In this approach, leisure and recreation are related to the inner world of a person who is individual and largely free from societal influences and forces. Kelly contrasts this with the sociological approach:

“While psychological models point to the perception of freedom, sociological models imply that freedom is more than a feeling or attitude” (Kelly, 1983).

Conceptual approaches to leisure and recreation either adopt one of these views, or combine them in a so-called ‘holistic view’ which is basically from a social-psychological standpoint. Iso-Ahola (1980), a social psychologist, for example, follows this line.

Part of the research questions shaping the content of this chapter asks what leisure and recreation are and one immediate answer or conclusion is that there is no established theory of leisure and recreation. Also there is no precise definition of leisure and recreation. However there are a number of common elements in the definitions provided. These elements

are discernible from the review of the relevant literature which presents us with the following conceptual pictures of leisure and of recreation as researched and described by scholars (largely), professionals and practitioners:

3.3.1 What is leisure?

The dictionary meaning of leisure can be given as follows:

1. “**leisure** *n.* time that is free from work, time in which one can do as one chooses. **at leisure** not occupied; in an unhurried way. **at one’s leisure** when one has time. **leisure centre** a centre with recreational facilities of various kinds” (The Oxford Dictionary, 1988).
2. “**leisure** *n.* **a.** time or opportunity for ease, relaxation, etc. **b.** (*as modifier*): *leisure activities*. **2.** ease or leisureliness. **3. at leisure.** **a.** having free time for ease, relaxation, etc. **b.** not occupied or engaged. **c.** without hurrying. **d. at one’s leisure.** when one has free time” (Collins English Dictionary, 1994).

The word leisure originates from the Latin word *licere*, which first evolved into the word license and then leisure. *Licere* (and license) simply means ‘to be permitted’. Based on this, leisure meant permission and being free from legal occupation and opportunity to be free.

Leisure is conceptualised in many different ways. The majority of these are influenced by the developments of the industrial era (producing the work time and non-work time dichotomy) and the Protestant work ethic. Views of leisure can be categorised under certain contextual headings, which are determined in line with the findings of the literature survey. They are

- Leisure as ‘time’
- Leisure as ‘activity’
- Leisure as ‘attitude/state of mind’
- Leisure as ‘social construct’
- Leisure as ‘holistic concept’

Some scholars appear in more than one category, which implies that they changed their views

over time or they subscribe to more than one particular view.

3.3.1.1 Leisure as 'time': the residual view

This is probably the most common approach to leisure. According to this approach, which seems to be mostly advocated by the sociological tradition³, leisure is basically a period of time, which is not committed to duties, obligations, social role expectations, 'necessary' work and survival activities such as sleeping, eating and personal hygiene. In line with this, leisure can be described in the context of *'freedom from'* and *'freedom to'* approaches; as such, how time is spent is largely considered to be a matter of individual discretion, which is a view largely advocated from liberal standpoint within the sociological tradition. The structuralist tradition, on the other hand, tends to argue that the discretion individuals have over their leisure (time) is largely defined by social/societal parameters. Feminist views within this group, for example, dispute the validity of women being free from 'social role expectations' in their leisure and generally treated the same way with men with respect to leisure.

In presenting a philosophy of leisure and recreation in his book 'Philosophy of leisure and recreation', Nash suggests that leisure is:

“...time freed from the survival needs. It may be earned, after the work of the day, or it may be unearned, because of the production of others - usually parents. Leisure, then, is merely part of a 24 hour day. It carries no connotation of quality which is judged by standards set by society” (Nash, 1953).

The same author views leisure as a potential threat to civilisation if not used constructively and filled with activities that “....contribute to the fullness of life” and cautions his reader that “to use leisure intelligently and profitably is the final test of civilization” (Nash, 1953). This somehow echoes what Aristotle said about leisure in the 5th century BC:

“That is the principal point, with what kind of activity, is man to occupy his leisure” (Aristotle in Torkildsen, 1999).

Although Aristotle does not directly refer to leisure as time, he does treat it as an opportunity

³ This can be divided into sub-groups of liberalist and structuralist views, and from these, even into further categories such as the Marxist and feminist accounts, which are most prominent in relation to the work and leisure issue.

to pursue the ideals of good citizenship and elitism. In this case, time is for achieving a 'leisure ideal'. His definition includes the concepts of 'freedom', which was largely the prerogative of the citizens and 'necessity to labour' which was experienced by the slaves.

Brightbill (1960) points out that leisure is the time available to be used according to our judgement or choice. Clawson & Knetsch (1966) echo this view and state that leisure is basically discretionary time, to be used as one chooses (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). Some others put it slightly differently, emphasising the 'residual-time' aspect of leisure; to Molyneux (1970) for example leisure can be best regarded as the time available to a person after requirements of sleeping, eating, earning one's living, travelling and basic social and household duties have been met (Molyneux, 1970). Parker puts forward a sociological view (liberal/pluralist) that despite difficulties with working with a 'slippery concept' like leisure, it can be best defined as:

“...time free from work and other obligations, and it also encompasses activities which are characterised by a feeling of (comparative) freedom. As with other aspects of life and social structure, leisure is an experience of the individual, an attribute of group or other social activity, and has relevant organisations and institutions which attempt to meet leisure needs, reconcile conflicting interests and implement social policies” (Parker, 1976).

According to Butler (1976) on the other hand, leisure is simply “...a time to relax, to learn and to cultivate our vital powers”. Kraus, in his definition of leisure emphasises the 'freedom of choice' concept:

“Leisure is that portion of an individual's time which is not devoted to work or work connected responsibilities or to other forms of maintenance activity and which therefore may be regarded as discretionary or unobligated time. Leisure implies freedom of choice, and must be seen as available to all, whether they work or not. Leisure is customarily used in a variety of ways, either to meet one's personal needs for self-enrichment, relaxation, or pleasure, or to contribute to society's well-being” (Kraus, 1978).

As can be seen from the above, leisure as 'time' is generally understood as opposed to and free from the concept of 'work'. As was referred to in chapter 2, this is mainly due to the way the industrial society developed which strictly demarcated work and non-work time for those who had to earn their living by paid labour in factories. The 'work and leisure' dichotomy is largely the product of the industrialisation period and as Farina suggests is a reflection of the Protestant work ethic (Farina, 1985). As mentioned in the preceding chapter, non-work or

leisure behaviour of the working population was of importance in the sense of achieving recuperation/revitalisation in order to increase work efficiency and economic profit. 'Time', in which both work and non-work took place, was regimented and measured against production goals and money. However, Farina points out that leisure and free time are actually different concepts. He also makes a distinction that leisure does not strictly describe activities and is not just free time (Farina, 1985). He goes on to say that leisure time and free time are different concepts, as leisure has more to do with the notion of 'freedom' than just 'time'. Bregha, on the other hand, suggests that:

“...leisure, to express freedom, requires choice; choice, in turn, requires awareness of preferences, hence a sense of direction, ultimately a goal. In other terms, leisure is as much freedom *to* something as it is *from* something. Goalless leisure, then, is a contradiction which illustrates, even in our times, the difference between leisure and idleness.” (Bregha, 1985).

Arnold (1985) argues, in an editorial, that definitions of leisure as residual time, 'time remaining after the necessities of life are attended to' became out of date (Arnold, 1985). In the same editorial and in contrast, Westland asserts that:

“Increasingly, leisure is seen as time; more specifically unobligated or discretionary time...leisure, on the international scene, has increasingly come to be equated with free time” (Westland, 1985).

Westland exemplifies this with the German term 'freizeit' which means free time; Spanish 'tiempo libre', Scandinavian 'fridit' and Dutch 'vrijtijdsbesteding' which all indicate an element of time. The reason for the increasing acceptance of leisure as free time, Westland explains, has been greatly facilitated by the absence of the equivalent for leisure in most languages (Westland, 1985), except in the case of the French word 'Loisir', which comes probably closest to leisure in its dictionary meaning. Westland does acknowledge that while there might be an increasing worldwide agreement on an operational definition of leisure (as time), there is still an apparent lack of conceptual consensus among English speaking countries.

Time is a significant concept for leisure, recreation and UORP. But it is not an easy concept to define. It has been a curious subject for the field of physics for a long time. One definition is that:

“Time is the diminution of the future by the accumulation of the past” (Patrick, 1916 in Farina,

1985).

‘Time’ can be linked to leisure and recreation this idea will be explored in the following sections.

3.3.1.1.1 Dimensions of time

According to Farina (1985), time has a number of attributes which are described below:

Duration:

Duration of time can be defined as a continuum extending from the infinite past to the infinite future (Farina, 1985). Duration is measurable which is done by ‘the clock’. Despite this, Farina points out that duration can be a subjective matter. When time is occupied by a pleasing, meaningful and absorbing pursuit, it may seem to pass quickly (duration appearing to be short), on the other hand, when it is occupied by a not so pleasing, obligatory or meaningless pursuit, time may not seem to pass so quickly (feeling of long duration). This is a relevant point for leisure and recreation and UORP. Driving for work and driving for pleasure, for example, can make the perceptions of time (duration) differ.

Intensity:

Farina (1985) associates this dimension of time with action, the subjective experience of which may vary in intensity. And regardless of the precise indices of time, it is perceptions and feelings which actually create the notion of intensity. In line with this, scoring a goal for a footballer can make him experience a much more intense moment than a routine exercise for a match as part of his job.

Extensity and quantity:

This basically refers to the availability and extent of the distribution of identifiable blocks of time such as life-time, work-time, free time and leisure time. Such blocks of time can increase or decrease in quantity (longer or shorter working hours) and become more available or restricted for people (extensity). For example, free time, and more of it, is now more widely available for larger parts of the population, in comparison to the pre-industrialisation era. If such identifiable blocks of time as work time and free time are studied specifically, they can provide significant data for the

field of UORP. How people use their work and free time and how much of it they have are very likely to influence their demand and need for outdoor recreation places as well as their preferences, expectations and satisfaction levels. Time-budget diaries have long been in use for this purpose.

Quality:

Farina explains that the quality of time refers to those conditions that make it possible to classify a time period as work, leisure, free time and idleness, which to a great extent is culturally determined and dependent upon values (Farina, 1985). Time is usually considered in a dichotomy of work and non-work, which is largely the product of the industrialisation period and according to Farina, is the reflection of the Protestant Ethic.

Work and Obligated Time:

Work time can be considered as the time spent for monetary reward by the activity of work. This can be considered as gainful employment and it is obligated time. However work can take many shapes and forms and is not necessarily always paid for. In this sense, there are two main groups: the first group includes the time which is devoted to sleep and personal maintenance such as bathing and cleansing; and the second group includes the non-work obligatory time which is spent on commitments such as taking children to school and doing food shopping.

Free time:

According to Farina, free time is the time during which one is relatively free of economic, social or physical restriction or compulsion and in general primary role expectations (Farina, 1985). It must be emphasised that free time does not suggest absolute freedom, it is a relative issue as an individual can only be relatively free. In this respect, free time is placed at one end of the spectrum and obligatory time is at the other.

“During free time there is a greater opportunity for a person to select from a wide range of choices of behaviour as he or she may pursue goals not necessarily related to economic or family expectations” (Farina, 1985).

During free time one is assumed to have choice and preferences of a range of behaviour, such

as playing golf, doing the household chores, listening to music, sleeping (not as a necessity as indicated above, but by choice during the day, for example) or simply doing nothing. However, in this context, the quality and quantity issue needs to be touched upon again. Farina (1985) suggests that there is a difference, in the quality of behavioural choice, after long hours of work and after a refreshing, good night's sleep. He also points out that, referring to the quantity of time issue, there is a difference, in the range of choices offered, during a fifteen minute free period at a factory miles away from home and a free afternoon at a summer resort.

One significant point emerges from Farina's article that being free from labour or work does not necessarily mean leisure, if the need or obligation to labour or to do something, not just work, still exists. For example the unemployed do not necessarily have continuous leisure because of being out of work. Similarly, out of work hours for the employed may not necessarily mean leisure if there is additional work or house chores need to be done during this time. In this context, the nature of the activity and the attitude/state of mind of the individual probably matter more. Leisure can have negative consequences when attitude towards it is negative. Unemployment, for example, can introduce (or impose) a lot of leisure to someone's life, but this is not necessarily a desirable thing for all. The most obvious impact is a severe decline of income causing financial hardship and poverty with the probability of having less money to spend on leisure. On the other hand, unemployment is relative to surplus or excess of leisure (time). When coupled with material hardship it may effect especially the youth due to delay of independence from family, a sense of frustration and distrust and resentment with societal structure. This, in the end, paves the way for the generation of youth subcultures, street gangs and deliberate disturbances to people especially in public places and highly populated areas. Some scholars name this 'leisure disorientation' or 'leisure deviance'. Governments are alarmed about the potential threat of such a culture of disordered youths with too much time on their hands. In this context, 'leisure as time' and as an antithesis of work has been an area of academic inquiry since the mid-1970's and still is a popular subject to study amongst scholars ('Catharsis' theory, which is explained later in this chapter, relates to this point). However, 'leisure deviance' has not been acknowledged by UORP authorities as a possible form of recreation, as such, not integrated into policies and practices of UORP.

3.3.1.2 Leisure as ‘activity’

This approach defines leisure as a variety of self-determined activities, which are engaged in - during one’s free time- for their own sake and provide satisfaction and enjoyment. Leisure as ‘activity’ is largely associated with the notions of ‘free time’ and ‘perceived freedom’ (perceived freedom to engage in self-determined activities) notions. Leisure activities can be vigorous or relatively passive (Neumeyer & Neumeyer, 1958). This distinction between active and passive forms of leisure appears to be widely used in UORP. Dumazedier argues that:

“Leisure is activity - apart from the obligations of work, family and society - to which the individual turns at will for either relaxation, diversion, or broadening his individual and spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of his creative capacity” (Dumazedier, 1967).

To Dumazedier, leisure provides relaxation from the pressures of daily life, it distracts and entertains individuals as opposed to boredom and despair, and also facilitates personal improvement. If work and obligations fuse into leisure, then it is no longer wholly leisure but ‘semi-leisure’ (Dumazedier, 1967).

Parker (1976) advocates that an adequate understanding of leisure requires that we take into account both its time and activity dimensions and defines that leisure encompasses activities which are characterised by a feeling of comparative freedom. According to Kraus (1978), leisure is those activities, which are chosen freely and separate from such obligatory, dutiful activities as work and family commitments. Kelly (1982) views leisure as self-determined activity chosen primarily for its own sake. Roberts (1978) prefers simplicity regarding the definition of leisure. In his opinion some definitions are unnecessarily elaborate and therefore confusing. Roberts offers a ‘simple’ explanation:

“Despite its apparent simplicity, regarding leisure as relatively freely undertaken non-work activity is broadly consistent with the everyday use of the term, and can also be penetrating sociological formula....Leisure is not the whole of non-work but within this area, includes only those activities (and inactivities) that are relatively self-determined....To say that activities are relatively self-determined does not mean that they are completely free from influences external to the actor. The criterion is that individuals can nevertheless feel that they have scope for choice” (Roberts, 1978).

Like the 'time' approach, the activity approach also emphasises the 'freedom to choose' element. Some authors suggest that individuals are free to choose their leisure activities, whilst others prefer to phrase it as 'largely free' instead of 'free'. As in the case of the 'time' view, the 'freedom' issue is broadened in relation to the 'freedom *to*' and 'freedom *from*' concepts.

3.3.1.3 Leisure as attitude/a state of mind/state of being

A group of scholars interpret leisure as a product of subjective attitudes, feelings, emotions and experiences rather than simply time or activity. Among them are Pieper (1952), Larrabee & Meyerson (1958), Brightbill (1963), de Grazia (1962), Neulinger (1974, 1981, 1984), Iso-Ahola (1980). They collectively put forward a view that leisure is an essential dimension of human existence, it is not a by-product of time nor is it a set of activities but rather it should be viewed as an end in itself. The individual, according to this viewpoint, is presumed to have freedom to indulge in pleasurable activities and what pleasure he/she derives is rather a subjective, inner experience. Pieper wrote:

“Leisure it must be understood, is a mental and spiritual attitude - it is not simply the result of external factors, it is not the inevitable result of spare time, a holiday, a weekend or a vacation. It is, in the first place, an attitude of the mind, a condition of the soul” (Pieper, 1952).

Pieper almost idealises leisure and emphasises the value component of it. He almost reiterates the Greek leisure ideal. Leisure must be occupied in a fruitful way, as such; an idle leisure is not an ideal leisure. Even if leisure is to be a non-activity it does not have to be idle (Pieper, 1952). To Larrabee and Meyerson (1958) leisure is a mood of contemplation, a state of mind rather than free time. Along the same lines, Sebastian de Grazia suggests that leisure can be described as follows:

“Anybody can have free time. Free time is a realizable idea of democracy. Leisure is not fully realizable and hence an ideal not alone an idea. Free time refers to a special way of calculating a special kind of time. Leisure refers to a state of being, a condition of man, which few desire and fewer achieve” (de Grazia, 1962).

To de Grazia leisure and free time live in two different worlds (de Grazia, 1962). Two other prominent interpreters of leisure in this particular context are Iso-Ahola and Neulinger. Iso-Ahola, a social psychologist, places specific emphasis on the shaping influences of

social/societal relations on the attitude and behaviour of the individual (Iso-Ahola, 1980). Iso-Ahola's explanation of leisure is in the context of the interactive relationship between the individual and other individuals and the overall social surrounding. This approach is significant in combining both subjective (individual-focused/psychological) and objective (situation-focused/sociological) views of leisure.

Neulinger combines activity and perceived freedom elements in his view of leisure and stresses that:

“Leisure....has one and only one essential criterion, and that is the condition of perceived freedom....*To leisure* implies being engaged in an activity as a free agent and of one's own choice” (Neulinger, 1981).

Based on the disciplinary theories and methodology of Psychology, Neulinger (1981) goes on to develop a model, a paradigm of leisure, which actually conceptualises leisure and a scale to measure the way in which and the extent to which individuals experience leisure. There are two referents/determinants in this model: perceived freedom and motivation. According to this, an individual must first have ‘perceived freedom’ to have leisure which is a state in which the person feels that what he/she is doing is by choice and because one wants to do it. To Neulinger, leisure is an attitude or perception which can differ from person to person; leisure is intrinsic and non-instrumental; it is an end in itself (Neulinger, 1981)⁴.

To all these writers leisure has positive connotations, as Pieper (1952) points out it cannot be mere idleness. Bregha (1985) also suggests that goalless leisure is a contradiction and points out to the difference between leisure and idleness. Such idealisation of leisure in definitions can be related to its historical evolution. As chapter 2 portrayed, for the ancient Greeks, for instance, leisure was an ideal; for the puritans it somehow became a ‘work ethic’; and for the industrialists it was recuperation for work through a range of healthy and wholesome pursuits, which also included educational engagements.

⁴ Following his 1981 publication on leisure, Neulinger (1984) later re-emphasised the ‘perceived freedom and ‘intrinsic motivation’ elements as the essential components of leisure. However, one problem with Neulinger's conceptualisation is that it only identifies the conditions under which leisure can occur; it does not, as Witt and Ellis (1985) argue, delineate the specific qualities of the experiential stages such as ‘pure leisure’.

3.3.1.4 Leisure as social construct

Articulated mostly by social scientists, the social construct view of leisure does not really explain or describe what leisure is, rather it describes leisure in relation to and under the influence of social factors such as class, status, employment, education, income, age, gender as well as work, non-work and economic, political and institutional structures. From this point of view, leisure can be described in a variety of ways, for example, as a symbol of social class; as a political tool for achieving social stability through responding to the basic leisure needs of the poor, disabled, the elderly and the young; as a binding factor in perpetuating the social classes. These views of leisure suggest that it is important to consider leisure in its entirety and as an entity shaped by society and social factors⁵. A great many writers elaborated leisure in this context, several to mention are Veblen (1899)⁶, Wilensky (1960), Parker (1976,1981), Rapoport & Rapoport (1975), Parry (1983), Clarke & Critcher (1985), Rojek (1985,1993,1995,2000), Roberts (1978, 1986, 1999), Stokowksi (1994).

Veblen, writing in 1899, argues that leisure is a symbol of social class; it is the exclusive experience of the elite. Parker (1981) on the other hand puts leisure in a social, societal context and links leisure with the concept of 'work' as it is probably the most influential factor on the nature of leisure. As with other aspects of life and social structures, leisure is an experience of the individual, an attribute of group or other social activity, and has relevant organisations and institutions, which attempt to meet leisure needs, reconcile conflicting interests and implement social policies. To Parker, leisure involves choice, flexibility, spontaneity and self-determination.

Rapoport & Rapoport (1975) stress the importance of the family life cycle for leisure. To them, leisure is best understood in the context of 'pre-occupations arising from psycho-

⁵ The research on leisure as a social construct is colossal, especially in relation to demographic variables such as age and stage in life cycle, gender, income and education, which, along with the issue of 'work and leisure' creates a 'Sociology of Leisure'.

⁶ Veblen's 1899 book was re-printed in 1953. The References section only lists this 1953 publication.

biological maturation processes', as such certain stages in life can be characterised by certain leisure patterns (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1975). Parry (1983), on the other hand, suggest that leisure is a social phenomenon, as it involves social constraints and social obligations in a whole way of life:

Cheek et al (1976) view leisure as a function of social groups, by which it almost becomes a shared experience and lifestyle. As a result, family and friends tend to have similar leisure interests and behaviour. In the case of certain leisure interest groups (e.g. mountain climbing groups or cooking classes) this may extend to special codes of conduct, means of communication and dress codes which creates distinct social settings for members of such groups.

Clarke & Critcher (1985) argue that leisure is a product of the capitalist enterprise and administrative apparatus; it is an economic good, a commercial product, a source of profit. Rojek (1985, 1995, 2000) opposes the view of leisure without the society element in it. He writes that:

“...relations of leisure cannot be studied in isolation from the power structure of capitalist society” (Rojek, 1985).

Roberts (1978, 1986, 1999) also views leisure in a social/societal context. Like Parker and unlike Rojek and Clarke & Critcher, Roberts adopts a pluralist viewpoint. He recognises all societal constraints and restrictions on one's complete freedom, but argues that individuals, ultimately, do have the capability to accept or reject a particular type of leisure activity. In his view, leisure is highly context dependent and a sociological definition allows leisure to be defined by its context (Roberts, 1999). He goes onto say that:

“The sociological concept can be described as residual in that leisure is portrayed as existing in what is left over; the time that remains when paid work and other obligatory activities have been done, and the money that can be spent in that time” (Roberts, 1999).

3.3.1.5 Leisure as holistic/integrated concept

Some scholars argue that leisure can contain all of the above mentioned definitional elements depending on the particular context it is placed in, at a given time and place. As such the meaning of leisure can be as large as the actions, activities, behaviour and feelings of the individual, it can take place during one's work time as well as free time. Among those who

provided argument towards an all-encompassing view of leisure are Kaplan (1960, 1975, 1991), Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1990), Tinsley & Tinsley (1982), Kelly (1983, 1987, 1994) and Kraus (1996).

Adopting this all-inclusive approach, Kaplan (1960) suggests that leisure can be a combination of a number of theses which were put forward before him, or it can be one single aspect of these explanations, depending on the circumstances which effect an individual. Leisure can be one's free time; or activities that take place during such time or simply can be a state of mind. As such, individuals may construct their own leisure definitions. Kaplan later says that:

“...nothing is definable as leisure per se, and almost anything is definable as leisure, given a synthesis of elements....Leisure consists of relatively self-determined activity/experience that falls into one's economically free-time roles, that is seen as leisure participants, that is psychologically pleasant in anticipation or recollection, that potentially covers the whole range of commitment and intensity, that provides opportunities for recreation, personal growth, and service to others” (Kaplan, 1975).

In 1991 Kaplan questions whether the individual or the society at large should be the focus of the leisure inquiry. He writes:

“There can be little doubt that the most difficult issues about leisure and recreation are those that center on the meanings of such actions....Are we concerned with the large culture, going beyond the person....or shall we be safer on the micro level....if we turn to persons as our frame of reference?” (Kaplan, 1991).

Tinsley and Tinsley (1982) argue that leisure is a multi-faceted experience and can take place in all aspects of one's life, including work and any obligations. The authors put forward the idea that it is the individual and not the activity that creates the leisure experience.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1990) outlines that leisure can take place in any part and aspect of one's life and when one is in optimal interaction with his/her surroundings. He considers that a person in leisure is in a momentary 'flow' state, as he/she directs attention on a particular stimulus field; this person is in loss of self-awareness of any anxiety and constraint or sense of time and space, and in the end the person gains enlightened perception and receives enjoyment. In order for a person to experience 'flow', certain conditions must exist: freedom from obligation, voluntary choice of a certain activity, pleasurable participation in activity and

culturally accepted form of leisure. Csikszentmihalyi lists six characteristics of the state of 'flow', which is based on his discussions with a number of individuals (such as rock climbers, surgeons, chess players and dancers) who provided descriptions of 'flow':

- A merging or fusion of action and awareness
- A centering of attention
- Loss of self-consciousness
- Perception of great power and control
- Non-contradicting demands for action and clear, unambiguous feedback concerning the person's actions
- The absence of a need for external rewards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The state of 'flow' is at its best when the requirements or demands of an activity are in tandem with the skills of the individual. Otherwise what is experienced is either boredom (individual has more skill than demanded) or anxiety (individual is less skilled than demanded). The 'flow' concept can also be applied to 'work' as well as leisure, as Csikszentmihalyi does not actually confine this analysis to leisure. Roberts (1999) suggests that it was other leisure researchers who have sought to associate 'flow' with leisure and not actually Csikszentmihalyi himself.

Kelly (1983, 1987, 1994) combines a variety of approaches in one framework: leisure is simply *freedom to be* and *beyond necessity*. With this, people *experience* leisure by expressing themselves freely (largely), interacting and creating identities and roles. He acknowledges that such leisure is engineered by the modern society and its social structures. Leisure is not a completely isolated experience; it is part of this wider picture.

Torkildsen (1983, 1986, 1992, 1999), on the other hand, proposes that:

“Leisure can be regarded as an individual and societal framework which offers the time, the situations, the activities and the psychological perceptions to be free to experience play, recreation and leisure; leisure presents opportunity for these things to occur” (Torkildsen, 1999).

Haywood, Kew, Bramham, Spink, Henry and Capenerhurst approach the leisure concept along the same lines:

“A more useful approach is to recognise that: (a) there are a number of different ways of conceptualising leisure, of which the most common revolve around the dimensions of work and time; activity; function; and freedom; (b) none of these explanations gives a complete definition of leisure, but each tells us something important about the nature of leisure; (c) most importantly, they focus attention on the social origins of conceptualisation; on the values implicit in defining leisure in a particular way; and on the current ways in which leisure is viewed by such decision-makers as politicians, leisure providers and recreation managers” (Haywood et al, 1989).

A combined, holistic approach to leisure tends to define it as time free from obligation as well as engaging in a socially acceptable, wholesome activity. But it is perhaps Kraus’s words which encapsulate the holistic meaning of leisure:

“The term *leisure* is usually thought of as non-work time that may be used in ways of one’s own choice. The adjective *leisurely* implies an unpressured, often unstructured, slow-paced, relaxed use of time. In the past, it was considered that leisure belonged primarily to the upper classes in European and American society. Today, leisure’s meaning has changed dramatically from these earlier views....Leisure should be regarded as broader than either recreation or play, in that it provides the framework within which these activities are carried on, but it may extend beyond them. Leisure may consist of simply doing nothing....or may include such activities as adult education undertaken for nonvocational purposes, religious or spiritual pursuits, or community-service volunteerism. Leisure thus may be seen as the opportunity for a host of enjoyable and enriching experiences-discovering one’s talents, exploring the world, strengthening family life, or contributing to community well-being” (Kraus, 1996).

3.3.2 What is Recreation?

The word ‘recreation’ takes the following meanings in dictionaries:

1. “**recreation** *n.* the process or means of refreshing or entertaining oneself after work by some pleasurable activity” (The Oxford Dictionary, 1988).
2. “**recreation** *n.* 1. refreshment of health or spirits by relaxation and enjoyment. 2. an activity or pastime that promotes this. 3. a an interval of free time between school lessons. **b** (*as modifier*) *recreation period*” (Collins English Dictionary, 1994).

Like leisure, recreation too is an abstract symbol. The word recreation originates from the Latin word *recreatio*, meaning that which refreshes or restores (Kraus, 1978). Arnold (1985) suggests that the word recreation arose from the middle English of the 14th century and all these words with a connotation of entertainment, were of French-Latin origin. Arnold (1985) further suggests that recreation had use, not to peasants and labourers, but to those elite individuals at high social positions with privileges. The Latin word the root of the word is *re-creare* meaning to renew or to create again; to restore, recover, refresh, invigorate, revive and revitalise. All this is of metaphysical content, which is difficult to measure and quantify.

The definitional situation regarding the concept of recreation is not much different from that of leisure. Approaches to recreation are as varied as those to leisure which can be grouped in four main categories:

- Recreation as ‘activity’
- Recreation from the psychological/behavioural/experiential perspective: needs, motivations, experience and benefits
- Recreation as ‘social issue/institution’
- Recreation as a ‘holistic concept’

3.3.2.1 Recreation as ‘activity’

Being probably the most common (but not necessarily the most acceptable) view of recreation, the ‘activity’ approach suggests that recreation is a set of freely chosen pleasurable activities, which are engaged in during leisure (time). It forms the backbone of this study that UORP is largely based on the ‘activity’ definition of recreation.

Neumeyer & Neumeyer (1958) define recreation as a cluster of individual or collective activities which are undertaken during one’s leisure. De Grazia advocates that:

“Recreation is activity that rests men from work, often by giving them a change (distraction, diversion), and restores (re-creates) them for work. When adults play -as they do, of course, with persons, things and symbols - they play for recreation. Like the Romans, our own conception of leisure is mainly recreative” (de Grazia, 1962).

Molyneux (1970) defines recreation “...to mean purposeful activity” (Molyneux, 1970),

which excludes purposeless activity. Molyneux's approach appears to be a reflection of the puritan attitude to leisure and recreation which tends to frown upon unproductive, purposeless pursuits. Burton, on the other hand, takes leisure and recreation as identical and states that:

“Recreation, in its wider sense, is identical with leisure....for the majority of people, recreation and leisure are more or less synonymous terms for things which are done during free time. It seems simplest therefore, to consider the two terms as being identical referring to those pursuits that people undertake during their free time” (Burton, 1971).

To Douglass:

“Any action that refreshes the mental attitude of an individual is recreation. Recreation is wholesome activity that is engaged in for pleasure; therefore it is play” (Douglass, 1975).

Douglass adds that leisure is the time available for recreation. It is significant to note that Douglass views recreation as a wholesome activity, which means that recreation must have value for the individual and society, it must be socially acceptable, it cannot be just any activity. Parker, meanwhile, argues that:

“Recreation is a term that used to mean something similar to leisure. Recreation always indicates *activity* of some kind and, like leisure and play, it takes no single form. In its literal sense of re-creation, it may be seen as one of the functions of leisure” (Parker, 1976).

Bucher, Shivers and Bucher (1984) take recreation as:

“....those activities which are voluntarily entered into for pleasure during leisure without being negative. This emphasis on wholesomeness, on activity that is not detrimental to the individual or to the society is fundamental to the definition” (Bucher et al, 1984).

This definition does not include those activities which may be highly pleasurable and entertaining for an individual but detrimental, such as alcohol and drugs. If such activities are as recreational as the ‘acceptable’ forms of recreation, this needs to be acknowledged rather than rejected altogether. The above quotation suggests that Bucher et al consider leisure as time which is opportune to recreation activity.

Equating leisure with recreation, as Burton (1971) does, and as is implied by numerous authors, oversimplifies the whole definitional matter and perhaps because of this may be appealing to authorities as well as scholars. However, taking them as synonymous terms actually ignores the multitude of conceptual components that these two concepts have and the

distinction between them. This may result in an oversight of some significant aspects in relation to the UORP process, which will be explored in the remainder of this thesis.

3.3.2.2 Recreation from the psychological/behavioural/experiential perspective: needs, motivations, experience and benefits

Theories of recreation grouped under this heading are largely developed in line with the underlying principles of Psychology, Social Psychology and Environmental Psychology, although some other disciplines such as Biology also seems to have contributed. The psychological/behavioural perspective has been developing since the 1960's and generating a large volume of research and information. Driver is one of the prominent writers on the behavioural/experiential side and benefits of recreation. He and a number of other writers (especially Brown, Schreyer, Clark, Stankey and Peterson) have been building up a body of knowledge, effectively since the early Seventies. Driver and Toucher state that recreation is simply:

“...an experience which results from recreational engagements” (Driver and Toucher, 1974).

As was briefly touched on in the introduction chapter, the same activity can create different experiences; different feelings, emotions, senses and satisfaction levels in different physical and social settings/surroundings. When user surveys conclude that there is demand, for example, for walking, UORP seems to focus on the provision for the activity of walking as in the case of provision of (strolling) paths in parks. But this kind of provision ignores the fact that walking in a tranquil, leafy part of the park provides a different experience from walking in the open grassland with pockets of designated, heavily manicured bedding plants. UORP does not seem to acknowledge that an ‘activity’ does not function the same way with every setting and individual. In this context, the ‘experience’ aspect of recreation is of great significance.

A number of authors attempted to emphasise this aspect. Williams (1995), for example, combines the ‘activity’ and ‘experience’ aspects in one framework and views activity as a component of the whole recreation experience:

“...primarily, recreation is about activity in which participants have chosen to engage. This is the sense in which the term ‘recreation’ is intended, ...-as active use of free time within an individual’s lifestyle. But simple statements seldom tell the whole story. At one level we must

acknowledge that the recognition of what actually constitutes recreational activity will vary from person to person and that that variation is, in turn, a reflection of the more complex structure of the 'recreation experience', an experience which is only partly dependent upon the activity itself' (Williams, 1995).

Compared with the 'activity' definition of recreation –which is descriptive and mostly confined to information on types of activities, demand, user characteristics and preferences of management practices (Manning, 1999) - the behavioural/experiential approach appears to be more analytical. It is concerned with why (as well as how) recreation takes place by establishing links and correlations between the variables which shape recreation as an 'experience'. This includes definitions of recreation as an inner need and desire to engage in an activity or pursuit with the potential of rest, relaxation, pleasure, recuperation; an 'experience' with such re-creative effects and an 'experience' with resultant psychological outcomes and benefits. Hence the psychological/behavioural view concentrates on the three distinct stages of recreation, which are pre-recreation (needs, urges, motivation, preferences) during recreation (re-creation) and post-recreation (outcomes and benefits) stages.

Despite the fact that this view considers recreation basically in the context of 'experience' as opposed to 'activity', it does not exclude the notion of 'activity'. In line with this, there are a number of distinct definitional groups, which are all based on the concept of 'experience'. These are described as follows:

3.3.2.2.1 Intrinsic motivation/need serving experience

Also known as the 'homeostasis' - the process of balancing the chemical equilibrium of the body and soul for maintenance of quality life - view, this approach describes recreation as a tool to satisfy one's inner needs for renewal, and to re-balance the chemical equilibrium between the body and soul, and as an outlet for self-expression. Jacks (1932) (in Torkildsen, 1999) claims that recreation is something to do with the body rather than mind and it is a response to a need to repair the damages to the human biology. Slavson (1948, in Torkildsen, 1999) suggests that recreation is a 'need serving experience', it is brought about by an inner need, and finds expression in chosen activities. Nash (1953) states that recreation is a tool to satisfy an individual's inner motivation to express himself/herself. He links recreation with leisure (time) and writes that:

“Recreation, the wholesome use of leisure, must.... be thought of in terms of satisfying a

human need. It becomes an outlet for inner urges and drives. How men and women will use it becomes the important question” (Nash, 1953).

This implies that non-recreational leisure is not ‘wholesome’ and leisure, which is used in an unwholesome way, is not recreational. It becomes clear from the views of leisure and recreation that leisure and recreation terms are, at times, used interchangeably.

Seeley (1973) suggests that recreation is basically a renewal or preparation for routine and necessary work or a means of escape from it. Butler (1976) argues in parallel to Nash (1953):

“Recreation offers man an outlet for his physical, mental and creative powers, and in which he engages because of inner desire and not because of outer compulsion” (Butler, 1976).

Recreation is viewed, in this particular context, in conjunction with the referents of ‘needs’, ‘motivations’ and ‘drives’. But the concept of ‘needs’ actually precedes the other two. Needs cause or lead to urges, motivations and drives. In relation to UORP, needs must be understood first. ‘Needs’ in this context are perceived in terms of the needs which create motivation to maintain the psychological homeostasis of the human body. When inner/psychological equilibrium is disturbed, an individual feels a need, an urge to restore this balance and becomes motivated and driven towards a type of behaviour which would achieve this. This can take many forms: caring for an ill relative, for example, can cause considerable anxiety and stress on an individual which may urge the carer to take a care-free, long holiday; or a monotonous predictable lifestyle might motivate someone to venture into something completely new and of unpredictable nature such as camping in the wilderness to experience the unpredictable and adventure. All this is brought about by a need to restore and maintain the psychological as well as the physiological equilibrium/homeostasis. Hence it seems to be crucial to acknowledge and understand the needs and motivations issue, before dealing with the ‘activity’ issue.

The needs and motivations issue is further explored in the scope of 3.3.2.2.4.

3.3.2.2.2 Recreation as ‘re-creation’ experience

In this view, recreation is considered as a means to restore mental energy/mental balance by discharging (surplus) energy which can be physical and/or psychological. Although this view was developed as far back as the late 19th century, it seems still relevant today. Recreation, in

the sense of re-creation, still functions as a tool to restore and conserve men and women's energy and recharge their batteries for further work, duties and obligation. Like the preceding view of recreation, this view is also based on the homeostasis theory and perceives recreation as a means to restore the chemical balance of the body and mind (psyche and soma).

Shivers (1967), one of the prominent advocates of this approach, provides a definition which is based on the notion of psychological homeostasis. According to Shivers, this view concentrates on what happens 'during recreation' or 'at recreation' as an experience and not what happens before or after. As such, the 're-creation' theory describes recreation as an experience and not as an activity or an outcome of an experience or in association with leisure. During recreation the body and mind is united, so the experience is described as any consummatory experience, which is non-debilitating in character (Shivers, 1967). However, this is questioned as such complete absorption in an experience cannot always be achieved in real terms (Torkildsen, 1999). It can also be questioned that not every experience can be classified as recreation and not every experience can create a feeling of re-creation. Which experiences are recreation and which are not must be specified in order for planning, provision and management of recreation services to take them into account. If this approach is only saying that any satisfying, pleasurable experience is recreation, then this is too general and broad in terms of applicability.

By presenting the examples of the work of Graham and Klar (1979) Torkildsen (1999) points out that recreation experience as 're-creation' does not have to be divorced from the notions of leisure and activity. In Graham and Klar's words recreation experience is:

“...positive emotional response to participation in a recreation activity, defined as such by the individual or by a sponsoring agency or organisation. Responses associated with the recreation experience include feeling good about self and others, experiencing a sense of inner calm or personal satisfaction, or feeling an enriched sense of self-worth which results from motivators of either an intrinsic or extrinsic nature. There is a clear absence of stress and tension which produce anxiety; the joy of re-creative experience is achieved. The essence of the classical view of leisure is achieved” (Graham and Klar, 1979 in Torkildsen, 1999).

This view of recreation must have implications for the field of UORP. As was mentioned above, this view should be distinguished from the rest as it focuses on what happens *during* a recreation experience as opposed to pre-recreation and post-recreation stages. And this is a vital part in understanding recreation, which appears to be a process with distinct phases.

UORP should take into account all three stages of recreation, or at least utilise information relating to people's needs which give rise to motivations and demands for certain types of activities, experiences and benefits (in certain surroundings and settings). Leisure and recreation 'activity' is only one of the pieces in the UORP jigsaw and should not be treated in isolation from the other vital parts of the recreation experience.

3.3.2.2.3 Catharsis

The catharsis theory views play and recreation as an outlet for aggressive and hostile emotions. To quote from Carr (quoted in Kraus, 1978):

“Catharsis....implies the idea of purging or draining of that energy which has anti-social possibilities....The value of football, boxing and other physical contests in relieving the pugnacious tendencies of boys is readily apparent as examples. Without the numberless well-organized set forms of play possessed by society which give a harmless outlet to the mischievous and unapplied energy of the young the task of the teacher and parent would be appalling”.

Catharsis theory incorporates a biological, physiological explanation. Patrick (quoted in Kraus, 1978) suggests that play and recreation are significant in terms of restoring the disturbed balance in the organism. According to this interpretation, human beings, as part of their evolutionary progress, instinctively pre-condition themselves for threatening situations, which involves a series of internal changes in the body such as increased blood sugar and adrenalin levels due to feelings of stress, anxiety, fear, anger, frustration, tension and hostility. However, as the modern way of life is much safer now in terms of external threats to human life, this kind of energy may not find an easy outlet to get discharged. This is where play and recreation function as an outlet to use up such energy and restore the body to its balanced state until it starts to build up again. If an outlet is not available, aggressive and hostile emotions run the danger of finding inappropriate, unacceptable and irrational channels. Take vandalism and anti-social behaviour in urban open spaces and parks for example. According to Welch (1995) and based on the sociologist Stanley Cohen's (in Welch, 1995) study on vandalism, the kinds of vandalism which most often occur in parks are (among the other types Cohen identifies):

Malicious vandalism: This is the type of vandalism where the target is usually an institution such as a school or it can be a park. It is fuelled by rage, frustration, boredom and

disillusionment and the damage this can cause is considerable both in terms of financial resources and quality management and maintenance issue and quality of recreation experiences for other park users, as it creates a sense of threat and unsafe parks. This is also vindictive vandalism and can cause extreme damage to the park as in the case of burnt down park buildings, snapped (young) trees, broken tree branches, smashed, broken park furniture (benches etc) and heritage elements (statues etc).

Play vandalism: This appears to be the most costly vandalism in terms of repair, replacement and vandal proof new design. Examples are pulling flowers from flower beds, breaking the strongest fence in a competitive and playful (and reckless) manner. This does not seem to be so far way from a playful, fun, entertaining recreation, but it certainly is not the type of recreation which society accepts as 'wholesome recreation'.

Graffiti: Although this one is considered as an art form by some, it is still not widely endorsed as an 'acceptable' act. Graffiti frequently requires cleaning as the longer it is left the longer it gives encouragement to others to outdo the previous ones. It takes place usually in the evenings and night time (Welch, 1995).

The vandals, who are usually young people and of male gender, come from relatively run-down areas, tend to have too much time on their hands with too little to do and with too little resources. As such, they may not have the 'acceptable' channels for their relatively aggressive and violent energy. As a result, such energy may be discharged through inappropriate and unacceptable outlets, such as vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Vandalism does not occur without a cause. And the problem of vandalism is not likely to be resolved if our actions stop at only condemning or denouncing it. Vandalism seems to have an element of play, leisure and recreation in it. This whole issue is highly relevant in terms of UORP, particularly in relation to the 'perceived decline' of the urban parks, one of the components of which appears to be vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Vandalism can function as a form of play and recreation for those who engage in it. In this case, it is vandalism which consumes the aggressive and violent energy and restores the balance of the body. Catharsis theory can help understand the dynamics of this. It is left to planners, policy makers and managers to divert such energy into socially acceptable outlets, find substitutes and devise ways of accommodating the 'unacceptable' in an acceptable way. Those who created the municipal parks in the first place, during the 19th century, appear to have done so as a response to a

possible ‘social threat’ posed by a weary, overworked and unruly workforce.

3.3.2.2.4 Recreation as resultant product/outcome and benefits/rewards of an experience

This view suggests that recreation can be best understood if it is linked to the outcomes and benefits of ‘pleasurable’ experiences, as such recreation is the outcome of homeostasis and motivated experiences. This outcome can be a feeling of well-being, which results from experiences in which the individual derives pleasurable and gratifying responses to the use of his/her physical and mental powers. The feelings of satisfaction, renewal and re-creation which can be sensed both during and in the aftermath of an experience.

To Gray and Greben (1974), recreation is not activity at all, it should be considered as a ‘peak experience in self-satisfaction’:

“Recreation is an emotional condition within an individual human being that flows from a feeling of well-being and self-satisfaction. It is characterized by feelings of mastery, achievement, exhilaration, acceptance, success, personal worth, and pleasure. It reinforces a positive self-image. Recreation is a response to aesthetic experience, achievement of personal goals, or positive feedback from others. It is independent of activity, leisure, or social acceptance” (Gray & Greben, 1974).

While associating recreation with free time or non-work time, Kraus explains, in the following quotation, that recreation has now progressed from the ‘activity’ definition to the ‘experience and outcomes’:

“Recreation traditionally has been viewed as a form of human activity carried on in one’s free or non-work time, that is voluntarily chosen and pleasurable....Today, recreation is seen not so much as free-time activity itself as the experience that one undergoes while participating. Emotional, social, creative, and cognitive experiences are all part of recreation and satisfying involvement is seen as contributing to full self-actualisation, reaching one’s full potential as a human being. It is generally understood that pleasure is not the only purpose of recreation. People may engage in free-time pursuits to meet needs for excitement and challenge, social acceptance and friendship, feelings of accomplishment and self-mastery, creative expression and improvement of physical and emotional well-being” (Kraus, 1996).

It is generally acknowledged that leisure and recreation are beneficial for individuals and society. Schreyer and Driver (1989) argue that people would not voluntarily engage in recreation if they did not perceive it to be beneficial. A definition of ‘benefits’ is as follows:

“...a benefit denotes a desirable change of state; it is a specified improvement in condition or state of an individual or a group of individuals, of a society, or even non-human organisms”
(Driver, Nash and Haas, 1987 in Schreyer and Driver, 1989).

Driver and Brown specify a long list of ‘benefits’ gained from use of outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences. This list derives from a number of studies which set out to explore people’s recreation experience preferences. Driver and Brown (1987) provide a scale of recreation experience preferences. According to this, preferences for certain experiences such as enjoying nature (with the scale of enjoying the scenery, general nature experience, undeveloped natural area), and reducing of tension (scale of tension release, slow down mentally, escape role overloads, escape daily routine) appear to have more specific groups (scales) of preferences. Driver and Brown (1987) also illustrate a taxonomy of probable benefits obtained from use of outdoor recreation opportunities. They identify eight groups of benefits: *personal development* (specifically self-concept, self-actualisation, self-reliance, value clarification/introspection, humility, leadership, spiritual growth, aesthetic enhancement, learning), *social bonding* (family kinship, kinship with significant others, meeting new people), *therapeutic/healing* (in relation to clinical problems such as drug abuse, stress/tension mediation, physical rest), *physical fitness/health, stimulation, independence/freedom, nostalgia, commodity related*. This list was later made more extensive by Schreyer and Brown (1989) in the light of the interviews carried out in a particular outdoor recreation place, which was a river setting. But probably the most extensive list is the one prepared by Manning (1999) which itemises research on recreation experience expectations/psychological outcomes. All these lists suggest that benefits accrued from outdoor recreation fall into four major categories: personal benefits (accruing primarily to individuals and which might or might not benefit society at large), social benefits (accruing across individuals to society collectively or to large segments of society), economic benefits and environmental benefits. As far as the scope of this study is concerned, the first two groups are more relevant.

Advocates of the recreation as ‘benefits’ view, such as Schreyer and Driver (1989), point out that there is still a lot to be explored in the sense of improving our knowledge on ‘benefits’ to advance the leisure and recreation field and UORP and improve resource allocation decisions

and enhance user/consumer choices⁷. Accepting that recreation experiences have beneficial consequences and these benefits are increasingly valued in the Western society, the question arises: What are the benefits? What are their magnitudes/significance? The answers to these questions can assist planners, policy makers and managers in decision making, allocation of recreation resources and facilities as recreation experiences and their resultant benefits can be compared based on this information. The benefits approach has been influential in informing policies and guiding recreation and parks management field since the 1990's, especially in the United States.

3.3.2.3 Recreation as social issue/process/institution

This particular approach describes recreation as a commodity shaped by social/societal influences and institutional structures. Therefore the type and place of recreation tend to be constructed by the society and its administrative systems; hence recreation needs to occur in 'acceptable', 'wholesome' or 'appropriate' forms. Miller and Robinson (1963) suggest that recreation is the 'acceptable' consumption of leisure; it has social value and contributes to both individuals' and society's well-being. Meyer and Brightbill (1964) echo this view; according to them recreation is a product which is processed by societal life and its structural components. As such, recreation takes 'socially acceptable' forms for the individual and society. Butler (1968) points out that recreation is a network of services and facilities which promotes only 'wholesome' recreation behaviour.

Kraus (1978) also claims that recreation takes place within the boundaries of social structures and institutions; as allowed for and provided by them and the overall value systems (Kraus, 1978). Kraus (1997) later writes that:

“...recreation, when provided by established community agencies, must be socially and morally acceptable in terms of prevailing values and standards. Recreation must be recognized as a major aspect of modern community life, and as a significant social institution. Thousands of public, private, commercial, and therapeutic agencies sponsor recreation programs” (Kraus, 1997).

⁷ The cost-benefit analysis approach could be related to the 'benefits' issue in general, however, in relation to UORP, it is too operationalised and does not establish a link between experiences and benefits, as such, it overlooks the experience component of recreation.

3.3.2.4 Recreation as holistic, all-embracing concept

According to the holistic view, recreation can be all or any of the meanings suggested, depending on the personal interpretation, context, time and place. Meyer and Brightbill (1964) argue that recreation can incorporate all definitional aspects such as activity, inner need and resultant outcome in one framework. Kraus (1978; 1996; 2001) also suggests that recreation can mean activities or experiences which are engaged in within leisure and which bring about satisfaction, pleasure or creative enrichment. He writes:

“Recreation consists of activities or experiences carried on within leisure, usually chosen voluntarily by the participant - either because of satisfaction, pleasure, or creative enrichment derived, or because he perceives certain personal or social values to be gained from them. It may also be perceived as the process of participation, or as the emotional state derived from involvement....Finally, recreation must be recognised as a social institution with its own values and traditions, structures and organisations, and professional groups and skilled practitioners” (Kraus, 1996).

Torkildsen (1983, 1986, 1992, 1999) provides a summary of what recreation can be along the same lines:

“Recreation can be viewed as personal experience (what it does to a person), as activities (the forms it takes) or as an institution (the structure in which it is made available to the community). Taken yet another way recreation can be viewed as a process (what happens to an individual) and as a structure (the framework in which recreation is practised” (Torkildsen, 1999).

3.4 Conclusions: towards operational definitions of leisure and recreation

3.4.1 General issues

Given the diversity and fragmentation of conceptual approaches to leisure and recreation phenomena one can see that an agreed, universal definition does not exist. While some scholars are still seeking one, others believe that such efforts will never succeed. It may also be true that a ‘universal’ or ‘grand theory’ of leisure and recreation may not be valid for all times. Because these concepts are amorphous, they are subject to change by consequences of human actions, especially the concept of leisure when it is understood as part of a continuum made up of work and leisure. They may change and be modified with our actions; equally what is true today may not be true tomorrow. The same goes for the past. As far as the leisure

and recreation issue is concerned, providing historical perspectives for an understanding can be only useful in terms of the possible changes of forms which leisure and recreation take, the degree of their change and the ways in which such change evolves.

As for an operational definition, this in fact constitutes the general theme of this section. We will see that those in the field, as planners, managers or decision makers, seem to be operating with implicit rather than explicit definitions of leisure and recreation. We will argue that in the absence of a generally agreed theory, we must at least adopt a framework for an understanding which would include significant aspects of the contemporary conceptions of leisure and recreation. Although none of the present conceptual approaches equips us with a complete understanding of leisure and recreation, this study supports the view that each approach tells us something about leisure and recreation (Haywood et al., 1989), which is not very different from the standpoint that social-psychologist Iso-Ahola (1980) adopts.

3.4.2 Problems with conceptions

The conceptual categories as they have been used in this chapter (under 3.3.1 and 3.3.2) in discussions of leisure and recreation raise unanswered questions due to issues which are not fully resolved. These are discussed below.

3.4.2.1 Definitional shortcomings of leisure

Leisure as time:

If leisure is time, which is mostly viewed in the context of free, residual, unobligated time, free from work, there are a number of questions to answer: How achievable is a truly 'free time'? If leisure is time left over after work, how do we define the leisure of those who do not work? And subsequently how do we define the 'work' concept? If it is paid work, those who work but are unpaid, such as housewives, would be automatically left out of our analyses. Where do the retired, elderly, unemployed, youth and children fit in? If, instead, work is viewed as being any kind of obligatory engagement, how do we draw the line between what is obligatory and what is not? This can be a purely judgemental matter. Thus, at this point the work and leisure concepts are complicated by relative differences in values, judgements and perceptions. DIY for instance may become an imposed activity, a form of home-keeping chore for some people, whereas some others may choose to devote *time* to

DIY and derive pleasure and enjoyment from such an engagement.

Leisure as activity:

If leisure is activity, which is understood in association with free time or spare time concepts, how do we identify what is activity and what is not? Is activity an 'active' engagement, like in the case of physically active sports? Are pursuits such as reading or taking a nap included in our analyses of leisure? Can those 'passive' pursuits not be means of pleasure, personal education, relaxation, and renewal for some? If they can, do they not require to be a part of 'leisure activity' concept?

Leisure as a state of mind:

If leisure is a state of mind, which focuses on the individual who is 'free' to choose the form of his/her leisure engagement along with his/her wishes, are there any external influences that shape such a state of mind? Does the individual really have control over his/her state of mind and thus leisure? Are such power and absolute freedom easily accessible in real life situations? Is the existence of the individual a self-contained, isolated one? What factors influence his/her state of mind? And finally, if leisure is a state of mind, why would not work become leisure when it is enjoyable?

Leisure as social matter:

If leisure is a social matter, in what particular aspect do we explain it? Is there a real definition of leisure in the social matter approach or is it simply treated as a side issue, an aspect of social life? Does leisure differ from other social matters in this context? How do we explain the intrinsically motivated, casual, playful fun that some would call leisure? What is the influence of social, societal life on such leisure, as in the case of children's play? Or is such leisure not significant enough to be broadened in social terms?

Leisure as holistic concept:

If leisure is a holistic concept, embracing all others, is there a degree of conflict in combining both individual and freedom factors at one end of the spectrum, and societal, structural control factors at the other, in explaining the determinants of the nature of leisure behaviour? One perspective basically suggests that freedom over

leisure is possible while the other asserts that in reality there is no such thing as absolute freedom. How does the holistic concept juxtapose these two opposing views when putting forward the idea that leisure can take one or many possible forms in life, depending on the individual, the circumstances, one's interpretations, time and place?

3.4.2.2 Definitional shortcomings of recreation

Recreation as activity:

If recreation is activity, an activity of a kind that is undertaken during leisure (time) and freely chosen, are those re-creational experiences during work hours not recreation? Similar to the argument for the 'leisure as activity' views, we are faced with the question of what is an activity? Is it 'active'? Is sport, inherently, recreationally superior to sitting and relaxing? Can passive activities be recreation?

Recreation as experience:

If recreation is pleasurable experiences, which concentrates on inner needs, urges, motivations, psychological outcomes and benefits, is every experience, which produces pleasure and satisfaction, to be named recreation? Is that not a far too broad categorisation? Why do people derive different pleasures from the levels and kinds of the same recreation pursuit? Does this approach fully explain what recreation is? Where do social circumstances fit in? What are the links between activities, experiences and benefits? Also, how does the physical setting effect recreation experience? And how does this definition of recreation relate to the concept of 'time' (and leisure)?

Recreation as social issue:

If recreation is a social issue, which is viewed in relation to societal factors, which line of argument does this approach primarily promote? Do we, as individuals, have control over our recreation or is it controlled by the structural framework of society? Is playful, spontaneous recreation governed by society as well? How does the 'social issue' approach explain what happens during and after recreation experience; why are we engaged in it and what do we feel afterwards?

Recreation as holistic concept:

If recreation is a holistic concept, embracing all other concepts and placing emphasis on one particular aspect depending on the time, place and person, which aspect is to be emphasised in what conditions, time, place and person? Which concept comes to the forefront when providing recreation opportunities for the disabled in the inner cities for example? How do we generally proceed as planners and managers with this particular approach to recreation?

Having acknowledged that there are shortcomings and information deficits for both theory and practice in the present conceptualisations of leisure and recreation, this study proceeds to concentrate on certain aspects of leisure and recreation, which have implications for both policy and practice.

3.4.3 Essential issues/factors to be included

Despite the wealth of ideas, philosophies and conceptual models put forward to define leisure and recreation, a clear understanding as to what is meant by the use of these terms has yet to be established. However, it is conclusive that conceptual accounts clearly link leisure and recreation as well as separate them.

If we are in search of an operational understanding of leisure and recreation, we must first discuss the nature of the relationship between them. Our survey of literature concludes that leisure and recreation are both similar to one another and they overlap, but they are actually distinct. This constitutes the backbone of our operational approach to leisure and recreation.

Leisure and recreation concepts are inextricably linked to one another but they are not identical or synonymous. If we are to provide a definition, at this point, in this study, we take Kraus's (1996; 2001) and Torkildsen's (1999) definitions as a base for our understanding of leisure and recreation from the relevant literature. These definitions embrace all the meanings associated with leisure and recreation, as far as the relevant literature is concerned. Based on this:

“Leisure is that portion of an individual's time which is not devoted to work or work-connected responsibilities or to other forms of maintenance activity and which therefore may be regarded as discretionary or unobligated time” (Kraus, 2001). This seems to be the general understanding of leisure. A majority of scholars appear to subscribe to this view. But it is probably more than that, as Torkildsen suggests “...leisure is not time, but a ‘leisure use’ of

time” (Torkildsen, 1999). “Leisure can be regarded as an individual and societal framework which offers the time, the situations, the activities and the psychological perceptions to be free to experience play, recreation and leisure; leisure presents opportunity for these things to occur” (Torkildsen, 1999). “Leisure implies freedom of choice, and must be seen as available to all, whether they work or not. Leisure is customarily used in a variety of ways, either to meet one’s personal needs for self-enrichment, relaxation, or pleasure, or to contribute to society’s well-being” (Kraus, 1996; 2001). “Leisure should be regarded as broader than either recreation or play, in that it provides the framework within which these activities are carried on, but it may extend beyond them. Leisure may consist of simply doing nothing...or may include such activities as adult education undertaken for nonvocational purposes, religious or spiritual pursuits, or community-service volunteerism. Leisure thus may be seen as the opportunity for a host of enjoyable and enriching experiences-discovering one’s talents, exploring the world, strengthening family life, or contributing to community well-being” (Kraus, 1996; 2001).

On the other hand Kraus defines recreation as:

“Recreation consists of activities or experiences carried on within leisure, usually chosen voluntarily by the participant - either because of satisfaction, pleasure, or creative enrichment derived, or because he perceives certain personal or social values to be gained from them. It may also be perceived as the process of participation, or as the emotional state derived from involvement...When carried on as part of organised community or voluntary agency programmes, recreation must be designed to meet constructive and socially acceptable goals of the individual participant, the group and society at large. Finally, recreation must be recognised as a social institution with its own values and traditions, structures and organisations, and professional groups and skilled practitioners” (Kraus, 1996; 2001). “Hence recreation can be viewed as personal experience (what it does to a person), as activities (the forms it takes) or as an institution (the structure in which it is made available to the community). Taken yet another way recreation can be viewed as a process (what happens to an individual) and as a structure (the framework in which recreation is practised” (Torkildsen, 1999).

Based on these, the following conclusions can be drawn:

3.4.4 Conclusions

3.4.4.1 Leisure and recreation are similar concepts

The similarity between leisure and recreation is brought about by the perception of freedom and discretion, separate from the obligations of life; of being away from the necessities, as they are interpreted in relative terms, and having the opportunity for pursuing largely self-chosen engagements in which there is pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction. One way or other, leisure and recreation are both sources of opportunity for enjoyment and pleasure. In their contribution to people's quality of life, leisure and recreation are immensely important concepts, not only for individuals and society as a whole, but also for those governors, policy makers, planners and managers who are concerned with 'quality of life' and its achievement.

It should be noted here that there are overlappings in conceptual views of leisure and recreation: They can be both placed in activity, social issue contexts, as well as become state of mind and holistic concepts. Still there are differences of emphases even within the same categories:

3.4.4.2 Leisure and recreation are distinct concepts

When the concepts of leisure and recreation are viewed as identical or synonymous, the distinctions go unnoticed. But there are some important distinctions between leisure and recreation which are emphasised below:

'Time' emphasis in leisure

Although recreation is also linked to the notions of free time, residual time, discretionary time and spare time, it is not usually considered as 'time', in the way in which leisure often is. At most, recreation is viewed as a leisure (time) experience, a form of leisure behaviour.

As noted before, 'leisure as time' has its roots in the urbanisation and industrialisation period. In its close relation to work (free/discretionary time as opposed to working time) during this particular period, leisure was coupled with the time element and still is by many. Leisure as 'time left over after work', is still an applicable concept to the understanding of leisure of those who are at paid employment. Their leisure (time) takes place when work ends; usually the evenings, weekends, and holidays. For other parts of the population such as the

unemployed and the retired, the work and leisure dichotomy does not mean much. In this case, 'too much time with little to do' can be as problematic as 'too little time with too much to do' in terms of one's management of time. This also presents a challenge for leisure and recreation service providers, who provide 'opportunities' for people to spend time, usually undertaking leisure and recreation 'activities'.

Psychological aspect of recreation

From a psychological point of view, leisure is understood as a state of mind or an attitude of mind. This view basically explains leisure in relation to the perception of 'freedom from' work and obligations and also 'freedom to' engage in a chosen pursuit notions.

The view of recreation in this context slightly differs from that of leisure. The body and mind are linked together during recreation which is undertaken as a response to inner needs/motivations in the first place. Recreation is viewed as a form of pleasurable experience during (re-creation) or after which an individual enjoys a set of positive benefits/psychological outcomes (satisfaction, pleasure, thrill, enjoyment, feeling of well-being, recuperation, renewal, re-creation). Such understanding of recreation is also largely the product of the industrialisation era, as factory workers were then presented with an opportunity to recreate themselves, for example, to stroll and enjoy the fresh air in urban parks and open spaces, in order to create a healthy workforce; healthy in mind and healthy in body.

Sociological/social aspect of recreation

The first dimension recreation takes in the social matter context is the 'acceptability' and 'wholesomeness' of its form by social and moral standards. Thus the norms and forms of acceptable recreation differ in time and place owing to changing value standards.

A social issue approach to recreation broadens a second facet of recreation which is its resultant benefits to the individuals and subsequently society at large. This aspect of recreation is evaluated by some sociologists as a potential social control mechanism for administrations. An example of this is the policies and practices of the Sports Council. It is argued that slogan policies such as 'sports for all' appears to be humanitarian in the way it offers the benefits of the sports to the individuals and society but in fact it can be seen as a

special prescription for those potential social problem groups.

Sociological/social aspect of leisure

Leisure, as a social issue, differs from recreation in certain aspects. First of all leisure as a 'phenomenon' is treated as part of sociology more than recreation is. The volume of research and academic writing, exclusively dealing with leisure is colossal in comparison to recreation. The context in which it is placed also differs greatly for it is generally considered as a time period of which the amount and nature are largely defined by social, societal institutions and structures. Recreation in sociology, on the other hand, is seen as basically some sort of activity, or a form of converting leisure into some pleasurable experience. As such recreation concerns social science in its acceptability, wholesomeness and contribution to societal well-being.

Among the most studied leisure themes are the 'work and leisure' dichotomy and the social variables which influence leisure behaviour. Social variables do interact and interrelate with one another as well as differing in degree of influence from one form of leisure behaviour to another. To mention a few they are age, gender, social status, education, ethnicity and disability.

3.4.4.3 Emerging conceptual synthesis

We already have claimed that aiming for a universal understanding and a definition of leisure and recreation would be too ambitious an agenda. What we are searching for, instead, is a conceptual picture of leisure and recreation and part of this picture would emerge as important for the planning, provision and management practices.

This study juxtaposes leisure and recreation in one framework. They are interrelated and complement each other in such a way that a juxtaposition becomes a necessity. But perhaps it is the recreation concept more than leisure, which demands to be considered in relation to the other. This and a number of other points need further clarification in the light of the overall discussion provided in the scope of this chapter:

- Leisure and recreation are multi-faceted concepts. Every facet or aspect (or every individual category of approach) tells something true about them. So we should consider them as all relevant in the context of UORP, at least initially; then certain facets or aspects

can be given more weight and emphasis in relation to the nature of the provision project in hand.

- Some dimensions overlap, some do not, according to contemporary understanding from the two concepts.
- Leisure contains a time dimension, recreation usually does not. Sociology regards leisure as residual time in the context of a dichotomy, which is between work and leisure.
- The 'state of mind' dimension of leisure and 'experience' definition of recreation partly overlap. But it appears to be usually recreation which is demystified by Psychology.
- In the social matter context, leisure is basically time related, while recreation is seen as activity. 'Leisure activity' receives a great deal of attention in this context, but does not necessarily mean recreation.
- An inventory of the amount of leisure (time) is not an inventory of recreation which people experience. They completely differ in this sense. Because leisure does not necessarily lead to recreation; it is only a facilitator of recreation. What matters is how leisure is consumed and what part or parts of this is relevant to UORP.
- Recreation usually takes place during leisure. Although recreation can also happen any time and anywhere (e.g. during work time and work place) this has relatively less significant implications for recreation planning and management practices.

In line with the above, the following points should be emphasised, as conclusions:

1. Leisure and recreation are similar, closely interlinked and they interact. Both the historical evolution and contemporary views of leisure and recreation inextricably link them to one another. The fact that some writers consider them as identical and synonymous is a token of how closely connected they are. The similarity lies with the aspect of pleasure and enjoyment through largely self-determined pursuits. In other words, they both have the potential (as time, activities, experiences and benefits) for offering rest, relaxation, entertainment, play, learning, education, creativity, self-realisation and self-expression.
2. We have seen that leisure and recreation are multi-faceted concepts and they are placed in

a multitude of contexts. This multi-faceted character is the result of our actions in historical perspectives; our social, economic, political, cultural thoughts; judgements; our governments and institutions and their policies and practices. The research conceptualising leisure and recreation is nothing but a reflection of these historical developments. Take the leisure and work dichotomy for instance. It is the product of the industrialisation period. Leisure's segregation as time away from work, still holds valid for many people who are at paid employment.

3. When one considers all the possible meanings attached to leisure and recreation, the situation gets complicated to the extent that one meaning denies the other, as in the case of sociological and psychological explanations. There seems to be no single meaning and no agreement on definitions of leisure and recreation. However, present accounts clearly link leisure and recreation as well as separate them. For an overall framework, we need the whole picture. Recognition of the multi-faceted character of leisure and recreation is the first step and of vital importance for an increased understanding in the context of UORP.
4. Recreation is largely viewed as a form of leisure behaviour and it is incomplete without understanding leisure, its dynamics and determinants first. If leisure has a time dimension as distinct from recreation, leisure (time) can be a potential for any type of engagement, be it activity or inactivity, or recreation or destruction of the self. But recreation is assumed to find its expression in leisure. The majority of research subscribes to this view and its logic is clear to follow.
5. This necessitates the analysis and evaluation of numerous influential variables in relation to leisure and how leisure (time) is used; in a recreational (pleasure, enjoyment, satisfaction, fulfilment, etc) or non-recreational way (boredom, frustration, anger, stress, anxiety, depression, self-destruction, etc). Certain social variables such as age, stage in life cycle, social class, education, income, gender, race, ethnicity and disability can exert influence on leisure in different ways. As a result, leisure (as 'time') can increase or decrease, offer choice or constraint, offer mobility, education, entertainment, socialising or inactivity, isolation and social deviance (and even lead to vandalism as experienced in many urban parks). For example, the elderly can experience leisure in different ways than the young. They tend to demand distinct activities, in distinct settings, in order to

experience distinct psychological outcomes, such as sitting in pleasant, green, tranquil settings to enjoy the sights, sounds and smell of nature; to walk in pleasant and peaceful surroundings in order to engage in some physical exercise and feel fit. Clearly there are exceptions who might rather wish to be surrounded by other people (even in a park) and interact and exercise against the backdrop of open/green space, by for example playing bowling or croquet. And what about the leisure of those who are elderly, unemployed, black, female, working class or disabled? Can research really explain what the meaning of leisure and recreation is for those? How does that effect their leisure behaviour or recreation pursuits? There is some agreement on the variables themselves but how they exert influence is not yet clear.

6. Planners, decision makers, public service providers, designers, managers and politicians who work in the field of leisure and recreation ought to be aware of the complete conceptual picture of leisure and recreation so that they can distinguish, emphasise and apply particularly relevant parts of this picture in a given situation. This can be any conceptual dimension: the time, activity, state of mind, inner needs and motivations, psychological outcomes/benefits of an experience, social construct or all of these can be relevant in a given UORP situation. Considering leisure and recreation in a 'holistic' conceptual frame would be a step in the right direction.
7. It needs to be emphasised that the time element of leisure and the 'experience' aspect of recreation do not seem to be integral parts of UORP, which is an issue to be investigated in this research. The current 'activity' concern (seemingly) of UORP is limited as a definitional base. Leisure and recreation are not only activity; activity is only one of the integral parts of the leisure and recreation phenomenon. The whole thing starts with availability of opportunity as time, perception of relative *freedom to* choose and *freedom from* obligations and necessary work (paid or not) to engage in some activity or pursuit which provides a recreational experience with a wide range of psychological outcomes and benefits.

On the whole, the 'recreation as activity' view is easy to understand and apply in practice. As was emphasised in chapter 1, this research proposes that currently UORP is largely based on the 'activity' view. However, the research also argues that this is neither the only nor a sufficient aspect of recreation.

PART III - OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction to the approach

This part aims to explore the current status of urban outdoor recreation provision-UORP, in particular urban parks; the underlying principles and philosophies of UORP on which policies, strategies, plans and management, maintenance policies are based; and the meanings that leisure and recreation concepts take within the UORP system. The reason for a scrutiny of the wider planning/provision/management environment is that it is, along with others, one of the influential factors in moulding the current shape and nature of urban open space, urban parks and also interpretations of leisure and recreation. In line with this, the study progresses with two distinct levels of research:

The first level is basically an overview; it looks into the overall framework for the planning and provision of leisure and recreation services in general. This includes an insight into the agencies and organisations involved in provision (chapter 4); local authorities as main providers; introduction to UORP system and the approaches, philosophies and principles which govern the processes of current UORP along with the prevailing legislative basis (chapter 5). This is largely based on compilation, review and analysis of the UORP related literature and official documents. Despite the fact that such literature does present us with facts and factual statements about the subject of our inquiry, many appear to be no more than hypotheses and assumptions needing empirical verification. That is exactly what the second level intends to do.

The second level involves a series of empirical studies. First, chapter 6 starts with the detailing of the empirical research agenda and methodology: what is to be surveyed in the light of the research aims and objectives and issues raised; and what methodological tools are to be employed in order to obtain the required data. Then the following chapter 7 presents the first phase of the empirical study, which is a questionnaire survey, with analysis, evaluation and conclusions. Chapter 8 and 9 describe a case study, which in effect a two-phase case study. These chapters outline how the case study was designed and carried out as well as discussing the findings and conclusions. The synthesis and proposals, in line with the research aims and objectives, then make up the scope of the final part of the thesis (Part 4).

CHAPTER 4 - Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision Framework: Providers

4.1 Introduction

The institutional framework of UORP is a significant factor in relation to the meanings given to leisure and recreation. The actions and influences of institutions and agencies involved in UORP, in this respect, vary from legitimising, controlling, licensing and inhibiting at one end of the spectrum, to promoting, reinforcing and supporting certain forms of leisure and recreation, at the other. Leisure and recreation, with the actions and interpretations of institutions, become 'wholesome', 'irrational/disruptive/degenerative'; 'active', 'passive', 'private', 'public', 'commercial' or 'activity-based', 'facility/resource-based' and so on.

This chapter looks at only the significant parts of the institutional framework for leisure and recreation provision. Also, although individuals themselves can make provisions for their own leisure and recreation pursuits, this will not be treated as an independent category here.

4.2 Institutional/organisational framework of leisure and recreation

A great many agencies make or influence leisure and recreation policies and practices. For the purposes of this research and in line with the relevant literature, three main groups can be identified:

- Public sector
- Private-commercial sector
- Voluntary (mutual aid) groups

4.2.1 Public sector

Apart from its controlling and licensing functions in relation to leisure and recreation goods and services, the public sector can either make direct provision or assist/enable other agencies to do so by providing subsidies and grant aids. Public sector provision in Britain, to date, has been pluralist and welfare oriented.

The segments of the public sector to be described here are central government, statutory

agencies and local government. Each operates with its own distinct approaches and philosophies.

4.2.1.1 Central government

The central government is the main figure in orchestrating the planning, provision, policy making and management aspects of the leisure and recreation services. In a way, it sets the standards and codes of practice for the other agencies which are involved, directly or indirectly, in the planning, provision and management of leisure and recreation services. As such leisure and recreation field is regulated with a plethora of Acts of Parliament, statutory instruments, specific official documents and such like.

Governments in Britain, to date, have adopted a pluralistic approach to leisure and recreation which basically consists of a multi-departmental and multi-sectoral involvement. Despite the fact that there exists, since July 1997, a specific government department called 'The Department for Culture, Media and Sport' (DCMS), this department does not actually cover the broad field of leisure and recreation. Such responsibilities are still spread across a range of government departments. This is viewed as both desirable and undesirable; as Haywood et al (1989) notes, while Roberts favours fragmentation since it:

“...militates against a 'Big Brother' approach to leisure policy in which government interferes with free choice by the imposition of centrally devised policies” (Roberts, 1978),

a Minister for Sport once called for a Ministry of Leisure on the grounds that:

“... if government is serious about tackling inequalities in access to leisure then it will require policy machinery capable of achieving significant policy change” (Haywood et al, 1989).

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is actually the re-named, re-formed version of the Department of National Heritage which was founded in April 1992 following the 1992 elections and the problem of fragmentation of responsibilities was hoped to be resolved. The Secretary of State for National Heritage transferred the functions of the Office of the Arts and Libraries; broadcasting, press and the safety of the sports grounds from the Home Office, sport from the Department of Education and Science; tourism from the Department of Employment (after its location in the Department of Trade), heritage from the Department of the Environment, and film and export licensing of antiques from the Department of Trade and

Industry. The DCMS became

“...the central UK Government Department responsible for Government policy on the arts, sport and recreation, the National Lottery, libraries, museums and galleries, export licensing of cultural goods, broadcasting, film, press freedom and regulation, the built heritage, the royal estate and tourism. It also has responsibility for royal parks and palaces through two executive agencies, Royal Parks, and the Historic Royal Palaces Agency, and for the Government Art Collection” (<http://www.culture.gov.uk>, 1998).

The Department strives to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, and to strengthen the creative industries. In relation to its ‘sport and recreation’ concern, the Department advocates the Government’s ‘Sport for All’ policy and aims to widen access to sport and recreation. Recreation here is taken in relation to sport and as active, physical activity, which only covers a part of the broad field of recreation.

The Heritage Lottery Fund of the National Lottery to date has been a popular organisation for the funding of various projects (acquisition, restoration, management) which involve countryside areas, buildings, museums, industrial heritage and parks. This is where the Heritage Lottery Fund concerns this study: in particular in the philosophy behind the funding of an increasing number of park restoration projects and the implications of this for UORP, which will be broadened in chapter 9.

It is still a matter of criticism that the fragmentation of responsibilities has not actually been resolved, since the DCMS has limited functions and responsibilities. The establishment of this new government department may be a step forward, in terms of achieving a degree of coordination between the scattered leisure and recreation services, agencies and sub-departments, but in effect only certain responsibility areas are gathered in its territory. The broad field of leisure and recreation, in its own right, is not recognised. Governmental interpretation and emphasis on leisure and recreation provision can change with election results as well as social and economic changes. However some forms of leisure and recreation are almost always idealised, as in the case of sports, especially competitive sports which are institutionalised, subsidised, encouraged and supported with a legislative basis. It was officially recognised with the 1975 White Paper ‘Sport and Recreation’ that sport is good for the individual, for the society; it is good for the body and soul. The political sensitivity aspect can also make a form of leisure and recreation a high profile issue such as countryside

recreation. Gaining both physical and legislative 'access' to the countryside for leisure and recreation purposes has taken some considerable efforts by pressure groups, over almost a century. Not all forms of pleasurable engagements take such a high profile stance, for example to lobby for the enjoyment of urban parks in a variety of ways.

4.2.1.2 Statutory agencies

Statutory agencies are also called 'quasi-governmental', 'quasi-independent' and 'national bodies'. Statutory provision actually dates back to the years when the 'organised recreation' movement took place during the industrialisation period. The majority of today's influential national agencies were first set up then, often in the form of private and voluntary organisations. Among these is the Central Council for Physical Recreation, which led to the establishment of the advisory Sports Council in 1965, and then the quasi-governmental Sports Council in 1972. During the first half of the twentieth century, these voluntary agencies gradually gained power, they were given different names and different status by the government and then became the quasi-governmental bodies. The transformation was made possible with various legislation and Royal Charters and, at times, simply by a ministerial recommendation. Most of these bodies were founded in the 1960's; after the Sports Council, the Countryside Commission (now re-named the Countryside Agency) in 1967 and 1968 (for Scotland) and the Tourist Board in 1968. But there is no statutory body with a single remit for leisure and recreation today. Among the leading statutory agencies are the UK Sports Council (and Sport England), the Countryside Agency, the Arts Council, the Central Council for Physical Recreation, the British Tourist Authority, the Forestry Commission, the Nature Conservancy Council, the Environment Agency and the English Heritage.

The statutory agencies are, however, not direct providers of leisure and recreation. Their role is rather supplementary, advisory and subsidiary to others. Nevertheless, they have played and still play an important part in encouraging and guiding provision by local authorities, voluntary bodies and the private-commercial sector. As their name suggests, the quasi-independent agencies are not completely independent or autonomous in their actions and operations. They receive varying amounts of grants from the government and largely function in accordance with general government policy. They are the authorised parts of the central administration to deal with particular, relatively de-politicised issues on behalf of the government, just as in the case of leisure and recreation field. They can lead to formations of

lobbies within their sphere of influence and inform policies. They can provide theoretical and practical guidance to other agencies in order to improve their services. These roles can have significant implications for the field of leisure and recreation.

The Countryside Agency concerns us for its position to deal with human interest in the countryside and the physical resources in it, and seems to be one of the most influential agencies in the field of UORP, although the title of the agency might suggest a separate area of concern for the providers (mainly due to greening of cities and nature in cities movements). This appears to take place in the form of guidance on recreation access and conservation issues. It is in fact a difficult and challenging task for the Agency, to address this issue. The Countryside Agency itself presents, in its policies and practices, the dual aims of recreational access and use and the conservation of the countryside. There are inherent conflicts in its remit, but the Commission can draw attention to such conflicts and publicise them.

The Sports Council is another significant agency for UORP. It is first and foremost a sports and physical recreation related agency. Its aim is to foster, support and encourage the development of sport and physical recreation and the attainment of high standards. In retrospect, its establishment was originally the product of the sports, physical activities and recreation movement in the post-war period. Physical activities and sports were introduced as a societal panacea, to help recover the nation from the negative effects of the war; a new beginning; a tool to achieve recovery and forgetting. With their recuperating, renewing, recreating, pleasing and calming effects, sports and physical activities are still seen and introduced as a welfare measure. The Sports Council has publicised its policies with slogans like 'Sport For All' and 'Recreation For All'. Today 'Sport For All' is still very much used in introduction of their policies and combined with a couple of others: 'Fit for Life' and 'Sport for Fun'. Since its early days, the Council has not only been concerned with provision of technical information, it also disseminates information on the assessment of future demand for sports and the nature of required facilities for sport. It is very much involved in research which resulted in coordination with the Economic and Social Research Council-ESRC in forming an exclusive panel on leisure and recreation research and funding of related research during the 1980's. The Council seems very influential in guiding policies and practices of local authorities, although this is limited to sport and physical recreation. Design of sports facilities and gauging of future demand for facilities are among the most utilised areas of research carried out by the Council.

There are often overlapping, concurrent powers and little coordination between these agencies. Furthermore some aspects of the leisure and recreation services are not covered by any one of these bodies. Urban recreation, entertainment/catering and community and social services are among them.

4.2.1.3 Local authorities

Provision by local administrations for leisure and recreation, during the industrialisation and urbanisation process was encouraged by the government, as part of the 'rational recreation' movement. This was mainly through the provision of open spaces and parks, primarily for the use of the 'working classes'. With the legislative support provided in 1847, local authorities were empowered to purchase, lease, build, acquire and manage public parks, gardens and baths. They continued to provide a wide variety of facilities and opportunities such as parks, libraries, museums, baths and wash-houses, on this basis, for a long time. In 1974, after the impacts of the uneven and fragmented pattern of local provisions, local governments were reorganised. In their new form, many new authorities set up exclusive recreation and leisure departments which amalgamated the scattered leisure and recreation services from other departments. They are still structured this way.

“No two authorities are exactly alike either in provision or management. There are general similarities but specific differences” (Torkildsen, 1999).

Each authority operates within a service area with unique features and characteristics, different needs and demands. Local authorities can make direct provision or enable and assist others to do so; more importantly they can devise policies and strategies and put it into practice in line with the needs, demands and expectations of the local population they serve. Their provision for leisure and recreation is wide-ranging, however, not necessarily in a creative way. The Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) reported in 1978 that:

“....despite the recent attempts to define objectives ab initio, in the context of such exercises as structure planning and corporate management, it is tradition which is the most significant factor in determining the nature of local authority leisure services and their de facto objectives” (CURS, 1978).

Torkildsen (1999) years later echoes this view and points out that it is the traditional, existing facilities like libraries, parks and swimming pools that take up the large proportion of

recreation expenditure. Local authorities are committed to what could be seen as a 'recreation for all' policy, from a pluralistic viewpoint. Also in principal, local governments are expected to cater for those who are under-privileged (in terms of leisure and recreation opportunities) for a variety of reasons, such as financial constraints, social status, genetic syndromes and diseases, etc. On the other hand, except in Scotland and Northern Ireland, they are not legally obliged to provide for people's leisure and recreation at a certain minimum rate.

Local government has often faced financial constraints and cutbacks in its expenditure, which hampers efforts of provision and management. This places the priority on 'more urgent issues' such as housing, health and education. As such, leisure and recreation can be marginalised in provision portfolios and even become relatively apolitical issues. Also increasing pressure for new development in urban areas further exacerbates the situation.

The important issue of planning and policy making processes in local authorities in relation to leisure and recreation and the 'Best Value' practice which superseded the 'Compulsory Competitive Tendering' will be elaborated in the scope of the next chapter.

4.2.2 Private-commercial sector

The commercial providers hold a colossal share in provision for leisure and recreation from the point of view of range and quantity (Haywood et al, 1989; Veal, 1994, Kraus, 1997; Torkildsen, 1999). With that variety, commercial provision may reach a large proportion of society. As well as the high income group, the low-income group and the 'working class' are the participants in commercially provided leisure and recreation pursuits, such as betting, gambling and attending sports fixtures such as football and so on. The large participation rate can be seen as the result of a wide range of provision the commercial sector makes. Torkildsen states that:

“Commercial providers of facilities, services and products for leisure consumption have by far the greatest influence on people’s use of leisure time. This is seen particularly in leisure in and around the home and social recreation. The holiday and tourist industry is an expanding commercial market and the continuing rise in active recreation has expanded the leisure and sports goods markets. Sponsorship has made it possible to promote many sports and arts events and has helped to bring major sporting and entertainment attractions of the highest calibre into the homes of millions of people through television” (Torkildsen, 1999).

There are several important points to make about the private- commercial provider that may

well have implications concerning its relationship with other providers and generally, its place in leisure and recreation services: they operate on the basis of financial return, in other words, they market leisure and recreation as economic goods. Therefore, unlike public sector investments, commercial sector investments do not normally put capital into costly, land-based provisions such as open spaces and parks. This also means that some leisure and recreation needs and preferences can be excluded from their provision agendas and they tend to serve the expressed demand rather than latent demand. Commercial provision means purchase of goods and services; as a consequence of this, those who are financially restrained, may not be catered for, due to their limited ability to pay. Also, the commercial provider is competitive and this may have some positive and negative implications: the quality of provision can improve and the staff employed can receive a good level of training for the best profit return. On the other hand, competing can emphasise the distinction between providing a service and providing something to generate money. In addition, the private-commercial investor may have the ambition to take over some of the service areas of the public investor with a profit potential.

Due to mass production, commercial products tend to get standardised and homogenised. This may eventually lead to disrespect for local cultural patterns, in provision. Being oriented mainly towards profit-making, commercial providers can be attracted to making use of or exploiting non-renewable resources, when they look promising for profit. This could be menacing in the context of a relative loss of control over the allocation and use of valuable resources.

Because of its profit orientation, the commercial sector makes great use of consumer/recreation demand surveys and predictions of future recreation uses. Many set up research departments in order to undertake leisure and recreation trends studies and it is normally directed towards utilising market intelligence to reach investment decisions. In some cases, they find it satisfactory to carry out standard market surveys to ensure that the product would sell in a given investment area.

4.2.3 Voluntary groups

The voluntary sector consists of a large number of specialised groups, clubs and associations which are formed by individuals who seek personal enjoyment, pleasure and fulfilment through certain types of mental and/or physical engagements, rather than volunteering to

achieve something in the interest of leisure and recreation issues, or in pursuit of communal or social aims. These groups which are also known as 'mutual aid groups' do not have much in common, when compared with each other. Therefore, we will prefer to call them 'voluntary groups' for simplicity.

What motivates a voluntary gathering in the field of leisure and recreation is the common interest. In the end, this amounts to 'mutual aid'. In theory, the main function of voluntary groups is to serve certain needs of certain communities, especially of those disadvantaged mentally, physically and financially. Some types of voluntary action in the service area of leisure and recreation can be different than that, for such voluntary groups can be the providers of leisure and recreation experiences for themselves (there is a clear distinction to be made between voluntary groups; activities of a club for the enjoyment of eighteenth century books or maps, for example, can differ greatly from the activities of the Rambler's Association, Green Peace or friends of neighbourhood parks groups).

Another aspect is that, some other types of groups can be effective in influencing leisure and recreation policies and practices. The most effective ones tend to be those who act for environmental interests and the resolution of certain issues concerning the countryside. Voluntary groups do not have to conform to governmental policies and practices; they are self-organised groups and can determine their own policies and decisions. However, this has to be in accordance with the general legal framework by which the boundaries and the nature of their actions are specified. Voluntary groups are non-profit making agencies and may have charitable status. They can either create their own financial resources or receive funding from various sections of the public sector and also commercial sector. The funding body can be a statutory agency, like the Sports Council, or a local authority. It is not surprising today for a sports related group to receive a substantial backing or sponsorship from the commercial sector, mainly for advertisement reasons. In general, they may be under pressure due to financial insecurity, when making decisions for future provisions.

Voluntary initiatives can be very effective in terms of satisfying the needs of the deprived and neglected sections of society. Therefore, the public sector views them as an extension of the implementation process of their policies which cannot reach every single specified target group. Latent demand can be met this way; through voluntary supply or provision. Unlike public and commercial providers, voluntary groups are not usually involved in gauging

demand, at least not in the form of market surveys or recreation surveys. There is growing emphasis on voluntary groups and voluntary provision under the climate of long-standing budget cuts and saving schemes imposed on local governments.

It should be emphasised that voluntary provision is not necessarily a direct provider of leisure and recreation. In fact, it contains two distinct types of groups: those action groups which are committed to and function for the public interest (such as the Inner City Unit) and those groups with an entertainment and (recreational) pleasure orientation (such as the Keep Fit Association, a local Bowling Club). Although the former group may seem to be non-recreational in character, their actions can influence recreation policies and practices when they act as pressure groups. As for the latter group, participation in voluntary activities can itself be viewed as participation in leisure and recreation.

4.3 Conclusions

Provision for leisure and recreation is fragmented. There is a plethora of institutions, agencies, organisations, groups, clubs and associations which are involved in leisure and recreation provision. Services are distributed among the public, private-commercial sectors and voluntary groups. **Provision for leisure and recreation is also un-coordinated.** There is a lack of fit between functions and operations of the segments of the institutional framework. The best example would be the central government and the local government. Some services are covered by the central administration directly (such as Royal Parks) and some are not. The lack of coordination between the agencies also results in concurrent powers and overlappings.

The public sector is a significant component of the institutional apparatus in providing for leisure and recreation. **Through its power to impose duties, make legislation, lead policies and establish organisations, central government is a vital part of UORP, not as a direct provider but as a powerful, indirect controller.**

There is no statutory agency solely responsible for leisure and/or recreation. This includes all sections of public provision. The nearest attempt is the establishment of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport covering a wide range of leisure and recreation related services but not all. Although officially recognised as 'one of the community's everyday needs' and 'part of the general fabric of social services', in White Paper 'Sport and Recreation', 1975, leisure and recreation are not given full recognition in terms of the

interests of the existing statutory agencies. It is only certain aspects of leisure and recreation, such as sports, physical activities and countryside recreation that get treated as significant areas. **There is also no single body solely responsible for Urban Outdoor Recreation.**

The statutory agencies are in a dynamic relationship with central government and other providers. The main components of this dynamic relationship are the social, economic and political ties and priorities. Events such as governmental changes, elections and economic recessions can result in dramatic modifications in their performances. **Statutory agencies can act as a pressure group; and inform policies.** Still, as 'quasi-governmental agencies', they themselves are regulated by the government and are dependent on financial resources provided by the government. In legal terms they act on the basis of technical and professional aid to other agencies. With respect to informing and influencing policies, 'statutory agencies' can be effective, but they act within different areas of concern.

Local authorities are the main segment of the public sector provision with planning and direct provision power and this covers a wide range of leisure and recreation services. In terms of attempts for a unifying, working general policy in relation to leisure and recreation, they seem to be too diverse and individualised in policies and practices, although clearly 'local' responses to provision and management would be expected to be varied according to local circumstances. They certainly are under-funded in relation to their potential to provide opportunities for leisure and recreation.

The other components of the institutional framework, private-commercial sector and voluntary groups, are usually not considered to be as effective as the public sector component of the overall institutional machinery, in influencing policies. Their area of impact differs. **Commercial providers however have a large share in the overall provision for leisure and recreation** and they are the creators of fads and fashions as well as 'popular cultures' by channelling people's leisure and recreation behaviour into certain marketing avenues. It is significant for public sector provider to take into consideration of the scale and nature of the provision made by the commercial sector, as this is a major factor in influencing people's choices, preferences and overall leisure and recreation behaviour. On the other hand, **voluntary groups can be effective in terms of meeting the latent demand.**

Chapter 5 - Local Authorities as Main Planners and Providers of Urban Outdoor Recreation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an insight into local authorities as the main public sector providers of leisure and recreation services; and the planning and provision process, with reference to urban outdoor recreation provision - UORP. In doing so, it first looks at the history of local government involvement in UORP and then includes a brief account of the current UORP environment. This is followed by description of the leisure and recreation strategy/policy making and planning processes and techniques at the local government level, aiming to identify the philosophies and principles on which leisure and recreation policies, plans and practices are based.

There is a wealth of literature on the subject of the history and current status of local authority leisure and recreation services, some with a general perspective and others with specific reference to urban open/green space and park provision. This part of the study utilises numerous sources, among them are Blackie et al (1979), Travis (1979; 1981), Cunningham (1980), Tourism and Recreation Research Unit (TRRU) (1983), Bailey (1978; 1987), Institute of Local Government Studies (Inlogov) (1987), Coalter et al. (1986), Cherry (1988), Cullingworth (1988), Adams (1990), Conway (1991), Ravenscroft (1992), Henry (1993), Veal (1994) and Torkildsen (1999). This chapter draws largely on this literature.

5.2 Historical antecedents of local government urban open space provision

As was introduced in previous chapters, in order to understand the nature of contemporary urban open space and open space provision, one needs to understand urban open space in an historical context as:

“....a function of the evolving industrial cities, and of the social and spatial organisation of these rapidly growing communities” (TRRU, 1983).

As Chadwick (1966) points out, it is during industrialisation that urban open space was given specific function, form and meaning under the shaping influences of the distinct

circumstances of this era. As seen in the second chapter of this study, historic accounts of general public leisure and recreation services in the industrialisation and urbanisation period reveal one common pattern, which is their evolution on a problem-solving basis. As Travis states:

“The sequence was one of growing problems, failures leading to crisis situations and dimensions, before general innovative and remedial propositions were put forward...The follow-up action of problem-defining and problem-solving was a response to different crises, and should not be seen as a normative planning and management process in a welfare context, for it was not!” (Travis, 1981).

By ‘innovative and remedial propositions’, Travis means the series of legislation that was gradually introduced by central Government in order to find solutions to problems created by rapid urbanisation and industrialisation and largely faced by the working population. Among these problems were inadequate, cramped and unsanitary housing conditions, increasingly threatened public health, long factory work hours, which also included children’s work, and ‘disruptive’ behaviour of workers during non-work hours. This caused concern among the middle and upper classes which found expression in the introduction of a number of ‘remedial’ or social reformist Acts such as the Baths and Wash-Houses Act of 1846, the Ten Hours (Factories) Act of 1847, the Public Health Acts of 1848 and 1875. Concerns for the welfare of the working classes also resulted in local authorities being progressively empowered to provide, promote, inhibit and control matters which related to leisure and recreation. Swimming pools, museums, libraries and places for physical exercise, education, amusement, rest and relaxation, in other words, public open/green space, became popular forms of such provision, as part of the nineteenth century Social Reform Movement.

Open space provision, however, is not a pure invention of the industrialisation period. Although neither designed nor planned, open spaces and parks were part of the urban fabric as early as the civilisations of Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, the best-known example of this being the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. These spaces were for the use of ruling classes and mainly for visual and aesthetic pleasure. For a more public form of open space “in the Western sense, the heritage of civic open space can be traced to the Greek *agora*” (Wilkinson, 1989). Wilkinson states that:

“The agora was a multi-functional place, providing opportunities for athletics, spectator sports, social interactions, politics, education and shopping. It is, therefore, the ancestor in

principle of the city park, the plaza, the market place, the campus, and the shopping centre of today” (Wilkinson, 1989).

Wilkinson agrees with French (French, 1973 in Wilkinson, 1989) that the agora is as much a concept as a physical being. Its main ingredients are not about its design features but its ideals, functions and flexibility. This is reflected in its shape and size. Public open space was also provided during the Roman period, for large-scale entertainment especially for spectator sports, as well as places for public ‘forum’. Public open space takes another dimension with the medieval town; with its market squares and churchyards. Furthermore, there were the town squares, places and piazzas, straight streets with vistas and promenades of the Renaissance; the almost theatrical design features of the Baroque; and the ‘Jardin Anglais’ which embraces the very meaning of the English natural style of the early 1700’s. These are elements that all evolved into the design and planning of urban open spaces which exist today.

Nevertheless it is once again the nature of the industrialisation and urbanisation period that appears to be the primary influence on the present character of urban open space. Open space provision by local authorities, during this period, was an extension of the growing concern about the welfare of the working population due to deteriorating human health, living and working conditions, which were basically brought about by the conditions of rapid urbanisation and massive migration from rural areas to urban settlements in search of better fortunes. Industrial cities were densely built up, over-populated, unsanitary - most with polluted air - and increasingly excluded open or green space. These undesirable conditions had undesirable effects especially on the working classes. A Select Committee on public walks which was advocated by Richard Slaney, MP, was established in 1833, based on the argument that it was important for the working classes to enjoy fresh air and exercise on their day of rest; if they had public ‘parks’ and walks this would improve their health and morality; and also, if they had ‘parks’ to walk in with their families they would tend to dress soberly and neatly, and this incentive to be clean and properly clothed would be an inducement to a greater productivity in industry (Blackie et al, 1979). In addition to this, the TRRU study of 1983 argues that open space would also function as a tool to dampen any potential social unrest, and the same study concludes that:

“Open space provision, therefore, was advocated on the grounds that it would improve the physical and moral welfare of the working classes, which in turn would serve to reduce social

unrest and would bring attendant economic benefits” (TRRU, 1983).

Bailey (1978) puts forward the view that urban open space provision was also advocated in order to wean the working classes from their undesirable leisure and recreation behaviour, such as excessive drinking and animal fighting. In other words it was a move towards a recreation reform, a move towards ‘rational recreation’. Woudstra and Fieldhouse (2000), from a more pluralist viewpoint, argue that parks were promoted and provided for all members of society; they were popular places and a cause for great civic pride. The authors state that:

“Historic parks were designed to improve the urban environment in many ways: financially, by raising the value of the property around them; practically, by cleaning the air and being lungs for the city; physically, by providing a place for sport and exercise; and psychologically, by providing a place where people could relax and enjoy the sight of trees and grass” (Woudstra and Fieldhouse, 2000).

Following the arguments for urban parks and open spaces, local authorities were eventually given power to purchase, plan, provide and manage public parks and open spaces without permission from parliament, through the 1847 Towns Improvement Clauses Act. Although the majority of land and finance for provision (libraries and museums as well as parks) came from donations by private philanthropists, who were often industrialists, the design, planning and management aspects were carried out by local government. Towards the second half of the nineteenth century, cities and towns started developing their first municipal parks, many of which were:

“...built, however, in accordance with what philanthropists and corporations considered appropriate to their dignity, not with regard to what the customers might want” (Cunningham, 1980).

The 19th century municipal park, according to Woudstra and Fieldhouse (2000), was a safe, respectable, educational and structured setting which brought different social classes together. Its design rationale and facilities aimed at ‘improvement’ of the park users as well as building of local and national pride and patriotism. On a wider scale, this was a part of the nineteenth century Social Reform Movement.

Parks were now being regarded as places where the urban working population could experience the sense of Nature and freedom, enjoy fresh air and the beauty of flowers and

shrubs. Activities such as walking in the open air and listening to bands or observing a lake were thought to be refreshing and restful. Despite the fact that they were often guarded against unlimited access by fencing and railings and heavy wear and tear by 'keep off the grass' sign (TRRU, 1983), an urban park was to belong to the people; it was the 'people's park', not far from being a social institution in itself. In fact parks are still viewed as in the ownership of the public, they are still made available and maintained as public goods and services today.

More legislation, in particular the 1859 Recreation Grounds Act, the 1863 Town Gardens Protection Act and the 1875 Public Health Act eventually gave way to three significant Acts: the 1887, 1890 and 1906 Open Space Acts which consolidated the provisions relating the open spaces and parks by local government. Urban parks and open spaces created during the nineteenth century had certain design elements: since part of the idea of providing parks in urban areas was about creating an image of the country, to introduce the look, sounds, smells and feel of natural environment into these crowded, built-up settlements, the nineteenth century park design concept contained design elements that evoked the image of the countryside. This also had similarities to that of the eighteenth century landscaped garden, especially the private gardens of the great estates. The English Natural Style or as better known elsewhere, the 'jardin anglais', displayed a romantic attitude towards natural landscape, although at times with touches of theatrical features such as:

“....volcanoes, wild animal preserves, the staging of idyllic scenes from the Orient and Greek mythology, and the construction of Roman 'ruins' and dripping grottoes” (Wilkinson, 1989).

Lancelot Brown, the great landscape garden designer, later transformed this approach and placed the emphasis on the concept of 'form'. 'Form' over 'function' approach found expression on a heroic, large scale with Brown's designs; water features appearing as winding rivers in a large, idyllic landscape which was adorned with tall, mature trees, stretching to the horizon. Many of today's urban parks and gardens still manifest influences of the English Natural Style.

The nineteenth century urban park however was heavily manicured in order to create the missing image of the country and the rural scene, in the industrial city. Conway (1991) views the buildings and structures of the 19th century park in three groups: those which are needed for maintenance; those intended for the park users; and commemorative buildings and

structures. In the maintenance category, she includes the lodges for the park keepers, toolsheds, stores and glasshouses for raising and keeping plants. For the use and enjoyment of visitors there were drinking fountains, refreshment rooms, bandstands which almost every park just had to have, clock towers, museums of natural history or antiquities, picture galleries which all aimed at education and 'cultivation of virtue', exotic buildings such as pagodas, palm houses, conservatories, small zoos and aviaries. The 19th century park also displayed a sense of local pride and patriotism by erecting numerous commemorative statues. Perhaps it was the elaborate planting schemes and floral displays that mostly attracted the public to the parks. Exotic species collected from different parts of the world, created impressive colour combinations and enthused visitors. The rock garden, Japanese garden, alpine garden, flower garden, rosarium and arboretum became integral parts of the municipal park which combined pleasure and education for visitors (Conway, 1991). Also water, in the form of boating lakes, was to contribute to the tranquillity of the municipal park, as well as allowing another outlet for healthy exercise. By the end of the nineteenth century the urban park was to become a part of the institutional framework; it belonged to the people.

At the beginning of the twentieth century in Britain, the town planning movement was already underway and was oriented towards the control and regulation of urban environment and development. The late nineteenth century governmental concern for improving the undesirable conditions of the working class housing and regulating new housing, which later resulted in clearance and replacement of slums for better housing, extended from the issue of housing to city form (Cherry, 1988). Cherry highlights the change of direction in the late nineteenth century state intervention in urban affairs:

“...by the end of the century the arguments had changed. It was now reasoned that housing and social betterment would best be achieved through environmental improvement. Sanitarism was taken for granted; environmentalism was then the banner for progress. Attention therefore turned to housing standards which lay beyond the simple criterion of physical fitness: instead, to questions of space, air orientation and to general facilities. The environment in which the house was situated was now held to be of singular importance: hence the passion for low density, concern over the appearance of dwellings and the setting of open space....the social degradation of the slums could be tackled in this way” (Cherry, 1988).

Following this trend, the 1909 Town Planning Act provided the legislative framework for statutory planning of urban settlements and it officially recognised recreational open space as

a land use category (Travis, 1979). Local authorities became responsible for developing specific town planning schemes and controlling private development. Urban parks and green spaces, as an officially recognised land use category and a desirable and functional physical entity, were now a part of the statutory planning system (though still in a rudimentary form), which was to evolve and take many different forms and character in later years.

In parallel, the Garden City Movement, introduced by Ebenezer Howard at the end of the nineteenth century, argued that urban environments could be made better places to live in by designing attractive, pleasant and functional open spaces (Cullingworth, 1988). The main thrust of the Garden City idea was to locate town settlements at a distance from the main city, like satellite settlements, and separate them by a buffer zone such as an agricultural belt which would function as a growth barrier. It also suggested that inhabitants of garden cities would share the ownership of the land they live on. Two pioneering examples of garden cities, Letchworth in 1903 and Welwyn in 1920, were designed as self-sufficient settlements to provide easy accessibility to work, amenities and services (Taigel & Williamson, 1993). Houses of the garden city developments had their own private gardens as well as access to tree planted streets, greens and parks. The Garden City concept can be viewed as part of a search to redistribute the population of densely inhabited, late Victorian cities. It can also be viewed as the foundation of both the New Towns idea and the 'Regional Planning' movement, which proposed that town and country should be considered in the same planning framework in order to achieve social and economic development objectives as well as dispersal from major, congested cities (decentralisation) such as London. The Garden City Movement also promoted and emphasised the significance of the idea of open space in urban settlements.

As was previously mentioned in chapter 2, in the inter-war period, open space provision shifted towards providing places for more active pursuits such as sports and physical training. This shift was supported by the 1937 Physical Training and Recreation Act, which provided local authorities with a legislative base to acquire and establish playing fields. Although mainly aimed at national fitness, this shift had a dramatic effect in coupling the Victorian approach of 'public walks and pleasure grounds' with the provision of land, buildings and premises for physical training and other sports activities. It should be noted here that many of the nineteenth century parks did provide, to some extent, for active recreation and sport, but not in the same scale and form. Recreation grounds differed from urban parks in character,

function and style, as they were provided specifically for active pitch sports.

After the First World War, there were attempts to provide a basis for the planning aspect of open space provision. The motive behind these attempts was the concern for the determination of how much open space was to be provided, where it was to be placed and what was to be its nature. The question of how much open space should be provided prompted a move towards the development of planning standards as well as open space systems and hierarchies. This is significant in the context of this study, as standards and hierarchies seem to be currently very popular with planning and provision authorities and influence the nature of UORP. For instance, the NPFA standard of 6 acres per 1000 population, which was recommended in 1925, seems to be still widely used.

In the post-war period there were a number of significant developments for the planning profession. The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act introduced the compulsory planning of British land by the preparation, implementation and updating of 'plans' which formed the statutory basis of planning as we understand it today. Planning was recognised, primarily, as an activity of local authorities, overseen and coordinated by central government. The 1968 and 1971 Town and Country Planning Acts consolidated the compulsory planning practice by local authorities. Within this framework, open space was recognised as a category of land use in urban areas. The legislation supported the popular view that towns and cities should not be planned or designed as places without the aesthetic, functional and organic breathing areas, called open and green spaces. This regarded urban open space as an essential part of the fabric of a civilised urban settlement, fit for human living in the twentieth century.

The post-war period also witnessed the emergence of 'new towns' and the 'green belt' concept. New Towns were in fact no more than an extension of the garden city idea and decentralisation programmes. The 1946 New Towns Act had previously detailed the legal framework, according to which major decisions concerning the designation of new towns would be made by the central Government and not by local authorities. The Government then set up the development corporations to plan and develop these new settlements. Stevenage being the first of them (in 1946), other new towns were quick to follow in the periphery of London: Hemel Hempstead (in 1947), Harlow (in 1947), Crawley (in 1947), Basildon (in 1949) and Bracknell (in 1949). Other parts of the country also utilised the idea of new towns. The new town settlements had different purposes and functions in their designation; some

functioned as a magnet for regional growth, some were there to relieve overcrowding in big cities and some simply served as tidying up centres for the old industrial areas (Cherry, 1988). The new towns programme was a device which was improvised by the maturing planning profession in the twentieth century, and a part of the practice of a decentralisation approach (from a regional planning and development point of view), and steered by the central Government. In the 'Master Plan' for these new towns, there was a general adoption of standards for the provision of a wide variety of land uses, including public open space, and access to it. Nor was the Green Belt issue new; it had resonance with Ebenezer Howard's 'Garden City' concept. Designating green belts around major conurbations, it was argued, would limit excessive development and form a natural boundary between settlements. Designation of green belts was made possible by a Ministerial circular in 1955 and it became a popular, useful practice in terms of keeping development in check. However, where to locate new development was to remain as a challenging issue for decision-makers and planners, and probably more so, due to this designation of green belts around the main conurbations in Britain.

In the post-war years, urban open space benefited from a maturing planning system and profession. In design terms, legislation, particularly the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act empowered local authorities to have aesthetic control over the appearance of cities. This was followed, with the help of a series of guidance notes and handbooks as to how to design cities, almost fashioning the hard and soft elements of urban settlements in one aesthetic, functional and economic framework. These elements were buildings –residential, official and commercial; streets and squares and also open and green spaces. As such the application of standards and spacious layout principles became widely used. Open space was 'amenity'; it separated hard materials like buildings, streets and transport routes. It also was a significant component of the 'better housing' schemes countrywide, in the form of a 'private garden' which is still a much sought after feature by urban dwellers. New towns, like Harlow, somehow acted as templates to illustrate what could be achieved by planning and how inclusion of open space in the urban fabric could create a pleasant surrounding. Open space now had a role to play in the urban environment, which was functional, aesthetic and ecological, and was to become an integral part of the town planning system. This found expression in attempts to establish planning standards (e.g. the NPFA standard), open space systems and hierarchies (e.g. the GLC hierarchy).

This period also witnessed the increasing variety of resources for provision, which was largely facilitated by recognition of the multiple functions of urban open space, which are aesthetic, amenity and ecological functions.

During the 1960's, increasing leisure (time), wealth and consumerism created new interests, such as indoor facilities for sports, music and cinema, as well as recreational use of the countryside. Visiting indoor facilities, new shopping centres and malls became more popular than some traditional leisure and recreation resources such as urban parks. Urban open space was to decline; it was to become a site management and maintenance issue, to be dealt with by the relevant departments of local authorities. Because of the historic location of many major parks in the older Victorian parts of towns, it somehow became increasingly associated with the urban poor or at least those with lesser mobility in these areas.

Following an inquiry into the local authority administrative structure by a Royal Commission, which reported in 1967, the re-organisation of local authorities became inevitable. In 1974 local authorities were re-organised and often created specific leisure and recreation departments. These departments brought together scattered leisure and recreation services such as urban parks, horticulture, baths and swimming pools and sports centres. A unifying policy for leisure and recreation services was to become a need. However, based on a problem-solving basis, policies developed usually along the lines of specific resource-based activities. Still the re-organisation began to improve the uneven pattern of leisure and recreation provision in general.

Meanwhile, although the concept of standards in provision was already developed and used in the New Towns, it has not been widely accepted and used in practice until the Greater London Council-(GLC) developed an altered open space hierarchy system and classified spaces on the basis of their variable character and differing distances from origins of potential uses, in 1968, after completing a survey of parks in London (TRRU, 1983). The GLC used its classification in relevant studies within their working area, such as the Greater London Development Plan in 1969, and the Colne Valley Development Study in 1972. Some other planners and local authorities, afterwards have taken up their approach, during the 1970's and 1980's. Among them were Leicester and Liverpool and later on Yorkshire, Humberside and East Midlands Councils. The GLC also started to collect information on open space use patterns and its users. Thereby, for the first time, the focus was on the role of open space in

satisfying the leisure and recreation needs of urban dwellers and what is provided to meet these. However, no attempts are known to examine the validity of these new approaches.

Following the recession of the 1970's, social stability, which seemed to be under threat by increasing delinquency, hooliganism and urban riots, became a great concern for authorities. Financial resources were becoming limited and allocated for priority issues. The existing urban open space, typified by the urban park, seemed mostly outdated and unable to respond to contemporary social needs. Cuts in budgets obviously had a part to play in such deterioration. However as noted before, more pressing issues such as housing and education also played a part in turning urban parks into a site management issue. As a result of their evaluation of the existing park system, the Department of the Environment (1977) stated that urban parks were 'sadly out-of-date and neglected resources'. The fact that, unlike the countryside, there was no national body with a remit solely for urban open space further exacerbated the situation. Apart from the Department of the Environment's report, a variety of white papers and Acts in relation to urban open space elaborated the potential loss of private open space and stressed the role of urban space for recreation. The 1975 White Paper on 'Sport and Recreation' had already presented this approach, describing sports and recreation as being "one of the community's everyday needs" and "part of the general fabric of social services". In line with the social problems experienced in urban areas during the Seventies, the White Paper stated that:

"By reducing boredom and urban frustration, participation in active recreation contributes to the reduction of hooliganism and delinquency among young people" (HMSO, 1975).

The late 1970's also witnessed the implementation of Inner Areas Programmes and the Partnership Schemes, which made funds available for new provisions and improvements for the existing neglected open space by quite a number of City Councils. Manchester and Leicester City Councils for example, used programme funds for rehabilitation and upgrading of their city parks and for general improvements within the cities. In fact, this trend became the characteristic of the period of the 1970's and the 1980's, whereas during the 1950's and 1960's mainly new developments and provisions had taken place.

Much of today's planning and provision policies appear to be still based on management, conservation and rehabilitation and much of the new open space provision comes from the rehabilitation of derelict or reclaimed land. It also tends to be driven by the availability of

specific funding, when this can be applied to open space. A worrying point here is that this approach is supply oriented and does not necessarily correspond to where the open space is required; in other words its focus is on facilities rather than people. In fact, the vast majority of the local authorities are having little involvement in the provision of new recreation and leisure resources, due to budgetary cutbacks. As financial constraints on local authority activities still continue, hitting now even the management of the existing open space and parks, some authorities are seeking alternative uses for open space or even to sell it off (these hypothetical statements will be tested in the following survey part). In fact providing for leisure and recreation is not mandatory for local authorities. These services are often areas of money savings, when authorities are under severe financial pressure, but have to try to maintain essential services.

At this point in the historical review of UORP, one can discern a number of shifts in emphasis as far as the norms and forms of provision are concerned, which are summarised below:

- The nineteenth century provision: As was pointed out earlier in chapter 2, the nineteenth century UORP was prompted by a concern for the physical and moral well-being of the working men, women and children in factories as well as the undesirable living conditions of the industrial cities. This found expression in the provision of parks and gardens (along with provision of a number of other services and facilities, such as baths and wash-houses, libraries and museums) as part of a social reform movement. In the early stages, these were donated by industrialists and philanthropists. Later, local governments were empowered to acquire land and plan, provide and maintain 'municipal parks'. Parks functioned as places for rest, relaxation, rejuvenation, education and healthy, gentle exercise (by strolling and promenading) as well as forming open spaces to provide fresh air circulation in the densely built-up industrial cities.
- The twentieth century provision: The 'amenity' open/green space was to be integrated into the urban environment by the town planning movement which aimed at the control and regulation of urban development. Open/green space was recognised as a land use category in its own right and as part of the urban fabric with a multitude of benefits for cities and city dwellers. The two world wars however had a somewhat different influence on UORP. The First World War slowed it down whilst the threat of the Second World

War caused further expansion in provision. UORP and open/green space was to be given a new dimension in the early decades of the twentieth century, which was the introduction of recreation grounds for physical training and activity. Both preparation (to be fit to fight) and recovery from the effects of the Wars added to the significance of physical and moral fitness through physical exercise. To this end, recreation grounds and sports/playing fields were designed with a different purpose than municipal parks and with different facilities and activities in mind. Also, playing fields, with the legislative support of a number of Education Acts, became a part of the schools' overall educational and recreational facilities. The emphasis of UORP was now placed, in the late 1930's, on the provision of open/green space for 'active recreation' with sports and physical recreation, which is a move away from the nineteenth century emphasis on 'passive recreation' with gentle strolling in pleasant, green parks for fresh air, rest and relaxation.

The post-war period saw a number of significant changes in UORP. As the review mentioned, in more detail, earlier, there were attempts to establish standards and open space hierarchies for UORP. The 1925 NPFA standard for playing fields and open space system and hierarchies, such as the GLC hierarchy in the late 1960's, became increasingly popular with providers. Also increasing wealth, free time and mobility made better use of resources and facilities as well as demanding and creating new ones. A strengthening Landscape Architecture and Design profession played a significant part in the creation and innovative design of a variety of new open/green spaces in the urban environment, such as plazas, shopping malls, pocket parks and roof gardens. Provision for children's play and recreation, both inside and outside the school environment, grew. The popularity of the urban park, on the other hand, was to decline against a surge in demand for countryside recreation and increasing interest and investment in indoor sports facilities. Even the amalgamation of fragmented local authority leisure and recreation services in 1974, which also brought urban parks and green spaces into single, broader departments failed to rejuvenate them against fierce competition from the new favourites shopping centre and sports/leisure centre.

Meanwhile, towards the end of the twentieth century, a great deal of attention was to be given to environmental issues. 'Greening' of cities was to become a part of numerous urban 'regeneration' projects -as opposed to urban 'degeneration'. The role of the existing urban open/green space in people's lives and within the urban environment was to be

questioned by authorities as it appeared to be far from fulfilling its potential, which led to a number of new proposals, policies and practices. Chapter 9 discusses these in the context of the Saltwell case study, in more detail.

It should be noted here that, during the 1980's and 1990's, governmental involvement in UORP has also been along the lines of budgetary constraints and limiting of the management power of local authorities. Governmental practices in different political climates, over the last two decades, left their legacy too. These are explored below.

5.3 Local authority urban outdoor recreation provision: current environment

In general, the development of leisure and recreation services has been piecemeal and fragmented, if not incoherent. Coalter et al (1986) relates this to the non-mandatory status, differences in local conditions, 'opportunism' and the absence of coherent social and political policies at local level. By 'opportunism' Coalter means

“...a situation in which leisure provision reflected opportunity rather than systematic planning” (Coalter et al., 1986).

Torkildsen (1999) points out that local authorities, in relation to their past practices, have been slow in adapting to new demands due to the nature of public accountability and bureaucratic systems. He articulates this in the following quotation:

“Another fundamental problem is the inevitable bureaucracy which comes through public accountability, public service, institutionalised systems and approaches, which render the whole machinery a slow moving animal, one which cannot respond to the needs of fast-moving, changeable and flexible society” (Torkildsen, 1999).

However new regulations and legislation are introducing 'change' albeit in very gradual, incremental manner. At times, this has taken place in line with the central Government's political ideologies and policies. 'Compulsory Competitive Tendering' –CCT and the currently the 'Best Value' practice are examples of attempts to transform local government into a more efficient, transparent (in the case of CCT, more competitive) organisation. The CCT practice was introduced under the Local Government Act of 1988, which was drafted by a Conservative government. The main purpose of this legislation was to introduce competition (on a competitive tender basis) into the field of management of municipal facilities, including sports and recreation facilities. Ravenscroft (1992), in agreement with

Gratton and Taylor (Gratton and Taylor, 1991 in Ravenscroft, 1992) states that CCT in fact forced local authorities to make their aims and agendas explicit by writing specifications for services for tender which also required the existence of objective measures against which performances can be evaluated (Ravenscroft, 1992). As Bovaird (1991) and Ravenscroft (1992) suggest, the really challenging task in implementing CCT appeared to be the definition and measurement of the social outputs of services. Henry and Bramham note that CCT:

“...is seen as endangering the social welfare approach of local government to the management of such facilities, since in order to compete in price terms for the winning of such contracts, public sector employees may be forced to emulate commercial management in pursuing market segments which can afford to pay high prices” (Henry and Bramham, 1993).

Although the main purpose of CCT was to increase efficiency in public services, it also had an inherent danger of losing effectiveness in social services. Nevertheless CCT seems to have provided cost effectiveness, transparency and control. CCT has now been replaced by the ‘Best Value’ practice which is devised by the Labour administration. The ‘Best Value’ idea was introduced within the context of the 1997 Labour Party manifesto and subsequently with the 1998 White Paper ‘Modern Local Government – In Touch With People’. According to this, ‘the duty of Best Value’ will require the following framework: a corporate approach to the provision of services; public and community consultation; ‘fundamental service reviews’, the setting of performance targets in order to improve services and evaluate performance (targets to be published in local Performance Plans); a pragmatic approach to who provides service (not necessarily an in-house team; partnership and competition are also encouraged for efficiency); scrutiny by audit and inspection and finally, action to tackle failure. The Best Value approach is expected to set standards and objectives of provision which will enable users to hold their local authority accountable and have more say in the provision and management of services.

The availability of a major new source of external financial resources through the National Lottery (by five Lottery Distributing Bodies which include the funding areas of arts, sports and National Heritage), which was launched following the National Lottery Act of 1993, has provided local authorities, who successfully bid for funds, with a wider manoeuvring area in terms of new open space provisions and improvement of existing ones. Especially through funds provided by the Lottery Heritage Fund, many historic urban parks are now being renovated and refurbished. Securing funds this way, however, is not an easy task. The process

requires local authorities to outline their aims and objectives and justify that a particular provision or renovation and regeneration is really needed; and that their use and management proposals are in line with this organisation's funding philosophy. This approach is actually prompting local authorities to prepare specific leisure and recreation strategies, which are seen as the wider framework for proposals.

With the introduction of Unitary Development Plans (UDP's)⁸, local authorities are increasingly incorporating specific leisure and recreation policies, strategies and plans into their UDP's. The overall planning system is a 'plan-led' system, which means strategic decisions relating to the planning, provision, development and management of facilities are to be taken within the contextual boundaries of a 'plan'. Local authorities have a statutory duty to prepare these plans in order to secure the best allocation of resources for specific uses and develop alternatives for possible conflicts. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1990 and the Planning and Compensation Act of 1991 provided the basis for today's 'plan-led' system. The 1990 Town and Country Planning Act also set the framework for benefiting from large scale developments in securing the provision of public open space and sporting, recreational, social, educational or other community facilities. Local authorities can legally request developers –usually for developments of large scale- to provide for leisure and recreation in return for granting planning permission for their development proposal. As such, with this 'planning obligation' tool, some development proposals can be granted planning permission provided those developments compensate for the loss of land or open space by provision of required facilities or provide funds to meet the service demands generated by the development. Urban open space is included in this system.

The 1990's saw the start of a series of 'Planning Policy Guidance Notes' (PPG's) by the Department of the Environment (DoE). A PPG specifically on sport and recreation, which is entitled 'Planning Policy Guidance: Sport and Recreation' and known as PPG17, was published in 1991. There are a few points to detail in terms of its implications for the present day provision environment: PPG17 (DoE, 1991) states that:

Sport and recreation are important components of civilised life. Participation can help improve the individual's health and sense of well-being; promotion of sporting excellence can help

⁸ This was required only for London boroughs, Metropolitan districts and Unitary authorities.

foster civic and national pride. Sport and recreation have a valuable social and economic role.

PPG17 has been revised, in 2002. However, this does not seem to differ much from the earlier version, which will be further explored in chapter 9. Overall the emphasis in the guidance note appears to be on sports and playing fields. Nevertheless, PPG17 also mentions 'open spaces with recreational value' and 'open spaces of public value'. The context, in which open space is placed, ranges between the following: 'recreational land'; 'amenity'; 'a contribution to the quality of urban land' and 'an entity to be protected from development'. The DoE advises local authorities to seek advice from statutory agencies such as the Sports Council for "all aspects of planning for sport and recreation"; and the Countryside Commission for "planning for recreation in the countryside....technical advice on conservation and recreational planning policies". The DoE also details that:

"Where conflicts are likely between nature conservation and sport and recreation, local planning authorities may find it helpful to obtain advice from English Nature....Local planning authorities should consult widely with these organisations in drawing up development plans" (DoE, 1991).

The Department also notes, in preparing policies, that close cooperation should be made between the planning department, the department responsible for sport and recreation and other relevant departments, such as education. In addition, PPG17 encourages the drawing up of specific sports and recreation strategies in consultation with the planning authority. It also endorses the standards proposed by the NPFA and GLC in relation to playing fields and 'publicly accessible open space' respectively, and cautions that such standards can only assist local authorities to develop or formulate their own local standards. The revised version reiterates this point and like the earlier version does not attempt to define leisure and recreation (nor sport).

In 1991, the Sports Council published 'District Sport and Recreation Strategies: A Guide' which also encourages local authorities to draw up specific leisure strategies at the district level. The Council recommends that this can be done in collaboration with local organisations and in consultation with their planning department. Developments from this point on, which are more detailed and particularly relevant to the urban parks issue, are provided in the scope of chapter 9, the case study of Saltwell Park.

Currently, UORP seems to be largely guided by the NPFA, Sports Council, Countryside

Agency, Tourist Board, DTLR and English Heritage and to a certain extent by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Apart from the Royal Parks, the Department of Culture, Media and Sports does not deal with urban parks.

5.4 Rationales for public services

There are two groups of arguments that justify why the state should get involved in the provision of (public) services: they are the ‘economic arguments’ and ‘social/political arguments’ (Veal, 1994). In relation to the purpose of this chapter, these can be summarised as follows:

Economic arguments suggest that certain goods and services should be provided by the state as they may not be potentially profitable for the private sector to do so. Some goods and services, for example, cannot be excluded from common or shared benefits once provided, as in the case of street lighting, which is a public good. Therefore ‘normal’ mechanisms do not function to produce financial profit. Public open space is considered to be a public good as well, although in some circumstances market forces may operate. Entrance fees may be charged to improve the quality of provision and facilities, but collection is usually seen as too costly when compared to what can be charged in order not to deter potential users from use. Also provision, management and maintenance of relatively large land and facilities associated with open space are generally considered as a costly affair altogether. An open space in an urban setting can also be viewed as a ‘mixed good’; with potential public and private benefits. A park can increase value of the land and buildings which overlook it (although it sometimes can decrease it too), which can amount to private benefits, but at the same time such a park can be enjoyed by active or passive use by many members of the public. There are both public and private benefits to be derived from an urban park; however it does not function like a commercial product of a competitive market. Therefore parks are still largely owned and provided by the public sector.

As for social and political arguments, they basically locate their argument in the context of demand, needs, equity, equality, fairness, equitable distribution of facilities and welfare issues, as well as social control. The poor, elderly, financially dependent, children and young people, disabled and ethnic minorities lie at the heart of these issues. It is mainly about ‘ability to pay’, ‘ability to use’ and ‘ability to access’. The public sector, by provision of certain services, aims to overcome the effects of social, economic and political

‘disadvantages’ experienced by individuals or groups. Such provision usually takes place with or without charges. Any charge, however, is usually at a minimum or symbolic level or concessionary, which can be in the form of vouchers, stamps, special passes and so on. Swimming pools provided by local authorities, for example, use this approach widely. As part of the same argument, the state can be seen as the provider of a ‘tradition’ such as Victorian parks. Although they were provided as a necessity and panacea to urban social problems at the time of their creation, they may not function today as they did years ago. However there is expectancy, among the general public as well as interest groups and lobbies, for Victorian parks to be maintained, looked after and revamped, as they are part of National heritage and pride. In this case, not denying the benefits derived from Victorian parks, the main rationale for provision and maintenance becomes the perpetuation of tradition and the maintenance of ‘heritage’.

5.5 Plans, strategies and policies for leisure and recreation

Over time, it has evolved that UORP needs to be guided by an agreed ‘plan’. A plan is a document which is the written, recorded and communicated outcome of a planning process. The planning process can be described as establishing a programme of action for the medium to long term future (Veal, 1994). A ‘strategy’, on the other hand, sets medium to long term objectives, and acts as reference or code of practice for those who are in the position of making day-to-day management decisions. These are applicable concepts for the provision of leisure and recreation and particularly UORP. As mentioned above, local authorities are increasingly encouraged by central Government and quasi-governmental agencies to draw up specific leisure and recreation strategies, which would be incorporated into their general development plans. As part of the general planning system, policies and policy statements are included in development plan documents, although not in all. Such policy statements may take widely differing titles, in widely differing contexts, such as environmental issues, sports and active recreation, urban open space, amenities and so on.

The main steps taken in arriving at leisure and recreation policies and strategies are briefly described below:

5.5.1 The process of making plans and policies

Policy making for leisure and recreation and UORP cannot be separated from the general

planning process and local plans. Policies have to be built upon the prevailing planning and legislative framework but with particular concern for local needs and demands. As such there does not exist a blueprint description of the process of preparation of policies and making plans for leisure and recreation. However, such a process should roughly include the stages outlined in Figure 5.1, which draws on descriptions provided by Torkildsen (1999) and Veal (1994).

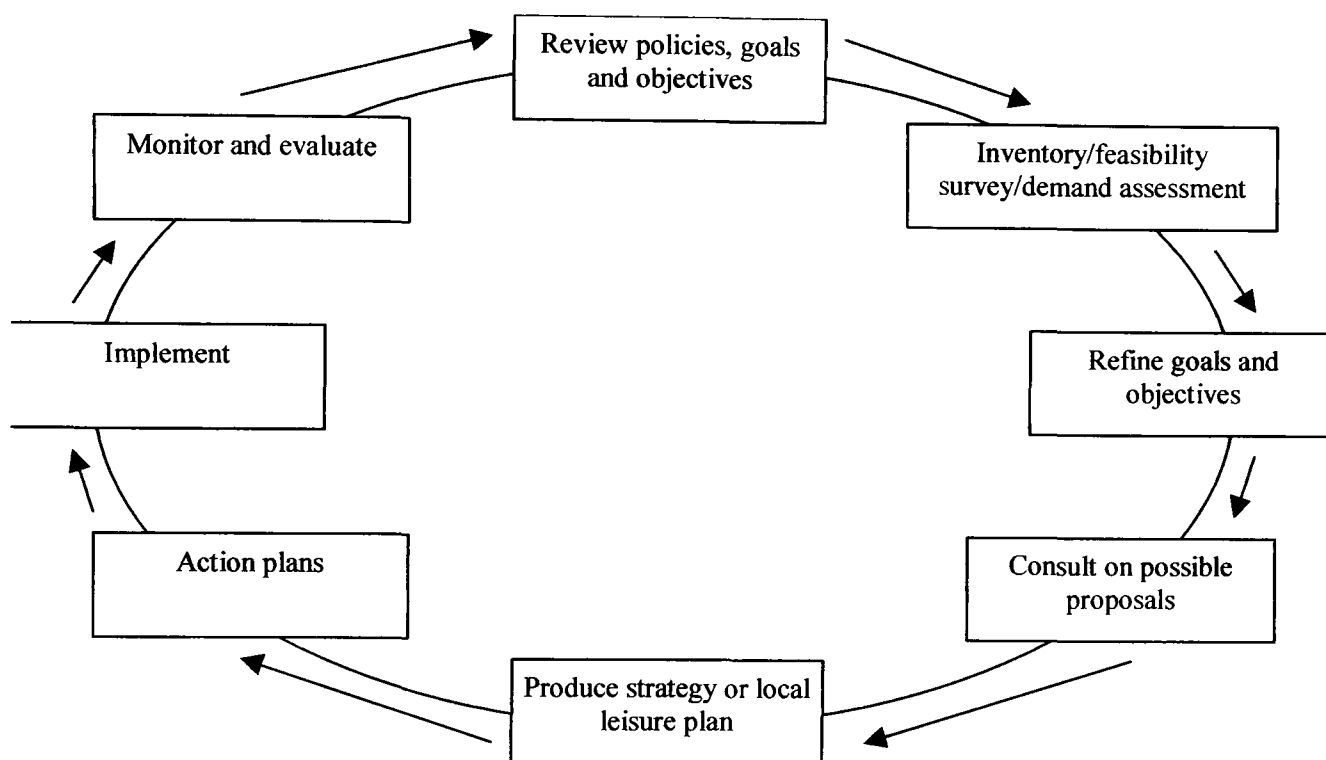


Figure 5.1 Leisure and recreation planning process (developed from Torkildsen, 1999)

These steps generally fall into three major categories which are survey, analysis and plan. Every step taken in the process performs a significant but complex task, which are described below:

- **Review policies, goals and objectives:** This involves establishing the philosophy and basis of providing services, not unlike establishing terms of reference for a task. Local authorities act in line with externally set policies, but then interpret these for their areas and communities by establishing aims and objectives for their plan. It has been argued, especially by ‘systems’ theorists like Chadwick (1971), that a clear statement of goals and objectives is an essential first step for any plan making activity. Strategic decisions concerning the type of provision, allocation of resources and facilities, management decisions are all made according to this basis. In relation to this preliminary stage, Veal (1994) puts forward that:

“...different people and political groups hold different values and have differing views on the role of the state, in relation to leisure as much as in relation to other areas such as education or defence. It might be expected, therefore, that differing values and philosophies would lead to differing mission or goals statements” Veal (1994).

Different values and ideologies can also give rise to different approaches and understanding of leisure and recreation. If leisure, for example, is taken as ‘leisure as a right’ then the goal/objective may become ‘access to facilities for chosen leisure activities for all’; if it is understood as ‘leisure as a need’, the goal/objective may be outlined as ‘provision for need for all’. Similarly, from the viewpoint of ideological differences viewpoint, one view might aim for the maintenance of traditional provision and promotion of excellence; whilst another might orient provision towards maximum state provision and equality of opportunity; and a different political perspective might choose to keep state involvement to a minimum.

- **Inventory/survey:** Existing provision needs to be examined in terms of quality, location and usage and demand levels. Provision can then target areas where there is need or demand for a particular type of service. At this level, efficiency, effectiveness, use and performance of facilities and other components, including resource availability, are also evaluated and used in the formulation of proposals.

Assessing demand is a challenging and complex task. Both current and future demands need to be assessed for a sound leisure and recreation provision. In this context, the provider gauges demand for activity, facility or resource. Among the widely employed techniques are demand modelling, population profiling and public consultation (questionnaires, interviews, etc.). Deficiencies and surpluses also need to be determined through demand-supply analysis. After demand is assessed, this is evaluated against existing supply, the difference is either deficiency or surplus. Following this, deficiencies are attempted to be redressed in order of priority, which is determined by user needs and leading policies.

- **Refine goals and objectives:** This is the adjustment and modification stage by assessment and interpretation of the findings of the preceding inventory and survey stage. Goals and objectives should become clearer in terms of achievability and, as such, can turn into refined proposals.

- **Consult widely on possible proposals:** It is only appropriate and part of a democratic planning system that potential users and benefiting agencies/organisations and relevant local authority departments are consulted about proposals, which are being considered but before any final decisions are made. This takes place in a variety of ways such as community and user surveys, interviews, media notices, exhibitions, public meetings and focus group discussions. Outside organisations are also consulted and coordinated. They are usually the educational institutions – schools, and agencies such as the Sports Council, the Arts Council, the Environment Agency and also Chambers of Commerce (Torkildsen, 1999). Consultation can take place more than once; it can be employed at the outset of the process in order to provide an input from other parties into the proposals package, or it can be employed later in order to gauge reaction to proposals and assist decision-making.

Following this, a number of technical issues need to be clarified, such as how a proposal will be put into practice. This is the step, which involves the analysis of, for example, investment and operating costs, financing of provision which might be supplied by an outside organisation/organisations, as in the case of partnership funds, the National Lottery and European Community funds. Developers can make a provision through the application of ‘planning obligation’. Also management styles of today offer considerable variety. The ‘Best Value’ is expected to be in operation soon, as required by law and this presents itself as an options package for local authorities.

- **Produce strategy for a local leisure plan:** The preceding steps in the process culminate in a series of significant decisions made in consideration of possible alternatives, which provides a base, to set out specific leisure and recreation plans. This base defines the local authority’s role and position in the field of leisure and recreation provision as well as guiding relevant policies, decisions concerning development and management. It also shapes the ‘plan of actions’.
- **Action plans and implementation:** This is similar to a ‘critical path analysis’ for implementation. Action plans are needed in order to set targets and meet them within the given time scale, with specification of activities required and the methods of distribution of responsibilities among local authority work force or other organisations in order to implement these plans.

- **Monitor and evaluate:** The overall effect of strategies, policies and activities on the community served is to be measured and evaluated. According to the results, strategies can be examined in parallel with social, economic, political and environmental variables. If results are unsatisfactory the whole process needs to be reviewed.

5.6 Techniques used in planning and provision for leisure and recreation

There is a wide range techniques used in planning and provision of leisure and recreation. Although they may all appear to be simple to understand and apply, the reality is that they are not. Every single one of them is fraught with difficulties. This study treats the subject of techniques, for the purposes of this chapter, from the point of view of governing philosophies and the implicit goals and objectives behind them.

Among a number of valuable writings on this topic such as those of Burton (1989); Henry and Spink (1990) and Ravenscroft (1992) and Torkildsen (1999), it is Veal's book 'Leisure Policy and Planning' (1994) that provides probably the most complete description of the planning techniques.

5.6.1 Standards approach

"A standard in planning for leisure can be defined as a prescribed level of provision of facilities or services related to some criterion such as the level of population" (Veal, 1994). Use of standards seems to be popular with leisure and recreation planners and providers. One reason for this is that they are easy to understand and apply, as well as easy to measure in terms of meeting goals and objectives. Furthermore, using externally produced, nationally agreed standards suggests that local authority proposals are based on a sound basis, with an agreed and endorsed numerical expression. Standards look authoritative in plans and policies as they are established by an external, respectable agency. Local authorities do not have to consume time and financial resources on research and analysis for arriving at new standards when there exists a set of nationally accepted standards for a certain provision area. The best known standard is the National Playing Fields Association – NPFA's open space standard of '6 acres per thousand population'.

Standards technique is based on the 'equitable distribution' philosophy. Although provision by standards might imply that facilities and services are to be distributed on an equal basis, in reality this may not be true, simply because of differences in social, economic and

environmental characteristics in different areas. A simple ‘per capita’ approach is probably insufficient. For instance a low-income area may well need a facility or service more than another, respectively, and provision of more of these facilities in such areas can be a closer approach to achieving equitable distribution in terms of the effective accessibility. It looks as if it is not the application of the same standards which should be treated with utmost priority but consideration of local and user variables in a given area against the targeted provision standards.

Standards, once adopted readily without questioning their validity and embraced as good performance indicators, can misguide the provider and provision. Standards are usually determined by nationwide or, at best, regionwide assessments of demand, such as the NPFA standard. Some standards, on the other hand, are only determined for certain localities such as the Greater London Development Plan – GLDP ‘5 acres local park provision within 0.25 mile walking distance’ which may not be applicable to every place and situation. In addition, standards in provision, once they are believed to be met, can make providers unresponsive to further demand.

Standards technique aims to meet a determined level of provision, which seems to consider leisure and recreation provision in the context of activities and facilities. Most standards are determined in relation to the provision for specific activities or facilities, such as swimming pools, playing fields for physical team sports and play, golf courses for golf and indoor sports centres for indoor sports. In this case, leisure and recreation are removed from their other conceptual dimensions.

As Torkildsen (1999) touches on the ‘paradox of leisure standards’ in Veal’s (1994) words:

“Leisure planners love standards. This is one of the great paradoxes of our time. When government Ministers try to tell local authorities how to organise their affairs they rise up as one and complain of threats to local democracy. And yet in the area of leisure provision, the one area where local authorities are virtually completely free to from government interference, they frequently look nervously over their shoulders to ensure that they are sanctioning their activities” (Veal, 1994).

Torkildsen (1999) points out that standards can be arbitrary and mechanistic and assume a ‘need’ for a particular ‘facility’. He goes onto say that such need might be addressed in different ways. For instance, the quality of a facility can be more important than the quantity

of it. A standards approach overlooks that. Providers need to consider every locality in its own terms and with its unique variables, preferences, priorities, and attributes.

5.6.2 Gross demand approach

This approach basically utilises information provided by secondary sources. It takes the level of participation in a certain activity (translated as expressed demand), as concluded by a national or regional participation survey and then applies this rate, as guidance, to the local population. This gives an estimated number of participants for a particular form of facility before provision takes place. Among national surveys of this kind is the General Household Survey (GHS), which is undertaken every three years by the government's Office of National Statistics and profiles demand for and frequency of certain leisure and recreation activities, at the national level. The survey is carried out for a sample size of 25,000 (approximately) which is made up by respondents of 16 years of age and over.

If, for example, GHS concludes that 10 per cent of the respondents swim once a week, this is translated, for a community of 100,000 population, as regular swimmers of 10,000 people who are aged 16 and over. This is considered as a level of potential demand and further expressed in terms of facility requirement for 10,000 swimmers. The use of standards is widely employed at this stage. Like standards, the gross demand technique is not sensitive to variable locational and user characteristics and tends to ignore the fact that demand as expressed through such surveys also reflects the level of current supply for a given 'activity'. National and regional demand surveys such as GHS, emphasise the 'activity' dimension of leisure and recreation. It looks as if, the more 'informal' the activity, such as 'visits to parks' and 'visits to countryside', the more difficult it is to translate it into facility requirement for the participants of that activity. In this case more specific surveys need to be undertaken by the provider, which usually takes place in the form of user surveys. Gross demand approach relies on the clarity of 'activity – facility' relationship, but it also ignores the possibility that the availability of a facility and its use may conceal latent demand for other facilities and the observed use levels contain a substitution effect.

5.6.3 Spatial analysis approach

Spatial approach is based on the identification of a 'catchment area' for individual leisure and recreation facilities and relates closely to accessibility. The type of the facility determines the size of the catchment area. Potential users for a large cinema complex, for example, tend to

travel longer distances in comparison to a small swimming pool. Therefore the catchment area for the cinema complex is larger. In order to strike a balance between affluent and less affluent areas, various solutions such as small scale provision and dual use of facilities (usually in schools) sometimes complement this particular approach.

User and visitor surveys are increasingly employed in order to determine how far users travel to use a given facility, which also outlines its catchment area. This enables the provider to explore which areas are left unserved and make new provision for these areas. The catchment area concept lends itself to mathematical expression and formulae and captures the substance of spatial analysis, often as a formulation of a 'gravity model'. Such analyses are undertaken within the framework of economic evaluations – particularly cost-benefit analysis - for leisure and recreation provision. Travel cost analysis, 'willingness to pay' methods can also employed in order to aid the decision making process in allocating resources and facilities for a given location.

Accessibility plays an important role in use of facilities. Car ownership, adequate transport and road connections, neighbouring facilities can make a facility more accessible and usable than others, or make it inaccessible and unattractive. Thus, the spatial analysis technique has to analyse every catchment area in its own right and in relation to environmental and socio-economic variables of user population. However, in practice, this may not be a straightforward task. Inner city areas are densely populated and space is limited for leisure and recreation facilities. The provider may have to choose between provision of small and frequent facilities and provision of large scale and strategically placed facilities. In this case the former option might not be economically viable for the provider.

Spatial analysis technique, although it aims to provide for all areas on an equitable distribution basis, approaches leisure and recreation from the 'activity–facility' perspective. As such, other components are excluded from analyses.

5.6.4 Hierarchies approach

Similar to the 'catchment area' idea, the hierarchies approach assumes that different sizes and types of facilities have different catchment areas. But the distinguishing philosophy here is that different sizes and types of facility require different numbers of users, or as Veal (1994) puts it, 'customers', to be viable and as such, they are suited to the needs of different sizes

and types of community. Hierarchies were widely used during the building of new towns and communities in the 1960's and 1970's. In Veal's own words:

“It was necessary to specify the whole range of facilities required in such communities. The new towns were themselves usually developed on a hierarchical basis, with neighbourhoods at the lowest level, a cluster of neighbourhoods forming some sort of district and finally a town or city level. Services of all kinds, including leisure, were planned within this framework, with education facilities often being the key organising factor” (Veal, 1994).

The best known example of this approach, as far as parks and open spaces are concerned, is the Greater London Council – GLC hierarchy of parks and open spaces which was developed by the Council in the late 1960's. The hierarchy was developed following a series of extensive user surveys and amended by London Planning Advisory Committee - LPAC in 1988. As can be seen from table 5.1, this particular hierarchy associates the 'recreation' concept, as well as parks and open spaces, with activities which can be 'active', 'passive' and 'informal'. This appears to be a limited view of recreation. If hierarchies of this kind are to serve as a basis for strategic planning of parks and open spaces which are classified as recreational facilities, the concept of 'recreation' then have to be reconsidered in a broader conceptual frame. In line with this, parks and open spaces need to be reconsidered in terms of their potential and functions for recreation.

Table 5.1 Open Space Hierarchy, developed by GLC and as amended by LPAC in 1988, adopted from DoE (1991)

Type and main function	Approximate size and distance from home	Characteristics
<p><i>Regional parks and open spaces</i> (Linked Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt Corridors)</p> <p>Weekend and occasional visits by car or public transport</p>	<p>400 hectares</p> <p>3.2 – 8 km</p>	<p>Large areas and corridors of natural heathland, downland, commons, woodlands and parkland also including areas not publicly accessible but which contribute to the overall environmental amenity. Primarily providing for informal recreation with some non-intensive active recreation uses. Car parking at key locations.</p>

<i>Metropolitan parks</i> Weekend and occasional visits by car or public transport	60 hectares 3.2 km or more where the park is appreciably larger	Either i. natural heathland, downland, commons, woodlands etc. or ii. formal parks providing for both active and passive recreation. May contain playing fields, but at least 40 hectares for other pursuits. Adequate car parking.
<i>District parks</i> Weekend and occasional visits by foot, cycle, car and short bus trips	20 hectares 1.2 km	Landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing for a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups, and informal recreation pursuits. Should provide some car parking.
<i>Local parks</i> For pedestrian visitors	2 hectares 0.4 km	Providing for court games, children's play, sitting-out areas, nature conservation, landscaped environment; and playing fields if the parks are large enough.
<i>Small local parks and open spaces</i> Pedestrian visits, especially by old people and children; particularly valuable in high density areas	2 hectares 0.4 km	Gardens, sitting-out areas, children's playgrounds or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.
<i>Linear open spaces</i> Pedestrian visits	Variable. Wherever feasible	Canal towpaths, paths, disused railways and other routes which provide opportunities for informal recreation, including nature conservation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.

5.6.5 Priority Social Area Analysis approach

Social priorities are the basis of this approach. Some residential areas or part of the local

population might have greater social and recreational needs, which require special public provision. The elderly, children, youth, disabled and deprivation areas are especially targeted for priority provision. Analyses involve use of census data, facility inventories and information technologies. The end product is a supply/need matrix, which is significant in the context of the inclusion of concept of 'need' in analyses. Torkildsen (1999) explains, in summary, how he applied the technique for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in 1996 to design a system in order to award funding for children's play areas by Ward, 'equitably':

First the social needs of children were considered, based upon the Department of Environment's 'Index of Local Conditions'. This provided a need index for children in the borough by ward. Second, play provision in each ward was examined in terms of distribution, age suitability, safety and play area value. This provided a play resource index. Third, the two indices were combined to produce a hierarchy of needs, i.e. wards were placed in priority order, those with greatest needs and least resources were highest on the list. The basic concept behind the approach was a 'needs' minus 'resources' model which provides an index to establish gaps in provision and priorities.

A variation on this approach, in the UK, is known as ACORN (A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods), which is a 'geo-demographic' analysis package. ACORN provides a classification of residential areas, on the basis of wards or enumeration districts, with indication of different socio-economic characteristics, such as 'areas of better terraces and mixed housing', 'areas of urban local authority housing', 'severely deprived tenement areas and council estates' and 'high status non-family areas' (Shaw, 1984). Such classifications can function as a basis for priority decisions.

Although the 'need' concept is a highly relevant one in order to improve our understanding of leisure and recreation, it does not explain it on its own. Furthermore, need, in the context of the application of this planning technique, seems to be understood as 'need for facilities' rather than 'need for leisure and recreation' which are worlds apart. As was mentioned in chapter 3, needs, motivations, urges all relate to the psychological and experiential aspect of the recreation (and leisure) concept. Planners and providers seem to overlook one critical issue in considering 'need'; as 'need for recreation' precedes 'need for facilities'. In fact, in the light of the findings of chapter 3, it can be said that there does not seem to be an inherent need for facilities in the first place, needs occur for certain forms of leisure and recreation

which can be met through provision of certain facilities and resources to fulfil the requirements of the needs in question.

5.6.6 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) approach

This is a comprehensive framework for planning and provision of leisure and recreation. The ROS approach was developed mainly as a management tool, in the seventies, by American scientists (Driver & Brown, 1978; Clark & Stankey, 1979) who worked in the field of resource allocation. The basic premise of ROS is that outdoor recreation can be experienced along a continuum of resources, which range from the undeveloped, primitive areas to the most modern recreation sites in urban settlements. Like the GLC hierarchy, the ROS idea is developed in the form of a hierarchy and classification of recreation resources. Although a number of researchers provided the first thought in a rudimentary manner for the ROS concept, it found its precise expression in Driver and Brown's paper (1978) presented to an American-Forest Service conference and elaborated by Brown et al (1978), during the same conference, and also detailed by Clark and Stankey (1979) in its application to practice. The ROS criteria and classes of recreation resources are illustrated in table 5.2. ROS proposes a conceptual framework on which the classification of resources can be based.

Table 5.2 ROS classification of resources, developed from Brown et al. (1978)

Resource Category	Underlying Characteristics	Recreation Opportunity Characteristics
Primitive	Fairly large in size (min. 5000 Acres). Unmodified natural environment. Interaction between users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. Free from evidence of human-induced restrictions and controls, but still managed. Motorised use is not permitted.	Extremely high opportunities for experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of man, complete interaction with nature, opportunities to experience a high degree of challenge and risk and practice outdoor skills such as woodsmanship.

<p>Semi-primitive, non-motorised</p>	<p>Moderate to large in size (min. 2500 Acres).</p> <p>Predominantly unmodified natural environment.</p> <p>Interaction between users is low, often there is evidence of other users.</p> <p>Minimal on-site controls (subtle management) and restrictions on the area.</p> <p>No motorised use.</p>	<p>High opportunities for isolation from the sights and sounds of man. High degree of interaction with the natural environment, opportunities to experience moderate challenge and risk and application of outdoor skills.</p>
<p>Semi-primitive, motorised</p>	<p>Moderate to large in size (min. 2500 Acres).</p> <p>Predominantly unmodified natural environment.</p> <p>Interaction between users is low and but there is often evidence of other users.</p> <p>Minimal on-site controls and restrictions may be present (subtle management).</p> <p>Motorised use is allowed.</p>	<p>Some (moderate) opportunities for experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds man, high degrees of interaction with nature, moderate challenge and risk, use of outdoor skills, opportunity to use motorised equipment while in the area.</p>
<p>Roaded Natural</p>	<p>Size min. 1 Acre</p> <p>Predominantly natural environment.</p> <p>Moderate evidences of the sights and sounds on man which harmonise with the natural environment.</p> <p>Interaction between users may be low to moderate.</p> <p>Resource modification and utilisation practices are evident but harmonise with the natural environment (Evident management).</p> <p>Conventional motorised use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities.</p>	<p>About equal opportunities for experiencing affiliation with other user groups and for isolation from sight and sounds of man, high degree of interaction with nature, challenge and risk taking are not very important but practise of outdoor skills may be important. Both motorised and non-motorised forms of recreation are possible.</p>

Rural	<p>Size min. 1 Acre</p> <p>Substantially modified natural environment.</p> <p>Sights and sounds of man are readily evident and interaction between users is modest to high.</p> <p>Resource modification and utilisation practises are to enable and enhance specific recreation and to maintain vegetative cover and soil. Large numbers of facilities are provided for the use of large numbers of people, groups or individuals.</p> <p>Intensified motorised use and parking are possible in specially provided facilities.</p>	<p>Opportunities for experiencing affiliation with individuals and groups are prevalent as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. Such factors are generally more important than the physical setting. Challenge and risk are not important except for such activities as downhill skiing.</p>
Urban	<p>Size min. 1 Acre</p> <p>Substantially urbanised environment.</p> <p>Sights and sounds of man are predominant. Interaction between users is high.</p> <p>Resource modification and utilisation practices are performed to enhance specific recreation opportunities. Vegetation is often exotic and manicured, soil protected by hard surfacing and terracing. Ample facilities for mass and individual uses. Numerous forms of controls and restriction are evident.</p> <p>Facilities for highly intensive motor use and parking are available.</p>	<p>Opportunities for experiencing affiliation with individuals and groups are prevalent as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. Such factors are more important than the physical setting. Challenge and risk are unimportant. Opportunities for competitive and spectator sports and use of highly human-influenced parks and open spaces are available.</p>

ROS stresses the provision of ‘opportunity’ instead of provision of activity, facility or resource for recreation. To this end, certain resources and activities are the means for provision of opportunities for certain recreation ‘experiences’. In contrast to the ‘activity’ concern in resource and facility allocation processes, the focus here shifts towards recreation ‘experience’ and provision of ‘opportunity’ for such recreation experience. This does not mean that activity concern is completely eliminated from the planning and provision processes. On the contrary, it has been reinforced and given a more complete meaning by

relating it to the concept of experience and psychological outcomes of experience.

The ROS idea is based on the understanding that same activities in different settings can produce different experiences and thus different psychological outcomes. Therefore, ROS based resource classification proposes the inventory of recreation resources (recreational land) in terms of their capability for providing both experience and activity opportunities for desired recreational (psychological) outcomes.

Driver and Brown (1978) ask, in their introduction to ROS:

“What is the inherent capability (i.e., potential) of an area to produce those recreation opportunities which are preferred (or demanded) most highly?...For what types of preferred opportunities is the inventory being made?” (Driver and Brown, 1978).

They then introduce another conceptual element which is ‘Recreation Opportunity Demand Hierarchy – RODH. RODH identifies four distinct types of opportunities which are most demanded by recreation seekers. They are listed in table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Recreation Opportunity Demand Hierarchy -RODH Model
(developed from Driver and Brown, 1978)

Hierarchical level	Demand category	Context
1	A recreation activity.	The most common element in shaping the nature of planning and provision for leisure and recreation. E.g., walking in a woodland, white-water canoeing, driving through outstanding scenery, camping in wilderness.
2	Opportunities to experience a set of situational attributes.	Includes three types of 'setting preference': physical, social and managerial settings which are significant for providing a desired quality recreation experience. E.g., a wilderness camper may demand the opportunity of being in a remote area (physical setting), interacting only a few people (social setting) little constraint on his/her behaviour while in the area (management setting).

3	Opportunities to realise specific psychological outcomes.	They are the specific psychological outcomes which are desired to be experienced through a given activity and associated environmental setting. In terms of satisfaction they are attached a great deal of importance, e.g., the feeling of family togetherness through family picnicking, enjoyment and exploration of nature through walking in the woods.
4	Opportunities to realise the benefits that flow from the satisfying experience.	Can be interpreted as the final outcome of the first three opportunities. They are the resulting benefits, improving and enhancing both individual and societal conditions (for instance, enhanced work performance after rest and relaxation, commitments to historical conservation after exploring and learning through visits to historical sites).

ROS does not rely on the assumption that providing as many activity types as possible in a given recreation setting would ensure a great variety of opportunities to experience recreation. Instead it is primarily concerned with providing opportunities for recreation experiences which can take many different forms. ROS also elaborates the psychological aspects of recreation. In doing so, attention is given to the psychological outcomes of recreation experiences. Recreation as ‘activity’ is accepted as one of the facets of the recreation phenomenon but it is emphasised that it should be, in fact, the ‘experience opportunity’ concern that should indicate the type of activity and recreation setting. For example, a recreation seeker, wishing to experience closeness to nature which is an opportunity type in ROS, may prefer backpacking and hiking in largely unmodified (primitive settings) recreation environments, or simply sitting, picnicking, bird- watching in woodlands. The planner and manager are aware in this case that only subtle management actions and minimum modifications to the physical environment can safeguard the expected quality of nature experience for the recreation seeker. ROS argues that any interference and modification in a recreation area may change the nature of the recreation opportunity class. Too much management evidence, such as frequent signposts, improved track surface, secure but modern looking bridges may not appeal to a recreationist who is seeking solitude in nature.

However, ROS is not the final answer for the planners and managers in the field of outdoor recreation in its present form. It needs to be revised and advanced in order to be applicable to other fields such as UORP. One of its major shortcomings is that the ‘resource’ concept does not proceed any further than recreational land. There seems to be much emphasis on this,

which may divert attention away from leisure and recreation needs, desires and satisfactions of people, especially in the context of UORP. Certain points such as the identification of psychological outcomes (in the context of the RODH model) of particular recreation experiences and the relationship between this and the physical setting attributes are stated as important elements to lead the resource allocation decisions, but they are far from being fully discovered (how to best identify and measure these outcomes, and by what means are still a matter of further clarification).

Although it was primarily designed as a resource allocation and management tool in a country with vast physical resources and relatively better financial resources, the ROS hierarchy appears to have significant implications for the leisure and recreation planning and provision field. ROS takes a broader view of recreation and proposes that recreation is not only activities, but also experiences; psychological outcomes and benefits of these experiences.

5.6.7 Grid/Matrix approach

This approach brings together the groups in the community and the range of facilities and services currently available for their use and examines the interaction between the two. On a grid table, then, the interaction is scaled as ‘very well served’, ‘well served’, ‘poorly served’ and ‘not served at all’. But before this stage an inventory of the facilities must be undertaken along with the identification of user groups.

User groups can be identified by the use of Census information or other registration systems such as health and social service registers. Such information should be able to reveal user characteristics, which can be listed as: age/life cycle, gender, economic status/socio-economic group, ethnicity, car ownership, health/disability, housing category, geographical area/neighbourhood, residents/businesses/workers. The whole idea of the Grid analysis is to examine the range of services and facilities available for a particular user group and determine deficiencies. Currently facilities provided by the private sector are also included in this. After deficiencies are determined, deficient areas can be listed in order of priority for provision.

5.6.8 Organic approach

This is similar to the previous approach. The analysis of grids might reveal spatial inequalities in provision. If this is the case, by employing an organic approach to examine the facilities in

an area, the inequality issue can be redressed, in other words, the organic approach seeks to identify needs and latent demand and compensate this with provision. A different scenario might be a seemingly sufficient level and quality of provision for a given area, which can be verified by inventory and analysis. An organic approach is one of the techniques, which can be employed for verification and to assist decision-making processes before allocating resources and facilities for that area.

The Organic approach is inevitably facility oriented and seems to be a complementary technique to be used along with other techniques. In a situation where there is no existing facility and the objective is the provision of new ones, this technique does not seem to be suitable.

5.6.9 Community development approach

‘Community’ concern overrides ‘facility’ and ‘individual’ concerns in this particular approach. Community involvement is part of the planning process at the neighbourhood level. Local authorities employ community workers for this purpose as animators. The approach is usually applied where there is perceived decline in the community.

The Community development approach emphasises the inclusion of public in decision making at the neighbourhood level and promotes the ‘user’ or ‘human’ aspect of leisure and recreation planning and provision. This is a move away from the overriding activity and facility theme. However, this approach is usually regarded as a method to employ for identifying short term policies. Despite this, it offers the planner and provider the opportunity to determine demand with direct public involvement and consultation. Apart from that the community development approach has been a popular approach for the remedy of social problems and to develop a sense of collectivism in alienated communities. This can be exemplified with the promotion of community Arts and sports

5.6.10 Issues approach

The issues approach involves the identification of key ‘issues’ and priorities in terms of determination of what is manageable and attainable without going through the considerably lengthy and expensive process of research and preparation work. Examples of issues identified can be listed as ‘greater participation’, ‘inner city recreation’ and ‘protection of significant / historic open space’.

Powerful lobbies and interest groups in line with the level of campaigning can influence the issues technique. Although this is desirable for local democracies, it can endanger adopting a strategic and comprehensive view in decision making, as the emphasis is on priorities.

5.7 Summary of UORP techniques

In summary, the majority of the techniques for planning and provision of leisure and recreation services, complement each other rather than used in isolation. They share common characteristics despite aiming for specific goals (Table 5.4). However, it is perhaps the ROS concept which has significant implications for the field of leisure and recreation, as it adopts a broader and all-encompassing view of recreation in operationalising it.

Table 5.4 Planning techniques and their objectives (adopted from Veal, 1994).

Technique	Goal/Objective
Standards	Meets standards (various)
Gross demand	Raise demand at least to the average Maximise participation
Spatial analysis	Serve all areas
Hierarchies	Ensure full range of facilities at all community levels
Priority Area Analysis	Meet needs of target groups in specified areas
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum	Provide full range of experiences
Grid / matrix	Appropriate provision for all groups and areas
Organic	Maximise utilisation of facilities Provide service to all areas
Community development	Meet community/group wishes
Issues	Meet concerns of community groups/professionals/politicians

5.8 Conclusions

Planning for leisure and recreation by local authorities has grown in a piecemeal, fragmented manner and presently seems to take place under the shaping influences of social, political and economic factors and various legislations and regulations. A framework for their action is provided, at the national level, by the existing planning system and specific guidances such as PPG17 on Sport and Recreation. However local authorities can produce their own framework of action in the form of specific leisure and recreation strategies, plans and policies. Although provision of leisure and recreation services is not mandatory, as in the case of health and education, local governments are increasingly encouraged to draw up strategies. Strategies are prepared for medium to long term future planning; therefore statement of goals and objectives constitutes a vital part in the strategy document. This requires defining what leisure and recreation are, what it is which is to be planned and provided for and the philosophy behind allocating resources for this provision. Therefore there might be a greater need to grasp these concepts as a basis for provision and strategic planning decisions.

Local authorities are the local governing organisations for a given locality, however they do not govern independently from the central Government, nor they are removed from the influences of social, economic and political factors. They can be enabled or disabled in their actions. **Financial resources, and more and less of it, seem to be a major factor for the maintenance and quality of their services. In addition, the nature of their internal structure, which can be influenced by politics, professionalism, managerialism and corporatism, can make them slow to respond to immediate problems, as well as ‘change’ in general.**

There is a wide range of approaches and techniques used in planning and providing for leisure and recreation. The standards and hierarchies approach seems to be widely employed in local authority UORP. Every technique has its own objectives for planning and provision. The standards technique, for example, aims to meet certain set standards, while hierarchies aims to secure full range of facilities at all user group levels and so on. For the purposes of this study, the ROS approach, for example, opens up a new perspective in the broad field of outdoor recreation planning and management. Its emphasis on provision of ‘opportunity for recreation experience’, which is classified into categories, can also have far

reaching consequences for UORP. Recreation as ‘activity’ is accepted as one of the facets of the recreation phenomenon but it is linked with the recreation setting and type of experience.

It is not the matter of what these techniques are aiming to achieve, but what actually the leisure and recreation profession and professionals are trying achieve which needs clarity. Leisure and recreation have not quite achieved a high status within the overall planning framework. The profession seems to be management oriented. Being a relatively apolitical service area, it becomes one of the first to be hit by financial constraints. So the application and advancement of the techniques, especially at the survey and data collection stage seem to be somehow hindered by limited resources, traditionalism and pragmatic attitudes.

The research will investigate the issues raised in this chapter in the context of practice and practitioner attitudes.

Chapter 6 - Survey of Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision by Metropolitan Local Authorities: Methodology

6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to outline the methodology by which the research is taken from the informative and descriptive stage through to the exploratory, empirical and analytical stage. The methodology is so devised that the issues raised and conclusions drawn in the previous chapters can be explored in the context of practice and practitioner attitudes.

6.2 The starting point for methodology: aims and objectives

The basic aim of this research is to develop a framework of guidelines through which an increased understanding of leisure and recreation concepts can be integrated into the process of urban outdoor recreation planning and provision. As such, the study focuses on urban outdoor recreation provision with particular emphasis on the link between ‘concepts and practice’.

To achieve this goal, the study has first put leisure and recreation in context and provided an analytical review of how leisure and recreation concepts developed and understood in different historical and academic contexts. This insight points to a set of conclusions at the end of chapter, which is to be woven into the fabric of the developing research themes and methodology.

Following this, the current status and official framework for the provision of urban outdoor recreation has been outlined, including an overview of relevant agencies, legislation and philosophies and principles of the process of planning and provision. Issues raised and conclusions drawn from this, constitute another significant part in guiding the form of methodological considerations in order to investigate the ‘practice’ aspect of UORP.

The survey methodology flows from the stated aims and objectives of the study and is shaped by the conceptual propositions made in the previous chapters.

6.3 Basis of methodology: a hierarchical approach

The methodology which has been developed is based on a hierarchical approach which is

described in the following sections and shown, in stages, by Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2 and finally outlined, in complete form, by Figure 6.3. The approach brings together, in a sequential, hierarchical but interlinked manner, the available strands of information and research findings, which points out the direction for those particular methods which are suitable for the task of verification and further exploration of such information and findings. It becomes clear, in line with this, that a questionnaire survey and the conduct of case study are suitable for the task. The first leg of the theoretical input for this conclusion, comes from the conceptual analysis of leisure and recreation:

6.3.1 Phase 1: analysis of concepts

The first phase is outlined in Figure 6.1 and was the examination of the concepts of leisure and recreation in Chapter 3 of this study, which revealed significant information. This phase was led by a number of research questions, the most important of which are:

- What is/are leisure and recreation (How did they evolve? How are they conceptualised or defined)?
- What is the relationship between leisure and recreation (Do they denote the same phenomenon or are they actually different)?
- What significance does this have for the field of UORP?

Key findings: Both the historical review and the literature survey suggest that leisure and recreation are constructed and shaped by historical, institutional and intellectual forces and interpretations, with distinctions in temporal and spatial zones. In terms of scientific approaches, they are multi-dimensional or multi-faceted concepts and studied by a multitude of disciplines. The terms ‘multi-dimensional’ and ‘multi-faceted’ refer to the variety and multitude of approaches adopted in describing leisure and recreation. As argued in Chapter 3, every ‘variety’ should be considered significant in contributing to the explanation of this phenomenon. These variety categories are called, in the context of this study, ‘conceptual dimensions’ and ‘conceptual aspects’ which form the basis of an increased understanding of leisure and recreation for UORP. Conceptual dimensions hold a great potential in our search for a better understanding of leisure and recreation. When conceptualisations of leisure and recreation are analysed, it becomes clear that some dimensions overlap whilst others do not. Every dimension says something true about leisure and/or recreation. As a result of the

conceptual analysis, leisure and recreation emerge as interrelated, similar but, at the same time, distinct concepts. The issues and questions which arise for further investigation are the following:

Issues to explore:

- What conceptual dimensions or aspects of leisure and recreation govern the process of urban outdoor recreation planning, provision and management in practice?
- How does UORP work? What are the main characteristics?
- How can the information obtained in this phase be applied to the field of UORP and is it, in fact, important, especially in terms of practice?
- What do the practitioners understand of leisure and recreation and distinctions between them in relation to their practices?

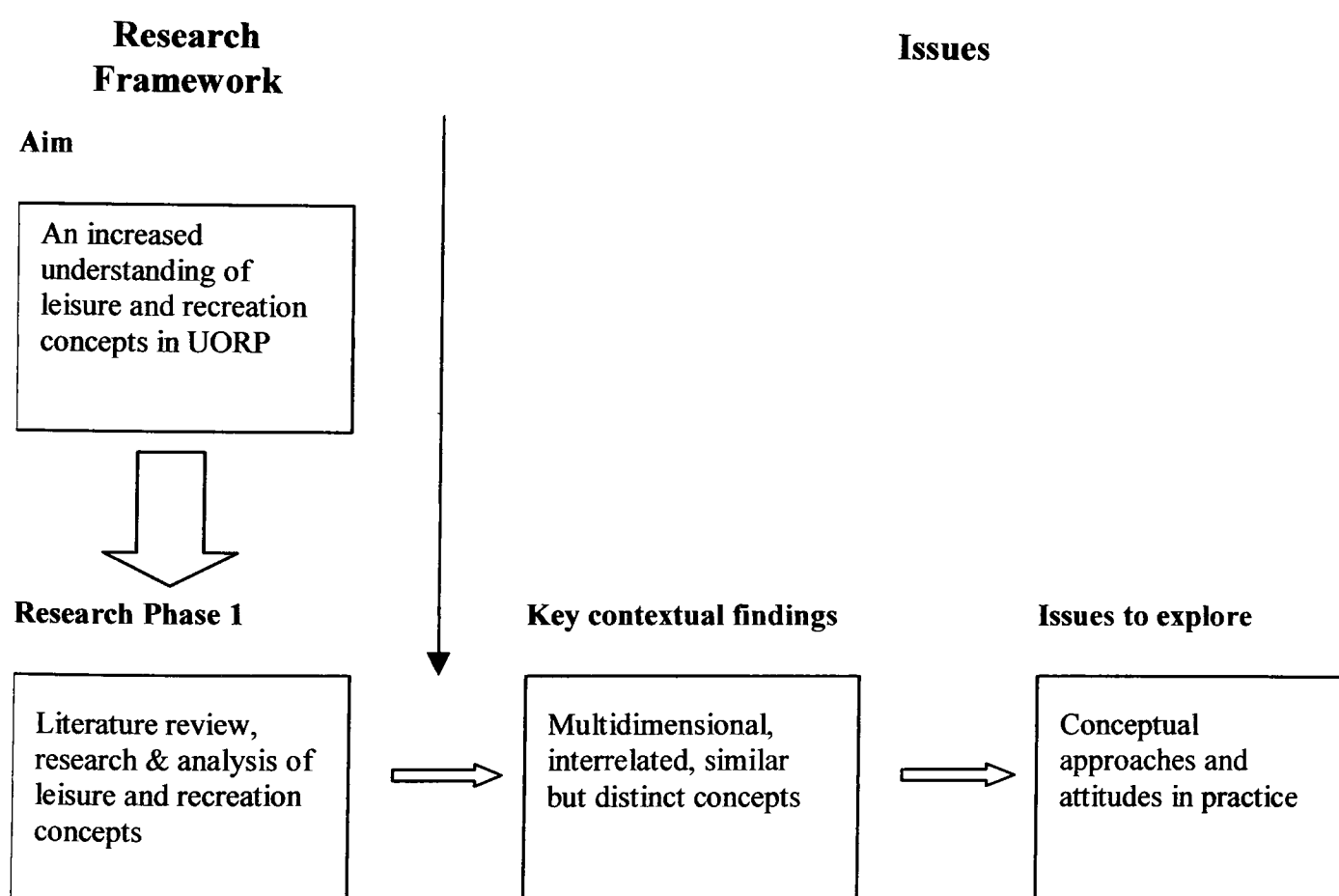


Figure 6.1 Hierarchical step 1: research phase 1

6.3.2 Phase 2: analysis of UORP framework

Phase 2, which is still an analytical overview in nature and shown in Figure 6.2, set out to

explore the current status of UORP. This includes a study of agencies and organisations involved in UORP (chapter 4), identifying local authorities as main providers and providing an introduction to UORP (chapter 5) with its governing approaches, philosophies and principles as well as relevant legislation. Such scrutiny points to numerous findings:

Key findings: The current system within which the local authority UORP operates seems fragmented, uncoordinated and increasingly challenged by financial constraints. UORP appears to be traditional in nature and oriented towards pragmatism with greater emphasis on management and maintenance of what already exists rather than planning or provision of new. In addition, leisure and recreation services seem to be apolitical service areas and more prone to be hit by cutbacks, in comparison to, for example, health and education. Moreover, the legislative base does not appear to provide an adequate guidance in terms of what actually leisure and recreation services are and ought to achieve. There is no agency responsible solely for UORP to exert influence and provide specific guidance. This is mostly done by the central Government, the former DoE (later DETR, now DTLR) and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, with probably more emphasis on sports and active recreation, in doing so.

Philosophies and principles which underpin local authority provision policies, practices and techniques can take many forms. The majority of these are based on problem solving approach and management. With the exception of the ROS approach, which is an American approach to resource allocation and management in origin, none seems to consider leisure and recreation in their entire conceptual frame. There seems to be an understanding that leisure and recreation provision is to be based on the aspect of ‘activity’ which should be matched to a ‘facility’ in the context of provision. This is probably the core of the UORP practices today. However there are other aspects of leisure and recreation which are studied by a great variety of disciplines. One of them is ‘experience’ which should be significant, as much as activity. As this study concentrates mainly on recreation, as the term UORP suggests, recreation, for instance, is a bigger conceptual package than just an ‘activity’. Apart from that, it has a very close relationship to ‘leisure’ and cannot be treated in isolation. These issues hold great implications for the field of UORP and the providing institutions like local government.

Issues to explore:

- What is the current status of UORP in practice, in the light of the research findings?

- How does practice actually work? Which factors influence this?
- What objectives is UORP trying to achieve and are they attained or attainable?
- What approach/approaches form the basis of UORP?
- How does the practitioner define the concepts of leisure and recreation? Can we actually infer any conceptual standpoints at all?
- Is this incorporated into plans and provision agendas? Are definitions important?
- Is there any need for an improved understanding of leisure and recreation for more efficient provision and management?

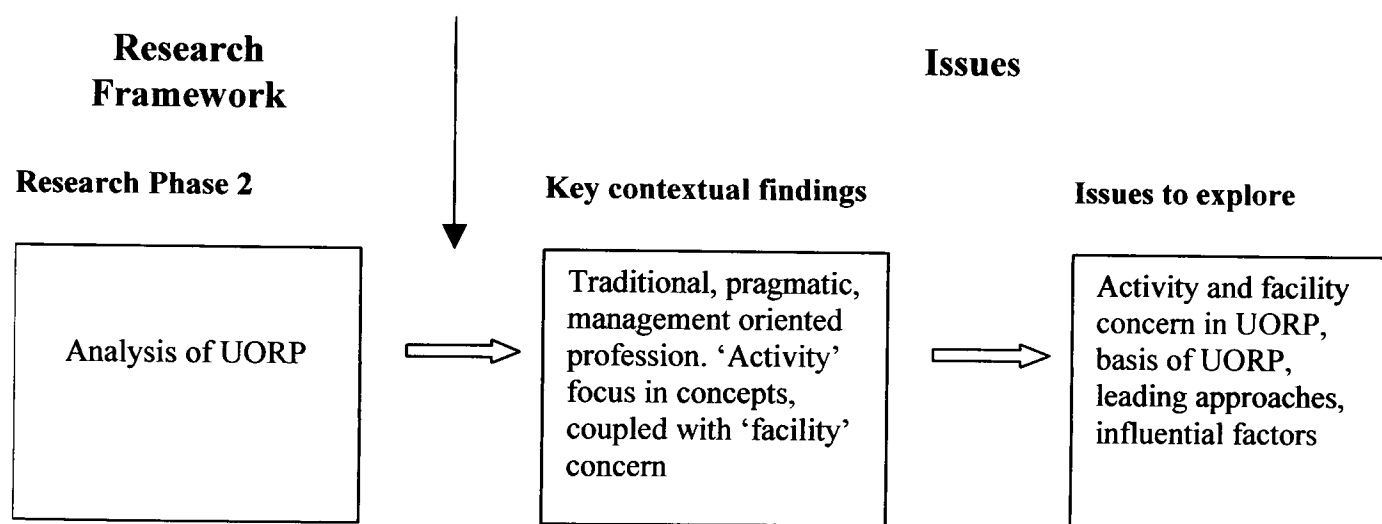


Figure 6.2 Hierarchical step 2: research phase 2

6.4 Survey: a three step hierarchical/linked investigation

Based on the nature of the initial analyses and issues marked for further and detailed exploration and analysis, the survey of UORP consists of a three level investigation, involving progressively more detailed investigation and analysis, especially to explore the issues in relation to practice. This includes a wide survey of local authorities, a case study investigation of one, selected authority and then a detailed analysis of practice in relation to a chosen case study.

Figure 6.3 shows the overall methodological approach and the issues involved and illustrates the way Phases 1 and 2 provide the context for the multi-level approach to the study of practice as a basis for drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

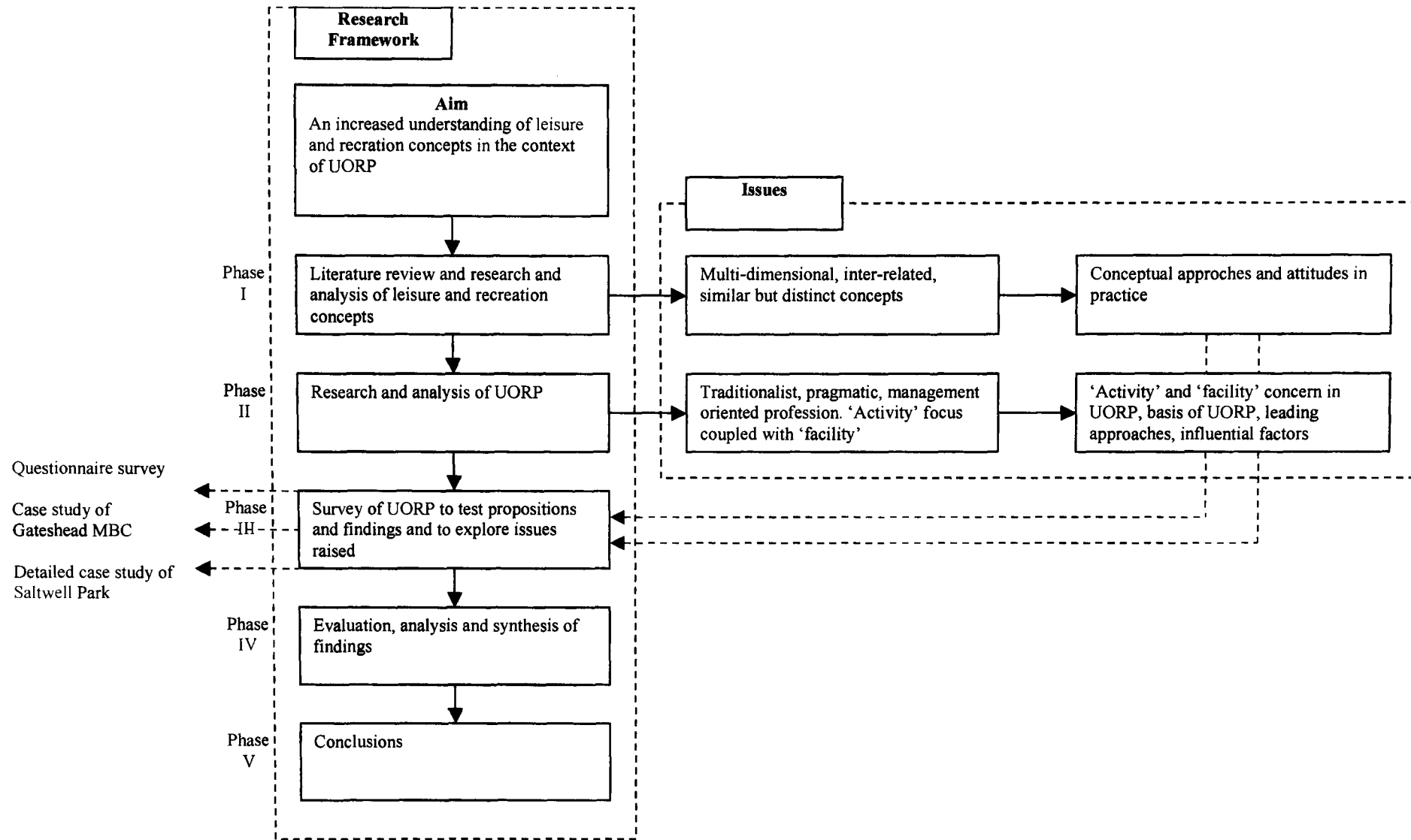


Figure 6.3 Methodological base of survey of UORP

6.4.1 Questionnaire survey

This is designed to explore both the general framework of UORP and specific conceptual attitudes of local authority officers. As this study is about urban outdoor recreation provision, the questionnaire survey will be limited to the districts of the former Metropolitan Counties and London Boroughs, which contain heavily urbanised areas in their inner cities which are limited in space for provision of open and green space.

These total 69 local authorities in metropolitan settlements of Britain. Therefore a postal questionnaire is to be sent to the directors of leisure and recreation departments at all of the 69 authorities. The sampling unit for the survey is finite, which means, as Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias define (1992), that it contains a countable number of sampling units. That is to say there is no risk of excluding sampling units in analyses or a need for designing a sampling frame, as far as the questionnaire survey is concerned. This type of survey is suitable as it enables the researcher to access local authorities, which are quite dispersed in a wide geography and saves the research time and cost. However the research has to employ simple questions with simple answers for an acceptable response rate and is aware that risk of low response rate can necessitate follow-ups and even telephone contacts for filling in questionnaires on the phone. Response rates are important, even critical, in relation to the 'generalisability' of survey results. These details will be discussed in the following chapter.

The research at this point is not interested in personal details of the respondents, except the optional information about his/her job. The emphasis is on the conceptual understandings and practices of the local authorities in planning, provision and management of urban open space and attitudes towards these. Individual opinions, however, may also be sought with subsequent interviews where there occurs a need for more detailed information on some issues (this will be broadened). The questions are grouped in three parts:

Existing situation for each local authority: This group of questions seeks to explore the UORP procedures and techniques which are followed by authorities, UORP policies, the objectives of UORP, organisational collaboration, practice of CCT and Best Value, factors which influence the nature of UORP and the problems mostly encountered in UORP.

Conceptual approaches: This part aims to find out how local authority officers define leisure and recreation and question the relationship between them.

Future planning and provision: The respondent in this section is asked to provide future scenarios for UORP and make recommendations, if applicable, for legislative, organisational and professional structures.

Specific technical details, as explored in texts such as Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1992) and Moser & Kalton (1971), like the number of questions, types of questions (open ended, close ended, matrix, contingency, etc.), conduct of the questionnaire survey (follow-up procedures, etc) will be detailed in the following chapter 7 which introduces and evaluates the questionnaire survey.

Political dimensions are only partly covered in the scope of the question 10, at this stage of the study, but will be explored in more detail later at the case study level.

6.4.2 Case study of Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council – MBC

The aim of singling out one Metropolitan local authority is to be able to investigate, in depth, the current operating environment with its governing components, at the local authority level. The questionnaire survey does provide valuable information but a case study method will enable the research to place this information under a magnifying glass to explore issues in a detailed framework. The general reason for conducting a case study is to test research propositions which are based on theory, as described by Yin (1994), in a real life context and accordingly confirm, extend, modify or challenge them.

Gateshead MBC is one of the 69 Metropolitan local authorities with a duty to serve the inhabitants of an urban settlement for many aspects of their lives including as leisure and recreation. Like others, it provides services and facilities for leisure and recreation in order to contribute to the quality of life of the local population. Gateshead is chosen for a variety of reasons: it is very close to the researcher, it manages valuable and prestigious leisure and recreation places for the public, including early Victorian municipal parks, and it serves a cosmopolitan population. Therefore, in line with Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992), selection of Gateshead can be classified, in research terms, both a ‘convenience sampling’ (readily available) and ‘purposive sampling’ (representative of a sample population, in this case local authorities in urban areas).

The preceding chapters highlighted the fact that local authorities operate within limited financial resources and within the legislative and political climates set by central government.

So their practices are influenced and perhaps challenged by these factors. However when they are relatively free to have discretion over planning, provision and management decisions in UORP, they appear not to be greatly concerned with establishing sound, usable, applicable, reliable and coherent bases, instead, seem to adopt standards and hierarchies in provision, which are largely set by others for different contexts. In this case there is an inherent danger of evaluating their achievement of objectives against standards, which might not be relevant to a given locality. These points need exploration and clarification.

The case study of Gateshead will survey its organisational structure, UORP policies (UDP focus), factors which are believed to drive the UORP process and conceptual views and attitudes of officers. As discussed in Yin's (1994) text on case study methodology, this involves the use of certain methods which are observation, document analysis and face to face interviews (all to be detailed in the relevant chapter).

6.4.3 Detailed case study of Saltwell Park

Purpose: In the context of this thesis, the detailed case study is intended to add further dimensions to the study of Gateshead, by analysis of the nature of specific, localised opportunities for UORP and the way the provision and management practices have reacted. Saltwell Park is selected in order to achieve this.

Reasons for selecting Saltwell Park: Saltwell Park is, first of all, a typical urban park serving an urban community and located in a residential area. It is easy to reach both for potential users and for frequent visits for research purposes. Secondly, it is prestigious Victorian park with a long history to reflect the evolution of UORP from its provision years up to the present time. This also provides opportunity to analyse how the dilemma of preservation against modernisation and retaining an identity for the park is tackled by the Council. Thirdly, the Council recently bid for and secured National Lottery funds for the renovation and regeneration of the park. This allows an examination of financial aspects of provision to be explored. It also has given rise to some considerable amount of background work and analysis of Saltwell Park, such as feasibility reports, inventories, use level and user attitude surveys, statistical data, updated, detailed maps, proposal packages and futuristic scenarios. This is an excellent pre-condition for a case study in terms of availability of multiple sources of evidence for data collection and analysis. It also allows an appreciation of the use of particular methods and techniques by these practitioners. Fourthly, although the

park is a premier park with uniformed, friendly park keepers in sight, there are visible signs of misuse and serious vandalism in some parts of the park. This is relevant in the context of why parks can be misused or vandalised and the link this can have with leisure and recreation and also the Council policies to overcome such problems. Fifthly, Saltwell on its own presents a good critical case study material to allow testing of propositions of the case study.

Putting a specific urban park under the magnifying glass of a survey will, as this study hopes to achieve, help provide answers to the following case study questions:

Case study questions:

- How do the provider (Gateshead MBC) and the provision product (Saltwell Park) interact?
- On what basis is this interaction based? In other words, what processes and actions produce what we see and use as urban park? On what philosophy or approach is the existence of an urban park based?
- What factors currently play a part in shaping the nature of urban park?
- How does this relate to leisure and recreation concepts?

Propositions: To move in the right direction in order to specify what to look for in this respect, specific propositions are required. The propositions help identify what will be the relevant information. As Yin (1994) suggests, without them, an investigator tends to collect 'everything'. The more a study contains specific propositions, the more it will stay in feasible limits and be relevant to the aims of the research (Yin, 1994). Propositions, reflecting an important theoretical issue, tell the research where to look for evidence and narrow the relevant data. The propositions for this case study, which are derived from the earlier analyses, are:

- What leisure and recreation are does not seem to be a matter of great importance or concern for the practising professional. This seems to be reflected both in attitudes and written policy documents. There seems to be a pragmatic disconnection between what they are and what to provide, which lies in the heart of the matter.

- The dominant theme seems to be ‘activity’ and ‘facility’ in provision.
- The end product of ‘urban park’ reflects this limited view of leisure and recreation.
- Pressing issues such as financial constraints, traditionalist and pragmatic management practices, vandalism and misuse, the relatively apolitical and marginalised status of leisure and recreation services seem to exacerbate the situation.

Unit of analysis: In strict research terms, the case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park, if considered together as segments of one case study, constitute an embedded single case study (Yin, 1994). This means it contains several units of analysis: the Council itself, relevant departments such as the Leisure Services Department, Saltwell park and also users of Saltwell park. These different but complementary and interactive units entail use of different techniques of data collection in line with the nature of the data in question, but the evidence from these should converge to point out to a certain finding or fact. Even if Saltwell is treated as a single case study, it is still a part of this wider structure.

Sources of evidence: Multiple sources are to be utilised in order to collect evidence for conforming or challenging propositions. They are:

- Documents (mission statements, policy documents, surveys of park, etc.)
- Archival records (statistical data, maps)
- Physical artefacts (facilities, buildings, historical structures)
- Interviews (Council officers, park staff)
- Direct observation (visits to the park and Council)
- Participant observation (participation in use of park, public meetings and consultation)

Linking data to propositions: This in fact relates to data analysis procedures along with the following point of ‘criteria for interpreting a study’s findings’. Foundations of these two points need to be laid at this very stage, prior to the actual conduct of the case study. The ‘pattern matching’ technique is probably the most clearly defined way of linking data to propositions (Yin 1994). Referring to Campbell’s (Campbell, 1975 in Yin, 1994) description,

Yin summarises this technique as relating several pieces of information from the same case to some theoretical proposition. Before embarking on a case study there must already be a certain theoretical pattern, guiding the overall flow of the study. As stated before, the evidence and information collected by the researcher can confirm, extend, advance, modify or rival this pattern.

Criteria for interpreting a study's findings: "How close does a match have to be in order to be considered a match?...One hopes that the different patterns are sufficiently contrasting that...the findings can be interpreted in terms of comparing at least two rival propositions" (Yin, 1994). The key here is the contextual findings and propositions made which guide the empirical phase of the study and function as a blueprint for the case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park.

Chapter 7 - Survey of Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision: questionnaire survey of metropolitan authorities

7.1 Introduction

The questionnaire survey aims at investigating the attitudes of metropolitan local authorities towards UORP, and in particular, leisure and recreation. The questionnaire includes specific questions in order to obtain information on the extent to which metropolitan authorities approach leisure and recreation as leading concepts within their framework of provision and how this is reflected in their practices. The main focus is on the link between ‘concepts’ and ‘practice’ within the general framework of UORP.

7.2 Design of questionnaire: method

7.2.1 Aim:

The questionnaire is designed in line with the key contextual findings of the previous chapters and in order to investigate the issues and questions which were raised in these chapters. As was previously mentioned in chapter 6, the key issues which will be investigated and tested through this survey are:

- Leisure and recreation are inter-related, similar, but distinct concepts.
- UORP is traditionalist, pragmatic and management oriented. Local authorities operate with increasing financial restrictions and become more concerned with maintaining the existing resources and facilities at some acceptable levels.
- UORP is largely concerned with the ‘activity’ (and ‘facility’) aspect of leisure and recreation.

Clearly, the survey may or may not confirm these points.

7.2.2 Structure of questions:

Respondents were asked to answer a total of 22 questions which were structured as open-ended, closed-ended, matrix and contingency questions (this last one is preceded by a filter question). Appendix 1 is a copy of the original questionnaire which shows the range of

questions asked.

In order not to lead the respondents in one direction and to obtain uninfluenced responses to certain questions, 11 out of 22 questions were structured as open-ended. These questions concern issues about which the respondent was expected to inform the researcher and not vice versa. Another reason behind structuring questions as open-ended is the lack of certainty in presenting the respondent with pre-defined categories and a limited range of possible answers.

The remaining 11 questions differ between themselves. Closed-ended questions offer the respondents a number of pre-determined choices of answers. But, where appropriate, this also includes an 'other' category, in order to enable the respondent to provide an answer which might not be listed. Closed-ended questions have been employed for investigating the issues to which possible responses could be gauged and grouped as choices of answers.

Matrix questions are also utilised in the questionnaire. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) define a matrix question as "...a method for organising a large set of rating questions that have the same response categories". This method has been used for question 10.

In relation to definitions of leisure and recreation, a contingency question was employed to allow the respondents to skip parts of the question, if these did not apply to their opinion or knowledge. These contingency questions, as such, include a filter question and then directs respondent to relevant response categories. Question 12 exemplifies this.

7.2.3 Scope of questions:

At the questionnaire survey level, the study is interested in investigating the current status of UORP and a connection or a link, if any, between the concepts of leisure and recreation and UORP.

The researcher, in order to get familiar with a metropolitan local authority working environment and aid in the brain storming process for formulating the context and types of questions, carried out three face-to-face interviews with Newcastle City Council officers. This included one chief officer, one leisure policy officer, and one senior outdoor recreation officer. This process, which took place between October 1996 and December 1996, proved to be very useful in terms of drawing a contextual frame for both questions and likely answers.

As may be seen in Appendix 1, the questionnaire aims to investigate the following issues and questions in three parts. It was decided that ‘conceptual approaches’, although these lie at the heart of the matter, should come after the ‘existing situation’ questions as the respondents are first introduced to the issues and are not immediately required to answer conceptual questions:

Part 1 Existing situation: Questions in this part concern UORP procedures and techniques followed, the policies made, the purpose of UORP, organisational collaboration, the form of open space provided, the practice of CCT, factors influencing the nature of UORP and the problems encountered. More specifically:

- What is the current status of UORP as practiced by Metropolitan local authorities?
- What procedures are followed in making planning, provision and management decisions? Is this found to be efficient?
- What is the main aim of UORP? How attainable is this?
- What other organisations or internal departments provide guidance and collaboration for local authorities in the context of UORP?
- On which techniques or principles is UORP based?
- How do authorities determine what recreation activities or experiences to provide in a given place?
- What are the ways, if any, of measuring the effectiveness of urban outdoor recreation?
- How do governmental requirements such as the Compulsory Competitive Tendering - CCT- effected/effect the nature of UORP?
- What are the factors which influence the nature of UORP? Which of them are most influential?
- What are the problems which challenge UORP?

Part 2 Conceptual approaches: This part investigates the relationship between leisure and recreation as well as definitions of leisure and recreation.

- How do local authorities approach leisure and recreation concepts?
- What is leisure and recreation? Are they the same phenomenon or different? What is the relationship between them?
- Is this understanding individual or institutional?
- Would local authorities like to see a governmental definition of leisure and recreation as a general guidance?

Part 3 Recommendations for future planning and provision: The third section aims to find out if local authorities would like to see further PPG's or specific legislation and better organizational collaboration in the future. It also requires authorities to list what future actions would be needed in order to improve UORP and also what the future trends might be.

- What suggestions can local authorities provide for a better future for UORP?
- Is there a need for a specific legislation to guide and regulate UORP? Would that provide more efficiency?
- What type of organisations might provide guidance and collaboration? In what way would this occur?
- What future actions need to be taken to improve UORP?
- What is the possible future trends and scenario for UORP?

7.2.4 Conducting the questionnaire survey

The questionnaire was sent to the metropolitan local authorities. The following county areas and districts were included in the survey: Greater Manchester with its 10 district authorities; Merseyside with 5; South Yorkshire with 4; Tyne and Wear with 5; West Midlands with 7; West Yorkshire with 5; Inner London with 14 and finally Outer London with 19; 69 authorities in total.

The questionnaires were addressed to the directors of leisure services departments since UORP is largely the responsibility of the outdoor recreation units of these departments. As expected and responses reveal, the majority of directors then passed the questionnaires to the

corresponding sub-departments and responsible officers. There was no requirement of printing any personal details about the respondent since the survey was basically about the authority practices and attitudes rather than individual views (although the latter were also sought after, through interviews).

The questionnaire papers were sent out on mid-February 1997 and the last receipt of a completed questionnaire was at the end of March 1997. However, the response rate was not satisfactory and only reached 40.6 % even with the addition of a few more completed questionnaires, after follow-up letters. To increase the response rate, 17 further attempts were made to complete more questionnaires. Only 6 of these attempts were successful but this was enough to elevate the response rate to 49.3 %. Completion over the telephone was finalised by mid-May 1997.

7.2.5 Response rates

Appendix 2 gives a list of the respondents to the questionnaire. The response rates to the questionnaire are detailed as follows:

<u>No. of questionnaires sent</u>	69	(100.0 %)
No. of questionnaires completed and returned	28	(40.6 %)
No. of questionnaires completed by phone	6	(8.7 %)
<u>No. of questionnaires completed</u>	34	(49.3 %)
No. of unsuccessful attempts for completion over the phone	11	(15.9 %)
No. of questionnaires not completed	35	(50.7 %)

Geographically, the distribution of respondents is as follows (the number 34 here is the total number of respondents):

For London Boroughs:

<u>No. of questionnaires completed by London B.'s</u>	14	(41.2 % of 34)
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(This represents 42.2% of the total of 33 London Boroughs).

Out of 14 Inner London	5	(35.7 % of 14)
Out of 19 Outer London	9	(47.3 % of 19)

As noted before, half of the questions were structured as open-ended. This, as expected, has made the classification of the raw data a challenging task. The raw data was first entered onto matrix tables with classified columns and cells. The second stage was to find out the frequencies and percentages of the different categories. This method is employed as a simple descriptive statistical analysis, which at this particular point is sufficient to provide an overall picture of the UORP. A similar procedure was followed in introducing and analysing the data obtained from the close ended, matrix and contingency questions. The obvious advantage in this process was the relative ease of data entry as responses were already categorised and coded.

7.3 Survey findings

The following section describes the findings of responses by 34 metropolitan authorities to a total of 22 questions. The discussion is sequenced with the order of the questions as they appear on the questionnaire. Questions 1 to 11 broadly analyse the ‘existing situation’; whilst 12 to 16 relate to ‘conceptual approaches’ and 17 to 22 concern ‘recommendations for future planning and provision system’.

7.3.1 Stages or steps taken by local authorities in UORP

7.3.1.1 Commonly followed procedures

This open-ended question aims to find out what happens before provision of an urban recreation place, such as a new urban park or a facility, takes place. With a few exceptions, local authorities differ greatly from one another regarding the procedures employed in UORP practices. Some authorities mention ‘reference to UDP policy/specific strategy’ as the only basic procedure employed; others report no particular procedures; whereas some authorities supply the finest details of the process of UORP as they experience it.

14 distinct steps (15 with the ‘no standard procedure’ in total) are mentioned in relation to this point (table 7.1). The highest voted category is ‘public consultation’ which is mentioned by 69.7 % of the responding authorities. As table 7.1 illustrates, only ‘reference to Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policy/specific strategy’ scores close to this with 48.5 %. The third category in the list, ‘feasibility studies/field survey’ is mentioned by less than half of the respondents (36.4 %). It is important to note that the percentage of those authorities which

claim to follow no standard procedure in provision of open space is 33.3 % which puts ‘no standard procedure’ in fourth place.

The ranking of the other categories of steps are listed in table 7.1. In the order of number of responses for each category, they are: ‘development brief/definition of proposals’, ‘further consultation (community and officials)’, ‘identification of public open space-POS deficient areas’, ‘financial appraisal’, ‘standards of open space/specifications’, ‘award & implementation of scheme’, ‘preparation of contract’, ‘review of success/monitoring’, ‘section 106 agreement’, ‘action plans’ and finally ‘draft design’.

The variety of procedures is not surprising given the fact that every authority operates under the influences of different social, economic and political factors. The most commonly used procedures are public consultation, reference to UDP, and field and feasibility surveys. The questionnaire allocated 8 lines for listing up to that many procedures, but the majority of authorities used only 3 or 4 of these lines. It seems that many authorities see UORP as part of a wider UDP preparation, involving public consultation and feasibility studies.

Steps or stages	No. of responses for each step	Percentage
Public consultation	23	69.70
Reference to UDP policy/specific strategy	16	48.48
Feasibility studies/field survey	12	36.36
No standard procedure	11	33.33
Development brief/definition of proposals	10	30.30
Further consultation (community and officials)	7	21.21
Identification of POS deficient areas	5	15.15
Financial appraisal	3	9.09
Standards of open space/specifications	3	9.09
Award & implement scheme	2	6.06
Preparation of contract	2	6.06
Review success/monitor	2	6.06
Section 106 agreement	2	6.06
Action plans	1	3.03
Draft design	1	3.03

Table 7.1 UORP procedures

7.3.1.2 Order of stages

The most commonly utilised ‘public consultation’ procedure is not necessarily the first step in UORP, as perhaps could be expected to be so –given the findings of 7.3.1.1 above. Instead ‘reference to UDP policy/specific strategy’ is given priority by 42.4 % of local authorities as opposed to 3 % for ‘public consultation’. As can be seen from table 7.2, which shows the full list, consulting the public is quite a common procedure as a second step: 30.3 % of the respondents claim to employ this as a second step in their UORP, whilst 30.3 % employ it as the third step. The other relatively significant step of ‘feasibility studies/field survey’ either follows ‘reference to UDP policy/specific strategy’ as second step (30.3 %) or precedes ‘public consultation’ as, again, the second step, or it can even can be the first taken by some of the respondents (12.1 %).

The above mentioned stages or steps are followed by ‘identification of open space deficient areas’, ‘development brief/definition of proposals’, ‘standards of open space/specifications’, ‘further consultation (with community, officials and relevant public and private organisations)’, ‘financial appraisal’, ‘draft design’, ‘action plans’, ‘section 106 agreement’, ‘award & implementation of scheme’, ‘preparation of contract’ and finally ‘review of success/monitoring’.

Reference to UDP as the most common first step among local authorities, provides a type of guidance that has been previously thoroughly discussed, analysed and agreed by a particular authority’s planning, management, political and decision making mechanisms. Therefore, it is not surprising that UDP should function as a blueprint for local authorities not only for their UORP practice, but also for other service areas.

Public consultation follows this, which opens what are often specific provision proposals to discussion and contribution from the public and also relevant public and private organisations. Public consultation can take place more than once as and when this is required.

Steps or stages	1st step		2nd step		3rd step		4th step		5th step		6th step		7th step	
	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
Reference to UDP policy/specific strategy	14	42.42	2	6.06										
Public consultation	1	3.03	10	30.30	10	30.30	2	6.06						
Feasibility studies/field survey	4	12.12	7	21.21			1	3.03						
Identification of POS deficient areas	3	9.09	1	3.03	1	3.03								
Development brief/definition of proposals			4	12.12	2	6.06	2	6.06	2	6.06				
Standards of open space/specifications	2	6.06									1	3.03		
Further consultation (community and officials)					3	9.09	2	6.06	2	6.06				
Financial appraisal			1	3.03	1	3.03			1	3.03				
Draft design					1	3.03								
Action plans							1	3.03						
Section 106 agreement									2	6.06				
Award & implement scheme											1	3.03	1	3.03
Preparation of contract											1	3.03	1	3.03
Review success/monitor											1	3.03	1	3.03

Table 7.2 Order of stages or steps taken by local authorities in providing open space for public use

7.3.2 Availability of open space policy for provision and/or management

The majority of local authorities claim to have a policy on provision (73.5 %), whereas a little less than half have a policy on management (47 %) and only 38.2 % confirm having a combined policy on provision and management. Although management here appears to be a matter of less concern than provision (figure 7.1), responding authorities particularly emphasise a growing concern for management issues. Most open space provision policies are drafted and incorporated into UDP's and specific policies are currently being prepared as long term 'strategies'. It is significant to note that a great majority of policies are the product of recent years (particularly in the early 1990's, as part of UDP preparations).

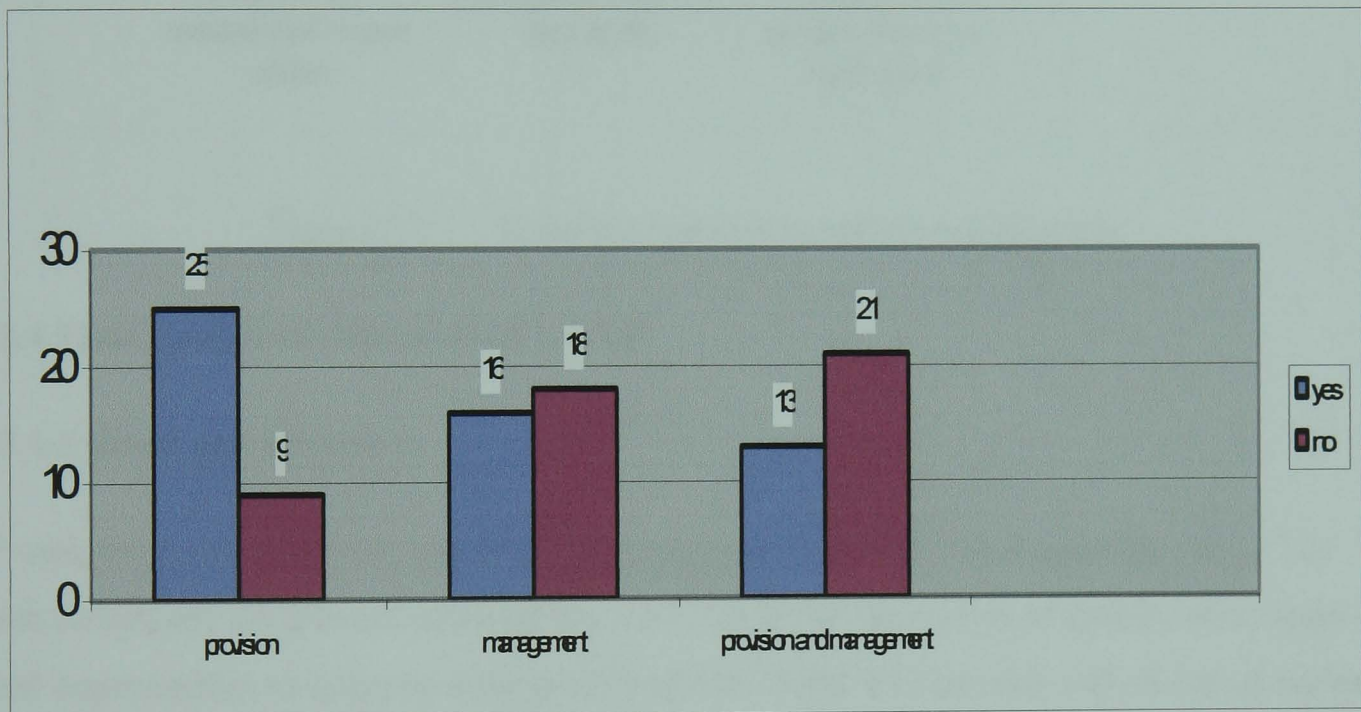


Figure 7.1 Availability of open space policy for provision and / or management

7.3.3 Priority of provision and/or management

Only one respondent - an Outer London Borough - out of 33 responses prioritised 'provision and development of new open space' over 'management' and 'provision and management'. However, this is due to respondent authority's ticking of all the optional answers. In general, Metropolitan local authorities do not prioritise provision and development of new open space over management. 54.5 % are in favour of 'provision and management of open space', whilst 48.5 % are in favour of 'management of existing open space' (Figure 7.2).

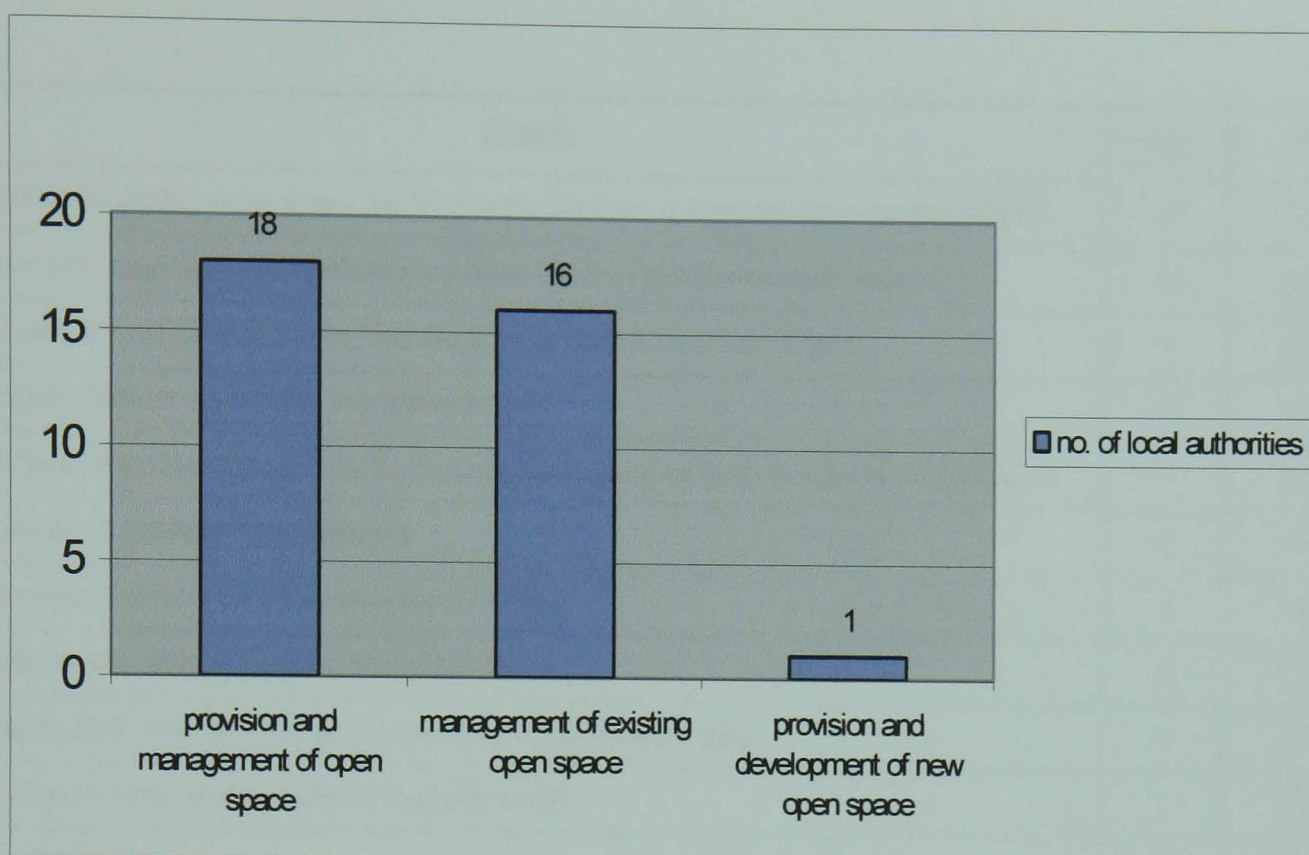


Figure 7.2 Priority of provision and/or management

7.3.4 Main goals and objectives of UORP

7.3.4.1 Goals and objectives

15 categories of goals were identified in relation to this open-ended question (table 7.3). The most commonly mentioned category (by 73.5 %) is the ‘provision of quality open space for local communities to improve their quality of life’. This is in parallel with the local authority social/public welfare policies. The link seems to be between quality resource/facility and quality life. Other mentioned goals are ‘addressing areas deficient in POS/equivalent level of provision/equal access’ (41.2 %), ‘provision of corridors of environmental areas/nature conservation areas’ (32.4 %), ‘enabling public to undertake recreation/leisure’ (32.4), ‘contributing to character of city/borough/improvement of built & natural environment’ (20.6 %). As can be seen from the remainder of the list, provided on table 7.3, ‘protection of existing public open space –POS and facilities’ and ‘improvement of existing facilities’ objectives are shared by 14.7 % of respondents.

Goals	no	%
Provision of quality open space for local communities to improve their quality of life	25	73.53
Addressing areas deficient in POS/equivalent level of provision/equal access	14	41.18
Provision of corridors of environmental areas/nature conservation areas	11	32.35
Enabling public to undertake recreation/leisure	11	32.35
Contribution to character of city/borough/improvement of built & natural environment	7	20.59
Protection of existing POS/facilities	5	14.71
Improvement/development of existing facilities	5	14.71
Definition of community and community identity	4	11.76
Adequate provision of local spaces-suitable for children's' play	3	8.82
Provision of open space in correct/suitable areas	3	8.82
Value for money	3	8.82
Encouraging increased use of open space	3	8.82
Provision of good quantity of open space	2	5.88
Response to customer requirement/different needs	2	5.88
Provision of sports pitches/addressing deficiency areas	1	2.94

Table 7.3 Main goals of UORP

7.3.4.2 Importance indication of goals

The majority of respondents (55.9 %) attach first-degree importance to ‘provision of good quality open space/key parks for local communities to improve their quality of life’ and rank this as first in the order of significance table (table 7.4). The same category of goal is listed also as of secondary importance by 17.7 % of the respondents. The second significant category of ‘addressing areas deficient in POS/equivalent level of provision/equal access’ is more divided: 17.7 % think it is the most important, 11.8% of secondary importance, 5.9 % of third order and another 5.9 % of fourth order. Although the following groups of ‘enabling public to undertake recreation/leisure’ and ‘provision of corridors of environmental areas/nature conservation areas’ are mentioned with the same frequency (32.4) as pointed out in the preceding section, they differ in opinions of importance: the former ranks higher as more respondents list it as primary and secondary goal. The answers provided here, establish a weak link between leisure and recreation concepts and urban open/green space.

Main goals	Importance of goals in accordance to the number of local authorities in favour of each											
	1st	%	2nd	%	3rd	%	4th	%	5th	%	equal imp	%
Provision of good quality open space/key parks for local communities to improve their quality of life	19	55.88	6	17.65								
Addressing areas deficient in POS/equivalent level of provision/equal access	6	17.65	4	11.76	2	5.88	2	5.88				
Enabling public to undertake recreation/leisure	3	8.82	4	11.76	2	5.88	1	2.94			1	2.94
Provision of corridors of environmental areas/nature conservation areas	2	5.88	1	2.94	3	8.82	3	8.82	1	2.94	1	2.94
Contribution to character of city/borough/improvement of built & natural environment	2	5.88	3	8.82								
Definition of community and community identity	1	2.94	1	2.94								
Protection of existing POS/facilities			2	5.88	2	5.88			2	5.88	1	2.94
Improvement/development of existing facilities			1	2.94	1	2.94			2	5.88		
Adequate provision of local spaces-suitable for children's play					4	11.76	1	2.94				
Provision of open space in correct/suitable areas			1	2.94	2	5.88						
Value for money					2	5.88	1	2.94				
Provision of good quantity of open space			1	2.94	2	5.88						
Encouraging increased use of open space			1	2.94	1	2.94						
Response to customer requirement/different needs			2	5.88			1	2.94				
Provision of sports pitches/addressing deficiency areas									1	2.94		

Table 7.4 Importance of main goals of UORP

Only 3 respondents out of 34 (8.82 %) suggest a strong link and prioritise UORP in order to ‘enable public to undertake recreation and/or leisure’. The first ranking aim of ‘provision of quality open space for local communities to improve their quality of life’ does not really indicate how such improvement would take place, with what form and scale of provision and management. It seems to be common belief that existence or provision of quality open space would naturally or automatically lead to better quality of lives for urban dwellers. This may not be true for every location or user community.

7.3.5 Achievement of goals

With the exception of ‘provision of good quality open space/key parks for local communities to improve their quality of life’ which is claimed to be achieved by 41.2 % of the responding authorities, no other stated objective is considered to have been achieved in any significant numbers (table 7.5). A common comment made is that ‘these matters, or objectives, are still being addressed’. This can be explained by a view that has goals and objectives being considered in a ‘long term’ frame rather than short term. Achievement of goals can therefore be described as a long-term process.

Goals	Achievement	Percentage
Provision of good quality open space/key parks for local communities to improve their quality of life	14	41.18
Enable public to undertake recreation/leisure	3	8.82
Addressing areas deficient in POS/equivalent level of provision/equal access	2	5.88
Protection of existing POS/facilities	2	5.88
Value for money	2	5.88
Provision of corridors of environmental areas/nature conservation areas	1	2.94
Improvement/development of existing facilities	1	2.94
Adequate provision of local spaces-suitable for children’s play	1	2.94
Contribute to character of city/improve built & natural environment	-	-
Definition of community and community identity	-	-
Provision of open space in correct/suitable areas	-	-
Provision of good quantity of open space	-	-
Encouraging increased use of open space	-	-
Response to customer requirement/different needs	-	-
Provision of sports pitches/addressing deficiency areas	-	-

Table 7.5 Achievement of goals

As the above table shows some of the goals which were listed by authorities are not considered to be achieved at all. An explanation might be that many goals, such as these, are longer term in terms of achievability than others. For instance, the goals which require new provision or a better spatial distribution might well require considerable investment and long term action.

7.3.6 Collaboration with other local authority departments and outside organisations

As can be seen on table 7.6, UORP related sections in Metropolitan local authorities mostly collaborate with their own Planning Departments (57.6 %), local residents associations (42.4 %), regional/local bodies involved in UORP (36.4 %), The Sports Council (24.2 %), Department of the Environment (21.21%), and with the same percentage (18.2 %) Housing Department, voluntary organisations, Leisure Services –which is consulted when UORP is the responsibility of a different department, The Countryside Commission, Education Department, National Playing Fields Association, English Nature, private companies (12.1%), and with same percentage (9.1 %), trusts, Legal Services, neighbouring authorities, Environmental Health Department (6.1 %). Table 7.6 demonstrates statistical details.

Respondents detail the ways in which collaboration occurs: the Planning department guides UORP in planning issues, provides professional advice (in line with UDP) on environmental issues and policies concerning new provisions. Planning aspect of UORP seems to be a great concern for those who carry out UORP. Local residents associations and local organisations form a significant part of the public consultation, development and refinement of proposals. Public consultation, once again, appears to be widely employed by local authorities and such collaboration echoes this finding. The Sports Council, on the other hand, gives advice and guidance for UORP and planning, especially with specific, published research documents. It was raised before, in the scope of chapter 5, that local authorities seem to like standards. The Sports Council does disseminate research findings and standards on planning, management and design of ‘sports and recreation facilities’. Their popularity might be related to this point, which is basically the need for facility or resource specific advice, information and also applicable standards. The DoE provides policy guidance, largely in the form of national planning guidance. Local authority housing departments also provide information on matters concerning UORP especially on new open space on housing association developments.

Voluntary organisations are a valuable component of the public consultation process of UORP. Finally, Leisure Services department, when UORP is carried out by a different department, informs that department about UORP, planning, UORP strategies, management and maintenance.

Agencies/other council departments	No.	%
Planning department	19	57.58
Local residents associations	14	42.42
Regional/local bodies	12	36.36
Sports Council	8	24.24
Department of the Environment	7	21.21
Housing department	6	18.18
Voluntary organizations	6	18.18
Leisure Services	6	18.18
Countryside Commission (now Countryside Agency)	6	18.18
Education Department	6	18.18
National Playing Fields Association	6	18.18
English Nature	6	18.18
Private companies	4	12.12
Trusts	3	9.09
Legal Services	3	9.09
Neighbouring authorities	3	9.09

Table 7.6 Collaboration with agencies / other council departments

7.3.7 Methods used in UORP

7.3.7.1 Methods used in determining form of recreation experiences to be permitted in a given place

For a majority of authorities, no particular method tops the list in relation to this point (table 7.7). A combination of methods seems to be employed in determining the form of recreation activities and experiences. ‘Demand surveys’ are most utilised (41.2 %), whilst the next most used method appears to be the ‘study of locational characteristics’ (32.4 %). ‘Public consultation’ (26.5%), ‘historical precedents’ (23.5%), ‘policy guidelines’ (20.6%), ‘demographic variables’ (17.7 %) are the other categories of methods with relative

importance to mention under this heading.

It is significant to note that local authorities appear to ask the public; as the potential users of open space, before determining what forms of recreation to provide for them. This draws attention to the methods they employ in asking the public and how this is done; what happens during public consultations and how the demand surveys and questionnaires are carried out, how they are worded and also how the survey findings are translated into UORP.

Methods	No	%
Demand survey	14	41.18
Locational characteristics	11	32.35
Public consultation	9	26.47
Historical precedents	8	23.53
Policy guidelines	7	20.59
Demographic variables	6	17.65
No specific procedure	2	5.88
No comment	1	2.94
Legal restrictions	1	2.94
Receipt of letters and requests	1	2.94

Table 7.7 Methods used in determining form of recreation experiences to be permitted in a given place

7.3.7.2 Methods used in measuring recreation needs and preferences of local population

As table 7.8 shows, half of the responding authorities use ‘demand/questionnaire surveys’ to gauge the needs and preferences of their local population. This is closely followed by ‘public consultation’ (47.1 %). Other identified categories of methods line up as follows: ‘reference to UDP, policy and strategies’ (17.7%), ‘no specific procedure’ (11.8%), ‘market research/Mori Polls’ (11.8%), ‘specified standards’ (8.9%), ‘no comment’ (2.9%), ‘historical precedent/past use forms’ (2.9%). It looks as if public consultation, demand surveys and reference to UDP are quite common practices among the responding authorities.

Methods	No	%
Demand surveys/questionnaires	17	50.00
Public consultation	16	47.06
Reference to UDP, policy and strategies	6	17.65
No specific procedure	4	11.76
Market research / Mori Polls	4	11.76
Specified standards	3	8.82
No comment	1	2.94
Historical precedent / past use forms	1	2.94

Table 7.8 Methods used in measuring recreation needs and preferences of local population

7.3.7.3 Techniques and approaches as basis of UORP

With equal percentage of votes (59.4 %), ‘use of standards’ and ‘open space hierarchy’ are the most commonly used techniques to form the basis of UORP policies and decision-making (table 7.9). Other techniques rank as follows: ‘community development approach’ (43.8 %), ‘gross demand approach’ (31.3%), ‘priority social area approach’ (21.9%), ‘organic/incremental approach’ (9.4%), ‘none/not known’ (6.3%), ‘recreation opportunity spectrum’ (3.1%), and ‘other’ (3.1%).

In relation to UORP techniques and methods, the survey findings verify at this point that UORP is oriented towards ‘standards and hierarchies’. This point was raised in the context of chapter 5. It was suggested that local authorities tend to utilise standards and hierarchies or classifications of open space, which might have been described for different locations and circumstances as well as different scales of provision. This matter needs to be explored further with the following case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park. Only one authority from outer London claimed to have their own open space classification system and again only one authority from West Yorkshire, claimed to have been aware of the ROS approach; however this particular authority claims to be using all the techniques with the exception of the ‘organic approach’.

Techniques	no.	%
Use of standards	19	59.38
Open space hierarchy	19	59.38
Community development approach	14	43.75
Gross demand approach	10	31.25
Priority social area approach	7	21.88
Organic / incremental approach	3	9.38
None/not known	2	6.25
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum -ROS	1	3.13

Table 7.9 Techniques as basis of UORP

7.3.8 Measurement of effectiveness of open space and its facilities in satisfying the recreation needs and preferences of local populations

‘Public consultation’, one of the widely employed methods in UORP tops the list having been mentioned by 44.1% of the respondents (table 7.10). However, many authorities say that they have no procedures, as such ‘no such method, no such practice’ category ranks second with 41.2 %, ‘questionnaires, user surveys’ ranks third with 26.5%, ‘use level’ fourth with 5.9%, ‘market research/Mori survey’ fifth with 5.9% and ‘ranger interface’ sixth with 2.9%. Although public consultation is widely used, a considerable portion of the respondents (41.2%) claim to have no applicable method in relation to this point, which indicates that the aftermath of provision is not as great a concern as it is prior to and during it. However, the current Best Value practice requires local authorities to measure their performances in service delivery against certain criteria.

Methods	no.	%
Public consultation	15	44.12
No method, no such practice	14	41.18
Questionnaires, user surveys	9	26.47
Use level	2	5.88
Market research/Mori survey	2	5.88
Ranger interface	1	2.94

Table 7.10 Ways to measure effectiveness of open space and user satisfaction

7.3.9 Effects of CCT

Two investigative issues shape the nature of analysis at this point: What the felt effects of CCT are and whether this indicates a positive or negative attitude towards CCT. CCT practice is now replaced by the ‘Best Value’ approach and may seem to be already out of date for discussion here, however, the ‘Best Value’ has many similarities with CCT and it should still be relevant for the purpose of this survey.

7.3.9.1 Effects

Seven distinct categories are listed under the heading of ‘effects’. As table 7.11 shows, a relative majority (35.7%) think CCT brought ‘more accountability as well as specification of responsibilities’. 28.6 % on the other hand claim that there is ‘much emphasis on CCT at the expense of actual needs’. Other groups of opinion are ‘no/very little effect on provision’ (17.9 %), ‘reduced standards of maintenance’ (17.9%), ‘budget reductions for management’ (14.3%), ‘change of communication, fragmented provision of services’ (14.3%), and finally ‘no relation to provision, it is a quality issue’ (7.1%). It is to be emphasised here that the two categories of ‘no/very little effect on provision’ and ‘no relation to provision, it is a quality issue’ can be grouped together which accumulates to 24.1% and increases the significance of ‘no effect to provision’ category.

Effects	no.	%
More accountability, specification of responsibilities	10	35.71
Much emphasis on CCT at expense of actual needs	8	28.57
No/very little effect on provision	5	17.86
Reduced standards of maintenance	5	17.86
Budget reductions for management	4	14.29
Change of communication, fragmented provision of services	4	14.29
No effect on provision, it is a quality issue	2	7.14

Table 7.11 Effects of CCT

7.3.9.2 General opinion

When the above-mentioned groups of opinions are classified again under the headings of positive and negative approaches, the findings reflect a slight majority towards a negative opinion of CCT. While 45 % believed that CCT had positive effects, 55 % expressed a negative view. Most complaints centre around the lack of innovation in maintaining and managing sites; shift in emphasis away from quality and developments issues, greater insecurity and increased vandalism due to CCT related budget reduction and subsequently less workforce in open spaces. However, respondents also detailed that as a maintenance tool and if monitored properly CCT can be of great value, as it is cost effective and provides transparency.

7.3.9.3 Division of CCT contracts

Responses reveal that 48.2 % of respondents carry out their own contracts, 40.7 % share contracts with outside organizations, and 11.1 % delegated CCT contracts only to outside organizations (figure 7.3). Comments to this question reveal that local authorities tend to favour their own bids for CCT contracts.

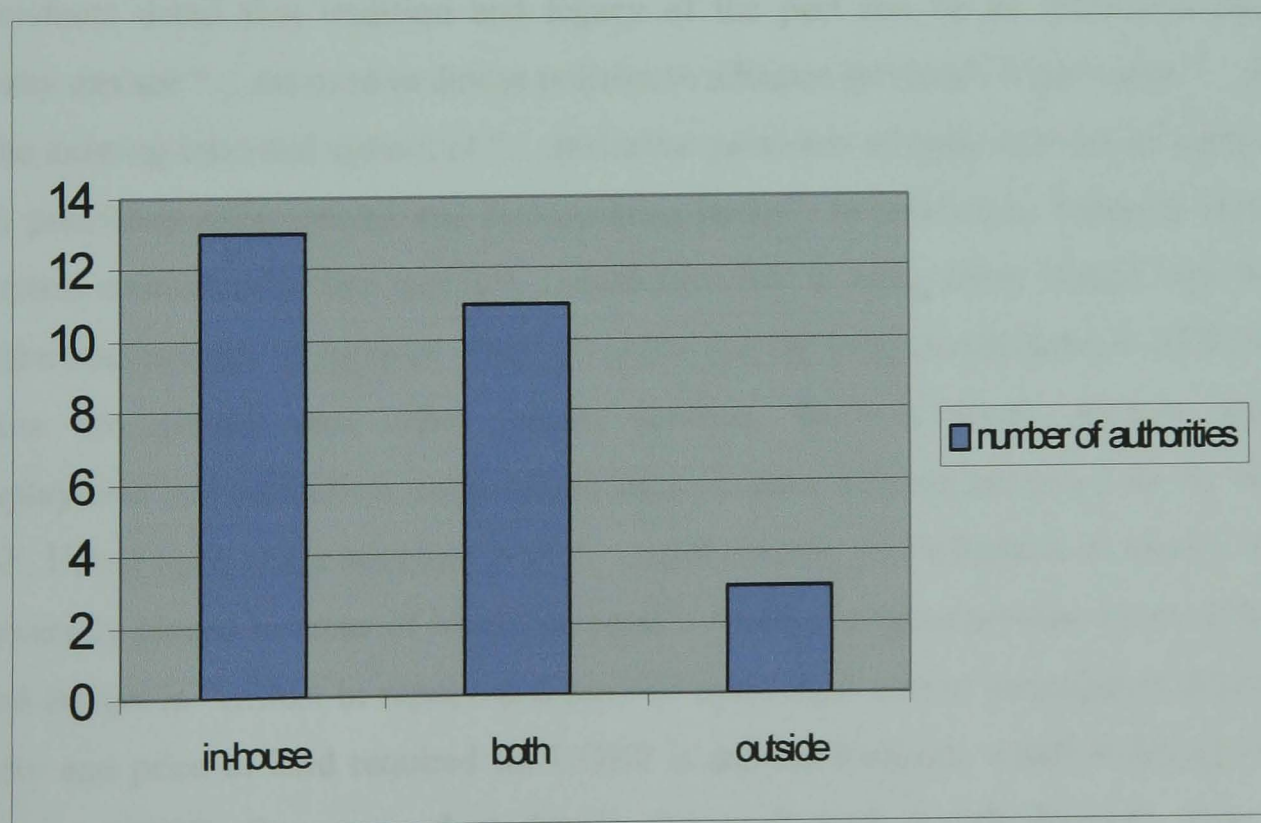


Figure 7.3 Delegation of CCT contracts

7.3.10 Factors which influence the nature of UORP

7.3.10.1 Factors and their influence

Responses suggest that two factors can be strongly related to the nature of UORP: 'tradition and the legacy of the past' (91.1 %) and 'budgetary limits/cutbacks' (82.4 % -the full list is given on table 7.12). This confirms the propositions made in the second phase of the study. Half of the respondents also closely link socio-economic factors (unemployment, vandalism, etc) to UORP. When other following factors and their influences are studied (table 7.12) it would be clear that 'scarcity and the price of land', 'politics/partisanship', 'leisure and recreation as non-statutory service areas' and 'professionalism' factors have strong influences rather than little. The opposite is true for 'organisational structure of the department or authority', 'inadequate legislative guidance', 'pragmatism' 'managerialism' and 'academic study'; in other words their influence on UORP is little rather than strong. One interesting finding in this part of the questionnaire is that 'academic study', as far as the respondents' opinion is concerned, is a factor of little (50.0%) or no influence (29.4%) in relation to UORP. Only 5.9% think 'academic study' is an influential factor in this respect. Also, although the survey reveals in this part that pragmatism and management concerns are of little influence, budgetary limits which are believed to be strong influence, would challenge this.

Respondents detail that tradition and legacy of the past can be so influential that local authority can see "...no need to devise policies to advance services", it can cause "...inertia" and the existing inherited system of "...historical provision of basic network of parks (1880-1950) prioritises management and maintenance issues". In relation to financial constraints authorities unanimously state that it "...restricts ability to bring about change" and hampers even the maintenance of services. They also note that the budget reductions in UORP related services are greater than other leisure services. Socio-economic factors, especially unemployment and vandalism, respondents suggest, have a strong influence on the nature of UORP. Urban open space structure is in "...rapid decline, no inclination to repair. Priorities are generally placed in areas of identified need". Another respondent puts forward that their limited budget is "...lost in repairs and have to meet extra cost of vandalproof equipment". Scarcity and price of land required for UORP is another element, which is thought to have effects on UORP. One respondent details that such land is "all donated. Only a few acquisitions made, no money to open up new areas and open space".

Factors	strong influence		little influence		no influence	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Tradition and the legacy of the past	31	91.10	4	11.76	1	2.94
Budgetary limits/cutbacks	28	82.35	4	11.76	2	5.88
Socio-economic factors (unemployment, vandalism, etc)	17	50.00	9	26.47	7	20.59
Scarcity and the price of land	16	47.06	11	32.35	5	14.71
Politics/partisanship	15	44.12	8	23.53	2	5.88
Leisure and recreation as non-statutory service areas	14	41.18	12	35.29	5	14.71
Professionalism	12	35.29	10	29.41	6	17.65
Organizational structure of the department or authority	8	23.53	14	41.18	5	14.71
Inadequate legislative guidance	8	23.53	14	41.18	7	20.59
Pragmatism	8	23.53	16	47.06	7	20.59
Managerialism	3	8.82	18	52.94	9	26.47
Academic study	2	5.88	17	50.00	10	29.41

Table 7.12 Factors which influence UORP

7.3.10.2 The three most influential factors

In order of significance in opinion, the most important factors are the ‘tradition and the legacy of the past’, ‘budgetary limits/cutbacks’, ‘socio-economic factors (table 7.13 and figure 7.4). The survey findings at this point confirm the proposition that UORP is traditionalist and the system appears to be slow in adapting to change and development. It is also shown here that certain factors such as financial constraints and socio-economic situation influence UORP.

Some respondents detail that the traditionalist culture of local authorities mostly prevails in the way in which the organisation functions in general; even when there is a discretion over certain policy areas and nature of service provision, this seems to be dictated by what is believed to have been the norm in the past. Financial constraints are a problem which affects almost all areas of local authority service provision. However, this seems to be worse for leisure and recreation related services as they are not mandatory.

Factor	1st	%	2nd	%	3rd	%
Tradition and the legacy of the past	18	56.3	5	15.6%	1	3.1%
Budgetary limits/cutbacks	11	34.4	12	37.5%	1	3.1%
Socio-economic factors (unemployment, vandalism, etc)	1	3.1	4	12.5	6	18.8
Scarcity and the price of land	1	3.1	2	6.3	3	9.4
Politics / partisanship	1	3.1	0		1	3.1
Leisure and recreation as non-statutory service areas	0		4	12.5	3	9.4
Professionalism	0		3	9.4	2	6.3
Pragmatism	0		0		8	25.0
Inadequate legislative guidance	0		0		3	9.4
Organizational structure of the department or authority	0		0		1	3.1
Managerialism	0		0		0	
Academic study	0		0		0	

Table 7.13 Factors and their perceived influence

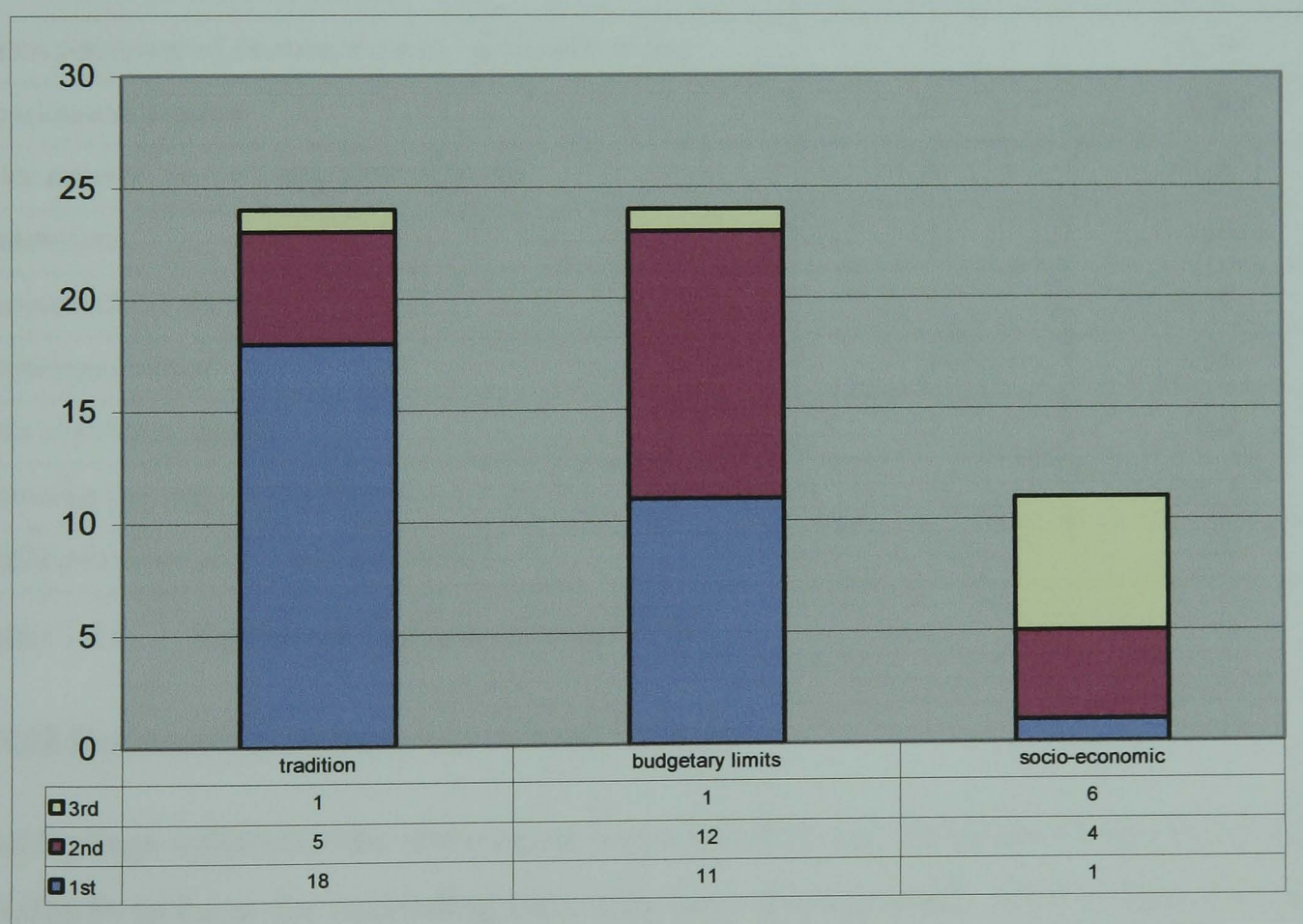


Figure 7.4 The three most influential factors

7.3.11 Significant problems facing UORP

In all, 13 categories of problems were mentioned (table 7.14). ‘lack of funding, budget constraints, spending cuts’ is the most commonly cited problem (75.0%). ‘vandalism, anti-social behaviour, misuse’ follow this with 46.9%. Other categories are as follows: ‘insufficient land in deficient areas’ (15.6%), ‘public perception of increase in crime, perception of fear’ (12.5%), ‘development pressure’ (12.5%), ‘wide range of users/meeting different needs’ (9.4%), ‘maintenance’ (6.3%), ‘reduced officer strength’ (6.3%), ‘identifying demand’ (3.1%), also with same percentage ‘lack of political support’, ‘increasing age range of population’, and finally ‘public will to see money invested in parks’. Table 7.14 shows the full list.

Problems	No.	%
Lack of funding, budget constraint, spending cuts	24	75.00
Vandalism, anti-social behaviour, misuse	15	46.88
Insufficient land in deficient areas	5	15.63
Public perception of increase in crime, ‘perception of fear’	4	12.50
Development pressure	4	12.50
Wide range of users/meeting different needs	3	9.38
Maintenance	2	6.25
Reduced officer strength	2	6.25
Identifying demand	1	3.13
Lack of political support	1	3.13
Increasing age range of population	1	3.13
Public will to see money invested in parks	1	3.13

Table 7.14 Significant problems facing UORP

7.3.12 Relationship between leisure and recreation

The findings reflect that the relationship between leisure and recreation is a matter of diverse opinion in so far as the responding local authorities are concerned. 38.2% believe that leisure and recreation are related but distinct concepts; whilst 32.4% have no opinion on the matter (figure 7.5). 20.6 % take them as synonymous terms, and 8.9% as totally different concepts. In general, the results show that there does not exist a common, shared approach by local authorities towards the relationship between leisure and recreation.

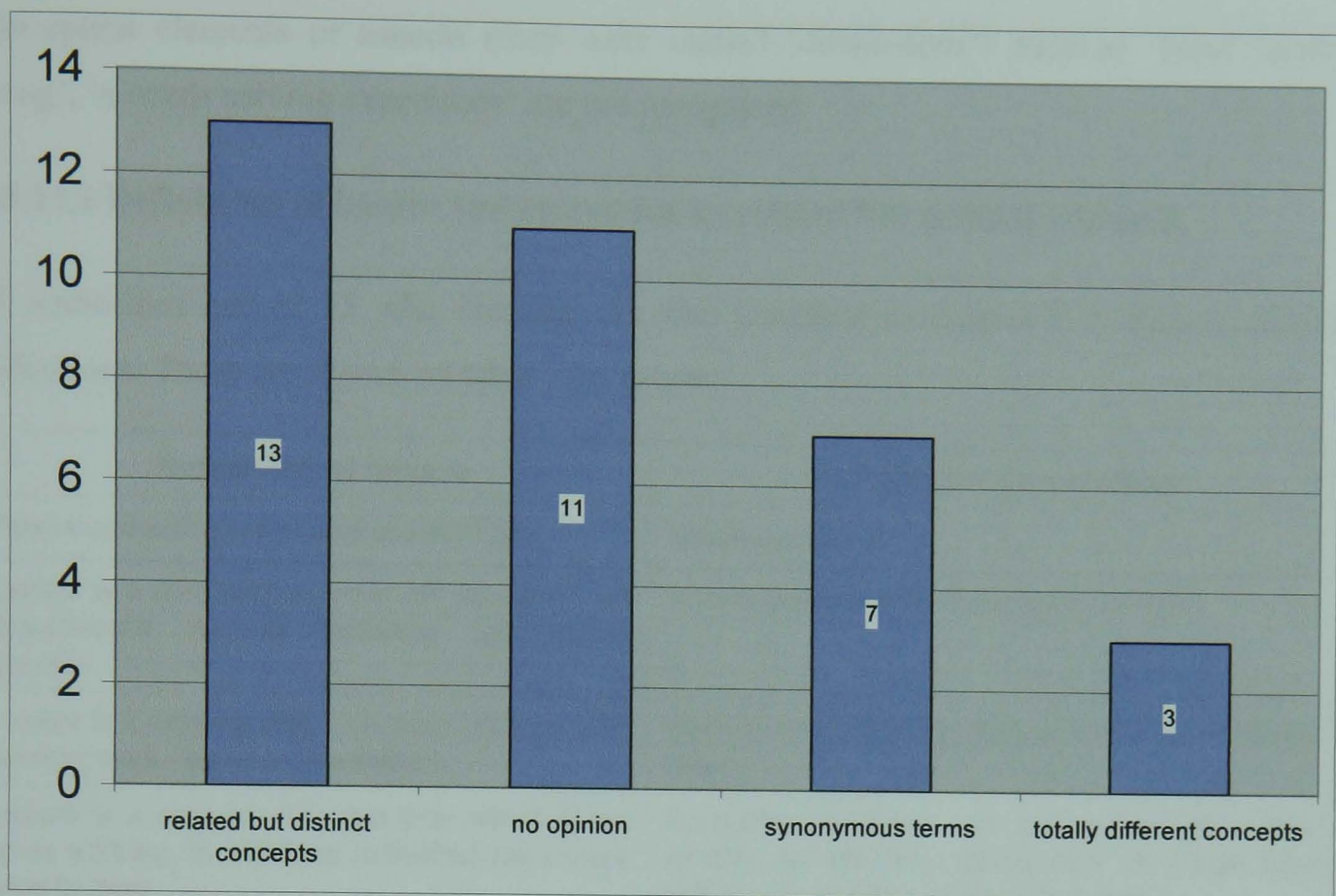


Figure 7.5 Relationship between leisure and recreation

7.3.13 Definitions

7.3.13.1 Definitions of leisure and recreation as synonymous concepts

Only four local authorities provided definitions under this category. Definitions given are the following:

“Both terms are used to cover a wide range of activities from active sports to bird watching” (a Merseyside authority); “A passive or active activity undertaken for social or physical well-being” (a West Yorkshire authority); “A definition to link the Arts, Sports and passive leisure within parks” (Inner London); “Leisure and recreation activities include a wide range of informal activities such as walking and visiting open spaces and parks, as well as football, cricket, golf, swimming and other sports and the social and entertainment activities provided for by restaurants, theatres, cinemas, clubs, pubs and other cultural attractions” (Inner London).

It is generally clear that as synonymous terms, definitions of leisure and recreation differ between authorities. It is also clear that there is emphasis on ‘activity’ aspect of leisure and recreation. This, as the analysis of leisure and recreation concepts has shown in Chapter 3, reflects only one aspect of the conceptual picture which emerged in this chapter. Other

conceptual elements or aspects (they were named ‘dimensions’) such as ‘time’ ‘state of being’, ‘a needs serving experience’ are not recognised.

7.3.13.2 Definitions of leisure and recreation as related but distinct concepts

11 authorities out of 13 who consider the two concepts as related but distinct, provided definitions. These are shown on table 7.15 below:

Definition of leisure	Definition of recreation
Passive and active use of land and facilities	Sporting activities
Leisure is a term used to cover all aspects of this department’s services including less formal pursuits	Formal games and facilities based activities
Leisure is a time concept – i.e. time left over after meeting work / home responsibilities	Recreation involves passive and active use of leisure time
Leisure is a concept- it is that time which is not spent working, in which an individual can choose what he does	Recreation is those activities which are either sporting or otherwise taking place in leisure time and are of a positive or pleasing nature
Passive pursuits	Active pursuits
Free time after the practical necessities of life have been accomplished	Activity carried out during periods of leisure
Identification and satisfaction of a community’s needs for the purposeful use of leisure time	-----
A wide range of activities undertaken during one’s disposable time uncommitted to the necessary demands of work and home	Encompasses those activities, sporting and non-sporting of a positive and pleasure giving nature which take place in leisure time
Activities of organised nature, what a person chooses to do	Activities of a less organised, informal nature
Leisure seems to be a broader term, it covers a broad spectrum of community services including recreation	Recreation covers a wide range of physical activities
Leisure is a time concept	Recreation is active or passive use of leisure

Table 7.15 Definitions of leisure and recreation as distinct concepts

According to the definitions given, leisure is associated with both ‘activity’ and ‘free time’. ‘Time’, however, seems to be relatively more emphasised in definitions of leisure. As far as the ‘activity’ emphasis is concerned, there seems to be a variety of opinions on whether the activity is passive or active; formal or informal.

Responding authorities associate the recreation concept mostly with active and formal, sporting events and use of leisure time. Leisure is seen as a more general, broader type of

term than recreation and even to encompass recreation. The ‘activity’ aspect of recreation is strongly emphasised.

As distinct concepts, leisure and recreation, basically, appear to be ‘time’ and ‘activity’. This is, again, a limited view of leisure and recreation. Such understanding does not acknowledge that leisure and recreation can occur in the form of, for example, a feeling of pleasure (resultant outcome of experience), a perception of freedom to engage in self-determined activity or pursuit (state of mind/being). Time and activity emphasis can be related back to the evolution of leisure and recreation in history, especially the open space and park provision during the industrialisation era (chapter 2). With ‘traditionalism’ being the most influential factor on UORP, as suggested by respondents, it seems that not only the facilities and the provision system of the industrialisation period have been inherited but its leisure and recreation concepts too.

7.3.13.3 Definitions of leisure and recreation as totally different concepts

Only three definitions are provided in this category. The definitions yet again reflect a diversity if not discrepancy over the definitional approaches to leisure and recreation, as table 7.16 illustrates.

Definition of leisure	Definition of recreation
Free time at one’s own disposal	Active use of free time, e.g. sport, dance, fitness
Informal participation in an activity	Structured participation in an organised activity
Informal pursuits	Organised, formal activity

Table 7.16 Definitions of leisure and recreation as totally different concepts

Obviously it is difficult to extract a common pattern of understanding based on table 7.16, it would be fair to say, at this point, that the definitions provided are neither plentiful to present a significant group of opinion, nor they are detailed enough to reflect a clear understanding of leisure and recreation. It appears as if definitions are not a matter of great concern for local authorities.

7.3.14 Basis of leisure and recreation definitions

The larger portion (47.0%) of the respondents did not wish to elaborate on this point (Figure 7.6). 35.3% claimed that their understanding is based on the ‘experiences of local authority in

the field' while others referred to 'professional/academic literature' (17.7%). There was also mention of other sources (8.9%) and other organisation's definition (5.9%).

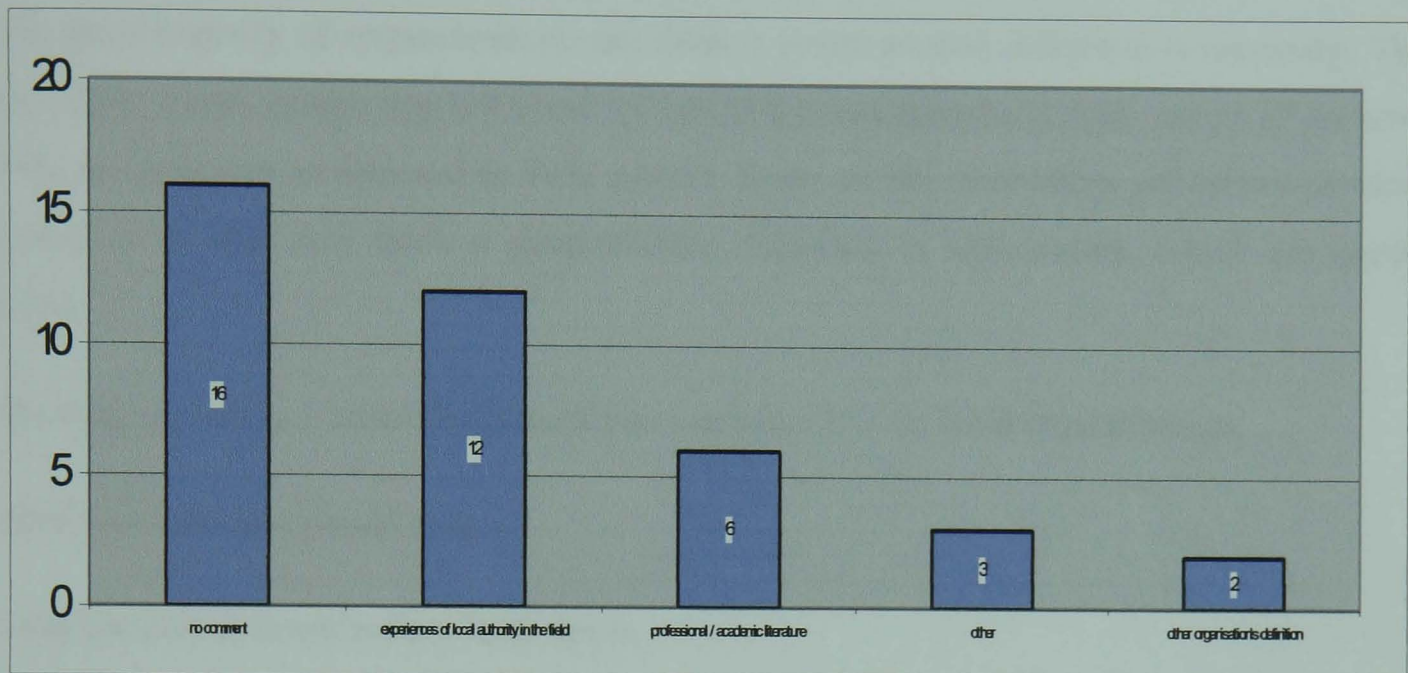


Figure 7.6 Base for leisure and recreation definitions

Three authorities claimed to base their understanding on both the 'experiences of local authority' and 'academic literature'. The three respondents who claimed to base their definitions on 'other' sources, detailed this as 'personal'. In terms of influencing respondents' approach to leisure and recreation one organisations name and a relevant document is mentioned (by a West Midlands authority) which is the DoE and the Planning Policy Guidance 17 – PPG17 of 1991. The respondent detailed that the definition of recreation, in this particular policy guidance, was the source of his definition. When this definition (implicit) is looked at, it can be seen that recreation is largely associated with sports and activities of physical nature. The respondent reflects this approach in his interpretation of recreation: "Recreation is those activities which are either sporting or otherwise taking place in leisure time and are of a positive or pleasing nature".

Overall, it is interesting to note that definitions issue, once again, seems to be an area of some discomfort but also indifference among authorities.

7.3.15 Availability of written definitions in policies

34% of the respondents claimed to have a written definition of leisure and recreation which is almost half of those who claim otherwise (66%). Those who claimed to have a written

definition, referenced this to their UDP's and forthcoming leisure and/or recreation strategies.

7.3.16 Practicality of a governmental definition

The great majority of respondents do not think a governmental definition is necessary. This part of the questionnaire was left blank by half of the respondents, as such, out of 17 answers, 29% are in favour as opposed to 71% against. Some of the responding authorities provided details as to why they think a governmental definition is unnecessary, which are quoted below:

“As long as there is a broad framework you can adapt it to fit local circumstances....

I don't see how this would help....

Local provision should reflect local needs....

Local authorities should target the problems and issues which affect them and can be unique....

A set of standards might be useful, a definition in itself would be of limited value....

These are local issues....

Not necessary. Local authorities should not get hung up in terms, but concentrate on facilities....

Authorities differ. So why tie them to one definition?....

If there was, how would you make everyone to use the same phrase?....

Guidelines and definitions would be helpful....

Only guidelines.”

It is clear from this that authorities do not consider definition of leisure and recreation by central Government as a necessity. What count with the authorities are the local conditions, circumstances, issues and problems. However, this view conflicts with the local authorities' keen interest in 'standards,' which can be determined by a government office and at a national level.

Answers reveal an emphasis on facilities, standards and guidelines, which once again implies that local authorities are primarily concerned with pragmatic issues, in particular issues which relate to design, development and maintenance of facilities. This is probably due to the fact that most of the urban outdoor recreation hardware, the physical resources and facilities, are inherited and in need of restoration, re-development and constant maintenance.

Authorities seem to support the idea of ‘broad framework’ and ‘guidelines’ as far as the definition issue is concerned. There is a majority objection to the idea of one ‘tying definition’. Therefore the expectation from a definition seems to be only along the lines of general guidance and a broad framework.

7.3.17 Sufficiency of Planning Policy Guidance 17 – PPG17

30 authorities answered this question reflecting a divided opinion in general. Nevertheless, 53% of authorities believed that PPG17 (the 1991 version) is sufficient in guiding the authorities in relation to UORP. However, 47% of the respondents, which is a considerable portion, claimed that PPG17 was not sufficient.

One of the respondents who believed PPG17 was sufficient commented that this policy was intended to be a general guidance and, as such, local policies should build on them (A South Yorkshire authority). Another from Outer London area suggested that it was adequate for ‘planners’.

Those respondents who found PPG17 not sufficient in terms providing guidance for UORP provided different comments:

“It does not deal sufficiently with informal open space provision....

Little guidance in definitions....

Not specific....

Ideally should incorporate specific standards....

Too vague....

Insufficient guidance on how to assess appropriate level of provision....

Not enough recognition of importance of very small open spaces in urban areas. Not enough on children's play facilities....

It is guidance but a loose guidance....

Not specific enough....”

There does not appear to be a specific pattern between authorities in terms of opinions on PPG17. Some respondents only require a general framework, while others demand a specific and detailed document. The comments which suggest that PPG17 is insufficient, emphasise that local authorities expect a policy guidance document to be more specific and provide more in depth treatment of UORP. The PPG is found to be too vague by some and with a narrow scope with respect to the classification and inclusion of resources and facilities in its terms of reference. One respondent actually believes that PPG17 provides ‘little guidance in definitions’, which is in complete contrast to the view that ‘this would be of very little value’. The issue of ‘standards’ is once again mentioned in relation to this issue.

7.3.18 Need for a specific legislative framework

The answer is provided as ‘yes’ by 62%, and ‘no’ by 38% of 29 respondents. Some of the comments provided by respondents, in the ‘yes’ category, in relation to this question are:

“Providing minimum standards and building fundingwould help protect the service provided....

Stronger influence on development industry – open space would not succumb to development pressure....

Subject to resources being made available to implement policies introduced....

May assist defence of existing open space....

Parks and open spaces are under threat,...However, legislation should not stifle innovation....

Depends upon the degree of control, i.e. would not hinder local circumstances....

To establish what the ‘norm’ should be and enable funding to be maintained against other

statutory demands....

Pressure on open space for development (housing, etc.), more powers to resist pressure....

A good one yes, leisure managers would probably say no!....

Clear guidance at national level and a more holistic approach....

The 'no' category comments, as exemplified below, basically contends that the 'real' issue is about 'money' and local 'autonomy':

“Finance and budget dictate, also lack of public open space in urban areas....

Likely to be too clumsy a mechanism....

Not budget specific....

Cannot be adequately dictated at national level....

These are local issues, guidance should be provided through responsible specialist groups....

A Parks Authority to further the cause of parks would be optimum....

Money is the issue....

Financial pressures challenge decisions....”

It is important to note that although a slight majority find PPG17 sufficient, a bigger majority express their support for a UORP specific legislative framework for clearer guidance. Such specific legislation is expected to make funding for provision available and maintain it “...against other statutory demands”, set minimum standards and establish the 'norm', protect urban open space from development pressure, provide local authorities with more powers in doing so and also provide “clear guidance at national level”. There is also expectation of a more holistic approach as far as the UORP guidance issue is concerned, which can be seen as a criticism levelled at PPG17. Among all the commentary provided and opinions expressed, respondents appear to be most concerned with financial and funding side of UORP. This is followed by securing of funds, as leisure and recreation services are among those which suffer from the consequences of budget cuts and saving programs. The funding

issue, throughout the questionnaire, is related almost to all aspects of UORP: planning, design, provision, management, maintenance, regeneration, restoration and so on.

Not all respondents support the idea of a UORP specific legislation. Some believe that it would be “too clumsy a mechanism” and the real issue is ‘money’, which shapes UORP decisions and practices. One authority suggests that setting up a Parks authority with a remit to further the cause of urban parks would be the optimum intervention in this area. Local issues, it is believed, are best left to the local organisations and any guidance should come from specialised establishments and groups.

7.3.19 CCT for a quality UORP in future

It is the majority opinion (88%) that CCT does not guarantee a higher quality for future UORP. Comments reflect that CCT is a maintenance tool and does not have much to do with quality provision.

One Outer London authority suggested that a Council may select the lowest tender in cost terms but this may not necessarily produce better maintenance. An Inner London authority cautions that a long-term contract can reduce flexibility and slow down change. On the other hand, one Tyne and Wear authority emphasises that CCT only provides value for money and efficiency. All the respondents seem to agree that one desirable effect of CCT is its transparency, efficiency and cost effectiveness in maintaining and monitoring services.

7.3.20 Agencies and sufficiency of their guidance

The Sports Council and the NPFA emerge as the most highly acclaimed agencies in sufficiency of guidance. These two are followed by the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) (33.3%), English Nature (30.0%), Department of National Heritage (26.7%), the Forestry Commission (16.7%) and the British Tourist Board (10.0%). The following table 7.15 shows the list of the agencies and ranks them in order of sufficiency as suggested by respondents.

Sufficiency of agencies	no.	%
The Sports Council	18	60.00
The National Playing Fields Association	18	60.00
The Countryside Commission	10	33.33
English Nature	9	30.00
Department of National Heritage	8	26.67
The Forestry Commission	5	16.67
The British Tourist Board	3	10.00

Table 7.15 Agencies and sufficiency of their guidance

The Sports Council and the NPFA are probably considered to be the most effective, mainly because of the standards they provide for provision of facilities, especially sports facilities. The NPFA, for example, was mentioned by the respondents in connection with the ‘Six acre per thousand population’ standard for playing fields. One West Midlands authority also mentions London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) with regard to open space hierarchy; which is also referred to, by 3 London authorities in connection with the 1994 Strategic Planning Guidance for London.

It is interesting note that respondents seem to measure the sufficiency matter with specific advice documents, ‘best practice manuals’, guidance notes, policy reports and standards produced by agencies.

7.3.21 Future actions to improve UORP

In total, 17 groups of actions were mentioned by responding local authorities (table 7.16). There is only one major category (56.7%) as a shared opinion which proposes ‘increased resources, more capital funds’ for future. ‘Well developed, actionable local policies/strategies’ follow this together with ‘political support/clear governmental/national policy’ (26.7%). Other relatively common groups are ‘better/improved management practices’ (23.3%), ‘user group involvement in management, social appreciation’ (13.3%), ‘better facilities to withstand intensive use’ (10.0%). The full list of future actions is given on Table 7.16. As can be seen from the table this list shows considerable variety in categories.

Financial resources and ‘actionable’ and ‘practical’ policies and strategies, once again are emphasised as significant variables of UORP. However, the main emphasis seems to be

placed on provision of more financial resources for a better, more efficient UORP. It is interesting to note that, out of the 33 respondents to this particular question, only 4 Outer and 2 Inner London Boroughs (42.8% of London authorities) pointed out to a need for more resources for future practices as opposed to 11 Metropolitan boroughs (61.1% of non-London authorities).

Actions	no.	%
Increased resources, more capital funds	17	56.67
Well developed, actionable local policies/strategies	8	26.67
Political support/clear governmental/national policy	8	26.67
Better/improved management practices	7	23.33
User group involvement in management, social appreciation	4	13.33
Better facilities to withstand intensive use	3	10.00
Service led provision instead of pure grounds maintenance	2	6.67
Improved planning legislation for protection of open space	2	6.67
More flexible, different systems/styles of open space	2	6.67
More revenue funds	1	3.33
Better coordination at local level	1	3.33
Statutory framework	1	3.33
Agreed standards and models	1	3.33
Dog fouling legislation	1	3.33
Family orientated provision with multi-activity access	1	3.33
Availability of land/developer to provide open space	1	3.33
Regeneration of city parks	1	3.33

Table 7.16 Future actions to improve UORP

7.3.22 Future trends in UORP

The results show a great diversity of forecasts made for the future of UORP (table 7.17). 17 groups were identified and the highest frequency is 25.9%, which forecasts that ‘nature conservation’ will be a dominant theme of the future. 22.2% of respondents forecast that ‘protection & maintenance of quality of resource’ will be a future concern too. ‘Community partnership and participation in provision and management’ and ‘efficient management methods, need for agreed standards, strategies’ are also suggested categories both by 18.6%. Other categories are ‘organisations of events, more variety’ in open spaces (14.8%), ‘trend towards formal recreation/sporting provision’ (14.8%), ‘more emphasis on informal recreation’ (14.8%), ‘transport innovations’ (11.1%). The rest of the list can be seen on the

following table 7.17.

Trends	no.	%
Nature conservation	7	25.93
Protection & maintenance of quality of resource	6	22.22
Community partnership + participation in provision and management	5	18.52
Management methods, need for agreed standards, strategies	5	18.52
Events, more variety	4	14.81
Trend towards formal recreation / sporting provision	4	14.81
More emphasis on informal recreation	4	14.81
Transport innovations	3	11.11
High tech infrastructure	1	3.70
Shift to urban fringe & countryside	1	3.70
Landscaping out crime	1	3.70
Promotion of 'near landscape'	1	3.70
Private provision – 'pay and play'	1	3.70
Increasing leisure time	1	3.70
Sponsorship	1	3.70
Pressure for development on existing open space	1	3.70
More active recreation	1	3.70

Table 7.17 Future trends in UORP

The 'nature conservation' issue is associated with conservation of 'basic green space' in urban areas. This might be due to the alarming rate of development pressure within urban areas and including the targets for 'brownfield' development which threatens open space and 'quality of life' in urban areas. It is also predicted that authorities will have to establish 'a more controlled environment to protect investment, quality resource and facilities', under the climate of budget constraints.

There does not seem to be great consistency in opinions of those authorities with similar characteristics such as location and resources. One exception is the nature conservation trend, which is suggested largely by London (4) and Tyne and Wear (2) authorities. Whilst one city council considers 'landscaping out crime' as a future trend, another sees 'shift to urban fringe and countryside' as a likely development. This particular question, as perhaps could be expected, provided a great variety of opinions.

7.4 Conclusions

The questionnaire survey investigated the attitudes of Metropolitan local authorities towards urban outdoor recreation provision, with particular emphasis on the link between concepts and practice.

Based on the findings and evaluation of this survey, the first point to make is that **the link between leisure and recreation concepts and the practices of urban outdoor recreation is weak, if not non-existent**. This stems from the approach to leisure and recreation which appears not to exceed the boundaries of “obviously relevant concepts, but not vital for how things are done on a daily basis” as one respondent puts it. The weakness of the link can be explained in relation to a number of other factors:

Local authorities operate under the influence of numerous factors. As responses to question 11 reveal, **‘tradition and the legacy of the past’ is the most influential factor which is often seen as one of the reasons behind the lack of policies for change and advancement of services. This is followed by financial constraints on UORP budgets. Budgetary cuts also play a role in prioritising maintenance and management** of the existing resources and facilities. Many authorities believe that there is simply not enough money to elevate the quality of services, let alone the provision of anything new. **The situation is exacerbated by the problems which high unemployment rates, delinquency and vandalism create in terms of extra maintenance investments and repairs costs in urban, metropolitan open spaces and parks.** All this might have a share in weakening the link between concepts of leisure and recreation and the UORP. UORP becomes more pragmatic and management oriented.

Leisure and recreation do not appear to be a matter of great concern for Metropolitan local authorities. Respondents define leisure and recreation with a very generalised notion. For this survey, it has been difficult to extract a common pattern of understanding based on the data provided; definitions provided were neither plentiful enough to present a significant group of opinion, nor were they detailed enough to reflect a clear understanding of leisure and recreation. However, those **definitions provided reveal that recreation is rather associated with active, sporting and organised ‘activities’.** Leisure is taken as more general than recreation and even to encompass it. Along with ‘activity’, ‘time’ element is also associated with leisure. Local authority opinions also reveal that other conceptual

dimensions of leisure and recreation, such as ‘state of mind’, ‘experience’ and ‘outcome of experience’ are not particularly acknowledged. This has implications for the field of UORP and will be discussed in the scope of the detailed case studies.

The relationship between leisure and recreation does not seem to be a matter of great concern either for authorities, as a considerable portion claimed to have no idea on this, and only less than half believed that they were similar whilst a few respondents suggested that they were completely different phenomena. The indifference to concepts and definitions of leisure and recreation can partly be explained by the ‘little’ effect of academic studies on UORP, which was stated as answer to question 10.

‘Use of standards’ and ‘open space hierarchy’ are the most commonly used techniques to form the basis of UORP policies and decision-making. This confirms the popularity of standards and hierarchies with local authorities, but conflicts with the finding that public consultation and demand surveys are also widely employed methods to gauge public preferences, likes and dislikes.

Chapter 8 - Case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park

8.1 Introduction

The case study phase of the research consists of two distinct but inextricably linked levels of analysis. These two levels are:

1. Gateshead MBC, and
2. Saltwell Park, which is provided, managed and maintained by Gateshead MBC.

Although these two are the integral components of the same inquiry, they will be carried out as distinct case studies, as the range of issues to be investigated and tested through them differs and varies considerably both in context and content, because they relate to different levels of analysis – district-wide on the one hand, and a detailed case study of an urban park on the other.

As already discussed in chapter 6, the case study method is employed as a device to enable the theoretical and operational propositions and issues raised in the earlier chapters to be tested in a real life context and accordingly, to be challenged, extended, verified or modified. The case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park intends to achieve this and provide a more in depth treatment of issues and propositions, following up and refining issues raised by the analysis of the questionnaire survey.

8.2 Application of case study method

As illustrated with figure 8.1, the driving factor behind the design of the case study is the prior development of theory along with propositions and issues raised previously. It is theory which defines the case study and also helps specification of appropriate data collection procedures. What is also significant to note here is that, generalisation from findings, at the end of the study, will be made in relation to this theory and to the propositions. Unlike survey research, which employs statistical generalisation, in case studies:

“...the method of generalisation is ‘analytic generalisation’ in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study”
(Yin, 1994).

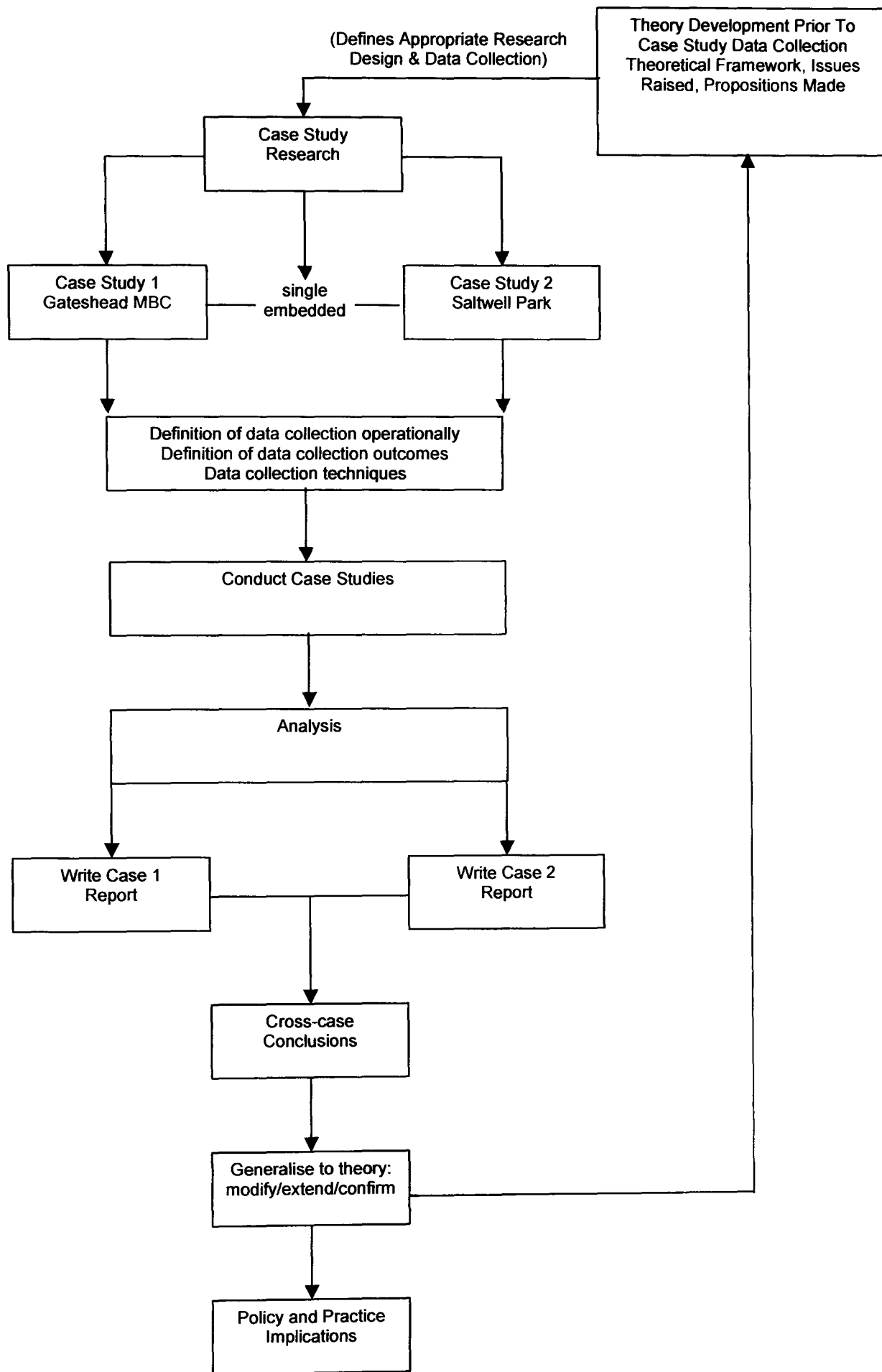


Figure 8.1 Application of case study method, based on Yin (1994)

As described previously, this is, in fact, an ‘embedded’ case study in nature, which includes two logical sub-units of analysis: Gateshead MBC – a public sector urban open space

provider - and Saltwell Park – an urban open space setting, an urban park which is provided and maintained by the former. Together they form a ‘real life context’ for investigating the topic of leisure and recreation concepts and their link and relevance to the practice of UORP, which implies analyses of history, organisations, professionalism, planning, planning tradition, finances, social factors, politics and specific aspects of urban park and urban open space dimensions as well as their dynamic relations with each other.

The starting point for the case study is the case of Gateshead MBC. However, this does not necessarily mean that there were rigid boundaries between the two cases in terms of a sequence of data collection and analysis. This allowed the cross-analyses of certain issues relating to Saltwell whilst the conduct of the first case study was in progress and vice versa. This is normal as the two cases are in fact ‘embedded’ (Saltwell case is embedded in Gateshead MBC case) in nature and not independent.

As figure 8.1 shows, case studies require design strategies. Despite being part of the same research, each case tries to answer specific questions and test a variety of different propositions. Therefore the context and content of the each case will differ with different areas of analysis and data collection techniques. The five design components of the case study method (Yin, 1994) were briefly described in the scope of chapter 6. They were:

- Study questions
- Study propositions (if applicable)
- Unit of analysis
- The logic of linking data to propositions
- The criteria for interpreting findings.

These components compose a strategy and an action plan to carry out a valid, reliable and consistent case study. The two cases also need a workplan. A workplan or a protocol for case studies is an indispensable tool; a valuable guide for the researcher, as it defines the overall process of conducting a case study with its data collection activity and its techniques as well as the process of data analysis and case study report. A protocol is also significant in increasing the reliability of a case study.

Following the conduct of the two cases and completion of the case study reports, the next stage is the synthesis of the two cases with their findings. To do this, a cross-case analysis and evaluation is required which is to be followed by 'generalisations'. Generalisations are made in relation to the previously developed theoretical propositions and policy and practice/operational issues. The final step, in this part of the research, is the reflection of findings from the case study onto policy and practice, which will result in the development of 'policy and practice implications'. Although these 'policy and practice implications' are very briefly mentioned here, this will probably be considered as the most significant part of this research, from a practising, professional point of view.

8.3 Case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park

In relation to the leading research questions, there is an absolute need for studying and providing an analytical insight into the characteristics, structure and working system of a specific public sector urban open space provider; following from the questionnaire survey a Metropolitan local authority was selected. This case study of Gateshead MBC will provide insights into the organisational structure, UORP policies and the context provided by the Unitary Development Plan - UDP, the factors which are believed to drive the UORP process and the conceptual views and attitudes of officers. In doing so, the main concern of the study is to question and analyse the connection of leisure and recreation concepts with UORP as practised by Gateshead MBC. The Council will be the subject of an in-depth investigation, which aims to find answers to a number of the leading research questions and to test certain theoretical propositions. The following describes these and the design of the case study.

8.3.1 Design of case study

"A research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of a study. Every empirical study has an implicit, if not explicit research design" (Yin, 1994).

And the case study method is no different. Designing a case study starts with the statement of its purpose and leading questions:

- **Study purpose:** The case study aims to investigate the link between the concepts of leisure and recreation and urban outdoor recreation provision - UORP, in a real life context, in the light of the findings of the questionnaire survey. The case study will

provide a template to test issues raised in previous chapters and also further examine the conclusions of the questionnaire survey.

- **Study questions:** Many of the following questions have already been asked through the questionnaire survey. However, some of them are only raised in the scope of the case study for obtaining more and detailed information on certain issues, such as the leisure and recreation context of specific open spaces and parks policies. The leading questions are:
 1. How can the UORP process be defined? What stages can be identified? How does UORP progress from the proposals stage to management and maintenance schemes? Which departments, organisations and individuals, and also professions are involved in UORP? How does an organisation involved in UORP such as a Metropolitan local authority actually work? What is the organisational structure and the place of UORP in this?
 2. What is the main objective of UORP? What does it do? Who is it for?
 3. Is UORP considered to be a successful public service area by the provider? If not, why? How is this measured and against what criteria? What is the method?
 4. What factors govern UORP? How much influence do factors such as tradition, financial resources, pragmatism, governmental/political/legislative forces (and others) exert? Is there a felt need for 'change' in any way or is the present system functioning well?
 5. What are the crucial problems facing UORP? Any suggestions as to how to overcome them? For instance, what is the attitude towards anti-social behaviour and vandalism in open spaces? Are parks for example becoming dangerous places to visit? What is being done to alleviate this problem, if any? Or is this only a 'perceived threat'?
 6. Does the Council have a specific policy on urban open space? How can this policy be described?
 7. Can an understanding or definition of leisure and recreation concepts be detected from policies or strategies?
 8. How do practitioners approach leisure and recreation? Do they understand the same thing or is there a variety of approaches? What is the pattern in this approach? Does it reveal

how leisure and recreation relate to each other? How important is defining leisure and recreation concepts? Does it matter, anyway? Is there a need for any guidance in order to establish terms of reference, from the Government or academic studies?

9. What is the present-day main function of urban parks such as Saltwell Park for urban dwellers? What does it do for users or the urban environment? Why provide or maintain such leisure and recreation resources/facilities? Who uses parks? Are they appreciated by the majority of users and also non-users? What attracts people to parks?
10. What technique, method or approach specifies what to provide in a given open space? What is being provided? Is it a service, a facility, an activity, a resource, an experience, or what? How is this described from an officers and written documents point of view? And how does this manifest itself in what is provided on site and proposed on plans and maps?
11. To what extent do authorities make use of findings from user surveys and public consultation practices? What conceptual approach produces the questions? How are 'need', 'demand' and 'user satisfaction' determined?
12. What is the attitude towards the 'standards' and 'open space hierarchies' issue? Are they a good measure to judge achievement? What role do local circumstances and variables play in application of standards?
13. What is the predicted future of UORP and urban open space?
14. In conclusion, what is the link between UORP practices and leisure and recreation concepts? Is this a really weak link, as suggested by the questionnaire survey? If so, is this considered to be a problem for UORP in any way? How does the problem occur? How can this be overcome?

The propositions which drive the case study were already outlined in the methodology chapter, chapter 6. Therefore, they will be only re-emphasised here briefly.

1. Definitions of leisure and recreation do not seem to be a matter of great importance or concern for the practising professional. This seems to be reflected both in attitudes and written policy documents.
2. The dominant theme in provision seems to be 'activity' and 'facility'.

3. The end product of ‘urban park’ reflects a limited view of leisure and recreation.
4. Pressing issues such as financial constraints, traditionalist and pragmatic management practices, vandalism and misuse and the relatively apolitical and marginalised status of leisure and recreation services, all seem to exacerbate the situation.

8.3.2 Procedures for conduct: a workplan/protocol

8.3.2.1 Field procedures and data collection

This is an area which requires careful planning and practice. Table 8.1 is an attempt to categorise the required data and appropriate data collection techniques. However, there is a need for a more operationalised and defined protocol for data collection. Every category of data in table 8.1 is to be made more operational for the investigator, by accompanying them with a list of specific questions to obtain such data, which forms the content of the next sub-heading. Whatever the type of data collection technique, three principles will be considered throughout the case study: use of multiple sources of evidence, creating a case study database and maintaining a chain of evidence (Yin, 1994). This is significant for achieving validity, reliability and high quality.

Required data	Source of data	Data collection techniques
Gateshead MBC’s organisational characteristics, UORP departments.	Gateshead MBC	Interviews with relevant officers, chief officers, documents
UORP process, as experienced by the Council, its rationale, techniques, shaping factors, standards, targets	Gateshead MBC	Interviews with relevant individuals at relevant Council departments documents
Leisure and recreation in policies, plans, strategies, definitions	Gateshead MBC	UDP, policy documents
Leisure and recreation, definitions	Gateshead MBC	Interviews with officers, councillors
Urban park as product of provision process, activity-facility issue, concepts and the park, history of park, current state, vandalism issue	Gateshead MBC Saltwell Park	Direct observation, participant observation, physical artefacts, documents, proposals document for lottery fund

Users, user surveys, conceptual characteristics of user surveys	GMBC, Saltwell Park	Documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation in park
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Table 8.1 Data and appropriate data collection techniques

Data groups and collection techniques should ideally be identified before embarking on a case study in order to collect the right information, which would contain answers to given questions and help explain the phenomenon under investigation. This should be followed by definition of the actual process of data collection, in its operational sense. For this study, it starts with exploring Gateshead MBC as a provider of urban open space.

Procedure/activity	Data/information sought	Technique
Initial visit to the Council, initial visit to the Park	Availability of relevant documents general information Saltwell Park	Informal meetings/consultations, unstructured interviews with Leisure Services officers
Obtaining relevant documents, determining who to interview and arranging interviews	Structure of Council, UORP related Depts, history of Saltwell Park, Lottery bidding, current situation	Informal interviews, archival records
Interviews at Leisure Services & Planning Depts. visit to park	Council structure, UORP, Rationale, Techniques, Problems, leisure and recreation concepts, Saltwell Park	Informal interviews, documents, direct observation
Interviews at Leisure Services & Planning Depts.	Planning issues relating to UORP, leisure and recreation, parks, Saltwell Park	Informal interviews, documents, archival records
Interviews with parks and open spaces officers visits to Saltwell Park	Current situation of Saltwell Park, restoration, management and development policies, leisure and recreation connection, futuristic scenarios, officer and councillor attitudes	Informal interviews, documents, archival records, direct observation, participant observation

Table 8.2 Case study work plan

8.4 Case study unit 1: Gateshead MBC as provider of urban open space

8.4.1 Preliminary interviews

Prior to the interviews the researcher carried out some preliminary interviews. This was done in order to better define the scope of the interviews in the Gateshead MBC. The preliminary interviews were carried out with three officers from the Leisure and Community Services of Newcastle City Council and two academics from the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. The information and opinions provided by the Newcastle City Council's officers were of great significance for this research. It provided direction and familiarity with the 'practice side of UORP' as well as underpinning the significant issues in the field, such as problems of UORP, possible solutions to these problems, the place of leisure and recreation in UORP and so on.

The interviews with academics were also very helpful in terms of different perspectives they seem to adopt and the insight they have on theory and practice issues. The researcher benefited greatly from hearing the opinions of scholars who have been involved with both sides of the UORP issue.

8.4.2 Structure

The nature of the research questions dictated that the interviews would be better designed as 'focused interviews'. As such, the interviews were flexible, informal and open-ended. But in strict research terms, they can be described as 'focused interviews (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992). They were carried out according to a checklist without formal questions.

Some of the questions were addressed to all interviewees whilst some were only addressed to a few. The interviewees held different positions with different types of job specifications in relation to UORP. As such, types and context of questions differed from one interviewee to another. Still, they were all asked to provide an opinion on what leisure and recreation actually mean for UORP.

8.4.3 Interviewees

In the Gateshead MBC part of case study, interviews with Council officers proved to be an invaluable source of information both in terms of first hand information and opinions provided and also directing the researcher to other sources of information.

For the purposes of this first level of the case study, a total of thirteen individuals were interviewed, who are listed in appendix 3. Nine of these were from the Gateshead MBC whereas other three were from the Newcastle City Council (there was also one officer from the Sunderland City Council and two academics who had worked and were familiar with Gateshead MBC's UORP policies and practices). Out of the nine officers of Gateshead MBC, five were from the Leisure Services (1 administration, 1 policy, 1 park management and 1 conservation, 1 design); two from Planning (the principal landscape officer and a planning officer); one from the Chief Executive's Office (Cooperate Programmes); and one local councillor who sat at the Leisure Services Committee, at the time of the interviews. The list of interviewees was outlined by the researcher with the assistance of the principal landscape officer and two other officers from the leisure services. The interviews aimed at reflecting the opinions of relevant individuals in relevant departments of the Council with regard to UORP.

8.4.4 Conducting interviews

The researcher preferred to carry out interviews on an 'appointment' basis. The interviewee was informed beforehand on the context and nature of the forthcoming interview. Only one interview took place unarranged, which was during a visit to the Council for document analysis.

Also on one occasion, two officers (planner and leisure officer) were interviewed simultaneously which took place as a suggestion from one of the officers. This in fact was very fruitful in the way of spontaneous consultation between the officers for seemingly unclear issues which were raised during the interview. However, the time spent on this particular interview was considerably longer than others. Although the researcher attempted to arrange a couple of more interviews this way, they have not materialised due to 'pressures of current workload' of the officers.

8.4.5 Analysis

Analysis of the interviews was fairly straightforward. The case study aims to answer certain questions, as outlined before in this chapter, therefore the interviewees are simply asked these questions. What follows, basically, is a 'topical discussion', which utilises the answers to these questions and also the data provided by other methods.

Although the researcher carried out the interviews with a prepared set of questions, during the

analysis it became clear that there were gaps of information on certain aspects of the case study. This resulted in secondary interviews, which were conducted on the phone and supported with e-mails. Only one interviewee was visited for a second time, in terms of an additional interview. It should be noted that this is mainly due to the new governmental policies and legislation coming into force during the conduct of the case study. In this transition period, the Council replaced CCT with 'best value' practice and also there has been a flurry of activities on the government's part, on the subject of urban open space, urban parks and green spaces which have been delegated to specific 'taskforces' and 'working groups'.

8.4.6 Document analysis

The Gateshead Unitary Development Plan has probably been the most comprehensive source of information for this part of the case study. Apart from that there were also specific policy statements, reports and on-line documents which provided valuable data.

From the archives, mainly maps and a number of documents were allowed to be consulted. These were used on site. But frequently, the researcher was directed to the Council's website for maps and photographs as they were believed to be easier to utilise for research purposes.

8.4.7 Gateshead MBC: introduction

Gateshead, in terms of the size of area it covers, is the largest district of Tyne and Wear. It covers an area of 55 square miles and is only separated from the city of Newcastle upon Tyne by the River Tyne (Figure 8.2 shows location of Gateshead as well as Saltwell Park). Recently there have been a number of projects that the Council has devised and successfully implemented, such as the Angel of the North and the Millennium Bridge. The Baltic Flour Mill and Music Centre Gateshead projects are the other components of a scheme which is hoped to win Newcastle and Gateshead the joint status of the 'Culture Capital of Europe 2008'. But in fact, Gateshead, like many other cities in Britain, is built upon the foundations of an industrial city. However the Borough seems to be in the process of being transformed into a city of innovation, art, design and high technology.



Figure 8.2 Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead and Saltwell Park

The Borough of Gateshead is divided into 22 wards. Each ward is allocated three councillors. The Council is a Labour controlled local authority and the present political composition of the Council is 47 Labour, 18 Liberal Democrat, and 1 Liberal. It employs approximately 11,000 people in order to deliver essential services to a population of around 200,000.

8.4.8 Organisational structure and Council Departments

8.4.8.1 Recent structural reform

In response to the Government's White Paper 'Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People' of 1998 and 'Best Value' plans, the Council initiated a review of its political management structure and delivery of services. The review resulted in a decision to establish better consultation links with the community as well as partnerships with outside organisations. However the long-standing, traditional committee structure seemed to be a potential problem to achieve this. Large amounts of time had to be spent on preparing for and attending formal Committee meetings. A new way of working was to be adopted for a new agenda of community leadership, democratic renewal and best value. The Council eventually opted for the 'Leader/Cabinet' model to replace the committees and sub-committees system.

"The Cabinet, headed by the Leader, consists of 11 members appointed by the Council from the majority party. It provides political leadership and direction across the whole range of Council services and considers all policy issues. Whilst the Cabinet acts collectively, individual Cabinet members have their own portfolio allocated to them by the Leader. These are based on the Council's policy framework and are cross-service, covering areas such as children and young people, health etc. Cabinet members are responsible for the development and public presentation of policy within their portfolio area. The Leader's portfolio includes the strategic management of the Council and the use of resources - finance, land and personnel. The Council's role is to:

Agree the budget

Agree the policy framework

Decide the political management framework

Appoint the Leader and the Cabinet. " (<http://www.Gateshead.gov.uk>).

The Council is now expected to have more time for debating of budget and policy proposals.

Other components of the new system are:

- An executive committee to take formal decisions (a single-party Cabinet with executive powers)
- Four scrutiny panels for appraisal of the decisions of member bodies and officers.

- ‘Separate decision-making bodies’ to exercise development control, licensing and appeals.
- A variety of advisory groups, which are formed by Cabinet and non-Cabinet members, to function as forums for ‘in-depth discussion of policy on specific topics’.

8.4.8.2 Council Departments and services

The Council, which had fifteen departments previously, re-structured them with their management and functions, into five new groups. Four of these groups are service based; whilst the fifth group contains the four central departments. The Council, under the new structure, consists of the following groups of services (<http://www.Gateshead.gov.uk>):

- **Community Based Services:** Community Based Services incorporate social services, housing management, health, community safety and community development. Specific groups, such as older people, children, families and people with disabilities, are also served by this service based group. The group also manages Gateshead MBC’s stock of housing, services for tenants and links with other social housing providers as well as services for community safety and reducing of youth offending” (<http://www.Gateshead.gov.uk>).
- **Learning and Culture:** This group includes all those activities, which contribute to learning and cultural development - particularly for young people. They are Education, Libraries, Leisure, Arts and Tourism. Although the emphasis seems to be on young people, services of this group are also used by adults.
- **Local Environmental Services:** This group brings together “the services provided in and around people's homes” including refuse/waste collection, disposal and recycling, street cleaning, road maintenance, building cleaning and housing repairs for Council tenants, school meals and grounds maintenance. The last group of services includes maintenance of parks and open/green spaces. With this structure, leisure and recreation services look divided, as the broad area of parks and green spaces are catered by the Learning and Culture Group, along with indoor sports centres and facilities.
- **Development and Enterprise:** The Development and Enterprise Group provides a wide range of services, including planning, economic development, property services,

highways and transport planning, architectural services, health and consumer services and UDP preparation and review. The Group also controls regulations which range from planning applications to food safety and development of environmental strategy (with reference to Local Agenda 21).

- **Central Services:** This group incorporates the Council's core support services such as finance, legal services, administration, personnel, training and development and policy. The Central Services Group accommodates the Chief Executive's office and the nine Group and Strategic Directors. They are: Community Based Services Development and Enterprise, Learning and Culture, Local Environmental Services, Local Environmental Services, Finance and ICT, Legal and Corporate Services, Human Resources and Chief Executives. Here The Chief Executive heads the authority's officer structure whilst, for example, the Strategy Group leads and coordinates the officer contribution to strategic development and thinking in the Council.

8.4.9 Gateshead UORP

As described by the officers of the Leisure Services and Planning Departments, UORP is carried out under a certain rationale and takes place in certain stages:

First of all UORP is guided by the Unitary Development Plan – the UDP. This seems to act as a general reference material for policy and provision. With the exception of special cases and policy issues, matters and proposals relating to UORP is considered within the context of relevant UDP policies.

Planning and Leisure officers agree that when there is a new open/green space to provide, UORP follows the path of a 'usual planning process' with all its integral features such as proposals and feasibility stage, public consultation, refining of proposals, action plan, implementation and monitoring. It is highlighted that Leisure Services works in close consultation with the Planning Department (and towards the final stages with the Housing and Legal Services). At the core of it, the group is made of planners, leisure officers, landscape architects, landscape designers, horticulturists, architects and the responsible councillor. They work under their own management structure and this is under the overall management of the Council. Under the new structure it appears that the maintenance of parks and open spaces are now placed in the territory of 'Local Environment' portfolio, whilst a

part of the overall leisure and recreation issue is the responsibility of 'Learning and Culture' portfolio. Apart from the maintenance aspect, the parks and open spaces are still with the Leisure Services department in this portfolio.

One point made by a couple of interviewees (planner and landscape architect) is that provision of a new open space does not take place very often as the land suitable for that purpose rarely becomes available. The Council however does utilise 'planning gain' as a planning tool (under the section 106 agreement), in which case new open space can be provided as part of a new development. However, such provision does not reach great figures. Officers put forward that UORP, more often than not, is a management and maintenance issue. And provision and maintenance of quality open space can be very challenging, if all financial targets are to be met.

Officers can initiate and influence policy. One senior officer from the planning department points out that it is the Planning Department which has the lead role in shaping policies. Policies can be seen as the product of a two-way relationship between the officer and politician (councillors). The officer adds that the interplay between the professional and managerial skills of officers and political agendas of politicians have a direct influence on the outcome. In the past the Committee system was the forum for such interplay and discussions for decision-making. With the cabinet system this is expected to change. Some officers on the other hand suggest that because leisure and recreation services are considered as one of those services with 'less political significance', professionals might be in a better position of influencing policy issues and provision matters. One adds that rather than politics, it is the 'financial realities', which ultimately shapes the nature of UORP.

Working now on the basis of 'portfolio' holding instead of 'Committees', the portfolio holder councillor becomes the link between the community and the Council.

8.4.9.1 Aim of UORP

The Leisure Services Committee (GMBC, 1996) states their aim for UORP as:

“...to maintain, develop and promote parks and open spaces in their care for the maximum benefit of residents and visitors, and to maximise the compatible environmental and recreational potential of each park and open space”.

A senior leisure officer states that through UORP, Gateshead MBC would like to achieve the following:

“...improving the quality of life of residents of Gateshead; in line with this, provision of quality open space based on equitable distribution and needs serving principles; provision of recreational opportunities (passive and active) and a base to allow a range of activities and also provision of access to open space”.

The same officer also feels that this general aim is still being addressed. As will be mentioned later, certain factors challenge the Council in this respect. It is significant to note that emphasis here is given to notions of ‘quality of life’, ‘quality open space’, ‘equitable distribution’, ‘needs serving’, ‘recreational opportunities’, ‘activities’ and ‘access’. All of these are of particular interest in the context of this research. First of all, quality of life approach seems to be too general to provide a basis against which objectives of UORP can be clearly measured, as well as establish a strong case for a leisure and recreation related service such as UORP. In terms of ‘quality open space’, this is said to be measured through various ways of public consultation, especially user surveys. The conversation with the officer indicates that ‘equitable distribution’ is linked with the idea of standards. Achieving set standards for provision are believed to facilitate equitable distribution. As will be discussed in this chapter, there are a number of problems with relying on standards if it becomes the underlying principle of provision.

The term ‘recreational opportunities’ is used by the leisure officer in a very broad context. A park, it seems to be believed, inherently would provide ‘recreational opportunities’. When this issue was further pursued it emerged that ‘opportunities’ are basically regarded as ‘activities’ which can be “...passive and active”.

8.4.9.2 Underlying approaches and techniques

It is largely agreed among the interviewees that the Council mostly employs the ‘standards’, ‘open space hierarchy’ and ‘community development’ approaches as the basis of UORP.

8.4.9.2.1 Standards

According to one officer, standards are seen as a tool which is claimed to be utilised by “...practically every authority”. Standards do matter to local authorities in the sense that they

add credibility to the level of provision and delivery of services as well as appearing to provide clear targets and guidance which seem easy to measure. In this respect the NPFA 6 acre standard is the most used standard by the Gateshead MBC. The Council states that:

“Setting standards of provision serves two purposes. Firstly, they provide a target towards which the Council can work in deciding its own priorities for provision and secondly they can be used to assess the effect of development proposals on the provision of open space” (GMBC, 1994).

There seems to be a consensus of opinion among interviewees that standards act as a ‘yardstick’, a set of criteria with which the Council can either justify the levels of provision as ‘adequate’ or find it ‘deficient’. In parallel with Veal’s view (1994), standards are believed to be simple tools, efficient and based on ‘equity’, and also are measurable. However, standards can become a sole target for provision.

8.4.9.2.2 Open space hierarchy

Open space hierarchy can also be seen as a form of standardisation. The GLC open space hierarchy, as a guide, is widely used among authorities, as discussed in chapter 7, in the light of the questionnaire survey, and the Gateshead MBC is one of them.

As was described in the scope of chapter 6, the hierarchy approach assumes that different sizes and types of facilities have different catchment areas. But the distinguishing philosophy here is that different sizes and types of facilities require different numbers of users, or ‘customers’ as Veal (1994) calls them, to be viable and as such, they are suited to the needs of different sizes and types of community.

8.4.9.2.3 Community development

Both leisure and planning officers emphasise the significance of this approach for the Borough. They state that it is imperative to make specific provision for under-provided and rundown areas. So the Council works at the neighbourhood level, frequently with groups such as residents associations which can voice concerns, needs, support or opposition. The Council officers state that there are around 40 residents’ associations in the Borough. Meetings held with those provide a significant input into the planning and provision process.

8.4.9.3 Factors which influence UORP

The most influential factor on UORP, according to the Council officers, is the “**tradition and the legacy of the past**”, which is also what tops the list in the context of questionnaire survey in chapter 7. It is felt that this allows “little flexibility and innovation” on the whole. Large parts of the available funds go into maintenance rather than new provision, improvements and development work. Although through CCT savings were made, it was not invested back into parks, as the “mechanism does not allow this to happen”. With the ‘Best Value’ practice and new organisational structure, this is hoped to be altered.

The second most significant factor is stated to be ‘**budgetary constraints**’. Interviewees state that adequate funds would dramatically improve the current status of UORP. This would take place mostly in the revival and refurbishment of parks, especially those historic parks. All interviewees agree although every department of the Council get adversely effected by financial constraints, it is probably more so in the case of leisure and recreation related services which are non-statutory.

The third factor is mentioned to be the ‘**scarcity and price of land**’. UORP in terms of providing new open spaces and parks is rare. Suitable land for that purpose occasionally becomes available either as part of new developments (for instance through a planning gain exercise, under a section 106 agreement) or as a result of a reclamation project. An officer claims that reclamation works generated some 50 hectares of suitable area from old industrial sites, for such use. However these are often more suitable for creating country parks. Within built up areas the problem of finding or developing new sites remains.

In terms of other significant factors the following are listed: ‘socio-economic factors’, ‘politics and partisanship’ and ‘marginalisation of leisure and recreation as non-statutory service areas’. In the context of **socio-economic factors**, it is the rate of unemployment and poverty and juvenile delinquency in some parts of Gateshead, which appear to create ‘problems’ in relation to leisure and recreation. The Council stresses that:

“....areas of the borough demonstrate symptoms of multiple deprivation and poverty, with pockets of high levels of unemployment. The borough’s historical industrial base has now largely disappeared leaving behind mismatch between the skills of the workforce and the needs of the labour market. The legacy of the borough’s industrial past coupled with the effects of low income faced by many families have led to worse than average health standards

in Gateshead generally” (GMBC, 2001).

Decline of the traditional industries in the Borough is probably the cause of the higher rate of unemployment for unskilled workforce. Unemployment stands at 5.7%, compared to the national figure of 4.3%. It is noted that in some wards of Gateshead, unemployment reaches as high as 11% and the Borough has 5 of the 40 most deprived wards in the Northern part of the UK. The list continues:

- “...the Borough is ranked 35th out of 366 in terms of deprivation
- more than 50% of households do not have a car
- 29% of households receive Housing Benefit
- 36% of households receive Council Tax Benefit” (GMBC, 2001).

One officer stresses that leisure must be learned at school, which might help individuals to develop ‘appropriate’ leisure behaviour, and vandalism and anti-social behaviour in parks stem from the ‘ills of leisure’. He goes on to say that due to lack of resources most of the vandalised facilities do not get repaired, which brings in more vandals and vandalism.

As for the **politics** factor, some interviewees talk about a working partnership with councillors, whilst some consider it as controversial. Despite the general notion held by officers that leisure and recreation are largely apolitical, a leisure officer and a planner agree that this may not be the case.

In terms of the ‘**marginalisation of leisure and recreation as non-statutory service areas**’, this is particularly emphasised by the officers who work in leisure services department. There seems to be an agreement that such services do not have to be mandatory, however they do tend to be one of the first to be affected by budget cuts, due to their non-statutory service status. ‘Leisure and recreation services tend to be the first to lose out’ one officer explains with regard to budget cuts. This is a view which is also supported by the findings of the questionnaire survey in chapter 7. However in the light of the government’s current efforts and emphasis on the urban open space and parks, officers strongly hope that there may be more funds available and more support for the cause of urban open space in general.

Officers think that a strong, supportive **legislative basis** for leisure and recreation is important

but probably not as important as the above mentioned factors. What is required is ‘guidance, not mandates’. This seems to be a commonly held view among metropolitan authorities, as the questionnaire survey previously revealed in chapter 7 (under headings numbered 7.3.16, 7.3.17 and 7.3.18), but it is somehow contradicted by the fascination to use set standards. There seems to be an agreement on the looseness of the legislative framework in the context of recreation and leisure issues and UORP. One comment about PPG17 is that “it is guidance but a loose guidance and it does not look into ‘management’ side of things”. Officers do agree on establishing a good frame of legislative support and guidance. However they emphasise that it must be more specific in terms of standards. For the purposes of this research, this is still problematic as PPG17 adopts a limited view of leisure and recreation.

To follow the same list presented in the questionnaire survey in chapter 7 (in section 7.3.11), interviewees rated a number of factors as of being ‘little influence’. They are: ‘organisational structure of the department or authority’, ‘academic study’, ‘pragmatism’, ‘professionalism’ and ‘managerialism’. It is significant to note that these factors which are rated to be of ‘little influence’ appear to have more influence than they are believed to. The recent re-organisation and re-structuring of the Council is a case in point. The mechanism was in need of a new structure for more efficiency and is being ‘modernised’ in order to deliver more and quality services, through the practice of ‘best value’. Academic work can be seen as a source of guidance and information, however one officer states that it is of little use for practical issues, and such work is hard to translate into practice. Pragmatism also seems to be an influential factor, in a climate of on-going financial constraints, pragmatic approach to given problems seems to be encouraged.

8.4.9.4 CCT

The ‘Compulsory Competitive Tendering’ practice is now replaced by the ‘Best Value’ as already touched upon in the scope of the chapter 5. During the case study, CCT was still in practice and best value was being piloted. To obtain data about this transition period in terms of changing the way services are provided, additional interviews were carried out. One officer suggests that CCT provided “efficiency and value for money. However, quality of service is a different issue”. There seems to be an agreement that CCT resulted in lack of innovation and creativity. With it, park management was almost reduced to simple grass cutting practice and ‘saving money’ became the focal point of park and open space management. What’s more,

one landscape officer from the planning department emphasised that the money saved through CCT was not put back into parks. This exacerbated the situation of the parks. CCT is seen as good value for money but not necessarily for quality.

8.4.9.5 Best Value

Responding to the Government's Best Value plans, the Council was among the first authorities to prepare a local performance plan. Having published two major consultation documents, which have been sent to every household in the Borough to enable people to give their views on the services provided, the Council informed people about the services provided and how well they are provided, as judged against certain performance targets.

“The Council wants to provide the best possible services for local people. This means providing services, which people not only want and need but also making sure they:

improve all the time;

are cost effective;

are developed in partnership with local people and users;

are delivered by staff who are well informed, well trained and committed” (GMBC, 2001).

The new administrative structure is hoped to assist the ‘best value’ philosophy. Within the new structure “local people are being put first” as services are being brought closer to them (GMBC, 2001). In the words of the Council Leader, Councillor George Gill “Local people see us as one council - not as separate services or departments. These changes will help us work together more effectively to solve problems and make our services more open and responsive to local people” (GMBC, 2001).

Best value introduces targets, which function as performance indicators. When local authorities meet a particular target, they claim to fulfil an objective. However local authorities seem to have too many objectives to fulfil and too many targets to meet. As a result, they often prioritise certain targets over others. The following quotation exemplifies this situation:

“If public servants are asked to focus on one measure, they will (rightly) ignore the others. So when the government set a target for reducing class sizes within primary schools, these duly fell and secondary school class sizes rose. And when the government set a target for raising literacy and numeracy, children became more literate and numerate-but at the cost of

squeezing out other beneficial activities such as sport” (The Economist, 2001).

A targets-orientated regime focuses on outputs. At the heart of all this, three issues are emphasised: economy, efficiency and effectiveness. For public services this is of value, as they do not function with market forces regulating output and profits as in private sector. For the latter, customer choice and winning custom can be seen as the best performance indicator. There is no reason why the same indicator should not work for the public sector, if ‘alternatives’ are available. It is understandable that the public sector does need some kind of incentive to perform well. But when best value is recorded, measured and reported by the government itself, it does require transparency as well as credibility.

Best value practice also seems to favour quantifiable targets at the cost of qualitative ones. As in the case of the ‘standards’ issue, local authorities are infatuated with quantifiable measures. There are apparently around 600 targets to meet, which makes the task of meeting targets a difficult one. The leisure and recreation issue is considered in the context of urban green spaces and parks. Public consultation is an important part of this. The Council traditionally strives to find out what type of facilities and activities people would like to see in parks and open spaces. What is now being recorded, measured and reported for public knowledge is how satisfied people are with what is provided. A general report actually has recently been published which is entitled ‘Best Value Performance Plan 2001/2002-Performance Data’. In line with this, the Council aims to achieve the following:

- “consult local people about the planning and delivery of services
- provide the services people want and need
- provide easy-to-understand information about our plans, our services and how they can be obtained
- deliver services that represent value for money
- ensure everyone can obtain appropriate services regardless of their circumstances
- make sure our actions, or the actions of those who provide services on our behalf, are just and fair
- make sure our services are delivered by people who are well informed and trained

- provide information about our progress and inviting views on our performance” (GMBC, 2001).

At the time of writing this thesis, there were no specific UORP targets set by the Council.

8.4.9.6 Budget and capital

The Council received £31.2 million from the Government for 2001/2002. This increased to approximately £45 million with the proceeds from asset sales. However, around £30 million was spent on major projects, among which are the Baltic Contemporary Arts Centre, Gateshead Millennium Bridge, the Music Centre Gateshead and the reclamation of Saltwell Park, even though the majority of funding for such projects is from external sources. As the Council cannot meet the costs of such large scale projects the approval of external funding agencies is necessary for implementation.

For Learning and Culture group the Council has budgeted to spend £541 (net) per person in 2000/2001, which renders this group as the most expensive service type per person. This is followed by the Community Based Services with £246, Development and Enterprise with £94, Local Environmental Service with £44, Central Services with £69, Levies (Transport, Environment Agency and Probation) with £40. For the period 2001/2002, Learning and Culture services expects to spend £590 (gross) per person, whilst it is £383 for Community Based services, £126 for Central Services, £121 for Development and Enterprise, £50 for Local Environmental Services and £41 for Levies.

The Council is expected to make cost and efficiency savings of 2% overall each year, as part of the Best Value programme. These savings are hoped to be made through the Best Value reviews. The money saved is planned to be reinvested to improve services and provide value for money.

8.4.10 Leisure and recreation in plans, policies, strategies and views

Although a couple of officers claimed that leisure and recreation concepts were defined in official documents, this research has not been able to extract any definitions. What can be detected in policy documents and in the UDP, however, is a set of implications that these concepts appear to have. The UDP document is the first primary source for such analysis:

8.4.10.1 Gateshead MBC Unitary Development Plan

The Gateshead Unitary Development Plan – UDP is a significant document in the context of this research. It is a collaborative work, which involves a great deal of research, analysis and projection into future as well as communication, coordination and consultation between numerous Council departments. It can be considered as a blueprint for the present and future actions of the Council.

Gateshead MBC first completed a deposit form of UDP in May 1994. Policies contained in this document are based on the work presented by the ‘Borough Plan for Gateshead’ by the Planning Committee in 1993. Following a Public Inquiry in 1995, the UDP was formally adopted in 1998. The formal review programme of the Gateshead UDP, which has already started, envisages that it will be adopted in 2004.

In the 1998 UDP, recreation and open space issues are dealt with under the title of ‘Community Facilities and Recreation’. This is further divided into policy categories of ‘Education, Health and Other Community Services’, ‘Indoor Recreation’, ‘Outdoor Sports Facilities’ and ‘Informal Outdoor Recreation’. It is this last group that encompasses the sub-groups of open space (urban open space), ‘Countryside Recreation’, ‘Allotments’, and ‘Children’s Play Areas’. It is interesting to note that, in the case Gateshead MBC, urban open/green space is categorised as ‘informal outdoor recreation’ and separate from sports.

8.4.10.1.1 Aim and objectives of provision of community facilities and recreation

The Council adopted a number of policies in relation to leisure and recreation. The main thrust of these policies is that community facilities and ‘recreational open space’ are:

“...essential in order to ensure the creation of high-quality neighbourhoods and to create a sense of belonging” (GMBC, 1998).

The first statement puts forward that:

“A satisfactory range, amount, quality and distribution of provision of community and recreational facilities should be secured in relation to needs throughout the Borough” (GMBC, 1998).

The aim of providing community facilities and recreation is stated as follows:

“To secure a satisfactory range and quality of community facilities and recreational opportunities within the Borough” (GMBC, 1998).

The terms “satisfactory” and ‘quality’ involve value judgements. Officers explain that such judgements are usually based on the input provided by the public, through the consultation process and also through their own professional expertise. One officer states that as public consultation is already a vital part of the current planning and provision system, problems with ‘satisfaction’ and ‘quality’ issues are easily communicated through consultation practices. On the other hand, another officer claims that it is the set standards (usually national standards) which largely defines what ‘satisfactory’ range and ‘quality’ provision are. But there is a general agreement that it is frequently dictated by availability of financial resources.

The Council also states its objectives for provision:

1. “To meet identified needs for community facilities on suitable sites
2. To enable provision to be made for outdoor and indoor sports and children’s play in accessible locations
3. To achieve satisfactory standards of recreational open space throughout the Borough” (GMBC, 1998).

Based on this, needs identification, provision of facilities in accessible sites for indoor and outdoor sports and children’s play, achievement of satisfactory standards of recreational open space are the principles and priorities of Gateshead MBC’s provision agenda.

The following policy statements deal with indoor, outdoor sports facilities and public open space. The common theme of these is that facilities will be sought to be provided, protected and enhanced in appropriate, accessible and especially under-provided areas, at adequate/satisfactory levels and in accordance with set standards, as one officer put it, “as opportunities arise and resources permit”.

8.4.10.1.2 Functions of public open space

Under the title of ‘Informal Outdoor Recreation’, ‘public open space’ is stated to play:

“....two important and inter-related roles. It provides opportunities for a range of recreational pursuits, and makes a valuable contribution to visual and environmental amenity” (GMBC,

1998).

The council recognises, in relation to the purpose of this study, that open space provides ‘opportunities for a range of recreational pursuits’. This renders open space as a resource offering opportunities for various forms of recreation. However, this view of the Council is in contrast with the overriding theme of open space as a resource offering opportunities for various forms of facilities in the context of the UDP. In terms of officers’ views on this matter, there seems to be a degree of uncertainty as to what ‘opportunity’ means in terms of planning, provision, design and maintenance. Still, officers rather frequently refer to ‘provision’ of recreation activities and facilities. Although the topic of provision of opportunity for leisure and recreation appears to be of significance in policy statements, it does not seem to have much importance in the minds of the interviewees as to lead to an in depth discussion for the purposes of this case study.

8.4.10.1.3 UDP classification of recreation

Overall, recreation seems to fall into two categories:

- Formal recreation (which only covers indoor sports and outdoor sports), and
- Informal recreation (urban and country parks and open/green spaces).

One can detect a certain pattern in Gateshead MBC’s approach to leisure and recreation in the form of their UDP. ‘Formal recreation’ is largely about sports and physical activities, and is thus ‘active’ whereas ‘informal recreation’ is largely about unstructured, informal pursuits and, more often than not, ‘passive’. There seems to be an emphasis that the challenge is to plan and provide for formal recreation rather than informal recreation. Furthermore, providing and looking after a ‘facility’ appears to be of more concern than providing recreation on its own terms.

Similarly, their understanding of ‘indoor recreation’ seems to cover only sports, which is only one aspect of ‘indoor recreation’ amongst others. If recreation is to matter to managers, planners and providers alike, it must be considered as a whole and in its wider framework. A limited view tends to overlook the level of provision made by a great quantity of indoor recreation providers – mostly by private sector, such as restaurants, museums, cinemas, shopping malls, etc. - as well as forms of recreation other than sports. This is a problem of

understanding and approach, which stems from a limited conceptual view. This view could be influenced by the form and nature of the UDP or by government guidance in terms of policy guidance and legislation. It matters simply because recreation seekers can be amply provided for one area whilst under-provided in another. A provider of this kind, with executive powers, should be aware of the wider picture of leisure and recreation provision and how and to what extent users utilise the overall level of provision.

8.4.10.1.4 Classification of open space

Local authorities interpret, classify, manage and use their recreation resources and facilities in accordance with the local variables and factors. This is encouraged in democracies. However, as recent government documents (Heritage Lottery Fund et al., 2001) have pointed out there is a database problem relating to urban open space. Efforts are now being made towards establishing a database through the work of the Urban Parks Programme and Urban Green Spaces Taskforce.

Gateshead adopts its own classification in order to aid the process of planning, provision and management. The three different types of open space are: local open space, neighbourhood open space and area parks.

Local open space: These can be relatively small patches of open green/spaces and hard surfaces which are usually close to people's homes and especially convenient for small children's use.

“This space is essential in satisfying the demand for some relief from the fabric of the built environment, especially for those who cannot regularly travel far from their homes, such as young children and many elderly people” (GMBC, 1994).

In order to assess provision of local open spaces, the Council divides the Borough into 90 small residential neighbourhoods, which in themselves have easy accessibility and are not divided by busy roads and other obstacles. As a result, a standard is specified:

“In each residential neighbourhood at least two hectares of Local Open Space, in sites of at least 0.2 hectares, should be provided per 1,000 residents” (GMBC, 1994).

This standard appears to be a variation of the GLC Open Space Hierarchy. As analyses show, although the overall provision appears to be more than adequate, which is 4.5 hectares per

1000 population, the distribution pattern points out to a deficiency of Local Open Space for certain areas. To remedy this problem the Council aims to provide at least one hectare of Local Open Space for fourteen residential neighbourhoods, which makes up 20% of the Borough population. Therefore a specific policy statement details that, where opportunities arise and as resources permit, additional Local Open Space will be provided as a priority in those neighbourhoods.

“In cases where no other method is practicable, consideration will be given to full or partial street closures to create local areas of public open space, providing there is unlikely to be a serious adverse impact on local amenity” (GMBC, 1998).

Neighbourhood Open Spaces:

“Neighbourhood Open Spaces, of a sufficient size and quality to be used for active informal recreation such as kickabouts, need to be relatively close to home to allow frequent visits and to discourage ball games on unsuitable spaces” (GMBC, 1994).

Such open space can be in the form of a ‘reasonably flat maintained grass of at least 2 hectares in size, or formal parks’. Sport pitches within these spaces are considered to contribute to ‘active informal recreation’. The term ‘active informal recreation’ seems to be used to mean some sort of physical activity and games engaged in by mostly by children and teenagers. The Council identifies the following standards for provision of Neighbourhood Open Spaces:

“Open spaces of at least two hectares in size should be provided so that, as far as possible, no resident has to travel more than 500 metres from home or cross a busy road to reach one....In parts of the Borough where the provision of Neighbourhood Open Spaces is non-existent or inadequate improvements will be made, as opportunities arise and resources permit, by upgrading some existing open spaces, making new provision within new large housing developments or by bringing other land into use as public open space” (GMBC, 1998).

Area Parks: These can be much larger than the previous two, and provide ‘a range of facilities and varied environments’. Among such facilities are ‘pitches, courts, greens, etc., for a variety of sports’. Due to their size, Area Parks can accommodate potentially clashing ‘active pursuits’ and ‘passive recreation’ on the same site. It is important that Area Parks provide ‘a wide range of facilities’, as users, who have access to a car, tend to travel greater distances (although less frequently when compared to small local open spaces) for quality and varied

facilities.

“Area Parks of at least five hectares in size should be provided in such locations that as few residents as possible have to travel more than 1.6 kilometres (one mile) to reach one” (GMBC, 1998).

Based on the specified standard, the Council finds that parts of Gateshead Borough (three settlements) are deficient. Despite the fact that the shortage affects only a minority of the Borough’s population, it affects the inhabitants of three settlements, as such the scale of the deficiency problem is great for these areas. However, it is stated that “...because resources are likely to be limited during the Plan period no sites are allocated for the creation of the new Area Parks” (GMBC, 1998). Still:

“In parts of the Borough where the provision of Area Parks is non-existent or inadequate improvements will be made, as opportunities arise and resources permit, by upgrading some existing open spaces or by bringing other land into use as public open space” (GMBC, 1998).

8.4.10.2 ‘Beyond 2000’

This is a document which outlines Gateshead MBC’s policies and priorities for Gateshead, in a concise form. It is significant for this research as it sets out the policies for the future and it is a new document. Under the ‘Learning and Culture’ heading, one summary policy is particularly relevant:

“Develop a strategic approach to the development of arts and leisure facilities; revisit all outstanding schemes and review priorities in the context of the development of a Cultural Strategy” (GMBC, 2001).

This largely refers to indoor recreation places. In the same document, Council also states that it will:

“...take positive action to create local environments that are pleasant, safe and clean and will enhance the quality and safety of local neighbourhoods by ...ensuring that all parks, open spaces, roads, footpaths and streetlights are maintained to a good standard” (GMBC, 2001).

‘Good standard’ seems to be determined by the public consultation practice. Also, the Council:

“...wants to enable local people to learn and develop throughout their lives, raising levels of

educational achievement and promoting universal access to leisure and cultural amenities” (GMBC, 2001).

8.4.10.3 Leisure and recreation in attitudes

One leisure officer views leisure and recreation as synonymous terms and suggests that they mean more or less the same thing. Another leisure officer suggests that leisure and recreation cover a whole range of pleasurable activities, which are engaged in during one’s free time. The planner’s view implies that recreation is more about active pursuits and sports whilst leisure is a more general term. It should be emphasised here that interviewees were uneasy about defining leisure and recreation concepts. This research has not been able to deduce a common pattern of understanding as to what leisure and recreation are, despite the fact that all interviewees have been asked to provide an opinion. As a result of this, the relationship between leisure and recreation also remains unclear.

Chapter 3 outlined a conceptual picture of leisure and recreation with a multitude of conceptual dimensions as well as significant areas of differences and similarities between them. This picture is not acknowledged by practitioners in Gateshead. The large amount of research on this subject appears not to matter greatly.

8.4.10.4 Agencies and a future Parks Agency

An Urban Parks agency is not unwanted but viewed with caution. The emphasis on ‘guidance, not mandates’ is repeated in this context too. However, officers do stress the need for establishing such an agency to champion the cause of urban parks and generate a lobby of interest, “as in the case of the Countryside Agency”. It is a consensus of opinion that urban parks are great assets for urban populations as well as future generations and that, although many of parks seem to be in decline, this situation can be reversed by the influence of a powerful agency and interest lobby.

As mentioned before, the recent activities of the Government and in particular the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, the Urban Parks Programme and Urban Parks Forum look promising. The Urban Parks Forum was set up by the Heritage Lottery Fund to guide its funding programme for regeneration of the historic parks. The Forum today has a wider agenda and deals with urban parks in a more general framework. Also, it is significant to note that the recent DTLR report (2002) actually proposes setting up a statutory agency for the

cause of urban green spaces and parks.

8.4.10.5 Preferences, needs, demand and satisfaction

The Council employs certain methods in order to gauge user opinion, demand and satisfaction. Although these are distinct issues in themselves, they can be categorised under the umbrella of ‘user opinion’ and ‘user attitudes’. The main methods which a senior leisure officer lists as useful tools in measuring user/public opinion are: public consultation, attitude survey and questionnaires, door to door enquiries, letters and requests and other types of communication. User attitude surveys, for example, were not carried out systematically or regularly in the past, a situation which is hoped to change with the Best Value practice.

Questionnaires are seen as the most effective way of exploring and analysing what the public likes and dislikes. They contain questions which aim to explore how the open space/park and its facilities are used. The Council usually carries out follow-up surveys to determine what the satisfaction levels are. Depending on the findings, such information is utilised for ameliorating a negative situation and also for future developments. Council’s open space questionnaire surveys will be analysed in the following ‘Saltwell Park’ phase of the case study.

Questionnaire surveys seem to be based on the ‘activity-facility’ principle. The respondents are usually asked what forms of activities they would like to engage in, in a park and accordingly what types of facilities they would like to be provided. This seems to make up the whole basis of leisure and recreation related services.

8.4.11 Conclusions

The Council attaches great importance to the issues of ‘adequate level of provision’ and ‘appropriate standards of provision’ which seems to feed into the ‘standards’ and ‘targets’ issue. The recent practice of ‘Best Value’ is likely to strengthen the case of set standards in the form of quantifiable, measurable targets and performance indicators. **In relation to the planning, provision and management of urban open/green spaces and parks, the Council works with its own open space hierarchy which is developed from the GLC hierarchy. This seems to be based on the activity-facility understanding.** In line with the context of UORP related policies, UORP is claimed to operate with ‘people’ in mind. **Nevertheless, it appears that UORP focuses more on ‘facilities’, ‘targets’ and**

'standards'. As was revealed in chapter 7 (under heading no. 7.3.4.2), 'provision of good quality open space/parks for local communities to improve their quality of life' is the foremost goal of UORP, followed by 'addressing areas deficient in POS/equivalent level of provision/equal access' and 'enabling public to undertake recreation/leisure'.

UORP, as a process described by Gateshead MBC officers shows great similarities to the general findings of the local authorities questionnaire survey in Chapter 7. Stages of UORP process are the same and the way in which the Council functions seems to be very similar to the majority of other metropolitan authorities. **Finance and resistance to change (due to traditionalist planning and provision culture) are probably the two most important factors to influence the quality of services. The tendency to maintain the legacy of the past seems to function as a barrier for practitioners to re-visit the rationale of UORP, and in relation to that, leisure and recreation concepts.** This can be one of the reasons behind the lack of innovation and creativity.

The metropolitan borough of Gateshead accommodates a considerable number of unemployed people (with 'imposed leisure'-leisure as time) and social problems. Parks are said to be misused and vandalised, which puts further pressure on the limited financial resources. **The Council adopts a pragmatic; management and maintenance oriented approach. Additionally, academic studies are regarded as of little use for UORP practice.** Considering the fact that the Council now operates within a different working environment, the 'change' and 'innovation' issue is now considered with more optimism. For the time being this does not seem to cover the concepts of leisure and recreation.

In terms of conceptual approaches in written policy documents leisure and recreation are associated with the 'activity' aspect which is linked to matching 'facility' and resource. Overall, one sees a clear emphasis on this. Facilities are generally divided into 'indoor and outdoor sports facilities' and implicitly 'recreational open space'. Activities are in two groups: 'passive' or 'active'. **This is a very limited view of leisure and recreation as it overlooks significant components such as the experience aspect of recreation and time dimension of leisure.**

One obvious conclusion is the apparent weakness of the link between the leisure and recreation concepts and UORP. This confirms the findings of the questionnaire survey.

Those officers interviewed simply argue that, in their day-to-day work, such theoretical issues do not get much of their attention, as the scale of their workload somehow disallows this. Leisure and recreation, as leading concepts do not seem to matter greatly in terms of providing 'quality public open spaces' for people. So much so that the very few answers given to the definitional question were even more incoherent than those provided for the questionnaire survey.

Quality of resources and facilities and services provided seems to be judged against the criteria of 'standards' and set 'targets' as well as the input from public consultation, which is a significant component of UORP, as was suggested by the questionnaire survey. However, under the best value review carried out by the Gateshead MBC, the public does not appear to have been given the opportunity to express an opinion on public open/green space and parks. A Best Value Parks Strategy would perhaps facilitate this.

Chapter 9 - Case study of Saltwell Park

9.1 Introduction

Saltwell Park, a prestigious, Victorian, urban park, will be under the scrutiny of the case study method in this chapter, in order to explore the links (if any) between leisure and recreation concepts and an urban outdoor recreation resource. As pointed out in the methodology chapter, chapter 6, Saltwell Park is expected to function as a template to reflect the nature of these links as well as the ‘activity – facility focus’ of UORP in its District, and will extend, confirm, modify or challenge the propositions made in the earlier chapters and the findings of the questionnaire survey and the GMBC case.

The chapter first places urban parks and green spaces in context and provides background information, which includes definitions, current themes and issues. This could have been allocated in Chapter 5; an overview of local authorities as main planners and providers of UORP. However, it seemed more appropriate to place such specific information on urban parks and green spaces in this chapter; in direct relation to the case study urban park. This general, informative section is followed by background information relating to Saltwell Park itself with its history, description of its characteristics, the on-going restoration and regeneration project. In doing so, the Park’s relation to leisure and recreation concepts, which is expected to reveal a weak link with the anticipation that only the activity-facility aspect of this issue is explored in UORP, is continuously questioned. This case will also establish links with the findings and conclusions of the earlier chapters.

9.1.1 Methodology

The Saltwell Park case study utilises a range of methods which are listed by Yin (1994) as producing evidence for a case study. Along with the use of documents, such as relevant open space policy documents, surveys of the park and the restoration proposal report for the Heritage Lottery Fund and archival records (particularly maps and photographs), it also refers to the physical artefacts (historical structures and buildings and facilities of the park), interviews (with both Council officers and park staff), direct observation (visits to Park) and finally participant observation (as users/visitors of Park).

For this part of the case study, more interviews with Council officers were carried out, specifically relating to Saltwell Park. The Open Spaces and Parks unit of Leisure Activities (of the Learning and Culture Group) consists of only four officers and of these, two with specific knowledge and expertise on Saltwell Park (one being the Saltwell Park manager and the other horticultural services officer) were interviewed. The interviews took place between 1997 and 2002 since the researcher interviewed the same officers twice, as it became necessary in line with the on-going nature of the park's restoration work and also current developments with regard to the parks and open spaces issue. There was also one interview with a park warden, who was on duty on November 1997. This interview was much more informal than the others. The warden gave his own account of the decline of the Park and but at the same time, pointed out to what is still so potentially good about Saltwell Park.

The researcher visited the Park several times. These visits took place between November 1997 and August 2002, which spanned both pre-restoration and restoration periods. Although the researcher could observe users, types of popular pursuits and the current status of the Park, information relating to this has been utilised from the Council's own user surveys and public consultation practices and relevant documents. The researcher did not carry out an exclusive survey in order to explore what the users and non-users of the Park actually thought of the Park, as this is not the prime concern of this study. Also, this study does not aim to provide detailed site survey or a park design strategy, as the main purpose is to examine the nature of the link between leisure and recreation concepts and UORP practice.

9.1.2 Analysis

As in the case of Gateshead MBC part of the case study, the analysis of data was straightforward. The Saltwell case had certain questions to answer and the analysis involved looking for these answers in those replies given to interview questions, in the content and context of relevant open spaces and parks policies; in the findings of the surveys and consultations carried out by the Council in relation to Saltwell Park; and also the Park itself. The researcher in this case, employed the method of secondary data analysis, which included the analysis of the Saltwell Park user survey as well as the results of the feasibility studies undertaken by the Council for the bid document submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is the data collected by the Council and not by the researcher; however, it is analysed independently for the purposes of this study. The researcher's own observations of the current

physical appearance and the proposed form and norm of the Park all point out to certain conclusions as far as the specific questions of this case study is concerned, which are incorporated into the conclusions of the case study as a whole.

9.1.3 Urban parks and open spaces

Urban outdoor recreation places make up only one small portion of the wider frame of leisure and recreation resources. However their significance for the urban environment and urban dwellers is beyond dispute. As Spink (1994) points out, the great majority of the British population (over 80 per cent) lives in urban areas and spends the vast proportion of their free time there. Urban outdoor recreation does not take place only in parks (formal and informal parks), but also in places like playing/sports fields, playgrounds, gardens, allotments, recreation grounds, water space, urban woodland as well as linear open space such as footpaths, towpaths, streets and thoroughfares (Williams, 1995).

9.1.3.1 Definitions

There have been numerous attempts to define parks and open spaces. The following is a selection of these, which also covers relevant terms, such as ‘amenities’:

“Parks and open spaces are diverse locations, providing opportunities for a wide range of formal and informal, passive and active leisure, sport, recreational and play activity....in the widest sense and it includes areas that may be termed local parks, country parks, play space, playing fields, river banks and public open spaces.” (LGA, 2001).

Another definition, which describes parks and amenities, is as follows:

“The term ‘parks’ is generally understood to mean those areas of open space which are set aside for human leisure and pleasure. Parks draw heavily on landscape and horticultural features for their impact and these provide a framework or backcloth for the activities within. ‘Amenities’ is a much broader term, encompassing all those sites such as golf courses playing fields, allotments and water features that are not parks in the strictest sense but have a common recreational bond with them. The two elements, parks and amenities, have been grouped together traditionally for the sake of convenience in identity and administration” (Gentil, 1991).

Gentil (1991) emphasises that parks provide a focal point for a community and they contain elements of both active and passive recreation. He distinguishes between urban and regional parks that whilst urban parks are the creation of the mid-nineteenth century, regional parks are

a much more recent innovation (Gentil, 1991). Gentil's definition uses the terms leisure and recreation interchangeably, in his attempts to describe parks and amenities.

Comedia (1995) offers a definition of types of parks and open spaces:

“We would include in the larger picture, streets, squares, market places as well as neighbourhood parks, town parks, linear parks, regional parks, commons, cemeteries, school playing fields, children's playgrounds, urban farms, canal paths, beck valleys, allotments, community gardens, urban woodlands, abandoned wasteland, land around the old utilities (railways and water boards), and so on. Some of this was intentionally planned, but much also has been inherited, particularly common land or 'lomas lands', where public rights of access are enshrined in ancient legislation. There clearly now is a wide variety of open spaces in cities” (Comedia, 1995).

The definitions of parks and open spaces are plentiful. The above is only a selection to illustrate that they are understood in association with leisure and recreation concepts, though in an inconsistent pattern. There seems to be a degree of uncertainty whether it is leisure and/or recreation (along with the 'passive' and 'active' leisure/recreation distinction) which should be relevant to the parks and open spaces issue. Listing of what types of places qualify as parks and open spaces in city environments seems to be a less problematic area in terms of definitions.

9.1.3.2 Functions and benefits

Welch (1995) suggests that:

“Parks and open spaces are important because they provide for the human need for peaceful enjoyment in the open air and easy access to the living world. In towns they offer a necessary sense of space and help to alleviate urban claustrophobia. Recent research suggests that they make people feel more at ease in their surroundings, where there are sufficient open spaces which are accessible to them. These increase what Americans have started to call the wellness of a community. If they are well cared for they enhance the areas around them and add to their value. Few other developments, whether for recreational use or not, can claim this” (Welch, 1995).

According to the Local Government Association (2001):

“Parks engender social inclusion, offering no barriers or restrictions to entry. Parks do not exclude on grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, race, disability, education or

economics. They help to reduce inequalities, poor health and exclusion. Parks form part of the life experience of most individuals in our communities, from babies in prams, through children's play and exploration of the environment; young people use as free and accessible space, to adults rediscovering their value for health, relaxation and companionship. They provide for the recreational and cultural needs of the community, and play a role in the economic and community renewal in deprived areas" (LGA, 2001).

Comedia (1995) argues that successful parks fulfil many complex needs of an urban settlement:

"By and large they are local facilities; people who use them use them frequently; they mostly walk to them; and they are accessible to all ages, and all walks of life. Many people take great pride in 'their' park, and it is often the meeting place and focal point of that elusive notion of 'community'. Few other urban institutions or facilities possess this openness and flexibility. Park are often a source of local continuity and 'sense of place' in a rapidly changing urban scene" (Comedia, 1995).

According to Sir Richard Rogers, parks bring diverse sections of society together, and breed a sense of toleration, identity and mutual respect (Comedia, 1995). The Urban Parks Forum (UPF) (2001) takes a similar line, but also touches on the undesirable functions of parks:

"Parks constitute a valuable inner city resource, providing a potential haven of peace and contact with nature. They provide for recreational and leisure needs, maintaining community spirit and interaction. They assist in urban regeneration, increasing the attractiveness of an area for inward investment and its residential desirability. However, parks are also the scene of criminal activities ranging from theft and vandalism, to assault" (UPF, 2001).

All of the above also recognise the environmental, ecological and aesthetic functions and benefits of parks and open spaces. In line with this, parks are considered as multi-functional assets with a multitude of benefits for cities and city dwellers, which can be grouped under the headings of health and well-being, environmental and ecological benefits; young people and education and community regeneration. An LGA report (2001) uses examples of 17 case studies of parks and open spaces to arrive at this categorisation. Dunnett et al. (2002) point out that recreational use of 'urban green space' can deliver social, educational and health benefits as well as environmental and economic benefits, on the whole.

9.1.3.3 The rise of urban parks: issues and context from 1990's to date

According to David Lambert of the Garden History Society, Hazel Conway's book "People's

Parks: the Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain', which was published in 1991, has been an influential factor in placing more emphasis on urban parks and rendered parks 'legitimate recipients' of heritage grants. Lambert argues that the book prompted English Heritage to begin redressing the imbalance against urban parks as far as the national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest is concerned (Lambert, 2002).

There were a number of other publications, which documented the perceived decline of the parks. In 'Guide to Management Plans for Parks and Open Spaces', ILAM (ILAM, 1991) emphasised the need to invest in parks. Similarly, the Garden History Society and Victorian Society argued in 'Public Prospects: the Historic Urban Park Under Threat (Conway and Lambert, 1993) that the historic parks were facing a crisis.

In 1995, Comedia raised the profile of urban parks with a first ever nation-wide research on parks and park users. The research entitled 'Park Life: Urban Parks and Social Renewal', contained twelve working papers which were written by experts on different aspects of the urban parks issue. This work, referring to the 'perceived decline' of Britain's urban parks first, underlined that quality parks are vital for urban settlements and urban dwellers and urged authorities to draw-up local strategies for parks, re-formulate their objectives for provision and management and adapt a more pro-active, flexible and creative approach (to UORP).

The Heritage Lottery Fund Urban Parks Programme was set up in 1996. This Programme has been very influential in effecting policies and strategies across the country. It was first established on a three year basis but this was soon extended. The Programme has been successfully funding numerous projects across the UK. In their first annual report for 1994-1995, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) stated that:

"Nothing...is more important than the restoration of parks, public gardens and open spaces in towns and cities. Many parks have now been reduced to a state in which their contribution to the quality of urban life is minimal. Their potential, however, remains enormous.Contributing to the regeneration of urban parks therefore exemplifies our policy in two important respects. It uses lottery money to maximum benefit, and it converts the legacy of the past into a vital asset for the future" (HLF, 1995).

The new labour government which came to power in 1997, had a specific interest in urban issues and hence urban green spaces and parks. The House of Commons Environment Select

Committee (Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee – ETRA Select Committee) called an inquiry into town and country parks in 1999 and pointed out to the decline and deficiency of information on urban parks.

Also a report by the Urban Taskforce entitled ‘Towards an Urban Renaissance’ was published in 1999. The report argued that urban open space is very important in making a city successful and attractive and supported the idea of their strategic planning to achieve this. Following this, the Government’s Urban White Paper, ‘Our Towns and Cities: the Future’, came into force in December 2000. The White Paper’s treatment of the issue of urban parks and play areas seems to be based on the information provided by the report of the ETRA Select Committee inquiry.

Another significant work is a joint report by the Heritage Lottery Fund, DTLR, English Heritage and the Countryside Agency, which is entitled ‘Public Park Assessment’ and published as a preliminary report in July 2001. The report put forward that 18% of the parks are in good condition while 69 % are in fair and 13 % are in poor condition. 37 % of the respondents pointed out that their parks were in a general decline. The report points out to evidence that condition of parks in deprived areas is generally poorer and in decline.

The DTLR commissioned a specific research entitled ‘Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces’, which was carried out and reported by Dunnett, Swanwick and Woolley in May 2002. The research suggests that there are seven ‘broad categories’ for visiting an ‘urban green space’: enjoying the environment, social activities, getting away from it all, walking activities (including dog walking), passive or informal enjoyment, active enjoyment (sport and specific activities) and attending events (Dunnett et al., 2002). It is interesting to note that this categorisation utilises both ‘experience’ and ‘activity’ definitions of recreation. Additionally, Dunnett et al. report that people would like to see good design and management in urban green spaces based on meeting people’s needs, and tackling the barriers to use as well as provision of high quality, varied experiences for a variety of users. The authors also point out that:

“There may be merit in local authorities using an adapted version of the Quality of Life Capital approach to provide a framework for presenting consistent arguments about the important benefits offered by urban green spaces and also for evaluating individual sites and features” (Dunnett et al., 2002).

Such views may now be better received by authorities under the climate of increasing awareness of the value of parks and green spaces for urban populations. The value and functions of parks and green spaces in urban environments are being increasingly questioned and examined today, in relation to what form, norm and function they should be given for future planning and management. There have been successful attempts in drawing government's attention to this matter and emphasising that these places play an important part in people's lives in a variety of ways, which is encouraging and looks promising for future UORP. The recent DTLR report, which was published in May 2002 and reported by the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (UGST), emphasises that 'urban parks and green spaces' bring benefits to people, neighbourhoods and cities. These are, briefly, urban regeneration and renewal; health; social cohesion; community development and citizenship; education and lifelong learning; environmental sustainability, and heritage and culture (DTLR, 2002).

However, despite the current, encouraging emphasis urban outdoor recreation places, the critical link with the concepts of leisure and recreation has yet to be explored and put to use. 'Benefits' issue is increasingly becoming a popular theme for academics and officials, but the questions of what benefits, how and what 'activities' and settings they can be yielded from are not addressed, which may well require establishing a conceptual link with the 'experience' and 'psychological outcomes of experience' views of recreation.

9.1.3.4 Current issues and context

Parks and open spaces are currently considered in relation to a range of governmental policies and practices. The Local Government Association provides a list as follows and raises some questions (LGA, 2001):

- **Modernising and Best Value:** Under the new local authority administrative structures and the Best Value practice, the question of whether local authorities will be able to deliver an improved parks and open spaces service remains to be answered.
- **The Local Government Act 2000:** The LGA questions if our parks and open spaces can be an influential part of local council's new power to promote social, economic and environmental well-being (LGA, 2001). The LGA also asks if the parks agenda be promoted in the context of community plans and strategies. Again, this remains to be seen.

- The Urban White Paper ‘Our towns and cities: the future’ (DETR, 2000): This identifies parks and open spaces as a key contributor to the idea of ‘urban renaissance’ as well as leading to the appointment of a specific Urban Green Spaces Taskforce and raising the profile of the ‘Green Flag’ award system, which functions as a national standard.
- A new commitment to neighbourhood renewal/regeneration: In this context the value of parks and open spaces will be considered in the context of local renewal strategies and strategic partnerships. This may further raise the profile of parks and open spaces.
- Sources for funding: A range of funding programmes might provide the much needed financial help to create, maintain, restore and regenerate parks and open spaces. Among these are Neighbourhood Renewal Funds, the Children’s Fund, New Opportunities Fund for Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities, Heritage Lottery Fund’s Urban Parks Programme and the Football Foundation’s grass roots programme. To tackle the issue of financial problems which have been adversely affecting the management and maintenance of urban parks and open spaces for decades now, increasing efforts are being made in order to establish closer links and partnership with the private sector as well as facilitate voluntary/self-help initiatives and provision. The DTLR report (2002) suggests that at least £100 million capital is needed in order to reverse the decline of existing parks and green spaces and to create good quality new ones. It proposes use of sources other than local authority and suggests different types of partnerships and community involvement in order to attract more funding from the private sector and local businesses.
- Regionalism: The LGA (2001) believes that parks and open spaces will need to work towards building and promoting their position within regional cultural strategies, regional cultural consortia and the developing regional agenda.
- Beacon Council initiative: On its third round the initiative now concentrates on the theme of ‘improving open spaces and green spaces’ which requires local authorities to devise innovative and effective approaches to the planning, design and management of green spaces (LGA, 2001). The name ‘Beacon Council’ suggests a guiding authority carrying a guiding signal for ‘good practice’.
- PPG17: PPG17 aims to provide policy guidance on sport, open space and recreation and it was first published in 1991 (DoE, 1991). A revised draft appeared in 2001 and the final

revised version was published in July 2002 (DTLR, 2002a). The new version advocates the use of standards on the condition that needs are assessed and standards are adapted in line with local variables and circumstances. The first earlier version appeared to be favouring the quantification of the open space issue, regarding provision, protection and disposal, the revised-version does not seem to introduce a new approach either; it encourages the use of local standards instead of national standards.

Parks are certainly back on the official agenda. But what is the rationale? How do they relate to leisure and recreation? How do they relate to their users and non-users? Saltwell Park case will be answering these questions:

9.2 Saltwell Park: history, description, features

9.2.1 History of Saltwell Park: a ‘People’s Park’

According to Gateshead MBC, Saltwell Park is one of the finest examples of Victorian Parks in the North East, if not in Britain. This prestigious urban park with historic character was opened to the public in 1876, to provide a pleasant and peaceful, open, green space for rest, respite and recreation, largely for the working population of Gateshead. The history of Saltwell is inextricably linked with the economic and social history of Gateshead and the North East. Gateshead was one of the industrial workshops of Britain with coal mining, engineering, shipbuilding and refining and processing chemicals being the primary sources of production and manufacturing. As in other industrialised parts of the country, the working population living in the North East were facing the consequences of a rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. Appalling living conditions, lack of quality sanitary facilities, epidemics and long working hours exacerbated the situation. Introducing open/green spaces in the form of urban parks was seen as part of a solution. Like many traditional municipal parks, Saltwell Park came into being this way. The aerial photograph (Figures 9.1) shows the location within the densely built urban area.



Figure 9.1 Aerial views of Saltwell Park from the south (Airfotos Ltd., 1997)

Saltwell Park is designed by a notable designer and author, Edward Kemp (1817–1891). Kemp was trained by Sir Joseph Paxton after which he became the superintendent of Birkenhead Park. There were two other notable figures of the North East who joined forces with Kemp in the creation of Saltwell Park. John Hancock advised on the landscaping phase of the lake and its close surroundings while Sir Joseph Swan, a Victorian inventor and Gateshead resident, provided expertise on the lighting of the lakeside (GMBC, 1996). A considerable portion of the land belonged to William Wailes who was a stained glass manufacturer. This included the mansion, grounds and four fields. The Gateshead Corporation actually bought the land from Wailes to create Saltwell Park (The conveyancing plan is shown as Figure 9.2).

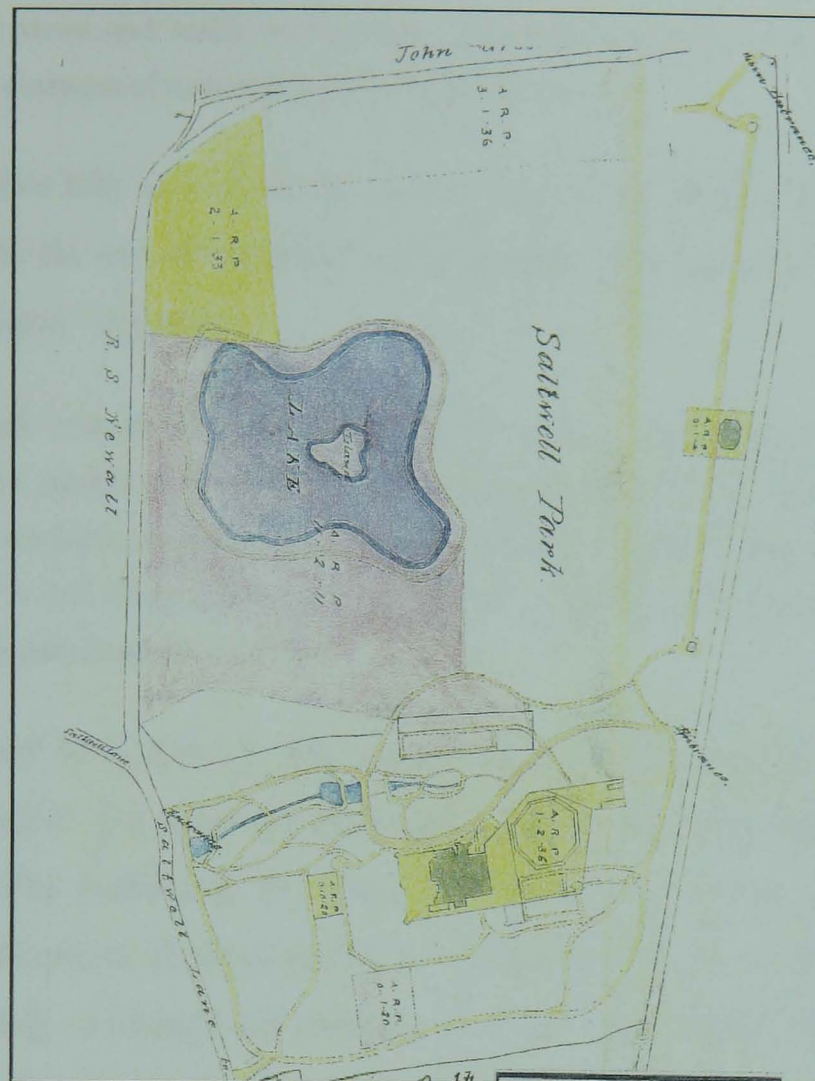


Figure 9.2 The 1880 conveyancing plan (Gateshead MBC)

Saltwell Park was opened to public in 1876 as a traditional municipal park. The name Saltwell is derived from ‘Salt Welle’ which is the public drinking fountain in the Park. This drinking fountain was the most celebrated design feature of the Park, when it was first launched. This is because the fountain provided clean drinking water for visitors, which was something of great value in terms of health of the working population and population in general. The main focal point of the Park, on the other hand, was the lake and Saltwell Towers and the adjoining gardens, which were then called Saltwell Mansion. Other design elements and facilities have been added to the Park in time, but the main layout, landscape frame, buildings and structures remained unchanged.

9.2.2 Description of the Park

9.2.2.1 Design and philosophy

The design of Saltwell Park reflects the essential design philosophy of the Victorian Park, which is discussed in chapter 2. This 19 hectare traditional municipal park contains:

“...controlled views and series of enclosures that enable activity to take place without destroying the character of natural tranquillity (GMBC, 1996).

The Council describes this as a series of ‘garden rooms’ in different styles (GMBC, 2001). This was achieved by the use of tree and shrubbery belts, which demarcate and form character zones/spaces for diverse ‘activities’.

“In a short walk users experience a wide variety of styles – going from open meadow, to formal Italianate gardens with planted borders and statues and then to a woodland glade – all in a relatively confined, urban space. Another key element of Kemp’s design is the clever use of open views to fool the eye and to give the impression that the park is much bigger than it really is” (www.gateshead.gov.uk, 2001).

In the way described in chapter 2, the ‘activities’ in a Victorian Park typically included strolling and relaxing in the tranquil, green and colourful park environment, enjoying fresh air, listening to music performed by bands on bandstands, playing and watching sports, enjoying floral, horticultural displays and variety of gardens and also entertaining children by feeding ducks, playing on swings and roundabouts (Conway, 2000). These ‘activities’ would enable park visitors to rest, relax and entertain but at the same time educate themselves and improve social and moral values. Saltwell was designed with this purpose in mind. In interviews, the two officers from the parks and open spaces unit stress that Saltwell Park functioned as a platform for the working classes to observe and aspire to the social and moral values of the upper classes as well as resting and relaxing in a tranquil setting. Can this still be the aim of park provision and management today?

The Victorians had a certain social agenda, an ethos, in the creation of urban parks. Providers seem to have focused on the outcomes and benefits of leisure and recreation and matched these with activities, which would yield them. This differs from the philosophy and rationale behind today’s UORP. The findings of the questionnaire survey and the interviews carried out for the GMBC case both suggest that today’s agenda does not appear to be as specific as this, and in fact is too general for the efficient delivery of UORP services. The aim is stated to be creation of ‘opportunities’ for leisure and recreation and, hence, ‘improving the quality of life’ of visitors. But today’s UORP seems to put the emphasis on creating opportunities for certain ‘activities’ and ‘facilities’. The wider conceptual picture of leisure and recreation goes largely unnoticed in practice. In relation to this point, the Saltwell Park management officer explains that the wider conceptual picture of leisure and recreation is understood but the

Council does not have the right mechanism or adequate resources to apply this to UORP. He exemplifies this with reference to the ‘recreation as experience’ approach and claims that the Jewish users are already interpreting the certain elements in the Park in line with their religious beliefs and culture. The management officer states that:

“The Jewish community would like pray over a large area of water. The lake in the park becomes a perfect setting for this”.

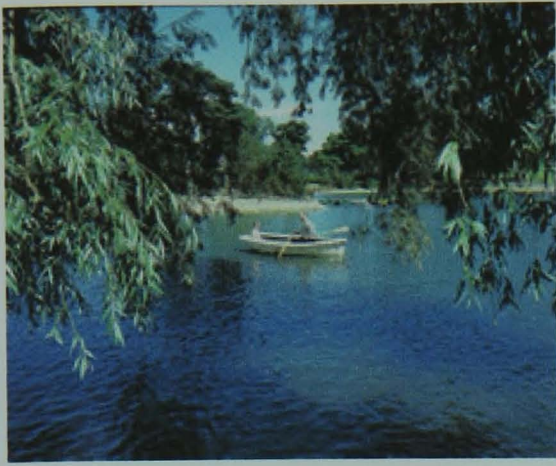
Nevertheless this is not acknowledged in relevant documents and UDP. And it should be pointed out that ‘recreation as experience’ as a topic was introduced to the interview by the researcher, so the officer was somehow prompted to talk about ‘recreation experiences’.

On the whole, the officer claims, that the general design framework of Saltwell Park remains unaltered, however, there seems to be serious problems with the current status of structure planting. As such, sustaining the landscape that holds that framework becomes a strategic issue and the Council has been working on a Management Plan to deal with long term management issues in relation to the landscape framework. There are no proposals or strategies developed for the management of ‘recreation experiences’ or ‘visitor satisfaction’ in the Management Plan document. Here, the focus seems to be placed on the physical resource (the Park) and the facilities (to facilitate recreation activities) that it contains.

9.2.2.2 Character spaces

Character spaces are described by the Council under the titles of ‘Character Analysis’ and ‘Conservation Context’ in the Lottery bid document (GMBC, 1996). In line with this, the park accommodates three main areas with distinct character and identity: the Parkland, the Pleasure Grounds and the walled enclosure of the Grove (containing the extensions of South Dene Nurseries and the Crematorium). They are briefly described below, which is based on the description of the Council in the bid document (GMBC, 1996):

The Parkland: This area, which is the northern end of the Park, contains the lake, the Broadwalk, the show ground and the formal games area. The area originally consisted of four open rural spaces and was the original piece of land bought by the Gateshead Corporation from William Wailes, in order to convert it into a municipal park. Some design features of the Parkland, such as the lake and the Broadwalk shelters have survived, whilst others have either been lost or seriously damaged. Almond Pavilion, for example, suffered serious damage, due

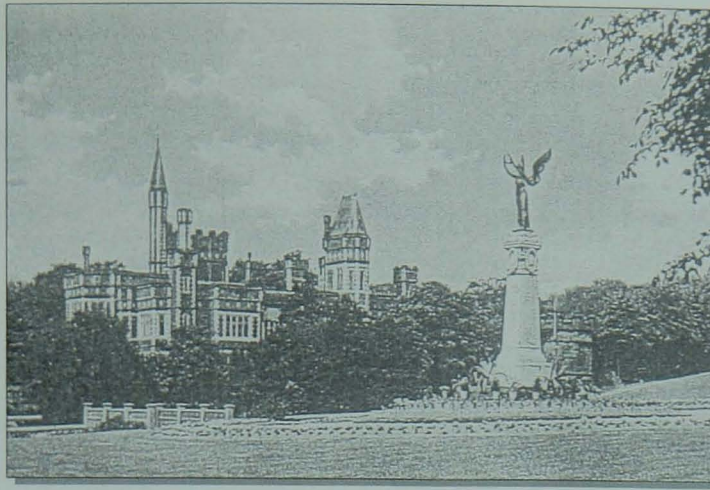


to arson. The lake in Saltwell Park remains a significant feature. Apart from providing a focal view, lakes in Victorian Parks, helped to shape a circulation system within parks. Restorative work on the lake actually started in 1995. A formal games area was also designed by Kemp to incorporate a bowling green and a tennis court, but later on other features were added and also

removed. Among the additions which still remain are a pavilion and training centre and a bandstand/kiosk. Some of these additional buildings, in the Council's opinion, degraded the general character of the Park as they were constructed from poor quality materials and their design did not meet quality standards (GMBC, 1996).



The Pleasure Grounds: This is the visual focal point of Saltwell Park where Kemp's and Wailes's designs seem to have merged. The highlights of the Pleasure Grounds are the Saltwell Towers, formal Belvedere gardens and the Dene and the Driveway. Saltwell Towers only exist as a shell today and are in need of major renovation work, which is expected to restore the original Gothic, Elizabethan and French design influences.



They are one of the twelve listed buildings in the Park. The Dene and the Driveway, which were designed and planted by Wailes, who also built Saltwell Towers, before they were included in Saltwell land, provided walks in a tranquil setting. However, the main driveway and the setting of the public drinking fountain 'Salte Welle' lost character due to changes and developments within and outside the Park. The modernisation of the fountain has been unsuccessful and future work needs to be done in order to restore it to its former character, which is already pledged by the restoration project. As with Parkland area, the general historic character of the Pleasure Gardens has degraded over the years and requires extensive restoration work. The Council states that the relatively new addition of a rose garden in this part of the Park is successful.

The Grove: This is an open area at the southern end of the Park, which accommodates the traditional bandstand as a focal point, a shelter and toilets. It was incorporated into the Park in 1928.

There are numerous historic buildings and monuments in Saltwell Park. These provide high quality foci and lead to quality vistas. Many of them need modest repair work and restoration except the Almond Pavillion, which requires extensive repair due to serious fire damage. As far as the landscape elements are concerned, the bedding displays are carefully maintained and a new heather garden was introduced. Nevertheless some significant focal elements of the original landscape design have been lost. Among them are the inner Belvedere formal garden, part of the Maze and shrubberies. In the Council's view, this has resulted in considerable loss of character in Saltwell Park. Relatively new features such as the African War Memorial, the rose garden and bowling shelters are now considered as part of the general fabric of the Park. Some of



these have not been very popular with users.

The Council recognises that there are serious problems with the park with regard to its infrastructure, furniture, path network, drainage system, toilet facilities and signage:

“Basic elements in the park have not been updated, or have been repaired using a piecemeal approach producing patchwork of poor quality. A management Plan, providing a coherent rolling programme of works to a high specification, which includes a monitoring and review process, is required to rectify poor and inadequate infrastructure elements. This approach would also safeguard the quality of historic features and the performance of the basic Park functions” (GMBC, 1996).

Character spaces will be emphasised with the restoration of the Park. The interviewed officers believe that the function of the park has not changed, and that it can function the same way as it did for the Victorians. What needed to be changed, they add, are the maintenance regimes and management styles and when these are in place, the public will be able to enjoy the parks the same way as the Victorians did. This is a controversial issue and tends to ignore the variable of ‘time’ and its great influences on individuals and society.

The officer suggests that the Victorian spirit of the Park has been lost. He goes on to say that a Victorian park provided a variety of experiences, it was never a uniform experience which is what, in his opinion, Saltwell Park has become recently. The restoration project is hoped to bring the Victorian spirit and the variety of experiences back to the Park. However what appears to be proposed in this context is largely conservation and very little complementary new development. In terms of the provision of ‘experiences’, there is no indication or intention of it in the Saltwell Park restoration project, policy statements or interview answers.

9.2.2.3 Conservation Area status

The Saltwell Conservation Area was designated on 6 July 1990 (GMBC, 1996). The conservation area encompasses the north westside of Low Fell, which contains large Victorian villas with private gardens. Saltwell Park is the principal element of this area. Later, the English Heritage and the Council established a Conservation Area Partnership for Saltwell Park, in 1994. Their aim was to promote the park as a major heritage asset and also highlight opportunities, which exist for its conservation, restoration, improvement and future development (GMBC, 1996).

Saltwell Park is a Grade II listed park as well as a 'Garden of Special Historic Interest'. The main one of the twelve listed buildings is Saltwell Towers with Gothic, Elizabethan and French design influences. In relation to this, an Urban Parks Forum report (HLF et al., 2001) report suggests that:

"Grade II parks derive no particular benefit at all from their designation and that their condition assessments are comparable with non-listed parks and gardens. ...effective protection is only really evident when Grade I parks are considered separately" (HLF et al., 2001).

This is evident in the Park's vandalised facilities and buildings. When Saltwell Park is restored it is likely to need specific protection from vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The future management and maintenance of the Park pledges to do that with adequate funds allocated for maintenance, staffing and installing of CCTV. This is in clear conflict with the apparent expectation of the officers, referred to above, that the Victorian design and facilities in the Park can be enjoyed in the same way, under quality management and adequate funding. The issue of anti-social behaviour and vandalism is relatively new one and requires specific planning, design and management strategies.

9.2.3 Catchments and function of the Park

As was described in chapter 8, Gateshead MBC identifies three kinds of, what is termed in the UDP, 'recreational open space': Local Open Space, Neighbourhood Open Space and Area Park. Both as Local Open Space and Neighbourhood Open Space, Saltwell serves a population of around 8000. This population lives in a densely built up housing area with terraced houses and Tyneside flats. A large majority does not have private gardens or have very small gardens (figure 9.1). With regard to its role as an Area Park, the potential user numbers reach as high as 50,000 (approximate) within a one mile radius, which includes most of the inner and poorer parts of Gateshead (GMBC, 1996). Saltwell Park is the only Area Park in this one mile radius, which increases its significance for a large part of Gateshead's population.

Saltwell Park is located in the Saltwell ward of Gateshead Borough. However it is the neighbouring Bensham area which probably has more implications for Saltwell Park, than Saltwell area itself. Bensham was named by the Government as:

“...one of the most deprived areas in the Country...Unemployment rates stand at 18 per cent, one third more than the average for the Gateshead Borough and more than twice that of the UK. In the Government’s official Indices of Deprivation published last year, Bensham was ranked as the 236th most deprived ward from the list of 8,414 across the country” (Evening Chronicle, 2001).

This area is included in a regeneration project, as it has been suffering from the consequences of urban decay and social deconstruction.

“Five years ago, Bensham was in trouble. Crime was rising, violent yobs walked the streets, vandals set fire to empty homes while elderly people were to go out after dark. Unemployment was a third more than the average for Gateshead and more than double the average for the UK. It was clear to everyone who lived in that multi-cultural community, home to the North East’s biggest Jewish quarter, that something needed to be done....Crime was a major factor in the unhappiness of many Bensham residents. In 1996, more than 114 of every 1000 local residents could expect to be a victim of crime, compared to only 67 for Gateshead as a whole....In a survey of Bensham residents in 1996, more than half thought the crime ridden area has become a worse place to live” (Evening Chronicle, 2001).

So far, more than £9 million has been injected into the Bensham regeneration scheme. This is provided by a variety of agencies such as the local government itself and the Lottery Fund. Saltwell Park on its own is granted £9.6 million. To reverse decline of the area, specific services are currently being provided towards training and advice and information is given on health and careers issues as well as parenting and childcare. Although there is some progress in the way of scaling down the crime and disorderly behaviour, a reader’s letter to a local newspaper describes the current situation of Saltwell Park in strong words:

“...Away from dogs and their incessant barking and their anti-social owners who couldn’t care less and take their pets walking to defecate at will (but not in their back yard) also the litter louts who do their best to rubbish the valiant efforts of the Council cleansing staff....At present the park gets vandals and glue sniffers nearly every night. I believe some of the Lottery money should be used to pay for ongoing security to protect the park, so visitors and residents can enjoy this park which must be one of the best in the country (Evening Chronicle, 2001).

One of the four park wardens of Saltwell Park also provided his opinions on the Park’s problems. According to him, the most serious of those are vandalism, litter and dog fouling. Vandalism can take place anytime and there is an urgent need for improving the security in

the Park such as higher fences, CCTV and better lighting. He adds that locking the Park doors at night might also be a good idea.

“But the worst thing is the senior school which is very close to the Park and the pupils of this school....It is like the World War III here during lunchtime. These are mostly boys who are in 10-16 age group. But the girls are ten times worse” (Park keeper on duty, 1997).

The Council states that, over a twelve month period there were forty-one recorded (by the wardens) incidents in the Park, among which were two cases of arson, five serious cases of violence and seventeen incidents of drunk and disorderly and threatening behaviour by youths. The park warden interviewed stresses that a considerable portion of the users of the Park does not comply with the rules. For instance, people walk and run their dogs on the War Memorial Area when there is actually a special area for dogs, however this does not seem to make any difference to dog owners.

Visitors/users seem to be alienated from what actually was created for them and what belongs to them as ‘the People’s Park’. The Council acknowledges this. There are efforts to encourage the communities to value their park, creating a ‘sense of ownership’ and a ‘sense of belonging’, an idea which seems to be also embraced by many other local authorities.

“A number of initiatives are being pursued to engage the local community in the future management of the Park. The South Dene Nursery Association and the Friends of Saltwell Park have been particularly helpful in this. It is intended that this will develop further as the restoration progresses. A number of the proposed improvements will also help facilitate this, in particular the restoration of Saltwell Towers” (GMBC, 1996).

The officers from the parks and open spaces unit argue that until the restoration work is complete and users observe for themselves that the Park is safe, there will be doubts about the safety issue and injecting a sense of belonging and ownership for many, will be a challenging task.

9.2.4 Restoration/revival of Saltwell Park

The slow but persistent decline of the Park and its surroundings has been a case for concern for the Council for some time. This concern eventually resulted in the preparation of a restoration proposal, which was submitted to the Urban Parks Programme of the Heritage Lottery Fund, in order to secure necessary funds to reverse the decline of the Park and secure

its future. Following this application, Saltwell Park was granted a £9.6 million funding for a large-scale revamp. The Almond Pavilion, in its own right, is expected to cost around £400,000. The work on the Park started two years ago and is expected to be completed in 2004. One third of the restoration work is now complete.

The Council states that the aim of the Saltwell Park Restoration Project is to conserve the North East's finest example of a nineteenth century municipal park at a critical stage in its history and to safeguard its continued success into the twenty first century at the forefront of urban life (GMBC, 1996). However, the primary aim seems to be conservation. The bid document in fact contains five groups of objectives which are listed below:

1. "Upholding the ethos of the Victorian 'People's Park' as a strategic public open space
2. Conservation and development of Saltwell Park as a whole and living entity and not merely a list of components
3. An active approach to monitoring visitor demands and expectations, responding appropriately to new and emerging issues whilst maintaining the historic integrity and legacy of the park
4. Implement an individually designed, strategic management plan covering all aspects of the repair, restoration, conservation, development and maintenance of the hard and soft elements of the park
5. Promote Saltwell Park and its amenities as an educational resource and a focal point within the Borough for future ecological, social and cultural events" (GMBC, 1996).

In relation to item 1, the Council stresses that this should be achieved by providing a "framework of character spaces, accommodating a wide range of recreational activities" (GMBC, 1996). This is in line with the People's Park philosophy, which is associated with a framework of character spaces and a range of leisure and recreation activities.

Item two implies that the 'conservation' objective is to be fulfilled along with that of 'development', which is a challenging issue for planners and designers. Given the fact that it is the Heritage Lottery Fund, which provides the financial resources for the restoration of the park, the objective of 'conservation' seems to get more emphasis. In an officer's view, if it was not for the Heritage Lottery funding, the historical character of Saltwell Park might not have been respected and many important features in the Park not restored.

Item three implies systematic and regular user/visitor surveys and public consultation exercise in order to gauge demand and preferences, however only focus groups are being consulted recently. The last user survey was carried out for the bidding process, which was in 1996.

As far as item four is concerned, there could have been a more innovative approach to the management of the Park, which could elevate the management issue from the level of mere facility management. This could mean, for example, management of user satisfaction.

In relation to item five, details of how this is going to be implemented are not specified in the bid document.

9.2.4.1 Restoration plan

A Restoration Plan was contained in the bid document in considerable detail. Figure 9.3 describes a summary of the comprehensive restoration plan. As figure 9.3 illustrates:

“The restoration Plan utilises the historic landscape design to determine activity, character and basic function and to sustain the living entity that is Saltwell Park. The implementation of the Restoration Plan will fulfil the aims and objectives of the Saltwell Park Project by safeguarding its historic merit, accommodating contemporary demands and securing the future of the Park into the twenty-first century....In simple terms the Restoration Plan aims to restore the best, ensure the continuation of the successful, remove the inappropriate, and respond to change sympathetically” (GMBC, 1996).

The Council states that the park is a whole and living entity and not only a setting for discrete features. Therefore the restoration plan is based on a ‘holistic’ approach. What the plan aims to achieve is to safeguard the historic identity of the Park, but at the same time, to accommodate contemporary demands. To do that, a colossal scale of work needs to be undertaken. Among these are the removal of unpopular design elements and buildings; restoration of bedding plants, lost formal gardens, historic details of features and park furniture, listed historic buildings and to include ‘flexible spaces’ and facilities to enable events, community activities, exhibitions and interpretation (as in the case of Saltwell Towers and Almond Pavilion); repair works and upgrading of utilities, infrastructure, park furniture, paths.



Figure 9.3 The Restoration Plan (Gateshead MBC, 1996)

In terms of detailing of 'flexible spaces' mentioned above, it is probably mostly confined to the Saltwell Towers, which is to accommodate a café. This café is planned to be a place for catering, exhibitions, community and educational uses, toilets and ancillary facilities. The future use of the café seems to be clearer than the other 'facilities' in the Park, as far as the Council's restoration proposals are concerned. If one particular area in the Park is to be scrutinised as an example of what is proposed in terms of restoration, regeneration and development, the Octagonal Garden presents a good example:

"The Octagonal Garden is the driving force in establishing the spatial form and character of the built core. The manner in which the buildings and landscape enclose the Octagonal Garden and the way in which the Octagonal Garden controls and directs circulation is of prime importance. Restoration of the Octagonal Garden will replicate the uncluttered grassed appearance of the original bowling green and will be edged in an appropriate manner. The hard and soft landscape in this area will be manipulated to recreate the original balance of views and the enclosure of buildings and space. Inappropriate modern buildings will be removed in order to accommodate the restoration of the historic landscape. The Belvedere walled gardens and the Maze will be restored to their original Victorian appearance and the other listed buildings and monuments in the built core will be repaired and restored. The arrangement of the footpath system will reflect the historic pattern laid out in the 1897 Edition Ordnance Survey" (GMBC, 1996).

Apart from some facilities such as the café and children's and junior play area, there is no apparent linking of open, 'soft landscape' and gardens to any kind of leisure and recreation pursuit in terms of future use of the park. The above given example is one of many similar proposals, which concentrates very much on restoration by conservation. This research can only assume that such areas are linked to 'informal recreation', of which most popular forms are walking (including walking the dog) and sitting outside, according to the findings of the Council's user survey (GMBC, 1996). There are large expanses of green land in Saltwell Park as well as historic buildings and structures, which could utilise the historic character of the Park with innovation and creativity. Keeping in mind that the funding is provided by a heritage and restoration oriented agency, such areas could at least be explored and utilised for their ability and potential for providing opportunities for certain forms of leisure and recreation experiences, which could have been incorporated into the bid document. However, the obvious problem with that is that utilising the link and relationship between open/green spaces and leisure and recreation experiences in UORP requires a new way of thinking and a new basis for UORP. It appears as if the community which will use and visit Saltwell Park

will have to adapt to Saltwell Park and not the other way round.

As was pointed out in chapters 7 and 8, UORP focuses on ‘activity’ and the matching ‘facility’. Saltwell Park case both confirms and contradicts that. The activity-facility focus is still there; it is in the content of the user surveys, questionnaire survey, public consultation and the restoration bid document, but it is somehow over-shadowed by the conservation-restoration focus of the whole project. As reversal of the decline of the Park became such a priority for the Council, so did the conservation and restoration focus. The Council was somehow driven to ‘conservation’ because that is the only way they can obtain any funding. The UDP policies encourage both development and conservation and there is no specific UDP policy to guide restoration of historic parks with a large (potential) user group from the ethnic minority and considerable external funding.

According to the interviewed officers, the highly influential factors of ‘tradition and legacy of the past’ and ‘financial cutbacks’ for normal council funding exacerbated the situation, which strengthens the findings of the questionnaire survey and the GMBC level of the case study.

9.2.4.2 Development and modernisation issue

This topic is dealt with under the title of ‘Promotion and Development’ in the Bid document (GMBC, 1996). It proposes, in relation to the purpose of this chapter, to restore the informal recreation area and improve the landscape framework of the character spaces; also:

“...improvement of the play provision within a newly created character space in conjunction with lakeside catering and boat kiosk, shelters and setting” (GMBC, 1996).

It also proposes building a facility for formal recreation and games to provide good quality changing rooms and toilets as well as indoors viewing and catering areas for users/visitors. The Council stresses frequently that the new facilities and structures (such as signage and lighting) to be introduced into the Park will not detract from its character. They will be of good quality and in simple styles.

Once again, this does not introduce an innovative approach or a strategic thinking as far as the issue of combination of conservation and development is concerned in a given place. A large scale, funded restoration project like Saltwell Park could have pioneered new approaches for the restoration/regeneration of all historic parks across the United Kingdom. The historic

parks are 9 % of the total number of parks and cover 32 % of the total area of parks, according to the findings of the 'Public Parks Assessment' (HLF et al, 2001). The question of 'do we restore them to their original state or do we adapt them to the wants and needs of today's society?' remains to be answered. David Lambert's reader's letter to a magazine argues that:

"The UPP has funded new gardens in old parks, such as the Moghul Garden in Lister Park, Bradford – as it is squeezed by the enormous demand, its priorities have naturally been repairing the roof rather than decorating the living room. So, yes, we need new parks, but we also need our old parks. We shouldn't be asking the either/or question: we want both!" (Lambert, 2000).

The Council officers support this view, though with more emphasis on preservation and conservation for Saltwell. The two officers from the parks and open spaces section explain that for historic parks such as Saltwell Park, restoring the historic physical fabric is vital and this could be used to the advantage of the Park, in terms of improving the image of the Borough and provision of better services and facilities for park users. However one cannot ignore the fact that today's society is spoilt for choice in terms of leisure and recreation related services and products. As Gentil (1991) argues:

"There has been a trend towards abandoning the urban park in favour of more diverse recreational opportunities elsewhere" (Gentil, 1991).

Obviously the needs and likes of today's society are quite different than that of the Victorians. Providers such as local authorities ought to take into account the trends, needs and preferences of the modern society. An urban park, just like any product for the use of the public, will have to be inviting, attractive and inspiring. People should be able to relate to it and also come back to it for future visits.

With reference to a report by the Garden History Society and The Victorian Society, Comedia (1995) provides a synopsis on the topic of heritage, conservation and new development.

"The report cites the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) development in Cannon Hill Park as showing 'little consideration for its park setting' whereas many might think it an ideal place to put an arts centre. Time and time again the report cites 'historic character' as a reason for not developing anything new, such as a garden centre or a car park. Yet in Merton the development of a garden centre (with a car park), café and art studios in the National Trust

owned, Morden Hall Park, encouraged by Merton Council, has re-invigorated that park. While admiring and endorsing many of the sentiments in favour of traditional Victorian park design, standards of horticulture and staffing levels, as well as the recommendation for individual park management plans, the lack of sympathy for modern social needs—there is no mention of children’s play facilities of any kind, for example—diminishes the strength of the argument” (Comedia, 1995).

9.2.5 Management Plan

With relevance to this study, the Saltwell Park management plan aims to:

“...encourage the urban population of Gateshead to participate in and enjoy the full range of cultural, educational, formal and informal recreation activities available within the safe environment of the Park; retain the relationship between the conservation of the historic fabric of the park in respect of the design structure whilst upholding the ethos of the Victorian Park and its heritage value,ensure the continued availability of an accessible public open space which is an example of horticultural excellence, an educational resource and a focal point within the Borough” (GMBC, 1996).

The Management Plan also suggests that Saltwell Park is basically a restoration project. There are no specific proposals, in the Plan, towards regenerating the Park through making it relevant to different parts of today’s society. If the legacy of the past can co-exist with what is relevant and in touch with today, then Saltwell Park restoration and management plan fails to deliver this. In fact the scheme looks like a project, which is concerned with re-creating a park as it was created more than hundred years ago. This is somehow ‘putting the clock the back’.

The future management of Saltwell Park will necessitate the allocation of considerable financial resources, which might deprive other (less prestigious) parks. The Management Plan is a long term plan and is subject to continuous reviews and modifications.

9.2.6 Public consultation

How did the Council devise its proposals for the restoration of Saltwell Park? This was partly guided by a number of public consultation exercises, which were based on the methods/techniques employed in the Comedia report of ‘Park Life’ of 1995. In line with this, the Council completed a consultation exercise with the local Jewish community, along with other forms of consultations, a gate count survey, and a visitor survey. The Council also consulted other user groups such as the Bowling Association, the South Dene Nursery Tenants Association and Gateshead College, which is in close proximity to the Park.

The interviewed officers state that further consultations are planned to take place as and when necessary, during the implementation and monitoring of the proposed restoration plan. The Council has been also meeting focus groups to explore if they support the restoration proposals and to enable them to express their views and wishes.

The Gate count survey was carried out during the summer of 1996, in order to determine the number and age profile of users to the Park as well as their age profile. Gate counts were carried out at different entrance points. According to this the number of visitors increase threefold between July 1996 and August 1996 (1341 in July, 3233 in August). However the researcher could not detect any application of this data to the proposals of the Saltwell Project.

The user survey was carried out in the winter, spring and summer of 1996. This basically consisted of a questionnaire survey. A total of 513 interviews were carried out to fill in the questionnaires between January 1996 and August 1996. The survey data was analysed to explore weekday-weekend and also seasonal variations (GMBC, 1996). A brief summary of the survey findings is as follows:

First of all, the ratio of male visitors to female visitors is 38: 42, which also reflects the results of the gate count analysis. Of all interviewed users, 82 % lived in Gateshead and in this proportion 58 % lived within walking distance. The majority (58 %) walked to the Park and 29 % drove. 45 % of those interviewed were accompanied by their family, whilst 28 % were with friends and 22 % alone. Visitors usually spent 1-4 hours during their visit. Among the reasons given for visiting the Park are walking (39 %) of which 10 % is done for walking the dog, using the play areas (25 %), sitting outside (12 %), picnicking (5 %) and boating (4 %). The most popular areas are the lake (79 %), the Parkland (70 %), pets corner (60 %) and play areas (58 %). A large majority (91 %) of the visitor expressed their contentment with the safety of the Park, however, a separate survey concluded that this is not the case. According to this other survey, a significant part of the neighbourhood does not feel safe in the Park. This user group tends to visit Saltwell Park at weekends and as part of a group. The survey also pointed out that 43 % of users found dogs a problem and 62 % of all visitors suggested restriction on dogs.

A copy of this questionnaire is enclosed in Appendix 4. Question 7 asks the user to give reasons for visiting the Park. If the listed categories of reasons studied, it becomes clear that

they are 'activity' categories: Walking, walking the dog, jogging, picnicking, sitting, bowling, playing tennis, football and so on. This is once again, limiting the leisure and recreation concept to one dimension, which is 'activity' (It is reasonable to think that people do something on a visit to a park, however, this does not seem to be linked to what people do and what they experience or feel as a result of what they do). The following question 8 then enquires about the user's favourite place in Saltwell, which partly embraces the issue of 'facility'. Questions 14 and 15 directly ask about facilities, those which should be improved and those which should be added. Leisure and recreation as 'activity' are linked to a 'facility' in urban park.

9.3 Conclusions

The basic conclusion of this chapter is that as a real-life case of UORP, Saltwell Park mirrors the UORP focus of 'activity' and 'facility'. However, the strength of this concern seems to be somehow lessened by the priority given to the 'restoration' of the Park to its original physical state. So, restoring the Park's historic physical fabric has much more emphasis than regenerating it as a whole. The Saltwell Park project, on the whole, is a straightforward restoration project. It is almost a park face-lift or refurbishment scheme.

Saltwell Park was designed with a social agenda and was premised on the thought of raising the morale of working classes and at the same time educating and improving their health by physical activity and experience of recreation in general. Leisure and recreation activities were linked to the experiences, psychological outcomes and benefits they would potentially provide. Today, the purpose of providing and maintaining an urban open/green space is stated to be for the improvement of the quality of life of the residents of Gateshead Borough. **The Council seems to prioritise maintenance and management of facilities over the management of quality recreation experiences, which supports the findings of the questionnaire survey. Feasibility work and public consultation practices, in relation to the UORP, are also based on 'activity' and 'facility'. The user groups or public are only asked about what activities and facilities they would like to be provided.** This case has analysed the Lottery bid document, the proposed restoration plan, management plan, public consultation, research documents, interviews with Council officers and Saltwell Park itself, and can only conclude that **the understanding of leisure and recreation concepts, in UORP, is based on the 'activity' definition.**

In the Saltwell case, other factors add another dimension to the nature of the link between leisure and recreation and an urban park, which are 'heritage', 'conservation' and 'restoration'. **Restoration of historic parks introduces a dilemma of conservation over development. In the Saltwell case, conservation became the priority in order to secure funds for reversing the decline of the Park.** However, it is arguable that money alone can create a well-used, 'successful' park. Although allowances were made for the development and improvement of the existing structure without taking away from the identity of Saltwell as a prestigious Victorian Park, this seems to be mostly confined to buildings.

Saltwell Park has been subject to acts of severe vandalism in places. However, **vandalism is not considered, by the officers interviewed, as a form of leisure and recreation behaviour. If it had been, attempts could have been made to divert such behaviour to different but 'acceptable' activities with similar experiential outcomes to vandalism and anti-social behaviour.** Such consideration does not necessarily condone or license anti-social behaviour, on the contrary, it can transform 'irrational', 'unacceptable' recreation into 'acceptable' forms of recreation with a potential of facilitating catharsis (as was discussed in chapter 3). The Council, on the whole, seems to adopt a 'problem solving'; management and maintenance oriented, almost outdated approach to UORP.

Although the Council is now under a new administrative system as part of the modernisation of local governments and committed to the delivery of the 'Best Value' in service provision, impact of this remains to be seen. **It is a significant period for urban parks and open spaces as they are now back on the agenda.**

As was outlined in the scope of the methodology chapter, chapter 6, the case studies of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park aim to answer different but closely linked questions. Conclusions which emerge from the two case studies are woven into the conclusions drawn from the overall research in the next final chapter.

PART IV – CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 10 - Summary and conclusions

10.1 Introduction

This chapter first summarises the whole study by re-emphasising the initial reasons for research, its aim and objectives, leading research questions, methodology and key findings from the critical stages. Following this, the main conclusions are outlined, which lead to a discussion of the wider implications of this study for the field of UORP, and consequently some proposals are made for the improvement of UORP services in relation to the main aim of the study. And in line with this, finally, some areas, which require further investigation, are highlighted.

10.2 Research problem, aim and objectives, research questions, rationale and methodology: a summary

Starting point

This research started with a problem; the problem being that leisure and recreation seemed to be viewed, in the field of UORP, in a limited, oversimplified way and UORP appeared to focus on an ‘activity’ definition. However, the research was aware of a large volume of academic work which offers other explanations, along with ‘activity’, which are significant and closely relate to UORP, especially the ‘behavioural’, ‘experiential’ definition. The research took the standpoint that leisure and recreation concepts do not appear to be simple concepts and they need to be understood in their (at that point, seemingly) multi-dimensional conceptual framework, however complicated this may initially seem to be. In addition, incorporating an understanding which would first acknowledge and then utilise the relevant aspects of the wider conceptual picture of leisure and recreation into UORP, would probably be highly beneficial in many respects; it could contribute to increasing and measuring user satisfaction levels, play a part in reversing the decline of urban parks (and create ‘successful’ parks) and improve planning and management.

Questions to answer

The study focused on leisure and recreation concepts, on UORP and on local authorities as main providers of UORP. It is local authority policies and practices that ultimately determine the nature of urban outdoor recreation places such as urban parks. But there seemed to be a lack of clarity in formulating what it is to provide and why and with what objectives it is to be provided and managed for the future. Local authorities were probably not very clear in defining the basis of their provision. What was being provided? Was it leisure and recreation? Was it the provision of facility that enabled the activity which was in mind? Was it management of what already exists? Why is there a problem with the 'activity' concern? What is the comprehensive picture? What is leisure and recreation?

These were among the questions which guided the research along the route briefly described below.

Aim

The aim of this study was to increase our understanding of leisure and recreation concepts in the context of urban outdoor recreation provision and to emphasise the need for integrating a more comprehensive conceptual picture as the basis of UORP.

Research rationale

To achieve this aim, the study first analysed the concepts of leisure and recreation, which included a critical historical account of the evolution of leisure and recreation and, linking with that, an extensive literature survey on the philosophies and definitions. These outlined a conceptual picture, much larger and more comprehensive than relating to just 'activity', but it also raised new issues to investigate and questions to address. As the study basically aims to inform UORP of the relevance of wider conceptual picture of leisure and recreation, the next task concentrated on UORP, investigating the links and meanings of leisure and recreation to the field of UORP. At this level, what guided and constituted a basis for the research flow and methodology was the theoretical build-up (and propositions made based on this) from the conceptual framework section of the thesis. In line with this, the next step was to provide a critical insight into the operational frame of UORP, within the boundaries of its relevance to the research aim, and to search for clues as to where the answers to these initial and newly

arisen research questions would be. This insight into the operational framework of UORP answered some of the research questions but left some unanswered and raised new ones. So the subsequent, three step empirical research stage was developed, in order to test the propositions and the theory which had developed, which verified some propositions and modified others. A general, postal questionnaire survey and a two-phase case study were employed as suitable methods for this task. The questionnaire survey provided valuable information and led to significant findings about the current status of UORP and attitudes towards leisure and recreation. In order to investigate the research issues in more detail and to do this in a real-life situation, a two level case study was carried out.

This final stage brings together all the main threads and relevant strands of the key findings of the research and re-synthesises these to reach its main conclusions.

10.3 Questions, emerging themes and findings

The section below contains the leading research questions, emerging themes, methodology and key findings. It should be noted that the structure below divides the actual research into two distinct phases:

- Phase 1 Conceptual
- Phase 2 Operational, which further splits into:
 - Phase 2.1 Overview of UORP
 - Phase 2.2 Questionnaire survey
 - Phase 2.3 Case study

10.3.1 Phase 1: Conceptual framework

Research questions

What is leisure and recreation? How are they conceptualised and defined? What is the historical root and progression of these concepts into becoming a public service area? Do they denote the same phenomenon or are they actually different? What is the link or relationship between them? How does all this relate to UORP?

Key findings

The historical overview (chapter 2) points out that leisure and recreation are human concepts, developed by human means and within human capabilities. From the dawn of civilisation to date, leisure and recreation has been given a variety of shapes and sizes. Opportunities for leisure and recreation, at times, increased and decreased, were inhibited and encouraged as well as facilitated throughout centuries, by the human action. Hence, their meaning and value can change with time, through the action of the human actor. An insight into the dynamics of the industrialisation process permits one to come closer to an understanding of how and why present accounts elucidate leisure and recreation the way they do. This insight reveals that industrialisation segregated the spheres of work and leisure, in the 'time' sense. Leisure and recreation were constructed in a new way and given a distinct set of meanings. Leisure was increasingly understood in relation to the time concept, as residual time, time away from work; such as evenings, weekends, bank holidays and paid holidays. Recreation, on the other hand, was to take forms of socially acceptable, 'wholesome' behaviour for rest and relaxation, recuperation, re-creation for work.

A comprehensive literature survey (chapter 3) firstly revealed that leisure and recreation are not synonymous terms; they are multi-dimensional, interrelated, but at the same time, distinct concepts. They have distinct as well as similar conceptual dimensions. In terms of the identical dimensions, leisure and recreation can be both 'activity' and 'social matter'; nevertheless the contexts can still differ. As for distinctions, leisure contains a time dimension; recreation does not appear to. Although the 'state of mind' aspect of leisure and behavioural/experiential definition of recreation partly overlap, it appears to be mostly recreation demystified by Psychology and Social Psychology. There is a tendency in literature to place leisure in a 'social matter' context; leisure is basically time related and largely the subject of Sociology. An inventory of the amount of leisure (time) is not necessarily an inventory of recreation which people experience or engage in, as leisure does not necessarily result in recreation; it is only a facilitator of recreation. Leisure as a social issue describes leisure as inextricably linked with the economic, political and institutional structure of society and with social variables such as class, education, income, age, gender and so on. Recreation as a social issue is broadened in the context of moral standards of society, which tends to translate recreation behaviour as either 'acceptable' or 'wholesome'; or 'irrational', 'disruptive' or 'unacceptable'.

Findings from phase 1 suggest that the wider conceptual picture of leisure and recreation would have implications for the field of UORP. If research on the operational framework part concludes that UORP indeed focuses basically on the ‘activity’ definition, this means that a considerable volume of valuable, significant and relevant conceptual information is missing from the UORP practice.

10.3.2 Phase 2: Operational framework

Research questions

How does practice work? What are the main components of UORP in relation to the aim and objectives of this research? How are leisure and recreation understood and applied within the operational framework of UORP? Can we actually infer any conceptual standpoints at all? What approach/approaches form the basis of UORP? How does this relate to the findings of ‘Phase 1’? What factors influence and shape the nature of UORP?

These questions imposed three different but integrated levels of research: a critical overview of the current status of UORP, a questionnaire survey of the metropolitan local authorities, and a case study/case studies of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park.

10.3.2.1 Phase 2.1: overview of UORP

Research questions

What is the current status of UORP? What is its institutional framework? How did UORP evolve? What legislative framework, governmental policies support UORP? How do local authorities operate as the main providers and what are the principles, philosophies and techniques which drive UORP? Can an understanding of leisure and recreation be inferred from these?

To find answers to these questions, at this first level, the relevant UORP literature, governmental and policy documents were reviewed and analysed.

Key findings

In terms of UORP’s institutional framework, central government is a vital part; not as a direct provider but as a powerful, indirect controller; with the power to impose duties, make

legislation, lead policies and establish organisations. However, the direct providers, planners and managers of UORP are local government. There is no statutory agency solely responsible for leisure and/or recreation and there is also no single body solely responsible for Urban Outdoor Recreation. Statutory agencies or 'quasi-governmental agencies' can be highly effective in terms of informing and influencing policies and championing the cause of given issues. They can act as pressure groups; inform policies and practices. The voluntary sector also emerges as significant as it is increasingly involved in UORP in terms of forming partnerships with the public provider and practising self-help in those areas where the public provider's service delivery is hampered or limited. The large-scale provision by the commercial sector is more varied than that of public sector; has the competitive edge; provides with the consumer in mind and moves with the changing times, society, fads and fashion. In contrast, there seems to be an element of traditionalism in the way UORP is practised by the public sector.

Planning and provision for leisure and recreation seem fragmented; influenced by social, political and economic factors; and guided by a variety of legislation and regulations. Plans, policies and strategies of UORP tend to state goals and objectives. So, what leisure and recreation mean, in the sense of clarifying what is being provided, could possibly be detected in such documents. However, even the governmental policy guidance note on open space, sport and recreation, PPG17, fails to do that. The relevant literature regards financial resources as a major factor for the quality of provision and maintenance. In addition, the nature of organisational structure, traditionalism, politics, professionalism, and managerialism can make agencies of UORP slow to respond to immediate problems, as well as 'change' in general.

There appeared to be a wide range of approaches and techniques used in UORP. The standards and hierarchies approaches were frequently mentioned. Although such techniques are valuable, it is questionable if they are used as a means to an end or an end in themselves; and if quantitative issues take precedence over qualitative ones. The research, at this level, could detect that the 'activity' focus of UORP is coupled with another, that is the 'facility'. The planning, provision and management techniques seem to be concerned with matching an 'activity' with a suitable 'facility' in a recreation setting, which emerged as an issue to be integrated into the subsequent phases of the research.

10.3.2.2 Phase 2.2: Questionnaire survey

Research questions

The questionnaire survey was conducted in order to examine the current status of UORP; and investigate the attitudes of metropolitan local authorities towards UORP and specifically leisure and recreation concepts. The survey aimed at answering the following main questions:

How is UORP conducted? With what goal and objectives is it practised? Against what criteria is achievement of objectives measured against? What are the problems, shortcomings and deficiencies? What are the factors which influence UORP? What techniques form the basis of provision? How do authorities determine what to provide? How is the quality of UORP measured? What do authorities understand from the concepts of leisure and recreation? Is definition issue important? Should there be a governmental definition? Is PPG17 sufficient in terms of guidance? Do outside agencies influence UORP, if so, how?

Key findings

It becomes clear from the questionnaire survey that it is not greatly important to local authority officers to define what leisure and recreation are, although they are seen by the officers as the key concepts of UORP. As such the definition, or rather what is implied by the wording of leading policy documents, of the basis of UORP is at best limited to recreation and leisure being ‘activity’, at worst it is very unclear or it does not exist at all. Only a few authorities provided definitions. Based on this, recreation is associated with active, sporting and organised ‘activities; leisure appears to be understood in more general terms than recreation and even to encompass it. Along with ‘activity’, the ‘time’ element is also associated with leisure. Local authority opinions did not reflect the other conceptual dimensions of leisure and recreation, outlined in chapter 3, such as leisure’s ‘state of mind’, recreation’s ‘experience’, ‘outcome of experience’, or ‘social issue’ for both leisure and recreation. It appears that leisure and recreation are viewed as related concepts by the majority of authorities, but what this relation is, is a matter of diverse opinion, which does not lend itself to a clear conclusion. It appears as if the respondents have never actually linked the concepts of leisure and recreation to the practice of UORP as part of its provision rationale and philosophy, despite considering them as key concepts. The indifference to concepts and definitions of leisure and recreation can partly be explained by the finding that academic

studies have 'little' effect on UORP. Outside organisations are considered important in terms of working in partnership and guidance on policy matters which appear to be on issues such as the determination of standards or clarity on the application of quantitative methods. The PPG17 (which meant the earlier 1991 version for the questionnaire) is only regarded sufficient by a small majority of respondents and there is expectation that it needs to be made more holistic and applicable, in terms of standards.

The main goal of UORP emerges, from both the questionnaire survey and case study, as the 'provision of good quality open space and key parks for local communities to improve their quality of life'. And it also emerges that there is much emphasis on standards, open space classification and hierarchies. In line with this, the achievement of a 'quality of life' objective is mostly evaluated against set standards and simplistic management practices, such as the regular cutting of grass (especially under the abolished CCT practice). The popularity of standards and hierarchies also conflicts with the finding that public consultation and demand surveys are also widely employed methods to gauge public opinion and preferences. Although the majority of authorities claim to carry out questionnaire surveys to gauge user opinion, these seem to be quite limited in scope and suggest that UORP is largely associated with 'activity'.

Local authorities point out to shortcomings and limitations in their practices due to a number of factors such as financial cuts, prevailing traditional methods and lack of innovation, pressing management issues and so on. So, 'tradition and the legacy of the past' is the most influential factor which is linked to the dearth of specific policies for change, innovation and improvement of services; and it also can be linked to authorities not feeling the need for re-evaluating or clarifying the conceptual basis, the philosophy behind today's UORP. Another influential factor is financial constraints, in the form of budgetary cuts, which prioritises maintenance and management of the existing resources and facilities. Many authorities state that money is an immense obstacle in the way of elevating the quality of services. The situation is not helped by the high unemployment rates, anti-social behaviour and vandalism which incur even more costs in terms of extra maintenance measures and repairs. This is listed as another influential factor. With the effects of these, the link between concepts of leisure and recreation and UORP probably gets weaker, and UORP becomes more pragmatic and management oriented.

10.3.2.3 Phase 2.3: case study

Research questions

In the operational framework, research phases 2.1 and 2.2 employed relatively general research methods which are literature survey, policy and document analyses (phase 2.1), and a postal questionnaire survey (2.2). Although analyses at this level reveal significant findings, the questions asked and subsequent data gathered are, inevitably, relatively general in nature. Certain research propositions and issues needed further investigation, clarification and needed to be explored in more detail. At this point, the study singled out a Metropolitan local authority (Gateshead MBC) and an urban outdoor recreation setting (Saltwell Park in Gateshead). In line with this, the following questions emerge to be answered:

What is the main objective of UORP? How is this evaluated and against what criteria? What factors influence UORP? How much influence do these factors, such as tradition, financial resources, pragmatism, governmental/political/legislative forces (and others), exert? What are the crucial problems facing UORP? Does the Council have a specific policy on urban open space? How can this policy be described? Can an understanding or definition of leisure and recreation concepts be detected from policies or strategies? How do practitioners approach leisure and recreation? What is this approach? Does it reveal how leisure and recreation relate to each other? How important is defining leisure and recreation concepts? Does it matter, anyway? Is there a need for any guidance in order to establish terms of reference, from the Government or academic studies? What is the present-day main function of urban parks such as Saltwell Park for urban dwellers? Why provide or maintain such leisure and recreation resources/facilities? What attracts people to parks? What technique, method or approach specifies what to provide in a given open space? What is being provided? Is it a service, a facility, an activity, a resource, an experience, or what? To what extent do authorities make use of findings from user surveys and public consultation practices? What conceptual approach produces the questions? What is the attitude towards the 'standards' and 'open space hierarchies' issue? And significantly, what is the link between UORP practices and leisure and recreation concepts? Is this a really weak link, as suggested by the questionnaire survey? If so, is this considered to be a problem for UORP in any way?

Key findings: a cross case analysis

The case study suggests that the issues of ‘adequate level of provision’ and ‘appropriate standards of provision’ are of great significance for the providing authority. This seems to justify and encourage the use of standards in UORP and evaluation of performance by targets. The goal of UORP in Gateshead is stated to be ‘improvement of the quality of life of residents’ (which echoes the questionnaire survey finding) and seems to be evaluated against standards too. The link between improvement of quality of life and standards is questionable, as it assumes that quantity provides quality. The local authority considers parks and open spaces in relation to the maximum benefit of residents and visitors, and aims to maximise the environmental and recreational potential of them; however, what these benefits are, how they can be obtained and what is the recreational potential of parks and open spaces are not outlined, analysed or featured in the restoration and management plan of the chosen urban park. Saltwell Park was initially provided with a social agenda which was premised on the thought of raising the morale of working classes and at the same time educating and improving their health by physical activity and experience of recreation in general. Activities were linked to experiences and psychological outcomes and benefits they would potentially provide. Today’s purpose of ‘improvement of the quality of life of the residents’ seems quite general in comparison. The two case studies suggest that ‘provision of recreational opportunities’, as stated by the Council, basically means the provision of a physical base (the urban park) to enable a range of activities (active and passive) with matching facilities. This is also reflected in public consultation practice and user surveys. The user groups or public are only asked about what activities and facilities they would like to be provided. Based on the case study interviews, the relationship between leisure and recreation is unclear, but these terms were used interchangeably, and also the documents analysed indicate the same uncertainty, which probably testifies that the conceptual distinctions are not acknowledged.

The Council does not have specific open/green spaces or parks policy (or strategy), but guidelines are provided within the UDP, which introduces an open space hierarchy. This is a variation on the GLC hierarchy, and like the GLC hierarchy, is based on the activity-facility understanding. The recent ‘Best Value’ practice could have initiated a new way thinking (What is being provided? Is it achieved?), however, it already appears to strengthen the case of set standards in the form of quantifiable, measurable targets and performance indicators. Still, the Council regards ‘Best Value’ as ‘just started’ and is hopeful that, along with the

recent organisational re-structuring, it can introduce more flexibility and innovation in UORP, despite the fact that 'Best Value' practice has yet to include open spaces and parks. Financial resources and, arising from a traditionalist planning and provision culture, resistance to change are mentioned, by interviewees, as the two most important factors to influence the quality of UORP. However, the case of Saltwell Park shows that, even with abundant financial resources for the revival of a declining urban park, the tendency to maintain the legacy of the past is very strong and seems to function as a barrier to re-visit and re-evaluate the rationale of UORP, and thus, leisure and recreation concepts. The restoration of Saltwell Park was financed by a heritage-oriented organisation; therefore it is understandable that the 'conservation' theme became the driving force in its restoration. So much so that the 'activity' focus, in certain parts of the project, was overshadowed by the 'restoration, 'conservation', 'preservation' themes.

A considerable number of unemployed people live in the metropolitan borough of Gateshead. For this part of the population, money is tight and leisure is plentiful (leisure as time), which can bring social and psychological problems. Parks are said to be misused and vandalised, which puts further pressure on the limited financial resources. Saltwell Park has been subject to acts of severe vandalism in places, despite having four park keepers on site. The Council adopts a problem-solving, management and maintenance oriented approach. Additionally, academic studies do not appear to make much impact on UORP. The Saltwell Park case shows that vandalism is considered, simply, as a nuisance, without the acknowledgment of the link that academic studies establish between leisure, recreation and anti-social tendencies and behaviour among the young, male population (catharsis theory in chapter 3). So the real problem is not how to tackle vandalism, but how to channel it into socially 'acceptable' and 'wholesome' forms of leisure and recreation behaviour, on which Social Psychology and sociology disciplines offer substantial research.

The case studies of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park conclude, as did the questionnaire survey, that the link between the concepts of leisure and recreation and UORP is weak and UORP is largely based on the 'activity' definition.

10.4 Main conclusions

Based on the evidence provided by both the questionnaire survey and the case study, defining leisure and recreation concepts in relation to the field of UORP, does not appear to be a

matter of great importance for the practising professionals. These include leisure and recreation officers, managers, landscape architects and designers, parks and open spaces officers and planners. What is interesting to note is that these concepts are understood, by these professionals, as being highly relevant for the field of UORP but this relevance is not actually reflected in practice, which leads to the main findings of this research:

- **Leisure and recreation concepts have a weak link to Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision and this weak link largely stems from a partial conceptual understanding, which concentrates on the ‘activity’ definition.** The ‘activity’ view is easy to understand and apply as far as the practice of Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision is concerned. However, considering that the concepts of leisure and recreation have other significant definitional elements such as ‘time’ and ‘experience’, the ‘activity’ view alone cannot form a sufficient basis for future UORP. Leisure and recreation have comprehensive conceptual frameworks with a multitude of definitional dimensions which are highly significant and greatly relevant for the field of Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision. To disregard this, is an immense oversight on the part of the provider.
- **Local authorities seem to recognise the ‘activity’ view of leisure and recreation, which is a limited view.** The ‘activity’ definition is the only definition of leisure and recreation which is applied to the planning, provision and management of urban outdoor recreation, as exemplified by the case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park in this research. There was no evidence of the utilisation of other definitional aspects. This renders the UORP, as carried out by local government, as an inadequate, incomplete and limited service area, guided by only a part of the wider leisure and recreation conceptual framework.
- **‘Activity’ is very often considered in its relation to ‘facility’.** This is clearly evident in local authority plans and policies, such as Gateshead MBC’s UDP and Saltwell Park’s restoration proposal document, as well as in general, official documents such as PPG17, and also in the policy advice from quasi-governmental agencies, such as the Sports Council. There seems to be, in these, a reflection of the belief that ‘facility’ enables ‘activity’ which, while largely true, is a seriously incomplete view. For instance, a recognition that leisure and recreation ‘activity’ further enables ‘experiences’ which further produce ‘outcomes’ and ‘benefits’, would broaden the whole basis of UORP.

- **Authorities do not seem to make any clear distinction between leisure and recreation.** Such longer term or conceptual issues are regarded as not relevant to how things are managed on a daily basis.
- **Nevertheless, there is, however small, a tendency towards associating leisure with ‘time’ and recreation with physical ‘activities’.** This was very weakly indicated by the results of the questionnaire survey. This study, however, has not been able to find any evidence of an input from the ‘time’ definition of leisure in any aspect of the UORP practice.
- **Definitional aspects other than ‘activity’, such as ‘time’ and ‘experience’, seem to have minimal, or perhaps no, impact on UORP.** This is a colossal omission considering the large volume of research on these particular aspects. The ‘activity’ view is currently an integral part of UORP, but the rest of the wider picture seems to exist only in books, journals, conference proceedings and research reports.
- **Leisure can be explained as ‘time’, ‘activity’, ‘state of mind’, ‘a social matter’ and ‘a holistic concept’ embracing all of these.** The disciplines of Sociology and Social Psychology have been producing a great deal of research on these aspects of leisure. The ‘time’ and ‘social matter’ views seem to have been explored in considerable detail, which can be of great use for UORP.
- **Recreation, on the other hand, can be defined as ‘activity’, ‘an inner need/urge/motivation’ for the ‘re-creation’ of the equilibrium between body and soul, ‘an experience’, ‘a psychological outcome of an experience’, ‘benefits’, ‘a social matter’ and ‘a holistic concept’.**
- **Leisure and recreation concepts evolve with time and take on different meanings, as the historical review (chapter 2) revealed.** The planning and provision system needs to adapt to these changes, however slow such change may appear to take place.

The indifference to conceptual issues was such that respondents to the questionnaire survey and interviewees for the case study appeared to be reluctant to answer questions relating to this and more enthusiastic towards answering or discussing practical matters, such as the likely positive effects of CCTV for Saltwell Park. There are a number of reasons for this

indifference; certain factors influence UORP, as well as the prevailing limited conceptual view. The case study confirms the findings of the questionnaire survey that **‘tradition and the legacy of the past’** is the most influential factor, which somehow stifles innovation and change. Therefore the ‘activity’ focus somehow becomes a tradition. Another strong factor is the lack of adequate **financial resources** which local authorities as providers of UORP have to utilise to provide ‘quality’ UORP services. Again, the case study supports the findings of the questionnaire survey that financial constraints make the authorities prioritise management and maintenance aspects of UORP. As was seen in the case of Saltwell Park, due to limited availability of the Gateshead Council’s own resources for a large-scale restoration project, funding for the project was secured through The Heritage Lottery Fund, which placed the emphasis largely on the theme of restoration by ‘conservation’. Clearly, this reinforces the ‘tradition and the legacy of the past’ approach. But there is evidence from the case studies that the nature of this major source of funding not only prescribes the form of the provision, it also strongly limits or focuses the mind-sets of the officers concerned.

The money factor also affects the quality of management and maintenance as **vandalism and anti-social behaviour** force the authorities to allocate extra funds on repair and replacement of park furniture as well as plant stocks. As was pointed out in chapter 7 in the context of questionnaire survey question 7, this issue is significant, being rated by the respondents as the third most influential factor on UORP. As well as putting further financial pressure on the provider/manager, it can also create a sense of apprehension and fear among users and may well inhibit use. It is significant that the individuals who cause vandalism and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces are also among the users of these parks and open spaces. The Saltwell Park case study showed that vandalism is only seen as a problem and not as a possible form of leisure and recreation behaviour for some individuals. This stems from the limited view of leisure and recreation.

It is interesting to note is that the large volume of the academic study of leisure and recreation does not seem to contribute greatly to UORP.

The current UORP is ‘techniques’ and ‘targets’ driven and is based on certain techniques, the most common of which are the ‘standards’ and ‘open space hierarchy’, as the questionnaire survey revealed and the case study of Gateshead MBC and Saltwell Park confirmed. Standards are very popular with local authority planning, leisure, recreation and open

spaces/parks departments. Even the criticisms on the PPG17 (both the old and revised versions) by the local authority officers seem to hinge on the need for more quantifiable guidance and standards. However, as was argued several times in this study, standards tend to divert attention away from significant issues such as quality of provision, the recreation resource itself and the needs of the communities. This is also true for open space hierarchies as they are largely concerned with the provision of a system of facilities and focus on the 'activity' side of leisure and recreation. There needs to be a more comprehensive approach as far as the basis of the UORP is concerned.

Victorians probably had a clearer and more specific purpose in the provision, management and maintenance of open spaces and parks than today's providers. The currently stated aim of improvement of a local population's quality of life appears to be too general and does not guide the providers themselves in terms of what exactly they are to achieve and what to use to evaluate the performances. Local authorities as the main providers of the urban outdoor recreation need to become more specific and precise to be able to justify why a portion of public funds should be allocated for urban outdoor recreation provision, management and maintenance. It is at this very point that the conceptual picture of leisure and recreation can provide an input for a new approach and a basis.

10.5 Implications and proposals

10.5.1 Significance of multi-dimensional nature of leisure and recreation for UORP

Perhaps it should be first argued that, if the conclusions from the historical chapter are to mean anything for UORP, it is the finding that leisure and recreation concepts change with time; they evolve. UORP should adapt to this, rather than following what governed and shaped the past UORP. Surely there is a legacy left to learn from and utilise, but this should not mean stopping the clock. Urban environments are different now, with a different social, economic and political composition. Indeed leisure and recreation are probably in the process of gaining new meanings and having new implications for planning and provision. People may now be searching for new aspirations and experiences to parallel their way of life and who they are. Parks and open spaces face a huge competition from other sources in this respect and will be handicapped if they do not seem to keep up with the changing times, people and the world in general. The popularity of parks should not be strictly judged on how much they are used and liked by various users, for instance, by families (because of play

equipment being there), by dog owners (walking the dog in park), by short cutters and by bored youngsters. Perhaps it is time to consider why some people never consider visiting a park⁹. Perhaps they expect more in the sense of rest, relaxation, re-creation, exhilaration, learning, observing and cultivating their mental and strengthening their physical powers. Many ways of fulfilling these expectations exist outside the parks. How, then, can leisure and recreation concepts provide an input?

The wider, comprehensive picture of leisure and recreation, as was presented in chapter 3 of this thesis, is highly relevant for planning, provision and management of urban outdoor recreation. It incorporates all of the definitional explanations, perhaps not much different than a 'holistic' approach. In agreement with Haywood et al (1989), none of the explanations provided actually gives a complete definition, but each tells us something important about what leisure and recreation are. This does not mean that UORP has to consider and analyse all of the meanings given to leisure and recreation, in every situation. On the contrary, depending on the nature of the case, some elements might be more significant than others. For example, in a socially deprived area where unemployment is at high levels, providers should probably concentrate more on the 'time' and 'social construct' aspects of leisure. This would involve considering how time is spent, how much of it is consumed with boredom and how much of it and in what way it is considered as leisure and recreation; the possibility of frustration and boredom which can lead to anti-social tendencies and vandalism; the effects of social variables on leisure and recreation behaviour and also establishing links with recreation as a 'social issue' ('acceptability', 'wholesomeness'); 'experience' (with stages of urges, motivations, homeostasis, re-creation, catharsis, satisfactions, resultant benefits) and 'activity' (to facilitate desired 'experiences').

It has already been concluded that UORP does not work like this. Because of the predominant 'activity' concern, certain relevant factors are not acknowledged, analysed or studied when urban open spaces and parks are provided and even restored, as in the Saltwell Park case. There were no attempts, in this particular case, to explore the amount of leisure (leisure as 'time' approach) as far as the user/visitor population is concerned and how this population

⁹ According to a recent survey, commissioned by the DTLR, 32% of people (in a chosen case study area) are non-users or infrequent users; and 12% of these never visit urban green spaces (Dunnett et al., 2002).

actually consume their leisure. Additionally, the 'leisure as a social construct' approach, if it had been considered and analysed by the planners and managers in the context of Saltwell Park and Gateshead Borough, could have enabled them to analyse if there is 'too much leisure and too little to do' for some parts of the population and if this is linked with the vandalism and anti-social behaviour in Saltwell Park and how this might relate to 'provision'. If recreation was understood, along with 'activity', also as 'experience' and 'outcome of experience' then some of the questions in the questionnaire survey of users would enquire about what the visitors would like to experience in a Park, such as the experience of the smells and sounds of nature (which could be provided by 'activities' of walking, sitting and even running in a suitable setting for this experience).

The 'activity' definition alone cannot provide a sound basis for UORP, because such a basis not only tends to ignore what happens during and in the aftermath of an 'activity', but also neglects to consider the fundamental reasons as to why the activity takes place at all. Different individuals experience activities in different ways. Also, there are a number of variables which can make a given 'activity' be experienced completely differently, such as the 'recreation setting'. In line with this, and to parallel the walking example given in the introduction chapter, *sitting* in a lakeside café in an urban park and *sitting* in a tranquil, quiet area in the same park are different experiences, in terms of the nature of experiences the sitting 'activity' creates in different settings. So the activity of 'sitting' can create a range of different experiences (feelings, aspirations, satisfactions, benefits) for different people, in different settings. This is a simple example of why the experiential side of the leisure and recreation cannot be ignored.

The providers should also consider leisure and recreation as 'experience' with psychological outcomes and benefits. Such an understanding may mean a new paradigm, a new way of thinking and could form, somehow, a new basis for UORP. Considering leisure and recreation as 'experience', which provides psychological outcomes and benefits (psychological, social, economic), would change the UORP scene dramatically. The basis of UORP would probably become *provision of experiences* (or provision of opportunities for experiences), and not merely provision of activities. This would, for instance, mean that user/visitor questionnaire survey questions would be constructed in a different way: The frequently asked question of "what activity/activities and facilities would you like to see in this park?" would start with "what experiences in what settings or surroundings....", which

mean and enquire about different things. Assuming that a user would like to be given the opportunity to escape crowds and ‘experience’ solitude and tranquillity, he/she cannot express this to the authorities as the present style of the wording of questionnaire surveys which do not acknowledge the conceptual aspect of ‘experience’ and utilise it in public consultation. It is significant to note that, in this scenario, the user variable is assumed to be always in the equation.

10.5.2 Implications of relationship between leisure and recreation

Basically, in practice, leisure and recreation are taken as more or less the same thing. Is differentiation between them so important for UORP? The answer is that if distinct definitional aspects are not acknowledged, this is very important. For example, if and when, UORP is based on the understanding that leisure and recreation are synonymous and they basically mean ‘activities’, it tends to overlook some significant elements such as ‘time’ and ‘experience’. These introduce certain other elements such as satisfactions and benefits into the process of planning, policy making and management.

The complete picture of the conceptual frame does matter to UORP probably more than the nature of the relationship between leisure and recreation. As long as the relevant part of the overall conceptual frame is identified and utilised in a given UORP situation, it is probably not of great significance to question the conceptual relationship. However it is vital for the UORP practitioner to understand that leisure and recreation are not synonymous terms. The distinct ‘time’ dimension of leisure and the behavioural, experiential dimension of recreation should not be overlooked and these should become integral parts of UORP. Clearly, the ‘activity’, ‘social matter’ and ‘holistic matter’ are shared, but as was shown in chapter 3, even here the contexts can differ. Also ‘state of mind’ aspect of leisure and ‘experience’ aspect of recreation are similar but, not the same.

10.5.3 Conceptual link to ‘vandalism’

The planning, design and management of urban parks should go beyond designing vandal-proof facilities and installing CCTV surveillance. Based on the conclusions of chapter 3, vandalism could be considered as a form of recreation experience; an experience which can be described by the vandals as pleasurable and exhilarating. However, vandalism is not socially acceptable. It is a disruptive form of recreation for the other users of the park and cannot be condoned. Such recreation is not permissible and must conform to the moral and

legal standards set by the society and its administrative apparatus. However, unless the authorities recognise that vandalism can be a form of recreation for some individuals, it will not be substituted with an acceptable (for both society and vandals) and appealing form of recreation and the situation will remain. One of the ways of overcoming the problem of vandalism may very well be the introduction of a form of recreation that is capable of substituting for the enjoyment and exhilaration, which the experience of vandalism produces as an outcome. An example is the changing attitude to skate boarding. Previously regarded as a nuisance activity, some authorities are now trying to legitimise this by creating specially designated areas for skateboarders, hoping to confine the ‘nuisance’.

10.5.4 Techniques

Standards and hierarchies of open/green space and facilities need to be reviewed, but perhaps more importantly, even in their revised form, they need to be used as part of a coherent conceptual basis; as a means to an end and not as an end in themselves. When the objectives of UORP are ascertained in not so general terms and defined more clearly, appropriate methods should follow accordingly. As was touched on briefly above (under 10.5.1), if the philosophical basis changes from the ‘*provision of activities*’ to ‘*provision of experiences*’, methods and techniques will change too.

10.5.4.1 The ROS approach: linking leisure and recreation to ‘activities’, ‘settings’, ‘experiences’ and ‘benefits’

As was mentioned in chapter 5, under 5.6.6, the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) approach was developed by Driver and Brown (1978) and Clark and Stankey (1979), during the late 1970’s for allocation and management of outdoor recreation resources. The ROS approach advocates provision and management of a variety of ‘opportunities’ for quality ‘recreation experiences’ and not only ‘activity’, ‘facility’ or ‘resource’. Such understanding classifies and relates a given outdoor recreation setting to experiences as well as activities. ROS proposes diversity for both recreation settings and experiences.

The ROS approach was evaluated by Jackson (1986), in terms of its applicability to urban outdoor recreation settings, arguing that the outputs of a Parks and Recreation Department should go beyond simple mowing programmes and consider the question of providing quality recreation experiences. Jackson believes that an ‘urban ROS’ can link the supply of particular

forms of outdoor recreation settings with demands for outdoor recreation opportunities on a comparable basis. He suggests that:

“...application of the Urban ROS allows for:

- a systematic classification of outdoor recreation opportunities
- the quantitative assessment of opportunities provided by the natural resource base
- a measure of the quality of outdoor recreation opportunity provided through diversity
- a means of comparison between defined areas, be they local government boundaries, intercity areas or sub-regions” (Jackson, 1986).

In Jackson’s listing, the Urban ROS takes three distinct steps:

1. Inventory of the natural resource base or land opportunity base found (not necessarily immediately available for public use) within the boundaries of the study area
2. Documentation and inventory of the range of man-created outdoor recreation landscapes which exist within the study area.
3. The linking of these opportunity settings to form a continuous spectrum of outdoor opportunity from the urban/built landscape to the biophysical natural system.

As such, at one end of the spectrum there is the man-created and maintained and highly modified landscapes and at the other end is the natural areas with minimum human modifications and maintenance. Each recreation setting category is determined on the basis of a certain combination of physical, social and management conditions. Even a minor change in these conditions can change the whole character of the Urban ROS class, which can be in the way of increasing or decreasing the range of opportunities the class offers. This becomes an effective guide for provision, planning, design, maintenance and management decisions.

Determination of the types of recreation opportunities in a given area is an issue to be resolved by the providing, planning and managing authority. This may not be a simple task. According to the Recreation Opportunity Demand Hierarchy – RODH model (as was described in table 5.3 in chapter 5), which was developed by Driver and Brown (1978), it should consider demand for a number of categories:

1. Recreation activity
2. Opportunities to experience a set of situational attributes
3. Opportunities to realise specific psychological outcomes
4. Opportunities to realise the benefits that flow from the satisfying experience

As can be seen, the 'activity' focus remains as far as the broad field of UORP is concerned. What is different in the above framework, however, is that the 'opportunity', 'experience', 'psychological outcomes' and 'benefits' aspects of leisure and recreation concepts also become significant components of UORP. This way, the demand issue is approached from several angles: in relation to item 1 above, demand can be for an 'activity'. For example the user demands to engage in a particular activity for its own sake, such as swimming. Swimming in this respect directs the user to a swimming pool (activity and matching facility) and he/she may not be worried about how modern the facilities are or how crowded they can get. On the other hand, another user may only wish to swim in an open swimming pool and in hot climates in which case the demand is for item 2 (situational attributes). However, another user might want to swim for a certain experience and feeling such as the feeling of family togetherness (item 3). Lastly, a visitor may only demand swimming for its after-effects such as relaxing, toning, physical fitness and socialising effects. All this widens the choice for 'opportunities' for recreation.

The question arises: how can all this be applied to urban parks and green spaces? The simple answer is that a method such as ROS, which was devised for a different field of inquiry, is not exactly applicable in its present form; it needs to be re-invented and re-formulated specifically for UORP and parks and green spaces. This has not been done yet. Still, a scenario can be presented here about how Gateshead MBC could have progressed along these lines, in relation to the Saltwell Park case:

Firstly, the basis of UORP needs to be broadened and made more specific in relation to the philosophical justification and guiding principles for provision and management. If the UORP policies of Gateshead MBC had been premised on the principle of providing a variety of quality 'recreation experiences' (or provision of 'opportunities' for experiences as in the ROS concept, described in chapter 5) and not just provision of 'activity', 'facility' or 'resource', such basis would have probably imposed a different route for the restoration project of Saltwell Park as well as its future management. The Urban ROS approach, for example, can

be further considered to be applicable to parks and green spaces¹⁰. The ROS technique has considerable potential to work for the entirety of a single park; its planning, design and management. In the Saltwell Park case, the Park could have been divided into a variety of recreation experience opportunity areas instead of only character spaces, which is what the Victorians seem to have done. All facilities and physical resources in the Park, natural and artificial, existing and envisaged, could be assessed in accordance with their characteristics and potential for certain forms of recreation experiences. Certain parameters such as the level of naturalness, expected social encounters and interaction could help determine the nature of the opportunity classes. When the analysis of the whole park is completed, the range of opportunities that the Park can offer would be outlined and, to follow the ROS example, a Park Recreation Opportunity Spectrum would emerge. The next step would be specification of what new elements and modifications need to be introduced in order to maintain, modify or create a setting for a given recreation opportunity category. This way, opportunities for a particular type of recreation experience can be increased and decreased in a park. The ROS technique would classify and relate a given setting in a park to experiences (along with psychological outcomes and benefits) *and* activities, and can achieve diversity for both recreation settings and experiences.

A technique like ROS can be a valuable planning and management tool for parks and green spaces as well as UORP in general. If the Gateshead MBC adopted a technique such as ROS, the current and future management of Saltwell Park would become a more straightforward and efficient practice with clear targets. Because the ROS concept relates to the management of a given setting in relation to the management of people's recreation experiences, which is linked to 'activity', 'experience', 'facility', 'setting' and resultant 'benefits' in one framework. The Council would be able to identify, classify and list distinct areas or settings within the Park into recreation opportunity classes on the basis of their physical characteristics, its location, history, facilities, users and use profiles, demand (which could relate to expectations for social and cultural experiences), management criteria and so on. As was argued above, to make all this operational and applicable, further and extensive research

¹⁰ The ROS concept includes certain parameters such as 'remoteness' which are not exactly applicable to parks and green spaces. The same goes for the ROS opportunity classes. These need to be considered and critically analysed if an actual application of ROS was to take place.

and pilot studies need to be undertaken. The ROS approach has yet to be explored for this field specifically. Although ROS is not complete in terms of its inclusion of all the possible meanings of leisure and recreation in relation to UORP, it can still provide a good basis for developing more sophisticated and suitable methods.

10.5.5 Providers and an increased understanding of leisure and recreation

Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision is currently functioning with a problem-solving orientation. However it looks as if it has to look further than its concern with day-to-day management. For today's society, leisure and recreation are of great value and a significant part of our lives, which needs to be planned and approached with a proactive, futuristic frame of mind in order to reflect the changing values attached to leisure and recreation. Although even in a climate of local authority modernisation, 'change' probably will not take place very quickly, this does present an opportunity for the provider to re-evaluate the basis, purpose and function of UORP.

So, what could have been and can be done to integrate a more comprehensive understanding from leisure and recreation into UORP?

There is already a Planning Policy Guidance (PPG17), by the DTLR, on open space, sport and recreation which has recently been revised. This revised 2002 version now encourages open space audits and the use of local standards instead of old national standards. But it completely fails to specify what open space provision is, why and for whom it is done. In a way, the guidance is too operational without providing any guidance for it. A guidance note of this calibre should clarify the purpose of open space provision so that it can be justified against other competing uses and development in general. Stating the purpose would inevitably touch on the issue of leisure and recreation; as the benefits and desirable, positive effects of pleasurable experiences would explicitly be mentioned.

Central Government or a specific, urban outdoor recreation and/or parks related statutory agency can initiate a more specific, comprehensive and clear guidance for local authorities. An organisation such as The Urban Parks Forum or Urban Green Spaces Taskforce can, for example, be given this task, or a new agency can be established specifically to champion the cause of urban open/green space, not to secure funds and research on further standards, but firstly, to lay the philosophical, conceptual foundations of a relatively neglected and

marginalised service area, the quality of which matters greatly to its users.

It is a significant period for urban parks and open spaces as they are now back on the agenda. And there seems to be a need to develop a new way of thinking which should be more in harmony with the user and not so preoccupied with the physical resource and facilities; it needs better ways of management and planning with more creativity and innovation, a new set of clear objectives, and then set targets to judge performance effectively. Approaching UORP with an increased understanding of leisure and recreation concepts can play a part in this. In fact, such an understanding can also be incorporated into the renovation and regeneration of historic parks as well as creation of new ones. The wider conceptual picture of leisure and recreation is relevant to UORP, and no doubt, more relevant than only an ‘activity’ oriented view.

10.5.6 Suggestions for further research and investigation

- The link between types of recreation places/settings and recreation experiences
- Methods for gauging user demand/preferences for recreation experiences
- Methods for evaluation of user satisfaction with experience provision
- Application of the ROS approach to UORP (specifically urban parks)
- Application of ‘experience’ and ‘benefits’ approach to urban outdoor recreation places (specifically urban parks)
- Vandalism as recreation: how to provide ‘acceptable’ recreation based on catharsis theory
- The underlying planning and design philosophy/principles behind ‘successful’ urban outdoor recreation places (specifically urban parks)
- Comparisons of different planning and design principles in UORP
- Future of historic parks: innovative approaches to conservation and development
- The effect of urban parks and open spaces on crime prevention, community regeneration and health in general and specific terms.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire form

(Please fill in this section first)

Questionnaire No.

Name of authority :

Name of department :

Political party in power :

Urban Outdoor Recreation Provision by Local Authorities

Part I - Existing Situation

- (1) In your authority, what are the main stages or steps taken in providing open space for public use (e.g., field survey, public consultations, etc.) *(please list them in order)*.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

- (2) Does your authority currently have:

i) A specific policy for the provision of open space?

1. Yes, when was this policy initiated _____

2. No

ii) A specific policy for the management of open space?

1. Yes, when was this policy initiated _____

2. No

iii) A combined policy for the provision and management of open space?

1. Yes, when was this policy initiated _____

2. No

(3) Which of the following do you consider to be the priority (*please circle as appropriate*)?

1) Provision and development of new open space

2) Management of the existing open space

3) Provision and management of open space

(4) What are the main goals that your authority would like to achieve through open space provision (*please list them in order of importance*)?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

(5) Which of these goals, from the question above, have been achieved (*please circle to indicate "achieved"*)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

(6) What other departments in your authority or outside organizations do you collaborate with in producing policies for urban open space?

Department or Organization

Primary function / input

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

(7) i) How do you determine what recreation activities/experiences are to be permitted in a given place?

ii) How do you measure the recreation needs and preferences of your local population?

iii) In line with the two questions above, which of the following techniques or approaches forms the basis of your open space provision?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Use of standards | 5. Priority social area approach |
| 2. Open space hierarchy | 6 'The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum' |
| 3. Organic/incremental approach | 7. Community development approach |
| 4. Gross demand approach | 8. Other (please specify) _____ |

(8) How do you measure the effectiveness of open space and its facilities in satisfying recreation needs and preferences of your local population?

(9) i) In what ways has the imposition of Compulsory Competitive Tendering - CCT effected the provision and management of open space?

ii) Under CCT, who carries out maintenance/management of open space in your area?

1. Outsider establishment
2. In-house team

(10) i) How much do the following factors influence the nature of the provision of urban open space?

Factor	Strong Influence	Little Influence	No Influence	Comment (what is the influence?)
1. Tradition and the legacy of the past				
2. Weak/inadequate legislative guidance				
3. Budgetary limits/cutbacks				
4. Scarcity and the price of land				
5. Marginalisation of leisure and recreation as non-statutory service areas				
6. Socio-economic factors (unemployment, vandalism, etc.,)				
7. Organisational structure of the department or authority				
8. Politics/partisanship				
9. Academic study				
10. Pragmatism				
11. Professionalism				
12. Managerialism				
13. Other _____				

ii) Which three factors would you mention as key factors from the above list?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(11) What are the most significant problems facing those responsible for open space provision in the urban outdoors?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Part II - Conceptual Approaches

(12) Given that leisure and recreation are the leading concepts in the field of urban outdoor recreation, what would your authority suggest is the relationship between these two concepts (*please circle as appropriate*)?

- 1) Leisure and recreation are synonymous, interchangeable terms
(if this is your opinion answer question 13, part i).
- 2) Leisure and recreation are related but distinct concepts
(if this is your opinion answer question 13, part ii and iii).
- 3) Leisure and recreation are totally different concepts
(if this is your opinion answer question 13, part ii and iii).
- 4) No opinion
(if this is your opinion proceed to question 15).

(13) i) How would your authority define leisure/recreation as synonymous concepts?

ii) How would your authority define leisure?

iii) How would your authority define recreation?

(14) Is your definition based on:

- 1) Experiences of your authority in this field
- 2) Professional / academic literature
- 3) Other organisation's definition (*please specify*) _____
- 4) Other (*please specify*) _____

- (15) Is there any attempt to define leisure and recreation in any of your policy reports, development plans, etc.?

1) Yes

Can you quote this definition/ definitions and cite the reference _____

2) No

- (16) Should there be a government definition of leisure and recreation to guide local authorities in urban open space provision (*please give your opinion below*)?

Part III - Recommendations for Future Planning and Provision System

- (17) Do you believe that the Planning Policy Guidance on Sport and Recreation (PPG17) provides sufficient guidance for the provision and management of urban open space?

1) Yes

2) No (if not, please explain why) _____

- (18) Do you think a specific legislative framework to guide and control the provision of urban open space would contribute to a more efficient provision system?

1) Yes (please detail below)

2) No (please detail below)

- (19) Does CCT guarantee a higher quality urban outdoor recreation provision in the future?

1) Yes (please detail below)

2) No (please detail below)

(20) i) Please go through the listed organisations below and circle those which provide sufficient guidance to local authorities about urban open space provision.

- 1) The Department of National Heritage
- 2) The Forestry Commission
- 3) The Countryside Commission
- 4) The British Tourist Board
- 5) The National Playing Fields Association
- 6) The Sports Council
- 7) The Nature Conservancy Council
- 8) Other(*please specify*) _____

ii) In what form has this guidance been provided (*please cite reference if you mention any official policies, reports etc.*) ?

(21) Please identify the future actions needed to improve urban outdoor recreation provision.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

(22) Could you indicate what you consider to be the important future trends in urban outdoor recreation.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Appendix 2: List of respondents to questionnaire survey

<u>No.</u>	<u>Name of Local Authority</u>	<u>Department</u>
1.	Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council	Leisure Services Department
2.	Wirral MBC	Leisure Department
3.	Doncaster City Council	Leisure
4.	South Tyneside MBC	Development Services
5.	Barnsley MBC	Leisure Services
6.	Manchester City Council	Education
7.	Bradford MBC	Recreation Division
8.	Dudley MBC	Planning and Leisure
9.	Solihull MBC	Environmental and Technical Services
10.	Calderdale MBC	Leisure Services
11.	London Borough of Merton	Leisure Services
12.	London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames	Planning and Transport
13.	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	Leisure Services (Parks)
14.	London Borough of Bexley	Education and Leisure Services
15.	London Borough of Croydon	Parks and Recreation
16.	London Borough of Harrow	Development and Transportation
17.	London Borough of Bromley	Leisure and Community Services
18.	London Borough of Sutton	Leisure Services
19.	London Borough of Westminster (city of)	Planning and Environment
20.	London Borough of Barking & Dagenham	Development and Technical Services (Recreation and Parks)
21.	Liverpool City Council	Leisure Services
22.	Bolton MBC	Leisure services (Landscape and Client Services)

23.	London Borough of Hackney	Planning Department
24.	Newcastle City Council	Community and Leisure Services
25.	Gateshead MBC	Leisure Services
26.	Coventry City Council	City Development Directorate
27.	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	Environment (Policy and Urban Regeneration)
28.	Sheffield City Council	Leisure Services Directorate (Parks and Open Spaces)
29.	London Borough of Ealing	Leisure Services
30.	Sefton MBC	Landscape Development and Management
31.	RochdaleMBC	Education and Leisure
32.	London Borough of Wandsworth	Leisure and Amenity Services
33.	North Tyneside MBC	Land and Development
34.	Sunderland City Council	Education and Community Services

Appendix 3: List of interviewees

Gateshead MBC

Position

Director, Leisure Services

Assistant Director, Leisure Services

Senior Planner, Saltwell Park Project Manager, Leisure Services

Client Officer, Park Management, Leisure Services,

Graphic designer, Leisure Services

Principal Landscape Architect, Planning

Planner, Planning

Cooperate Programmes Assistant, Chief Executive's Department

Councillor, Bensham Ward, Leisure Services Committee

Park Keeper, Saltwell Park

Newcastle City Council

Position

Deputy Director of Community & Leisure Services

Principal Outdoor Recreation Development Officer

Planner, Leisure Policy Officer, Community & Leisure

Sunderland MBC

Position

Officer, Education & Community Services

Appendix 4: Gateshead MBC Saltwell Park Visitor Survey

We are presently preparing a management plan for Saltwell Park in order to consider its future upkeep. As part of this, we are trying to find out about who uses the park and what they think about it. Would you please help us by answering a few questions. It will only take a few minutes and the information will be treated in confidence.

Question 1

a) How often do you visit Saltwell Park? (tick box)

Summer

Winter

Daily 1
 2 or 3 times per week 2
 1 per week 3
 1 per month 4
 Less frequently 5

Daily 1
 2 or 3 times per week 2
 1 per week 3
 1 per month 4
 Less frequently 5

b) Does that include a weekend day? Yes No

Question 2 Do you live: -

Within easy walking distance 1

Elsewhere in the town of Gateshead 2

Tyne and Wear 3

Further afield 4

Question 3 How did you travel to the park?

Walk 1

Car 2

Motorbike 3

Bicycle 4

Bus 5

Other 6

Question 4 If you travelled by car or motorbike, did you have a problem finding somewhere to park?

Yes No

Question 5 If we provided local car parking would you use it?

Yes No

Question 6 Are you here: -

Alone 1

With friends 2

With family 3

Mixture of family and friends 4

Other 5

If with family or friends or mixture of both, please specify ages of children.

Specify

Question 7 What are the reasons for your visit today?

For a walk 1

Walk the dog 2

Jogging 3

Picnicking 4

To sit outside 5

Bowling 6

- Tennis 7
- Football 8
- Other sport (specify) 9
- Visit toddler play 10
- Visit junior play 11
- Boating 12
- Other (specify) 13

Specify

Question 8 Which areas in the Park will you have visited today?

- Open parkland 1
- Broadwalk 2
- Lake 3
- Kiosk area 4
- Bowling greens 5
- Rose garden 6
- The Dene 7
- Pets corner 8
- Play areas 9
- War memorial area 10

The Grove 11

Other (specify) 12

Specify.....

Question 9 What do you most enjoy about the park?

Specify.....

Question 10 Are you aware that events are held in the park?

Yes No

Question 11 What events do you visit in the park?

Bonfire night 1

The fair 2

Sculpture day 3

Concerns 4

Other 5

Specify.....

Question 12 What do you least enjoy about the park?

(E.g. any particular problems, or anything that might put you off visiting the park)

Specify.....

Question 13 Do you feel generally safe in the park? Yes No

Question 14 Are there any existing facilities which you think should be improved?

Specify.....

Question 15 Are there any other changes or additional facilities which you think should be added?

Specify.....

Question 16 Do you use the park in the evenings?

Yes No

Question 17 In which area of the park do you feel least safe?

Specify e.g. particular area.....

Question 18 Do you find that you get lost easily in the park?

Yes No

Question 19 Do you feel that dogs are a problem in the park?

Yes No

Question 20 Would you prefer to have restricted access for dogs? E.g. certain areas only.

Yes No

Question 21 Would you use the park in the evenings if it was lit? E.g. for organised events.

Yes No

Question 22 Approximately how long will your visit to the park be?

Less than ½ hour 1

½ - 1 hour 2

1 - 2 hour 3

1 - 4 hours 4

Over 4 hours 5

Do not know 6

Question 23 May I ask what age group you are in?

0 - 6 1

7 – 15	<input type="text"/>	2
16 – 25	<input type="text"/>	3
26 – 40	<input type="text"/>	4
41 – 60	<input type="text"/>	5
60+	<input type="text"/>	6

Thank you for your time. The answers you have given may influence the development of the park, so it is very helpful to have your views.