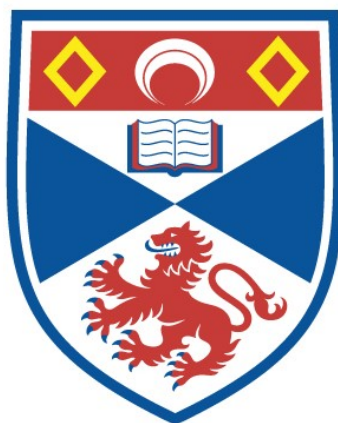# AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF A SCENARIO-INFORMED STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS: A PUBLIC SECTOR CASE

Gary Bowman

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

2011

An Empirical Analysis of a Scenario-Informed Strategic Planning Process: A Public Sector Case

by

Gary Bowman

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Management,
University of St Andrews

June 2010

Declarations

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I, Gary Bowman, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 100,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September, 2003 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in September, 2003; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2003 and 2010.

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Abstract

This thesis lies at the nexus of scenario planning and strategy. Scenario planning is a foresight activity used extensively in strategic planning and public policy development to imagine alternative, plausible futures as means to understand the driving forces behind the uncertainties and possibilities of a changing environment. Despite significant application in both private and public sectors, and a growing body of academic and practitioner-orientated literature, little empirical evidence exists about how organisations actually use scenario planning to inform strategy. Moreover, the emerging Strategy-as-Practice (S-as-P)perspective, which has exposed strategy to more sociological pursuits, presented a way of conceiving and studying strategy not as something an *organisation has*, but rather as something *people do*. By examining the activities of scenario planning, understanding its use as an example of episodic, interactive strategizing, S-as-P provides a theoretical lens through which to perform a much needed empirical analysis of the scenario-to-strategy process. A second goal of the thesis is to advance understanding of the S-as-P perspective by addressing recent criticisms as well as contributing to the growing body of practice-based research.

The central research question which guides the thesis is, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?* To answer this question, the research vehicle is a single, in-depth case study of community planning in Fife, which extends from 1999 until April 2008. A detailed, longitudinal narrative of Fife's scenario planning and strategy process is presented before using empirical evidence from the case to understand how an organisation manages the scenario planning process, how scenario planning affects policy development, and how cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation. The thesis concludes that scenario planning created a sensemaking/sensegiving framework that provided structural and interpretive legitimacy which facilitated communicative activities and helped the Fife Partnership understand and improve the interconnectedness of Fife's public services and community planning process. While contributing to the S-as-P research agenda, the investigation of the scenario-to-strategy process also revealed, and solidified, a number of criticisms that challenge the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical validity of the strategy-as-practice perspective.

In loving memory of

Adam and Catherine Allan

&

William and Anne Bowman

Acknowledgements

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make and end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.

      T.S. Eliot
      Little Gidding (Four Quartets)

I owe everything to my mother and father. They have worked exhaustively to provide me with the opportunities they were not fortunate enough to have themselves. Without their emotional, intellectual, and financial support, I would not be here. Words alone cannot express the depth of my gratitude. Instead, I can only promise to live my life in a way that honours the values they have instilled in me, to have courage and confidence, to have faith in that which I cannot control, and to appreciate every step of the journey.

This thesis has been an intellectual adventure that has challenged ontological and epistemological assumptions I never knew I had. It is also a process that has been enriched with teaching, administrative and professional experiences. Thus, when I reflect upon the thesis, I think of more than just the physical words presented herein. Appropriately, thanks must go to my supervisor, Professor Peter McKiernan, who has mentored my academic apprenticeship, and provided constant and invaluable support throughout this challenging and deeply rewarding process.

Ryan Parks has been a great friend and has provided sound counsel and reassurances through difficult times. I grateful too for the advice and understanding of Brad MacKay and Swapnesh Masrani. Thanks must also go to several members of the School of Management. The attentiveness and and enthusiasm of Professors Rob Gray, Nic Beech and Huw Davies provided extra motivation over the final few months and was much appreciated. A final thanks must go to Professors Alan McKinlay and Chris Carter, whose advice and friendship throughout my PhD has been greatly appreciated.

Much of the thesis' empirics are based upon in-depth interviews with key figures in Fife's public services. I am indebted to all those who took time out of their busy schedules to talk honestly and openly with me about their work and the community planning process. A special thanks is due to Chris Mitchell of Fife Council, who was always willing to help with my seemingly never-ending search for information.

There are simply too many friends to mention. Rather, I will say a loud and general thanks to all, and a quiet, and special, thanks to Fraser, Andy, and Miles, for not forgetting about me, tucked away in this strange little corner of the world. I am continually grateful for the

support of Heather and Gerhard, and Maggie and Robin, who have welcomed me into their families and provided me with homes away from home.

A very special thanks must go to my sister, Elaine, not just for her timely 'interventions' in my fleeting relationship with Higher English, but for being the most caring and considerate person I know. Her unwavering support and uncanny knack of saying exactly the right thing at exactly the right time have been hugely important to me. Thanks must also go to Elaine and Don for blessing me with the most beautiful niece an uncle could wish for. Stacey has been an immeasurable source of joy throughout the final months of this process.

My final thanks must go to Isla, who has lived and breathed almost every inch of this journey. Although finishing the thesis has, at times, been a painful trial of endurance, it is one that I will always reflect on with a smile. I will be eternally grateful for Isla's love and support while she has been completing her own PhD, and look forward to sharing the next stage of our life together.

Glossary of Terms: Fife's Public Sector

Children's Services Group is a multi-agency group, which coordinates and oversees Fife's Integrated Children's Service Plan and is the lead partnership on creating a well-educated and skilled Fife (formerly the responsibility of the Fife Lifelong Learning Partnership).

Communities Scotland was formed in 2001 as a separate agency to deliver the Scottish Executive's objectives on housing and regeneration. It was abolished formally in April 2008 so that its non-regulatory functions could be brought into the core of the Scottish Government—its regulatory functions are now performed by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Before its termination the Lothian, Borders and Fife area office were responsible for six local authorities (Edinburgh City, West Lothian, Midlothian, East Lothian, Scottish Borders and Fife). Their investment budget in 2007/08 was just over £85 million.

Community Planning Implementation Group (CPIG) was preceded by the Community Planning Task Force (CPTF), which was established in March 2001 to facilitate the development of community planning in Scotland. Its remit is focused on maintaining progress, raising the profile, providing guidance, promoting best practice and giving independent focus to community planning.

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is the representative voice of Scottish local governments and acts as the employers' association on behalf of all Scottish councils.

Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) Fife is an umbrella organisation designed to strengthen and support the voluntary sector in Fife. Their main task is to promote social inclusion in Fife by helping excluded social groups (e.g. the unemployed; the impoverished; the mentally and physically disabled; ethnic minorities; the homeless; and those in areas served poorly by public transport). They use a variety of local, national and European funding to help support the 1200 voluntary organisations in Fife.

Equality Forum is responsible for tackling inequality and discrimination (as of April 2008 its function was under review by the Fife Partnership).

Fife Community Safety Partnership is responsible for making Fife's communities safer through the reduction of crime, the fear of crime, antisocial behaviour, abuse of women and children, and the number of domestic and road-traffic accidents. Their main planning document is the "Fife Community Safety Strategy: Making Fife Safer"

Fife Constabulary is responsible for the provision of a policing service to Fife and shares a conterminous boundary with both Fife Council and NHS Fife. It is divided into three divisions: Central Division, which has 160,000 inhabitants and three main population centres (Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Levenmouth); Western Division, which has around 130,000 people concentrated in Dunfermline, Cowdenbeath and Dalgety Bay); and Eastern Division, which has

only 70,000 people but 57% of Fife's geographical area. As of April 2008, Fife Constabulary employ 1640 people (1020 Police Officers, 500 support staff, and 120 Special Constables).

Fife Council is responsible for delivery all local government services in Fife. It is a unitary body established after the reorganisation of local authorities in 1996 (previously, the area was segmented into the three districts of Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and North-East Fife). As of 2007, Fife Council operates with a yearly budget of £580 million and employs over 22,000 people, delivering more than 900 services. Of those 22,000 employees, only 78 are councillors or *elected members* and the rest are non-political *council officers*.

Fife Economic Forum is responsible for helping Fife to build a stronger, more flexible and diverse economy. One of their main planning documents is "Growing Fife's Future: An Economic Development Strategy for Fife 2005-2015".

Fife Environmental Network is responsible for helping Fife create a sustainable environment through the reduction of waste, the preservation of local environments and natural heritage, providing more sustainable methods of transportation, lowering CO_2 emissions, and improving water, air and land quality. Their major planning document is the "Taking A Pride in Fife (TAPIF) Environmental Strategy for Fife".

Fife Health & Wellbeing Alliance is responsible for improving health and wellbeing in Fife, focusing particularly on reducing health inequalities, creating healthier environments and fostering healthier environments. Their major planning document is the Joint Health Improvement Plan.

Fife Housing Partnership provides a forum for investors, planning agencies, housing providers, tenants and other organisation to plan and develop ways to meet the housing and housing service needs in Fife. Its yearly investment fund is £113 million.

Fife Lifelong Learning Partnership was discontinued in 2007. Its strategic responsibilities were divided between the Fife Economic Forum, the Sustainable Communities Group, and the Children's Services Group.

Fife Rights Forum is responsible for developing the rights and advice strategy for Fife.

Fife Rural Partnership is responsible for improving the quality of life in rural Fife.

Fife's Further and Higher Education Sector is represented by Adam Smith College, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes (formerly known as Fife and Glenrothes Colleges); Carnegie College, Dunfermline (formerly known as Lauder College); Elmwood College, Cupar; and the University of St Andrews, St Andrews.

NHS Fife is responsible for the provision of all health services (Primary, Community and Hospital Care) in Fife and shares a conterminous boundary with both Fife Council and Fife Constabulary. As of April 2008, it has an annual budget of almost £600 million and is both a

commissioner and provider of health care, employing 8000 people directly and responsible for another 3000-4000 independently contracted jobs (i.e. General Practitioners, Dentists, Optometrists, etc.).

Scottish Enterprise (SE) Fife was terminated along with all local divisions of Scottish Enterprise (Scotland's main economic development agency) in April of 2008 in favour of a centralised Scottish-wide service. While in operation, the goal of the organisation was to help new businesses get underway as well as to support and develop existing businesses to help strengthen the reputation of Scotland's private sector in the global economy.

Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) is the representative body for senior strategic managers working in the public sector.

Sustainable Communities Group is responsible for overseeing the regeneration elements within the Community Plan through Fife's Regeneration Outcome Agreement.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Despite a rich military history spanning over 2500 years, the concept of strategy and strategic management has become synonymous with the nomenclature of business and organisation. Corporate strategy first emerged in the written form in the 1950s (Cummings and Wilson 2003), through works by Selznick (1957), Drucker (1954), Chandler (1962), Sloan (1963) and Ansoff (1965). Separately, they analysed businesses as profit-making entities, studying concurrently the use of strategy to achieve profit. From this narrow beginning, discussions pertaining to the nature of organisations and the function and application of strategy came rapidly and with vigour. Over the past half century, the study of strategy has become one of the most prominent areas in Management academia (Johnson et al. 2007). During this period, strategy research has evolved impressively (Hoskisson et al. 1999), maturing into an eclectic grouping of nuanced concepts and agendas and freeing itself from the clutches of Industrial Organisation economics that defined much of its infancy and adolescence (see McKiernan 1997). New schools of thought emerged, paradigms within schools were formed, and soon numerous definitions, though at times confusing and often contradictory, somehow solidified the greying concept of strategy, as it diffused throughout virtually every component of management academia.

In the last decade there has been a shift in the conception of strategy. Traditionally, it has been considered something that an organisation *has* (Jarzabkowski and Whittington 2008). Recently, however, this tradition has been challenged by the emergence of the notion that strategy is a kind of work (Jarzabkowski and Whittington 2008), something that people *do* (Jarzabkowski 2004: 529)—a shift emulating a broader practice turn in social theory (see Turner 1994; Schatzki et al. 2001; Reckwitz 2002) and management science (Brown and Duguid 1991; Orlikowski 1992, 2000; Brown and Duguid 2001; Jarzabkowski 2005). While the tight ontological grip of industrial economics may have spread the study of strategy far and wide, it has not provided, nor allowed, the depth of enquiry needed to research the activities

of people inside the firm, and thus understand more fully what *strategizing* actually involved, and the impact it may have on strategic outcomes (Johnson et al. 2007). Consequently, a new tradition has emerged, re-asserting the meaning of strategy on economic, theoretical, and practical levels (Jarzabkowski 2005; Johnson et al. 2007), and expanding rapidly throughout a discipline once dominated by firm level, micro-economic theory. The Strategy-as-Practice perspective has gained a large following (evidenced by the growing *www.s-as-p.org* online community), drawing on social theory and practice to help define the praxis of strategy and thus the role of the strategist (Whittington 1996, 2004, 2006a). Descending from an ethno-methodological extraction (see Garfinkel 1967), Strategy-as-Practice research attempts to delve into strategic 'life', to embrace the awkward complexities of strategy as a situated human endeavour, to study what a strategy practitioner does, what tools he or she uses, and the resultant implications for strategy as an organisational activity (see Whittington 1996; Jarzabkowski 2003; Chia 2004; Jarzabkowski 2004; McKiernan and Carter 2004; Whittington 2004; Jarzabkowski 2005; Whittington 2006a).

It is against this theoretical backdrop that the study of scenario planning, a situated strategic activity and example of episodic, interactive strategizing, will be conducted. Scenario planning has become one of the most common foresight activities practiced by large, capital intensive organisations (Linneman and Klein 1979, 1983; Bradfield et al. 2005; Rigby and Bilodeau 2009). It can be applied in a multitude of ways to satisfy a number of different objectives (Mason 1994; Martelli 2001; Nicol 2005; Curry and Schultz 2009). However, the growth in popularity amongst practitioners has left the literature with an over abundance of definitions, methods and prescriptive guides, and a distinct lack of theoretical development (Wilkinson 2009) and longitudinal-based empirical evidence. The questions that inspired this piece of research were worryingly simple, how does it *actually* work? How does an organisation *actually* use it? What happens physically, to turn a collection of hypothetical futures into something strategic? As investigation and analysis of the literature progressed, more sophisticated research questions emerged that focused the enquiry; they are all based upon the fundamental and central research question that this thesis will attempt to answer: *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?*

This chapter will introduce the thesis, beginning with an articulation of the rationale and justification for the study, before presenting the research questions that will guide the theoretical and empirical journey, and the research vehicle upon which the empirical analysis is based. The chapter will conclude with a structural outline of the thesis before continuing with the literature review in Chapter 2.

1.1 Rationale and Justification of Thesis

This thesis lies at the nexus of scenario planning and strategy. Scenario planning is a foresight activity used extensively in strategic planning and public policy development to imagine alternative, plausible futures as means to understand the driving forces behind the uncertainties and possibilities of a changing environment. Despite significant application in both private (see, for example, Linneman and Klein 1983; Wack 1985a, 1985b; Stokke et al. 1991; Simpson 1992; Martelli 1996; Moyer 1996; Ringland 2002a; Grant 2003; Miller and Waller 2003) and public (Kahane 1992b; Northcott 1996; McKiernan et al. 2000; Godet 2001; Ringland 2002b; NIC 2004; van der Duin et al. 2006; Docherty and McKiernan 2008) sectors, and a growing body of academic and practitioner-orientated literature, little empirical evidence exists about how organisations actually use scenario planning to inform strategy. It is this problem that the thesis attempts to address.

The scenario planning literature is replete with competing definitions (for a comparison of 20 axioms, see Nicol 2005) and alternative methodologies and frameworks (see, for example, Wack 1985a; Schoemaker 1995; Godet and Roubelat 1996; Schwartz 1998; Godet 2001) to aid the doing of scenario planning. However, despite the strategic followthrough being recognised as a critical, if not the *most* critical, component of the scenario planning process (see, for example, Wack 1985b; Wilson 2000; Selin 2006), it receives little more than a cursory glance from the majority of the literature. The literature that does address the transition provides unsatisfactory heuristics that lack theoretical rigour and empirical evidence based upon sound longitudinal research showing how scenario planning is used by an organisation over time to inform strategy.

Scenario planning emerged in a business and organisational context as a tool synonymous with the traditions of the planning school of strategy (Mintzberg et al. 1998). Since the frequently quoted example of Shell's successful scenario planning endeavour in the 1970s, the justification for scenario planning is that through a blend of analysis and insight (Wack 1985a), stories of hypothetical futures can open mindsets to potential threats and opportunities before they materialise, allowing a skilled user to act strategically to take advantage of the situation when (or if) it comes. Implicit in this understanding is the role of strategists and activities of people. The emerging Strategy-as-Practice perspective, which has exposed strategy to more sociological pursuits, presented a way of conceiving and studying strategy not as something an *organisation has*, but rather as something *people do* (Jarzabkowski 2004: 529). Within the developing Strategy-as-Practice agenda is an increase in the examination of the practices of firms as strategic devices (Dougherty 1992; Barry and Elmes 1997; Hardy et al. 2000; Hodgkinson and Wright 2002; Jarzabkowski and Wilson 2002; Grant 2003; Hendry and Seidl 2003; Jarzabkowski 2003; Samra-Fredricks 2003). Scenario planning is such a practice. By understanding scenario planning as an example of episodic, interactive strategizing, Strategy-as-Practice provides a theoretical lens through which empirical analysis of the scenario-to-strategy process can be performed.

The goal of the research is to perform an empirical analysis of the scenario-to-strategy process to help develop an academic understanding of how scenario planning actually works, how it helps people think, and how it makes them act. Although scenario planning is not without its critics (see Hamel and Prahalad 1994; Mintzberg 2000; Molitor 2009), it is a tool that has been used extensively throughout the world and has proved important financially (see Schwartz 1998; van der Heijden et al. 2002) and socially (see Kahane 1992b; Godet 2001), and is in need of empirical and theoretical development.

A secondary goal of the research is to advance understanding of the Strategy-as-Practice perspective and research agenda. Two areas of research, identified by Johnson et al. (2007) as critical to the advancement of Strategy-as-Practice, are tackled by this thesis; namely *people's activities and organisational level processes*, and the *relationship between institutionalised processes and people's activities*. Moreover, Strategy-as-Practice has been

criticised recently for applying a conservative notion of strategy to an ambiguous understanding of practice (Carter et al. 2008a). It is an agenda that has grown rapidly, but has also drawn criticism for a lack of originality in its contribution to theory (Carter et al. 2008b), and for its role alongside, within (Langley 1999), or beyond (Johnson et al. 2003; Whittington 2007) the process tradition. This thesis will attempt to address some of those criticisms as well as contributing to the body of practice-based research.

1.2 Research Questions

The central research question upon which this thesis is based is, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?* Three sub-questions emerge through the literature review which help answer the central question. They are as follows:

- *How do cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation?*
- *How does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?*
- *How does scenario planning affect policy development?*

The empirical evidence and longitudinal nature of the case study provide a unique and detailed account of how scenario planning is used in the strategic planning process. Such an account can help explore fully the praxis of the scenario planning process and advance theoretical and practical understanding of scenario planning as a situated strategic activity. The following section will present briefly the research vehicle at the heart of the thesis.

1.3 Research Vehicle

Fife is the third largest local authority area in Scotland and has a population of just under 360,000. The area is governed locally by Fife Council, a unitary body established after the reorganisation of local authorities in 1996. As of 2008, Fife Council operated with a yearly budget of c.£600 million and employed over 22,000 people, delivering more than 900 services to Fife residents. After 11 years of a Labour party majority, the 2007 elections saw a new coalition administration between the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Liberal Democrats, with Labour leading the opposition.

Fife Council also plays a leading role in the Fife Partnership, the group charged with coordinating Fife's Community Plan. The other partner agencies are NHS Fife, Fife Constabulary, Scottish Enterprise, Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) Fife, Communities Scotland, and Fife's Further and Higher Education sector (short descriptions of these agencies and their function can be found in the Glossary). Together, the agencies employ c.35,000 people and account for c.£1.6 billion in annual public spending. From the period of March 2002 to December 2007, the Partnership has met on 24 different occasions and has involved nearly 100 different people, the permanent members being the most senior decision-makers from the partner agencies. The Partnership consists of five other 'Strategic Partnerships', namely: the *Fife Community Safety Partnership*, the *Sustainable Communities Group*, the *Fife Economic Forum*, the *Taking a Pride in Fife Environmental Network*, and the *Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance* (see Glossary for further details). The purpose of these groups is to take forward the main themes of the Community Plan—the main planning document for Fife and key responsibility for the Partnership. The Fife Partnership, formed in 1998/9, developed the first Community Plan in 2000 and have used scenario planning to inform revised versions in 2004 and 2007.

The community planning movement was conceived as a way for local authorities to engage in Partnership work to provide and promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the communities they serve (Community Planning Working Group 1998): to "provide a strategic framework for the activities of the multifarious institutions engaged in community capacity building and regeneration" (Lloyd and Illsley 1999: 181). In Fife Council, the Community Plan "is at the heart" (Fife Council 2007) of everything they do. It is regarded as the "top" policy document for Fife and sets the tone and agenda for all local government services.

1.4 Overview of Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, providing a background, rationale and justification for the research question and goals of the research. The chapter provides a brief to introduction the research vehicle, before providing a structural overview of the thesis.

Chapter 2 provides a review of both scenario planning and Strategy-as-Practice literatures. The function of the chapter is to provide contextual understanding and critique of both literatures, detailing the theoretical lens that will guide the empirical part of the thesis, and supporting the preliminary unravelling and construction of the research questions that will shape the research. The first section of the review attempts to further knowledge of scenario planning, understanding it as a structured process used to imagine, create and explore multiple futures to help stakeholders re-perceive reality and thus better understand today in order to improve strategic and/or policy decisions. The review segments and examines key assumptions and concepts most pertinent to this research under the headings: Organisational Awakening; Organisational Awareness; Social Awakening; and Engagement and Strategy. The focus then shifts to the scenario-to-strategy process, highlighting the lack of empirical research on the engagement of scenario planning within a wider strategic planning process. The first part of the literature review concludes with recognition of the fundamental issues undermining the effectiveness of the scenario planning literature as the sole foundation of a piece of theoretically and empirically rigorous research. Thus, the second section of the literature review acknowledges scenario planning as a practice employed in the *doing* of strategy, utilising the Strategy-as-Practice research agenda to better inform understanding of the scenario-strategy nexus, which is the focal point of this thesis. This part of the literature review presents the development and origins of Strategy-as-Practice, discussing and critiquing the praxis, practices, practitioner framework (Jarzabkowski 2005) before addressing recent criticisms and areas of contention. The literature review concludes by locating the research question and scenario planning in general within the Strategy-as-Practice agenda, and offering a reconceptualisation of scenario planning as an example of episodic, interactive strategizing.

Chapter 3 explains the methodological choices and processes undertaken to help answer the central research question. The empirical research will examine the 'how' and 'why' of the scenario-strategy process, applying conceptual guidance formed in the literature review and attempting to extend the literatures involved to a more rigorous level of discussion. The research agenda will not be one of falsification or confirmation but rather of exploration,

illustration and explanation. The chapter will detail the methodological organisation of this research, describing the logic and method that underpins the study. In the first instance, the research subject and case study will be described, discussing also the theoretical and practical rationale behind its use and articulating the research objectives and questions guiding the inquiry. Following a discussion of the philosophical roots of the research and the paradigms that underpin it, the reasons for using a single, in-depth case study, and the organisation of the empirical elements of this research, will be presented. The chapter will also discuss data collection methods, and the grounded theory method of data coding and analysis employed, before concluding with a brief summary of the points covered, as well as an introduction to the structure of the empirical section of the thesis.

Chapter 4 represents the start of the empirical portion of the thesis. The case study presented therein is that of community planning in Fife, which extends from 1999 until April 2008. During this period, three Community Plans were produced by the Fife Partnership: the first in 2000, the second in 2004, and the third in 2007 (though was not released until 2008). Both the 2004 and 2007 editions were produced after the Fife Partnership underwent a scenario planning process. The descriptive, chronological narrative is intended to provide an opportunity to explore the contextual conditions pertinent to the phenomenon (see Yin 1994: 13), while also offering insight into the causal sequences critical to developing understanding of the scenario-to-strategy process. The chapter begins with Episode 1 (Pre-Scenario Planning), from the formation of the Fife Partnership and creation of the first Community Plan (c. 1999), and extending up to the initiation of the first scenario planning process in August 2002. Episode 2 (Scenario Planning 2003) runs from September 2002 through the scenario planning process, ending with the final draft of the scenarios, shortly before the scenario-into-action stage of March 2003. Episode 3 (Scenario Planning 2003: Follow-through Process) begins in March 2003 and concludes with the decision to re-engage the scenario planning process in October 2005. Episode 4 (Scenario Planning 2006) begins in October 2005 and follows the 'Managing Fife's Future' process through to (and including) the second *Managing Fife's Future* workshop in May 2006. Finally, Episode 5 (Scenario Planning 2006: Follow-through Process) begins in June 2006, again following the outcomes of the scenario planning and Managing Fife's Future process with respect to the Community Plan, the

Partnership, and the partner agencies, and concludes in April 2008 with the public release of the '2007 Community Plan'. The chapter is intended to provide a valuable and necessary illustration and exploration of the actual use of scenario planning in a wider strategic planning process, helping to establish how the scenario planning process was managed, and the effect it had on policy development.

Chapter 5 concludes the empirical part of the study, tackling directly the central and sub-research questions of the thesis. The chapter adds further explanation to answers developed in the case narrative, and combines theoretical knowledge and empirical evidence to extend understanding of scenario planning, the scenario-strategy nexus, and the research capabilities of the Strategy-as-Practice perspective. In understanding how an organisation manages the scenario planning process, how scenario planning affects policy development, and how cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation, the chapter concludes by presenting a succinct answer to the central research question, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process*?

The thesis concludes in chapter 6, which provides a summary of the thesis before articulating key theoretical and practical contributions, discussing some of the limitations of the study, and suggesting some avenues of further research. The chapter and thesis concludes with some final reflections on the journey undertaken.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Over the last 50 years, the study of strategy has become one of the most prominent areas in Management academia (Johnson et al. 2007). During this period, strategy research has evolved impressively (Hoskisson et al. 1999), maturing into an eclectic grouping of nuanced concepts and agendas and freeing itself from the clutches of Industrial Organisation economics that defined much of its infancy and adolescence (see McKiernan 1997). Despite early empirical study[1] in "systematic, analytically based frameworks for strategy formulation...interest in companies' strategic planning practices waned" (Grant 2003: 492). However, the recent "practice turn" in strategy research , emulating a broader practice turn in social theory (see Turner 1994; Schatzki et al. 2001; Reckwitz 2002) and management science (Brown and Duguid 1991; Orlikowski 1992, 2000; Brown and Duguid 2001; Jarzabkowski 2005), has returned some focus to intra-organisational activity, examining the practices of the firm as strategic devices (Dougherty 1992; Barry and Elmes 1997; Hardy et al. 2000; Hodgkinson and Wright 2002; Jarzabkowski and Wilson 2002; Grant 2003; Hendry and Seidl 2003; Jarzabkowski 2003; Samra-Fredricks 2003). One such practice is **scenario planning**, which has emerged over the last 30 years (Bradfield et al. 2005) as a popular method of foresight amongst large[2], capital intensive organisations with long planning horizons (see Linneman and Klein 1979, 1983).

The function of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, the central research question driving this thesis is *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?* Thus, a contextual understanding of both scenario planning and strategy must be provided. This contextual understanding will also detail the theoretical lens through which the case study will be analysed. The second function is the preliminary unravelling and

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[1] Empirical studies of corporate planning practices include work by Henry (1967), Denning and Lehr (1971; 1972), Grinyer and Norburn (1975), Cleland (1976), Ang and Chua (1979), Capon et al. (1987).

[2] Linneman and Klein (1983) found that 46% of Fortune 1000 companies used scenario planning, with the figure rising to 75% amongst the largest 100 (Fortune 100). Rigby and Bilodeau (2009) ranked scenario planning the 13th most commonly used management tool out of a survey of 1,430 executives. They also reported an increase in use between 2008 and 2009.

construction of the research questions that will guide the empirical enquiry. To achieve these objectives, this chapter will be organised as follows. The first section will review and critique the scenario planning literature, segmenting and examining key assumptions and concepts under the headings: Organisational Awakening; Organisational Awareness; Social Awakening; and Engagement and Strategy. This final part will discuss the literature addressing the scenario-to-strategy process, and in so doing highlight the lack of empirical research on the engagement of scenario planning within a wider strategic planning process. The first section of the literature review will conclude with recognition of the fundamental issues undermining the effectiveness of the scenario planning literature as the sole foundation of a piece of theoretically and empirically rigorous research.

The second section of the literature review acknowledges scenario planning as a practice employed in the pursuit—the *doing*—of strategy, and utilises the Strategy-as-Practice research agenda (hereafter referred to as S-as-P) to extend knowledge of the scenario-strategy nexus, which is the focal point of this thesis. Consequently, this section will present the development and origins of S-as-P, discussing and critiquing the praxis, practices, practitioner framework (Jarzabkowski 2005) before addressing recent criticisms and areas of contention. The chapter will conclude with a brief reflection on the conceptual foundations that will help guide the empirical portion of this research.

2.1 Scenario Planning

2.1.0 Introduction to Scenario Planning

Scenario Planning is a foresight activity used in strategic planning[3] and public policy development[4] to imagine alternative, plausible futures as means to understand the driving forces behind the uncertainties and possibilities of a changing environment. Yet, despite the appearance of definitional clarity, scenario planning has become a term that evokes

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[3] For private sector examples, see Linneman and Klein (1983), Wack (1985a; 1985b), Stokke et al. (1991), Simpson (1992), Martelli (1996), Moyer (1996), Krause (2002), Ringland (2002a), Grant (2003), and Miller and Waller (2003).

[4] For public sector examples, see Kahane (1992b), Northcott (1996), McKiernan (2000), Godet (2001), Ringland (2002b), NIC (2004), and van der Duin et al. (2006).

contention and confusion (Khakee 1991). Although foresight and scenarios have featured in ancient texts and military strategy (Bradfield et al. 2005), its application in business, and subsequent appearance in the management literature, has been a recent development. Part of the confusion surrounding scenario planning can be attributed to inconsistencies in the academic and practitioner literature (Mason 1994): "the literature reveals a large number of different and at times conflicting definitions, characteristics, principles and methodological ideas about scenarios" (Bradfield et al. 2005: 796). Bradfield et al. (2005) make two further observations which contribute to the confusion surrounding scenario planning: firstly, an absence of theoretical belonging leaves scenarios drifting between a multitude of frameworks —"planning, thinking, forecasting, analysis, and learning are commonly attached to the word scenario in the literature" (Bradfield et al. 2005: 796); and secondly, the plethora of different scenario planning models and techniques has created a methodological chaos (Martelli 2001) that must be overcome if the confusion over scenario planning is to be resolved (Millet 2003). Pettigrew's (1985) *context, process, content* framework illustrates the problematic further: there is no set paradigm or location for scenario planning (*context*), no methodological agreement (*process*), and no consensus on what the term scenario planning actually means (*content*). Although vagueness and loosely defined concepts could be considered counterproductive (Simpson 1992), perhaps a strict definition is unnecessary for such a creative and flexible device. Scenarios are rooted in art (Kleiner 1996) and refined by science; they need to be described and explored, not defined and restricted. Scenarios use a multitude of different techniques and methods to explore how the future will evolve—part of their appeal is effectiveness in different situations (e.g. decision scenarios for long-term capital investment requires a different focus, method and outcome than for uniting opposing viewpoints in a post-apartheid country[5]). While lacking overall homogeneity, the various versions of scenario planning are united in their difference from forecasts in the way that they embrace uncertainty rather than shun away from it and in doing so highlight the critical issues affecting the environment and the organisation. They are designed to make an

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[5] See Kahane's (1992b) Mont Fleur scenarios, a visioning exercise for post-apartheid South Africa, and Schwarz's (1998: 44-49) description of Shell's use of scenario planning to inform capital investment decisions regarding the Troll gas field in the North Sea.

organisation learn about itself and become more in-tune with its surroundings so that the strategic choices and policy decisions will create and/or sustain prosperity.

This literature review will not attempt further calibration or indeed unification of the scenario planning literature, rather it will embrace the patchwork nature of the scenario planning collage, articulating the strengths and weaknesses of its fundamental components while acknowledging the effect of nuance, whether in perspective, methodology, purpose, or a combination of all three. The next section will present an explanation of what scenario planning is and how it has developed. Following this will be an examination and critique of the assumptions underpinning the scenario planning literature within the broad categories of Organisational Awakening, Organisational Awareness, Social Awakening, and Engagement and Strategy. This final section will focus specifically on the scenario-to-strategy components of the scenario planning process. The purpose of this portion of the literature review is to provide contextual understanding that will underpin the rest of the thesis, introduce the following inquiry and begin answering some preliminary research questions. Specifically, the review will begin to address the reasons why an organisation would choose to use a scenario planning process, focusing on specific 'pre-conditions' as well as the various ways scenario planning can be used by an organisation and the benefits brought by different applications. It is also through this examination that an understanding can be gained of how an organisation manages the scenario planning process and the importance of fitting together purpose, application and method.

2.1.1 The Meaning of Scenario Planning

The goal of this section is to present a background of scenarios and scenario planning (arranged chronologically) to help understand how their use and perception has developed and evolved over the last 60 years.

The word 'scenario', defined in the Oxford dictionary as "an outline of the plot of a dramatic or literary work", stems from the Latin word *scena*, meaning 'scene', and *scenarious*, meaning 'of stage scenes', and was used widely during the renaissance and the silent movie

era. It was in this artistic sense that first inspired Leo Rosten of the RAND Corporation to suggest the term to a group of physicists searching for a name for alternative descriptions of satellite behaviour (Kleiner 1996). At the same time, a colleague of Rosten at RAND, Herman Kahn, also became drawn to the term's literary connotations as a means of conveying a hypothetical future state (Kleiner 1996). Fifty years on, Kahn is regarded as the populariser of the term and general forefather of modern-day scenario planning (Godet and Roubelat 1996; van der Heijden et al. 2002).

Kahn envisaged scenarios as a way to blend art and science in order to widen or even change beliefs. He argued that "belief followed language as much as the other way round" (Kahn 1960: 9), and thus scenarios should be "fictional and playful" and separate from the rigours of forecasting and implied certainty of quantification (Kleiner 1996: 150). In Kahn's words, scenarios are:

> "...a *hypothetical sequence of events that could lead plausibly to the situation envisaged*. Some scenarios may explore and emphasize an element of a larger problem, such as a crisis or other event that could lead to war...Other scenarios can be used to produce, perhaps in *impressionistic tones*, the future development of the world as a whole, a culture, a nation, or some group or class. The scenario is *particularly suited to dealing with events taken together*— integrating several aspects of a situation more or less simultaneously." (Kahn and Wiener 1967: 262)[6]

The features detailed here, such as the hypothetical sequence of events, the need for plausibility, the impressionistic tones, and the combination of uncertainty and complexity, represent the foundations of the scenario planning literature and the 'Intuitive Logics' methodology or 'school' in particular. Other significant authors, like Wack (1985a, 1985b), Schoemaker (1991, 1993, 1995), and Schwartz (1992, 1998) have added to this list of characteristics: Wack advocated that scenarios were "internally consistent pathways to the future" (Wack 1985b: 146) that gave managers the "ability to re-perceive reality" (p. 150); Schoemaker's heuristic approach emphasised "causal connections, internal consistency, and concreteness" (Schoemaker 1991: 550), as a way of "*bounding* the uncertainty" (p. 550);

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[6] Emphasis added.

whereas Schwartz sympathised with Kahn's artistic notion, where scenarios allow the user to "dream effectively" (Schwartz 1998: 4) about the kind of future one can aspire to.

Using Kahn's work as a guide, Pierre Wack, the man largely responsible for the translation of scenarios into its current form, first introduced the notion to the Royal Dutch/Shell Group in the 1960s (Kleiner 1996; van der Heijden 1996; de Geus 2002). Despite General Electric's simultaneous and equally effective application of scenario planning, Shell's more publicised success led to their installation as the "gold standard of corporate scenario generation" (Millet 2003), which is also why "the intuitive logics methodology is sometimes referred to as the 'Shell approach'" (Bradfield et al. 2005: 880).

Intuitive Logics could be described as the philosophy that underpins the conceptual purpose and method of the Anglo-American model of scenario planning. The 'intuitive' elements refers to the acceptance that because one cannot *know* the future, one must instead *feel* for it. However, such a soft, artistic process needs to be guided by a heuristically sound structure (Schoemaker 1991, 1997). Thus, the 'logic' component refers to the strict method and process that achieves validity and reliability of data (see Yin 1994) and provides a rigorous, scientific platform for the intuition to flourish. Schoemaker's (1997) 'Disciplined Imagination' draws on a similar theme. Although the two terms suggest fundamentally different processes (i.e. *Disciplined Imagination* evokes the idea that an artistic foundation is framed scientifically, whereas *Intuitive Logics* suggests an artistic extension of a calculated, scientific activity), they both capture the essence of a technique which draws upon both art and science alike. The degree to which art and science is balanced depends on the purpose of the process.

There are a vast number of acknowledged scenario planning methodologies (for example, Morphological Analysis, Delphi, Trend-Impact Analysis, etc.), all of which require a different balance of artistic freedom and scientific procedure. Even within *Intuitive Logics*, Wack (1985a, 1985b) acknowledges that although "first-generation scenarios" (i.e. global, macro-scenarios) offer little strategic value, they are a necessary precursor to second-level, decision-scenarios, which are much more 'strategically' orientated. Although both processes

are very similar, methodologically, the art/science balance requires fine-tuning to achieve the desired output.

To describe scenario planning or scenarios in their entirety would be an exhaustive task. Indeed, Nicol (2005) presented 20 axioms of scenario planning based upon an analysis of the many differing definitions of scenario planning that exist in the growing body of literature. The first four axioms capture the cornerstones of scenario planning (see Nicol 2005: 30):

1. Scenarios are about the future

2. Scenarios are descriptive

3. Scenarios present alternative foresights (multiple futures)

4. A systematic structured process is needed to develop scenarios

Utilising Decision Explorer software, Nicol (2005) examined the relationship between the 20 axioms. Two significant strands emerged (see Nicol 2005: 80):

1. The External Focus – a framework for understanding an uncertain future

2. The Internal Aspect – a method for revealing the conceptual ecology of individuals in the organisation

Although an interesting development in the pursuit of a "scenario planning theory" (see Nicol 2005: 23-25), it is very similar to van der Heijden's distinction between "understanding the environment" (scenarios) and "understanding the organisation" (business idea) (van der Heijden 1996: 108). The significant connection absent from Nicol's (2005) framework is the strategic conversation: the unifying moment and transitional object between scenarios and business idea (van der Heijden 1996).

As Nicol (2005) illustrates, the scenario planning literature has become replete with definitional differences. Although both Nicol (2005) and Bradfield (2005) seem to view these differences as a pejorative development, academics and practitioners should not be fooled into thinking that the scenario literature has become irrevocably fractured. Nicol's (see 2005: 31) own research into the varying definitions highlights more similarities than it does differences. Accordingly, the following sections and chapters will not be based on an exact

definition of scenario planning; rather the thesis shall be based on a sound understanding drawn from the aforementioned points:

Scenario planning is about using a structured process to imagine, create and explore multiple futures to help stakeholders re-perceive reality and thus better understand today in order to improve strategic and/or policy decisions.

This section has presented an understanding of what scenario planning means. Accordingly, the two following sections will describe the evolution of two main strands in scenario planning: the Anglo-American Development, and the emergence of *La Prospective* approach, also known as the 'French Centre' (Bradfield et al. 2005).

2.1.2 The Development of Scenario Planning

Aspects of scenario planning appeared first in both military and literary contexts. In military terms, the simulation of war games, evaluation of plans, preparation of soldiers for contingencies, and casualty projections (Brown 1968; Handel 2001; van der Heijden et al. 2002), encompasses the more mechanistic components of modern day scenario planning. In Literary terms, Plato's *The Republic* and Orwell's *1984* were an imagination of a possible future, based, albeit loosely, on current trends at the time (see Bradfield et al. 2005). Although still used in each context, scenario planning has evolved into a commonly used foresight technique intended to help individuals, companies, and governments better understand the world around them and the ramifications of their, and others', actions. This section will look briefly at this evolution, examining the roots of the nature and purpose of scenario planning in both an Anglo-American and European context. The purpose of this section is to examine the progression of scenario planning as a means of understanding the impact and implications these progressions have had on the management of the scenario planning process and the ensuing planning process.

<u>2.1.2.1 The Anglo-American Development</u>

During the 1940s and 1950s, scenario planning received little attention beyond the United States government and military think tanks (e.g. the RAND Corporation). Scenarios were used to help understand the cold war. The scientific, statistical components were applied to missile defence, and the more artistic, literary aspects were used to help imagine the aftermath of a nuclear exchange. Most of the work conducted during this era was classified as *top secret*, thus publications were seldom allowed. It was Kahn's book, *On Thermonuclear War,* released in 1961, that opened many eyes to the use and power of scenarios. Although criticised, ironically, for "thinking the unthinkable," Khan argued that it was "the only way to keep one's strategic vision from getting stale" (Kleiner 1999: 1)[7]. Shortly thereafter, Kahn left RAND to start the Hudson Institute, where he could re-ignite the literary and dramatic connotations of scenarios and, in doing so, apply his particular "methodology to social forecasting and public policy" (van der Heijden et al. 2002: 128).

The Hudson Institute's early financial struggles forced Kahn to meet senior executives from a selection of America's elite companies in a bid to gain corporate sponsorship. It was in this forum that he captured the attention of Shell's Ted Newland, who saw immediately the benefits of a scenario-driven approach (Kleiner 1996). At that time, Shell's Unified Planning Machinery (UPM), capable of processing both upstream and downstream operations, was one of the most advanced computational devices in the world. However, as advanced as its modelling capabilities were, it was unreliable. The UPM struggled to cope with the growing uncertainties of the external environment (e.g., the formation of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Yom-Kippur War, and the ensuing oil crisis). It appeared that the formal, mechanical era of stepped approaches (Ansoff 1965) and predict and control (van der Heijden et al. 2002) was being outgrown by the complexities of the globalised world, and that something more 'human' and cognitive was needed to understand the environmental uncertainties. Scenario planning emerged as a seemingly successful way to process the uncertainties that more formalised, scientific approaches were unable to

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[7] This page number refers to the article only; a corresponding number within the whole journal issue was not available.

(Linneman and Klein 1979). In Shell, this new approach was championed by Pierre Wack, who likened future study to Zen archery, saying that scenarios were a way to "hone ones' senses until you could see the world as it really is, not as you would like it to be" (Kleiner 1999: 1)[8].

Wack applied and refined Kahn's technique to the problems Shell faced (van der Heijden et al. 2002). The scenario-based strategy process was vastly different from the traditional UPM strategy sessions, focusing more on stories of possible futures than on the usual avalanche of numbers (Wack 1985a). Initially Shell's executives resisted the scenarios and the messages being conveyed (Wack 1985a; Kleiner 1996, 1999; van der Heijden et al. 2002), however Wack's vision helped Shell react to the 1973 oil crisis[9] faster than the other 'seven sisters' of the oil industry (van der Heijden et al. 2002).

In a time of management 'fads and fashions' (see Abrahamson 1991; 1996), scenario planning appeared to be a legitimate technique for organisational advancement. Shell refined their scenario studies, using them to help deflect further price shocks, like the steep rise caused by the Iranian Revolution in 1979, as well as the price collapse in 1986 when Saudi Arabia increased its production beyond OPEC quotas, sending prices plummeting to under $10 per barrel. Shell's scenario-informed strategies are estimated to have saved them billions of dollars (van der Heijden et al. 2002).

As mentioned briefly in the previous section, scenarios have been used to communicate a vision of the future. The storytelling aspect of scenarios allows an imagination of the consequences of both action and inaction in an attempt to instil a sense of pride and belief in what can be accomplished as well as a fear of apathy. The use of scenarios in this aspect is especially attractive to local and national governments who seek to use scenario planning projects to act as a precursor of change (see Ringland 2002b; Docherty and McKiernan 2008). Examples of this can be seen in the South African *Mont Fleur Scenarios* (Kahane 1992c), the *Scenarios For Scotland* (McKiernan et al. 2000, 2001a, 2001b), and in the British Columbia

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[8] This page number refers to the article only; a corresponding number within whole journal issue was not available.

[9] In October 1973, following the Yum Kippur war, OPEC led an Arab oil embargo that sent oil prices up by over 400% to $35 per barrel.

(Van Wynsberghe et al. 2003), Seattle, Rotterdam, Rome (Ringland 2002b) and Hamburg (Grossman 2006) scenarios.

This section has described briefly the Anglo-American development of scenario planning. However, while scenario planning was being developed at the RAND Corporation and the Hudson Institute, researchers in France were experimenting with a similar systematic study of the future. Thus the following section will describe the French development, known as *'La Prospective'*.

2.1.2.2 The Development of *La Prospective*

In the 1950s, after a string of failures in classical forecasting (Godet 1987), Gaston Berger, a French philosopher and founder of the *Centre d'Etudes Prospectives*, developed a scenario-based, long-term planning approach, called *La Prospective*, which sought to create a future-orientated 'attitude' (Godet and Roubelat 1996). The term *La Prospective* it is often mistranslated as meaning foresight; more accurately, it covers Ackoff's (see 1970, 1978, 1981) concepts of *preactivity* (anticipating changes) and *proactivity* (provoking changes)—a modern translation of which would be *strategic scenario building* (Godet 2001).

Berger, concerned primarily with public policy and planning, saw France's political and social future as being not a predetermined eventuality but rather as something that could be created to favour and further society. Accordingly, *La Prospective* was seen as a far-reaching, broad, and benevolent (Godet and Roubelat 1996) way to look at the future to determine present action. These forward-looking choices were called *futuribles* by Bertrand de Jouvenal, creator of the research organisation of the same name, to assert the intellectual undertakings inherent in futurology:

> "It was chosen because it designates what seems to be the object of thought when the mind is directed toward the future: our thought is unable to grasp with certainty the *futura*, the things which will be; instead it considers the possible futures."(de Jouvenel 1967: 18)

While de Jouvenel distanced his conjecturing from prophecy incognito, the de facto purpose of *La Prospective* was to create normative scenarios to project positive images onto the political arena to influence the actions of politicians and lawmakers alike—in a sense, it was a way to create a Pygmalion effect on a national level. This encapsulates the early distinction between the emerging Anglo-American and French approaches: on a conceptual level, the French centre wanted to create the future, whereas the Anglo-American centre wanted to discover it. Consequently, a criticism of the French centre is that it is partly enslaved by its environment, and is thus driven by Politics rather than knowledge. However, de Jouvenel argued that 'knowledge' was exactly what foresight needed to escape from:

> "The reason why the word 'conjecture' appears in the title of this book is precisely that it is opposed to the term 'knowledge'." (de Jouvenel 1967: 17)

Using the words of Jaques Bernoulli in *Ars Conjectandi*, de Jouvenel accentuated the distinction:

> "With regard to things which are certain and indubitable, we speak of *knowing* or *understanding*; with regard to other things, of *conjecturing*, that is to say, *opining*." (de Jouvenel 1967: 17)

This notion of embracing uncertainty and accepting that which "we know we don't know" and that which "we don't know we don't know" (see Schoemaker 1995: 38) underpins much of the scenario planning literature as well as some of the disputes over the role of probabilities in scenario development (see Global Business Network 1991).

In the 1970's, *La Prospective* began to develop beyond its normative roots. Michel Godet, then head of future studies at SEMA, developed scenarios for Électricité de France (EDF) and Elf using a progressive and largely mathematical and computerised approach designed to derive probabilistic outputs from which to build strategy. There are many different methodologies used to create scenarios (see Martelli 1996; Millet 2003; Van Notten et al. 2003). Shell's development of intuitive logics (described above) is often the most commonly cited 'way' to 'do' scenario planning; other organisations that have used scenario planning successfully have favoured other methods, for example, RAND cultivated the Delphi method (Amara and Lipinski 1983), whereas GE pioneered their own approach, which was based upon

a Delphi panel followed by cross- and trend-impact analyses (Georgantzas and Acar 1995). Part of Godet's method concentrated on the sequence of events that prompted future situations (Godet 1987, 2001), meaning that through the understanding of past trends one may better understand how the future may unfold. To aid this conceptual development of *La Prospective*, Godet used a virtual toolbox (Godet and Roubelat 1996), containing techniques enabling him to: identify key variables (using the MICMAC method); analyse trends and actors' strategies (using the MACTOR method); reduce uncertainty (using the Delphi method and Cross-Impact Analysis); and identify and assess strategic options (MULTIPOL method). Many of Godet's methods involved a high degree of mathematical data and computational processing—something he believes to be extremely valuable and vastly underused (see Godet 2001: 75). However, this was disputed by scenario practitioners and theorists who favoured the creative, intuitive methods that are free from the bindings of probabilistic likelihoods—Mandel, for example, referencing Ogilvy, described Godet's approach as "French Obscurantism" (Global Business Network 1991: 12), illuminating another fundamental difference between the Anglo-American and French approaches to scenario building.

A further distinction between the two methods is the tendency of Anglo-American scenarios to have a more global outlook whereas the French method was far more national in its focus—questions were asked and contextualised in a socio-political forum rather than in a geo-political one. Similarly, the analytical concentration of Anglo-American approaches raises questions as to disseminate the scenarios or just the strategies borne of them (Porter 1985), whereas in the French method, the scenarios are used to precipitate a form of societal 'postalgia' (Ybema 2004) in an effort to instil a more positive social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Ogilvy 2002). Both approaches have evolved separately but are linked inextricably. As such, both have benefits and both have shortcomings, but on a fundamental level, they share the same essence and function that have formed the cornerstones of scenario planning. Thus, they should not be seen in competing terms: often, different situations require different ideological approaches. Ever since the inception of scenario planning, its strengths have been applied (and misapplied) in a multitude of ways to a multitude of uses (Godet and Roubelat 1996).

This section described the genesis of both Anglo-American and French approaches to the use of scenario planning and scenarios. In doing so, a number of issues pertinent to developing and extending understanding of scenario planning have been highlighted. Scenario planning has developed as a way to understand uncertainty, through analysis of the past and present as a means of preparing for, improving, and indeed, creating the future. Both Anglo-American and French developments highlighted the need for artistic imagination and freedom as well as rigorous, scientific analysis and structural integrity. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two centres is simply a matter of perspective: the Anglo-American centre sought to re-conceptualise the impact of nuclear war and the demand and supply of oil, so, naturally, they looked outwards to the world; meanwhile, the French centre sought to improve the well-being of its citizens, and thus looked inwards.

Having introduced a background to the basic components and genesis of scenario planning, the following section will discuss the application and benefits of scenario planning. Specifically, it will tackle the capacity of scenarios to stimulate organisational and social awakening, and increase organisational awareness, as well discussing the importance of engagement during the strategic follow-through.

2.1.3 The Application and Benefits of Scenario Planning

The genesis and evolution of scenario planning described in the previous section illustrated the different ways an organisation can approach sensemaking about the future. This section will delve deeper into the benefits and shortcomings of scenario planning in an attempt to further understanding, and begin answering, the central research question, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?* Accordingly, this section begins with a brief introduction to some of the 'conditions' the scenario-orientated literature deems suitable for scenario-based interventions, before presenting the applications, benefits and criticisms in a more synthesised and thematic format.

Some scenario planning authors have described conditions whereby an organisation would, or indeed, *should* use scenario planning. For example, Ringland (2002a, 2002b) proposes that

scenarios are best used where "the force of the external world requires senior managers to think 'outside-in'—as in times of structural change in the environment, industry, competitors or customers" (Ringland 2002a: 119), when there is a need for the creation of a shared context and language within the organisation, and finally, to foster engagement with stakeholders when developing public policy (Ringland 2002b: 137).   Similarly, Schoemaker (1991, 1995, 1997) lists eight main conditions where an organisation should consider using scenario planning as part of the strategy process[10].

The problem with such lists is that virtually every organisation in the world can fit into one of the categories, and although scenario planning could probably be used relatively successfully by most organisations in the world, there are certain conditions that make it far more or less likely for a successful scenario-driven exercise to occur (see, for example, Hodgkinson and Wright 2002).   Regardless of the specific reason, the underlying rationale is that there are inherent benefits in gaining an improved understanding of how the future may unfold.   Thus, the implicit assumption underpinning much of the scenario planning literature is that, under certain circumstances, it is beneficial for an organisation to use scenario planning—that, within the scope of this thesis, **scenario planning improves a) the strategies of an organisation, which should improve performance, and/or b) the policies of a public authority, which should improve social progress**.

Four main aspects of the scenario planning literature underpin this assumption.   Accordingly, the following sections will address and critique the use of scenario planning in each of these areas: *Organisational Awakening*, *Organisational Awareness*, *Social Awakening*, and *Engagement and Strategy*.   Through investigation of these areas, further processes required to bridge the gap between scenario planning and improved performance and social progress will be discussed.

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[10] The eight conditions are as follows: uncertainty is high relative to managers' ability to predict or adjust; too many costly surprises have occurred in the past; the company does not perceive or generate new opportunities; the quality of strategic thinking is low; the industry has experienced significant change or is about to; the company wants a common language and framework, without stifling diversity; there are strong differences of opinion, with multiple opinions having merit; your competitors are using scenario planning. For further details, see Schoemaker (1995: 27).

2.1.3.1 Organisational Awakening

Scenario planning addresses both reality and perceived reality: "they [scenarios] explore for facts but they aim at perceptions inside the heads of decision-makers" (Wack 1985b: 140). Consequently, the purpose of a scenario-based intervention is to challenge strategic paradigms (see Roubelat 2006: 526), to "gather and transform information of strategic significance into fresh perceptions" (Wack 1985b: 140). This assumes that "fresh perceptions" are better than previous perceptions, that what was being done prior to the use of scenario planning was inferior, that the (then current) thinking was insufficient for the coming future, or as Drucker (1980) wrote famously: "the greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence: it is to act with yesterday's logic". The implications of this assumption are twofold: firstly, the exploration of facts will reveal a future not thought of; and secondly, that if a possible future has not been thought of, then the organisation will not be prepared for it, at least not deliberately. Thus, the re-perception required to stimulate an organisational awakening must occur on two levels of diametrically opposed insight:

- External – re-perceiving the world as it relates to the organisation
- Internal – re-perceiving the organisation as it relates to the world

Although opposed diametrically, these two levels of insight are linked inextricably. There is an instinctive connection between the external and internal: the re-perception of the external environment involves a reflexive reappraisal of the internal implications and requirements (Sandri 2009). A person's understanding of the world is based on the lens through which it is viewed, i.e. the structure, which is constructed, constrained and enabled by the rules and resources which help attribute meaning (Giddens 1984). This structure, which has been sculpted over time through interaction with colleagues, education, bureaucracy, power, culture, politics, etc., is difficult to adapt and thus requires a sufficient 'shock' to cause the necessary re-perception (Harvard Business School Press 2005).

Wack (1985b) argues that scenario planning can help provide such a shock, the "aha" moment, which "leads to strategic insights beyond the mind's previous reach" (Wack 1985b: 140). In bridging the external and internal, Wack connects the hypothetical futures to new

strategic insights through the mind of the decision-maker and manager, whereas van der Heijden (1997) discusses the connection on a more collective level, referring explicitly to the "organisational self":

> "Scenario development can be seen as a process of scaffolding insights about the environment. In addition, as strategy is about confronting the 'self' with the environment we need a similar instrument for scaffolding insights about the organisational 'self'." (van der Heijden 1997: 7)

The notion of "scaffolding insights about the environment" highlights the reflexive learning connection between scenarios and strategy and the conscious and subconscious cognitive benefits of using scenario planning as a component of the strategic learning cycle (see Bood and Postma 1998; Boyle 2002): the environment is a vital component in strategy development; scenario planning helps generate insights about the environment; therefore, a change in understanding about the environment causes a self-evaluation—a *re-evaluation*—into the "organisational self" (van der Heijden 1997). Put another way, scenarios can be used to force an institutions into a double-loop learning model (Kolb and Rubin 1991).

Despite apparent benefits, putting the "organisational self" under the microscope is not always welcomed. Even in the Shell scenarios, Wack described the reluctance of senior managers to "re-perceive reality" (Wack 1985b: 150). More recently, Hodgkinson and Wright (2002) described a 'failed' scenario-intervention at a publishing firm. Their efforts to "surface managerial understandings of the company's current strategy and competitive position" (Hodgkinson and Wright 2002: 950), in order to start a debate amongst the senior managers about the medium to long-term strategic direction of the firm, were stymied by a combative CEO. Despite organising the workshop, the Chief Executive was openly sceptical and then completely dismissive of any benefits that the process may have. Regardless of whether or not that failure was the cause of practitioner error or inexperience (see Whittington 2006b), it highlights the importance of trust in the practitioners, the process and the scenarios themselves (Selin 2006). It also highlights the susceptibility of the process to issues common in organisational life (e.g. role of power, politics, culture, etc.) that can impede the "transformation process", which "more often than not…does not happen…and is the real challenge of scenario analysis" (Wack 1985b: 140).

Both artistic and scientific elements of scenario planning play a role in ensuring that the process does not fall on deaf ears. The analytical, scientific components are important in establishing and indeed showing methodological rigour. However, it is the scenario component—the artistic part—that needs to trigger the "inner space [of a] manager's microcosm where choices are played out and judgement exercised" (Wack 1985b: 140). A strong narrative (Novak 1975; Ricoeur 1984; Bruner 1990; Polkinghorne 1995) and powerful storytelling (see Allan et al. 2002) helps penetrate this microcosm. Aside from providing the initial 'shock' of the hypothetical future, the narrative component of the scenario also helps create a common language and framework the organisation can use to interact on strategic implications (Schoemaker 1991, 1995, 1997). The establishment of language with scenario-specific meaning can transcend organisational boundaries, change beliefs, and help create or negotiate an 'objective' reality (Kahn 1960; Berger and Luckman 1966; Chermack and van der Merwe 2003). The role of language continues to factor in the "transformation process"; the language of the scenarios and the perceptions people hold and have built up over time have an impact on the nature and outcome of the strategic conversation[11]:

> "It's important to remember that the strategic conversation is shaped by the way people in the organisation see their world. Mental models have been built up over time, and these are coupled through a common language that makes the strategic conversation possible. Over time people influence each other in the way they see the world." (van der Heijden 1996: viii)

Through illustrating the role scenarios play in triggering an organisational awakening, this section has begun to unravel why an organisation would use scenario planning as well as how the process would be managed. The awakening has been shown to involve both a re-perception of reality and a re-evaluation of the organisation. Underpinning this aspect of scenario planning is the assumption that an organisational awakening—a re-perception of the world and re-evaluation of the organisation—will improve the strategic decisions of the managers and thus improve the performance of the organisation. However, despite scenario planning being an episodic activity (see Grant 2003; Jarzabkowski 2005), in an era of rapid environmental change, it is unreasonable to expect a monthly, or even yearly, organisational

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[11] This issue of strategic conversation will be the subject of section 2.1.4.3.

awakening. Rather, a scenario planning process can help elevate an organisation to a more sophisticated level of awareness. Thus, the following section will concentrate on the ability and use of scenario planning as a way to improve organisational awareness.

2.1.3.2 Organisational Awareness

Aside from instigating a 're-perception of reality' (Wack 1985a, 1985b), scenario planning also has the capacity to increase an organisation's awareness and sensitivity to even subtle changes in the external environment. The scenario planning literature is replete with anecdotal tales of 'big-miss errors' (see Schoemaker 1997: 44), where valuable information was overlooked or ignored, as well as more positive stories involving the identification of subtle and/or well-hidden pieces of information that scenario processes helped identify as an indicator of impending change. A popular example of the latter is Royal Dutch/Shell's detection of a subtle string of events that suggested a possible opening of the communist bloc, which changed their decision to invest in a $6 billion platform in the Troll gas fields (see Schwartz 1998: 44-59). This example illustrates the two implicit and interconnected elements that underpins the elevated awareness achieved through the scenario planning process:

- Recognition – identifying the 'soft' or 'weak' signals
- Meaning – understanding the implications of the signals

The nature of the awareness stimulated by scenario planning forms part of a "chain of perception" (Schwartz 1998: 36) that precludes the separation of these two elements. The ability to recognise and detect previously hidden signals is only achieved through the attachment of meaning to the specific signal. Thus, without the understanding of causal processes, developed through the scenario exercise, the signals would likely remain hidden. Consequently, two stages are required: first, the generation of understanding (which is achieved during the 'awakening'); and second, the active and regular search for underlying signals and drivers of change.

The scenario planning process helps to give meaning to weak and previously undetected signals in the environment (van der Heijden 1997, 2004), which allows the prioritisation of issues of potential concern and an examination of the impacts of events therein (Slaughter 1996a; Goodwin and Wright 2001). Scenarios focus attention on causal processes and key decisions (Kahn and Wiener 1967), helping the practitioners recognise patterns of competition, business direction, industry competition, consumer culture and any other external factors that are relevant to the organisation at that particular time (Ringland 2002a). Given the strength of scenario planning's ability to monitor weak signals, it has been suggested that it has a large role to play within the specific field of environmental scanning (Schnaars 1989). Scenario planning is a technique suited to tracking early indicators of change, but could be honed more specifically towards the development of ultra-sensitive environmental probes with anticipatory skills to track the beginnings of, changes to, and conclusion of major trends (Ringland 2002a). For example, Schnaars (1989) argued that the use of scenarios should be confined to environmental analysis and should not be applied as a device used to gage the rigour of business plans or the potential reaction of markets or industries. However, while formal scanning systems are beneficial to organisations (Hambrick 1982), using scenario planning only for environmental analysis creates a disconnection between the scanning itself and the cognitive evolution upon which the scanning relies.

This focus on external challenges and the contextual environment has "important repercussions for the organisation" (van der Heijden 2005: 115). By taking a more 'outside-in' approach, the scenario planner should be better equipped to contextualise the role and impact of the environment, competitors, opportunities and threats in relation to the organisation (van der Heijden and Schutte 2000). The ability of scenario planning to look both far and wide, thereby stretching the "strategic space", allows a regular challenge to managers' strategic paradigms (Roubelat 2006: 526).

This section has illustrated the role scenario planning plays in the elevation and perpetuation of organisational awareness, unravelling further the ways in which an organisation may use and manage a scenario planning process. The assumption underpinning this section is that scenario planning can elevate an organisation's awareness to a more sophisticated level,

which can increase the responsiveness of the organisation to potential threats and opportunities, improving the strategic decision-making and thus the eventual performance. While the two previous sections dealt with organisational components of the scenario planning literature, some well-known scenario planning interventions are located in the public domain (e.g. the South African Mont Fleur scenarios, the Scenarios for Scotland, etc.) and have been designed to engender a form of 'social awakening'. This will be the subject of the following section.

2.1.3.3 Social Awakening

The use of scenario planning in the public arena is increasing (Bradfield et al. 2005). The organisational components discussed previously are still relevant to public institutions but publicly orientated scenario planning projects can also contribute to a form of 'social awakening', which is manifested through interaction and engagement of relevant stakeholder groups charged with implementing necessary policy choices. The process which connects this network of actors illuminates the ideological rather than analytical function of scenario planning (see Roubelat 2009).

Marchais-Roubelat and Roubelat (2008) contend that "beyond sense-making foresight plays many functions", which one could classify as knowledge-building scientific function or as an influence-building ideological function (Marchais-Roubelat and Roubelat 2008: 27). Within these functions, scenarios can challenge the dominant strategic paradigm or, if more trend-based, contribute to the re-enforcement of it (Marchais-Roubelat and Roubelat 2008). However, when applied to publicly-orientated scenarios, this framework assumes a level of harmony between ambition and actuation. For example, in a situation whereby there is an unrealised ambition to change, perhaps to a more eco-friendly way of working, scenarios may be used to break the dominant action-based trend while simultaneously re-enforcing the dominant strategic paradigm (i.e. the underlying ambition).

The use of scenarios in a public domain also assumes a disconnection between strategists and the public. They may be united in ambition but the application of scenarios to instigate

social change assumes, at the most basic level, that society needs to evolve. Following this, as the 'strategists' (policy-makers) are using scenario planning to achieve societal change, one can assume that, using Marchais-Roubelat and Roubelat's (2008) framework, the scenarios are designed to serve an ideological function and challenge the dominant strategic paradigm held by the public (and indeed members of the public organisation), and therefore re-enforce the strategic paradigm held by the 'strategists'—put another way, it is using scenarios as a 'catch-up' device, as a way to accelerate the change in mindsets and speed of organisational learning. Thus, the purpose and role of scenarios in this endeavour is to communicate a vision of society to help enact positive change amongst key stakeholders, which will improve relevant and particular areas.

A strong vision is a powerful tool when trying to change mindsets and raise the organisation's strategic I.Q. (Tregoe and Zimmerman 1980), hence scenarios are considered effective in the development and creation of public policy. A snapshot of the world in 10, 15, or 20 years time can extrapolate minimal trends into a frightening conclusion, illustrating the impact and importance of decisions (Grossman 2006). Senge's (1990) parable of the boiled frog explains the value of understanding long-term outcomes provided in a scenario-based exercise:

> "If you place a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will immediately try to scramble out. But if you place the frog in room temperature water, and don't scare him, he'll stay put. Now, if the pot sits on the heat source, and if you gradually turn up the temperature...the frog will do nothing. In fact, he will show every sign of enjoying himself. As the temperature gradually increases, the frog will become groggier and groggier, until he is unable to climb out of the pot. Though there is nothing restraining him, the frog will sit there and boil. Why? Because the frog's internal apparatus for sensing threats to survival is geared to sudden changes in his environment, not to slow, gradual changes." (Senge 1990: 22)

Senge goes on to describe the American automobile industry's gradual decline against the Japanese auto industry, and although intended as a parable of corporate failure, it illustrates the importance of understanding trends and momentum as a basis for understanding the future. It also illustrates how a slow-moving force (like a Local Authority Council or Health Service, with a large bureaucratic structure) can fall victim to a steady decline, thus highlighting the import of using scenario planning to extrapolate subtle trends (like 1-2%

annual budget cuts with an ageing population and shrinking workforce) out over 10, 20, 50 years. Affording the stakeholder a glimpse into this world is intended to invoke action and policies to counter approaching threats as well as to take advantage of opportunities.

Ambition for individual and societal progress is fundamental to government and played a central role in the emergence of the French method of scenario planning (de Jouvenel 1967; Godet 2001). The Scottish Government advocates a single purpose: "to create a more successful country where all of Scotland can flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth"[12]. At a local level, Fife Council's two-line vision statement uses the word 'ambitious' three times relating to individual improvement as a means for societal advancement. Consequently public-sector scenario projects attempt to convey a positive but attainable image of the future—an articulation of the achievement of ambition (Bezold 2009). Similarly, as much as social change has been largely dependent on ambition, so too has it been stimulated by fear, whether of war, religion, persecution, disease, poverty, etc. Thus a positive scenario is often tempered with the notion of social regression—an articulation of the negative consequences of inaction; the goal of which being that the combination of hope and fear will stimulate an awakening—a need for action and fear of apathy[13].

Although Wack (1985b) argues against polar scenarios, where an obvious 'middle-ground' exists, the use of Trend, Utopian, Catastrophic and Normative scenarios is advocated strongly by Masini and Vasquez (2000). They define this area as "Human and Social Future Studies", illustrating the categorisation with successful examples from Latin America, where public officials from Venezuela and Colombia examined the future of Primary and Higher Education, respectively, as well as other world-wide endeavours (see Masini and Vasquez 2000: 59-62). Perhaps two more well-known examples of scenario planning processes designed to engender social prosperity are from Scotland and South Africa: the *Scenarios for Scotland*[14] were

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[12] From 'The Scottish Government website' (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms) accessed October 2009.

[13] Both Mont Fleur Scenarios (see Kahane 1992b; 1992c) and Scenarios for Scotland (see McKiernan et al. 2000; 2001a; 2001b) offer good examples of this.

[14] See McKiernan et al (2000, 2001a, 2001b) for further details: two scenarios were created, the "High Road", a predominantly positive scenario, and the "Low Road", a predominantly negative scenario.

designed to inspire a country to take the "High Road" to socio-economic success and thus avoid cyclical decline of the "Low Road"; and the *Mont Fleur Scenarios*[15] were created to illustrate the importance of successful and sustainable government policies in a post-Apartheid South Africa. Thus, while polar scenarios may not have been desirable in the decision-orientated situations Wack faced in for-profit organisations, there is evidence that they are used widely and effectively in a more public arena (see Kahane 1992b; 1992c; Masini and Vasquez 2000; McKiernan et al. 2000, 2001a, 2001b).

The notion of "social building of the future"[16], which illustrates the essence of the French school of scenario building, also captures the philosophical difference which distinguishes public and private scenario projects. On an organisational level, scenarios tend to to err on the navigational—they are used to understand and traverse environmental uncertainties on the path to prosperity (for examples, see Wack 1985a, 1985b; Ringland 2002a); but on a societal level, scenarios assume a more activist role, becoming agents for positive social change and trying to shape a better world (Kahane 1999), in spite of the difficulties that may present:

> "Building the future implies carrying through...difficult educational processes and processes of culture transformation while at the same time carrying out exercises of anticipation. It means making future studies a fundamental tool so that we are subjects of change and not objects of destiny or victims of the 'manipulators and colonisers of the future'." (Masini and Vasquez 2000: 51)

Consequently, Masini and Vasquez argue that "human and social future studies" must draw on:

> "The role of visions in the identification of a desirable future; the importance ascribed to the influence of present and future values in the analysis and building of reality; and the futurist's role in the 'building of society'." (Masini and Vasquez 2000: 51)

Accordingly, an objective in this pursuit is to "pinpoint priority issues in terms of problems and opportunities" (Masini and Vasquez 2000: 51). The application of scenario planning in

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[15] See Kahane (1992b, 1992c) for further details: four scenarios were created, three described negative futures and one, "flight of the flamingos", depicted a positive and prosperous future for South Africa.

[16] From Masini and Vasquez (2000), referencing the work of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Gaston Berger.

pursuit of more functional and practical societal advancement illustrates the theoretical underdevelopment (or perhaps naïveté) of scenario planning. Scenarios constructed with a view to social building[17] are aligned (albeit inadvertently) with a functionalist view of society —that there are "functional prerequisites" (see Parsons 1951) and by targeting specific components of society (e.g. education, social equality, etc.) for specific actions, society as a whole will benefit. Consequently, scenario planning is susceptible to the same critique directed towards a Parsonian view of functionalism—that there is an inbuilt conservative bias, which supports the status quo of society and thus the argument that there are aspects of society which are beneficial and indispensable, which, simultaneously reinforces their legitimacy and rejects any radical change (Haralambos and Holborn 1980). The goal here is not to critique functionalism as a sociological perspective, but rather to illustrate the unwitting philosophical conflict inherent to scenario planning—that although the scenario planning process aims to change mindsets and to 'think the unthinkable', in a social building context, it begins with the implicit, unarticulated, and inadvertent truth that there are functional prerequisites of society, like the universal presence of social stratification, which, in scenario terms, serves as both the lens and vehicle for social mobility and societal advancement.

Not all publicly orientated scenarios are designed within a 'practical' social building construct. Scenario Planning can also be used as a form of negotiation. Merging people and ideas and opinions is a difficult and often sensitive task, which can require the assistance of a common dialogue to penetrate the entrenched rhetoric of opposing interest groups (see Young et al. 1970). In situations like this, scenarios:

> "…permit the establishment of communication between people who do not
> understand each other, the identification of actors and objectives to comprehend
> the roots of conflicts and to come up with creative, shared solutions." (Masini
> and Vasquez 2000: 51)

This captures the sentiment behind one of the more well known examples of a scenario planning exercise. In 1991-92 in South Africa, the Mont Fleur scenarios were used as an

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[17] As described by Masini and Vasquez (2000) and Roubelat (2006)

innovative method for bringing different organisations and people together to "think creatively about the future of their country" (Kahane 1992c: 1). The scenarios, which sought to shape the next ten years (1992-2002) for post-apartheid South Africa, united "politicians, activists, academics and businessmen, from across the ideological spectrum" (1992c: 1). The four scenarios were called *Ostrich*, where negotiations fail and non-representation continues; *Lame Duck*, where the transition to the "new dispensation is slow and indecisive" (1992c: 1); *Icarus*, where the transition is rapid but unsustainable; and finally, *Flight of the Flamingos*, where South Africa enjoys inclusion and growth through sustainable policies.

The open, informal nature of the work that preceded the Mont Fleur scenarios helped breakdown some of the ideological divides that separated many of those involved. In turn, the focus shifted to the future of *their* country rather than the achievement of *their* ideals. Kahane (1992b, 1992c), one of the main facilitators, described the three main results of the exercise as: the creation of substantive messages which forced the country's leaders to realign their thinking; the "creation of informal networks and understandings among the participants" (Kahane 1992c: 3), which spurned future discussion and agreements; and, the evolution of language and thought from those involved in the discussions (Kahane 1992c). Kahane's (1992c) three results capture the essence of the two preceding sections: the 'realignment of thinking' as the 'awakening' and the increased understanding and common language as the elevated awareness. This also illustrates the level of cohesiveness required to extend their benefits onto a societal level.

The purpose here is two-fold: firstly, to illustrate the multi-faceted and complementary nature of scenario planning, and, secondly, to demonstrate the connectedness of the various uses of scenario planning. Scenarios can be used in a functional sense—as a way to identify and target elements of society for improvement. They can also be used in a 'softer' way—as a means to facilitate discussions, challenge thinking and create a language and joint vision which can guide the more functional elements of social change (Schoemaker 1991; Kahane 1992c). While the application of scenarios in this section has concentrated on social awakening, two methods of pursuing such a challenge have been discussed. These methods should not be treated as mutually exclusive endeavours, nor should they be disconnected

from the issues relating to organisational awakening or organisational awareness, rather they should all be considered integral parts of a scenario planning tapestry. Scenarios can engender positive social change, but effective implementation requires a greater contribution. Socially orientated scenarios can help create a common language *and* common vision, essentially the *beginning* and *end* of ambition, but the vehicle required to attain that vision lies in the cohesion between stakeholder organisations and society itself. The organisations required to stimulate change, which tend to be publicly-orientated[18], must become part of the process. Thus, to connect vision with realisation, the process must be inclusive (Roubelat 2000): the relevant stakeholders must engage with both vision and reality, i.e. they must achieve their own organisational awakening and elevate their own awareness to align their strategic focus with that of the larger social aspiration.

This section has illustrated the layers of involvement in using scenario planning to stimulate social awakening. The assumption underpinning this section is that society as a whole can be improved by targeting specific components of it (e.g. education, transportation infrastructure). Thus, societal scenarios can help align and engage stakeholder organisations with a common goal, which should lead to positive social change. Consequently, the achievement of such change is dependant on widespread strategic engagement between relevant organisations and the scenarios and scenario process. Despite its importance, it is an area overlooked by much of the scenario planning literature. The following section will examine the importance of strategy and engagement before progressing onto a critique of the scenario-to-strategy literature and the role of scenario planning within a wider strategic context.

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[18] While private organisations also have a significant role in building social prosperity, the genesis for an improved private sector is often publicly controlled elements, like an improved education system or transportation infrastructure (see Buck et al. 2005; Docherty and McKiernan 2008).

<u>2.1.4 Strategy and Engagement</u>

Creating scenarios should not be seen as the culmination of the scenario planning process (Wilson 2000), but rather as a stepping-stone on the path towards advanced strategic insight (Wack 1985b). Indeed, action is the "end goal of scenario exercises"; "without action...the scenario exercise is moot and irrelevant" (Selin 2006: 2). The previous sections illustrated *what* scenario planning is used for but not *how* it is actually used. As described in Organisational Awakening (section 2.1.3.1), scenarios provide a challenge to current thinking, and that cognitive challenge is then presumed to improve long-term strategic decision making. But how does that happen? How is the connection managed? Similarly, an ambition of scenario planning can also be to increase organisational awareness (section 2.1.3.2), but how is that process managed? How do you embed scenario planning into an organisation so that it improves the doing of strategy? Within these broad questions are a number of sub-points. For example, scenario planning processes supporting strategic decision making are inherently episodic, they provide the cognitive apparatus for confronting critical uncertainties particular to their space and time, whereas scenario planning processes aimed at increasing long-term thinking are more about creating a culture of foresight and a reflective mechanism for considering the future; thus, is the difference between these two approaches simply a matter of repetition or are they two distinct processes? Similarly, if a scenario-based intervention is used to assist in decision making, should the scenarios be communicated to the organisation, or just the final decision? Put more broadly, who should be involved with the scenario planning and its strategic followthrough?

The following section will attempt to understand these questions more thoroughly and answer them where possible so that it may help guide the empirical portion of the thesis. This part of the literature review will be split into four parts. Firstly, the literature where scenario planning is used to support strategic decision making will be discussed and critiqued; the second section will consider the literature on the self-reflection that occurs between the organisation's present position and the hypothetical futures created in the scenario planning process; the penultimate section will focus on the notion of strategic conversation and some of the communicative issues associated with scenario planning and its followthrough; and

finally, the section will conclude with a synthesis of the scenario-to-strategy literature before articulating the need for theoretical and empirical guidance from the S-as-P perspective.

2.1.4.1 Using Scenarios for Strategic Decision Making

Over the past 25 years, a consistent shortcoming in the scenario planning literature has been the lack of guidance about how to both use scenarios to develop strategies (see Porter 1985; Wilson 2000), and how to evaluate the relationship between scenarios and decision making (see Harries 2003; Chermack 2005). The irony in such shortcomings is that despite frequent acknowledgement to that effect from scholars and practitioners focusing on the scenario-to-strategy transition, like Porter (1985), Wilson (2000), Godet (2000), the area is still lacking thorough empirical and theoretical investigation (Harries 2003; Chermack 2005). There are many ideas about how the scenario-to-scenario process should be managed or how scenarios should be used, but they tend to be prescriptive and lacking empirical and longitudinal evidence (see Wilson 2000; Lindgren and Bandhold 2002). The following section will discuss and critique aspects of the scenarios-to-strategy literature that focuses on using scenarios to support strategic decision-making.

Porter (1985) was one of the first researchers to both articulate and address shortcomings in the transition from scenarios into strategy (see Porter 1985: 470-471). An underlying assumption, echoed by Chermack (2005), is that scenario planning has a positive effect on decision making. However, Porter also identified the dilemma of choice that precedes and thus affects any purported benefit from improved decision making: "a strategy built around one scenario is risky, while a strategy designed to ensure success under all scenarios is expensive" (Porter 1985: 471). Furthermore, Porter also recognised that as each scenario differs from the next, so too do the competitive environments and structures, thus the "strategies implied by the different scenarios are often contradictory" (Porter 1985: 471). Accordingly, table 2.1 shows a brief compendium of different strategic approaches when facing multiple, plausible scenarios, as proposed by Porter (see 1985: 471-475), Schnaars (1986), and Fink et al. (2005):

Table 2.1 - Compendium of strategic approaches

Porter (1985)	Schnaars (1986)	Fink et al. (2005)
Bet on the most probable scenario	Robust strategy	Planning-orientated strategies
Bet on the "best" scenario	Flexible strategy	Preventive strategies
Hedge	Multiple coverage strategy	Proactive strategies
Preserve Flexibility	Gambling strategy	
Influence		

Source: Synthesised from Porter (1985), Schnaars (1986), and Fink et al. (2005).

While these lists of strategic approaches offer the user simplicity, the attribution of probability undermines the notion that scenarios should be equally plausible stories of the future. Probability is a controversial subject in the scenario planning literature, prompting a special published dialogue by the Global Business Network (GBN) on the subject. In the scenario method created and popularised by Pierre Wack, probabilities do not belong. Wack's scenarios are about expanding vision and changing mindsets, neither of which are aided through the introduction of quantification and degrees of certainty. GBN's colloquium largely supported this position (see Global Business Network 1991); other contributors, however, acknowledged areas where probabilities could add value. It was argued that aspects of quantification can aid decision-making, that assigning probabilities to aspects of scenarios (for example, key events or intervals) can benefit subjective judgment, although most writers argued against attributing a statement of probability to or between individual scenarios. Other writers have since offered alternative ways to incorporate probabilities into the scenario process (see, for example, Tonn 2005). However, the main thrust of the critique is still that probabilities lie in conflict with Wack's notion of scenarios, insofar as probabilities, explicit or tacit, represent conventional wisdom, and thus diminish the capacity of the scenarios to change mindsets, expand vision and increase awareness[19].

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[19] For further information on this debate, GBN's "The Deeper News" published a teleconference titled 'Probabilities: Help or Hindrance in Scenario Planning?' in 1991. The discussion comprised some of the foremost scholars and practitioners of the time (e.g. Adam Kahane, Art Kleiner, Jay Ogilvy, Peter Schwartz, Kees van der Heijden, to name but a few).

Although there may be conflict with the role of probabilities, Porter (1985) and Schnaars' (1986) strategic approaches also illustrate a significant issue in the scenario literature that parallels the differences between the Positioning school of strategy and the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm[20]: external focus or internal reflection. Although Porter (1985) and Schnaars (1986) agrees on a a strategic approach that looks outwards to the competitive structures of the different scenarios, if one analyses the set of approaches and the use of language like "Bet", "Hedge", "Preserve flexibility", "Influence", and "Gambling strategy", one can see the emphasis placed on the aggressiveness and risk attitudes of the organisation. Perhaps indicative of Porter (1985) and the Positioning school's roots in Industrial-Organisation economics, the strategic approaches share an obvious similarity to the three 'risk attitudes'—a bedrock of the financial and economic response to uncertainty:

- Risk-Loving

- Risk-Neutral

- Risk-Averse

Despite this, Porter's (1985) and Schnaars' (1986) approach should not be discounted. Wilson (2000), who also offers four strategic approaches, albeit at a higher level (Wilson 2000), echoes Porter and Schnaars when discussing strategic decision making in each approach. Wilson's "primer", designed to help guide the scenario-to-strategy process, becomes more sophisticated and is intended to be used as a template for those to whom intuition and insight still eludes (see Table 2.2):

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[20] For a thorough discussion and critique of the Positioning school of strategy and the Resource-Based View of the firm, see McKiernan (1996a; 1996b) and Mintzberg (1990; 1994).

Table 2.2 - Wilson's four strategic approaches

Approach	Purpose	Steps
Sensitivity / Risk Assessment	Evaluation of a specific decision	Identify key conditions; Assess conditions in each scenario; Judge likely success, resilience and vulnerability of the decision in each scenario; Assess overall resilience of proposed strategy to determine whether 'hedging' or strategic modification is needed.
Strategy Evaluation	Test-bed for evaluation of current strategy	Disaggregate strategy into specific 'thrusts', and identify specific goals and objectives; Assess relevance and likely success of thrusts in each scenario; Management team should then identify: (a) opportunities the strategy addresses or overlooks; (b) threats the analysis has foreseen or overlooked; (c) comparative levels of success and failure; Identify options for changes in strategy.
Strategy Development (using "planning focus" scenario)	To bridge the "cultural" gap between traditional planning methods and scenario planning	Review scenarios to identify common threats and opportunities; Determine, in any case, what the company *should do*, and *should not* do; Select most probable scenario as the "planning focus" scenario; Integrate what the company should and should not do (from above) into a coherent strategy for "planning focus" scenario; Test strategy used in the "planning focus" scenario across other scenarios to assess resilience; Review results of previous test to ascertain level of modification required.
Strategy Development (without "planning focus" scenario)	To give managers the greatest range of choice, and achieve optimal use of scenarios in strategic development	Identify key elements of a successful strategy; Analyse each scenario to determine optimal setting for each strategy; Review scenario-specific settings to determine most resilient option for each strategy element; Integrate strategy options into a co-ordinated business strategy.

Source: Adapted from Wilson (2000: 26-29)

Wilson's four approaches acknowledges implicitly the difference in sophistication and know-how required between using scenario planning to evaluate specific decisions and incorporating a scenario-based planning process (see Wilson 2000: 28). Moreover, he articulates that this journey — the transition from using scenarios as a episodic planning tool to cultivating a "new way of thinking" — requires the bridging of a "cultural" gap (Wilson 2000: 27). Despite recognition of such a gap, Wilson does not go onto discuss the cultural factors which may impede the adoption and acceptance of a scenario-based strategy

development process. Lindgren and Bandhold (2002), writing on their experiences at Kairos Future, suggest a number of pitfalls that provide some insight into factors which may impede the effectiveness of the scenario-to-strategy process. Their TAIDA™ framework for thinking about the future breaks down the scenario planning process as follows:

Table 2.3 - TAIDA™: A framework for thinking of the future

Step	Description
Tracking	Detection, identification, and description of changes, threats, and opportunities in the surrounding environment
Analysing	Analysis of changes and consequences; and generation of scenarios
Imaging	Identification of possibilities; clarification of desires; and generation of vision
Deciding	Identification of development areas; and generation of strategies to meet threats and achieve visions and goals
Acting	Clarification of short-term goals; and "following up" on actions.

Source: Adapted from Lindgren and Bandhold (2002: 47-96)

The purpose and function of the "Imaging" and "Deciding" phases, which concentrate on the scenario-to-strategy process, mirrors aspects common to the work of Porter (1985), Schnaars (1986, 1987), and WIlson (2000) (described above), i.e., *where do we want to go and what is the best way to get there?*, whereas the final stage, "Acting", is not focused on implementation, but rather details early warning systems. Here, much like Wilson (2000), Lindgren and Bandhold state that "there is no one simple answer on how to organize continuous futuristic work", arguing that it very much depends on the culture and resources of the organisation (Lindgren and Bandhold 2002: 96). However, as mentioned above, some indication of these cultural issues can be deduced from their list of pitfalls. The pitfalls listed for "Imaging", "Deciding", and "Acting" have been analysed and synthesised into three main categories[21]: Involvement and Engagement; Focus and Endurance; and Strategic Acuity (see below - Table 2.4):

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[21] For a full list of their 24 pitfalls, see Lindgren and Bandhold (2002: 96-101)

Table 2.4 - Scenario-to-strategy pitfalls

Category	Stage	Pitfall	Description
Involvement and Engagement	Imaging	"Lack of participation in the vision process"	"Visions built solely by a few members of the top management tend to stay on the bookshelves. If people from the organization have been a part of the process, it can be made concrete much more easily. The vision will also far better reflect people's thoughts."
	Imaging	"Not communicating the vision enough"	"Under-communication is the most frequent reason why visionary leadership fails. Communicate over and over again and relate strategies and actions to the vision whenever they are discussed."
	Deciding	"Not translating long-term strategies into short-term developments"	"It takes a lot of energy to change a well-established work pattern into a new one. This emphasizes the need to involve middle-management in strategy development and follow-up."
	Acting	"The information is only used by a few"	"There are many organizations that have databases filled with information. The problem is that very few people know that it exists, and even fewer have the knowledge needed to use it.
Focus and Endurance	Imaging	"Not living the vision"	"Strategies, goals and actions often seem to be set without any relation to the vision, and nothing is done to remove obstacles to a new vision. Obviously the top management has to be very consistent in living the vision. Then it will rub off on the rest of the organisation."
	Acting	"Low endurance"	"The people involved in scanning the environment often do it as a part-time job. This risk is obvious that they well give priority to other tasks that are more highly valued in the organization."
	Acting	"The future is forgotten"	"During a scenario process, a strong focus is put on the future and the challenges that it provides. When the process is over people go back to the everyday questions that tend to be placed on top of the in-tray."
Strategic Acuity	Deciding	"Standard answers to non-standard environments"	"It takes both time and a systematic process to find strategies that are not already in common use."
	Deciding	"It feels safe to cling on to old strategies"	"It is very easy to cling on to old strategies that have served well in the past. It seems that organizations will not accept they must find new paths until it has been proven time after time that their old strategies do not work in the face of change."

Source: Adapted from Lindgren and Bandhold (2002: 100-101)

Inherent in these pitfalls is also the issue of leadership. In Godet's (2001) scenario-based strategic planning process, which has nine stages, the final two stages echo the importance of leadership, involvement, engagement and action:

> "The strategic choices and hierarchy of objectives come from the board of directors, executive committee or administrative equivalent.
>
> [...]
>
> Steps eight and nine involve a smaller group within the company but they are important in that the decisions must be followed up with action. Although fewer people are involved in these steps, the information, decisions and objectives have been enriched through the consultation process. They crown the efforts of a group united in its efforts and motivated through a collective process designed to shed light on future action." (Godet 2001: 81)

Although it would appear that cultural factors and issues of involvement and communication are again important components of scenario-informed strategic decision-making, there is a lack of empirical and theoretical research exploring the impact such factors have on the process.

This section has exposed some important points and some critical weaknesses in the scenario-to-strategy literature. The approaches mentioned above are (seemingly) simple to follow and share some significant commonalities. For example, the use of scenarios allows organisations to understand how aggressive or defensive they need or want to be. Similarly, it is implied that by examining the future, an organisation would be better equipped to identify what is needed to achieve one's goals. However, another similarity of the approaches is their prescriptiveness—they are guides for using scenarios to make strategic decisions that pay little or no attention to the organisational realities involved in the actual practice of strategy. The brief mention of 'culture' gave an indication that other factors may make the scenario-to-strategy process more complex and difficult than the stepped approaches would suggest. However, the lack of theoretical and empirical concentration on these murkier aspects of the scenario-to-strategy process limits further explanation but provokes curiosity. Similarly, with the exception of Lindgren and Bandhold (2002), recognition of the internal reflection implicit in the outward looking strategic approaches did not extend beyond consideration of the aggressiveness of the strategy or the ambitiousness of the vision. Accordingly, the following

section will examine more throughly the self-reflection stimulated by the juxtaposition of the organisation's present reality with a series of hypothetical futures.

2.1.4.2 Post-Scenario Self-Reflection

The previous section examined extant literature on how scenario planning is used to inform strategic decisions. A number of approaches exemplified similarities in the literatures dealing with the scenario-to-strategy process. However, the section also exposed an empirical and theoretical shallowness in those enquiries. Sporadic references to 'culture', and a perfunctory and superficial handling of concepts like 'choice' and 'vision', would suggest that the scenario-to-strategy process is more complex than the prescriptive strategic approaches imply. Thus, this section will explore the scenario planning literature to develop greater understanding of the self-reflection that precedes action, which occurs when an organisation is faced with multiple futures.

As was stated during the discussion in the sections above, the assumption underpinning much of the scenario planning literature is that its use improves the strategic capabilities of the firm:

> "Traditional strategists, without access to scenario planning, often have difficulties in identifying and articulating the elements of the environment and of the "self" that are relevant to the strategic situation" (van der Heijden 1997: 6)

The construction of the scenarios deals with the 'identification' and 'articulation' of elements in the environment but the reflection of these elements on to the organisational 'self' is what should improve strategy. To bridge this connection, van der Heijden (1997, 2005) proposes "the business idea", a "tool for articulating and 'scaffolding' knowledge about the organisation itself (van der Heijden 1997: 7). The notion of scaffolding, borrowed from Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' (see 1978; 1986), is a process for integrating tacit and codified knowledge to "clarify the self" (van der Heijden 1997: 13), i.e., to articulate the strategic identity and business model of the firm in order to analyse it rationally. Thus, van der Heijden (1997) argues that underpinning this identity must be a strong direction and capacity for adaptation. The business idea should be negotiated by the management team

then confronted with the scenarios. In this "internal perspective", scaffolding occurs during a "capability" and "portfolio" review (see van der Heijden 1996: 225): If the organisation is deemed 'not right' for the future environments, the firm must address its competences; and if it is deemed 'right' then it must address the choices needing to be made.   Lindgren and Bandhold (see 2002: 86-88) propose a similar albeit simplified version of this reflective process: a three dimensioned, single-impact WUS analysis ("Want", "Utilize", "Should"). Lindgren and Bandhold capture the essence of van der Heijden's process with three questions (2002: 86):

- "Does the strategy contribute to the desired direction of the organization (Want)?"

- "Does it utilize present strengths or assets of the organization (Utilize)?"

- "Does it match the future environment (Should)?"

Moreover, Lindrgen and Bandhold (2002) favour the use of causal loop diagrams and cross-impact matrices to traverse the relationship between resources, direction and choice, whereas van der Heijden (see 1997; see 2005) utilises positive loop learning and Kolb's (see 1991) double learning system to help with the scaffolding process. Similar to these processes is Schoemaker's (1992) method of using Key Success Factors (see Vasconcellos and Hambrick 1989) to integrate scenarios into the strategic planning process (Schoemaker 1991: 558).

Although Vasconcellos and Hambrick (1989) argue that organisations able match their core capabilities with the Key Success Factors (KSF) in its environment will be more successful than those who do not, the use of KSF is not without its critics.   The empirical analysis applied by Vasconcellos and Hambrick (1989) is *ex post facto*, whereas the management decisions regarding resource allocation is done *ex ante*, and therefore includes complexity and uncertainty (Amit and Schoemaker 1993).   Furthermore, if all firms score high on presumed KSF, the factors will no longer be key to success, requiring the inclusion of asymmetry into the analysis (Amit and Schoemaker 1993). Moreover, the concept of KSF was seen as lacking: identification (deciding which out of many factors to focus on), concreteness (ambiguity over the causal process), generality (the valuation of the factors), and necessity (ignorance of dynamic elements of strategy) (see Ghemawat 1991). Consequently, Amit and Schoemaker (1993) sought to supplant the concept of KSF with the notions of Strategic Industry Factors, and Strategic Assets (Amit and Schoemaker 1993: 43).

This idea of bridging the gap between strategic vision and core capabilities is a prevalent theme in Schoemaker's work (see 1991; 1992, 1995), using a KSF matrix to juxtapose the scenarios against the strategic segments of the organisation, much like van der Heijden (see 1996; 1997). Schoemaker (1992) used the case of Apple Computer to illustrate this method, and, more specifically, how a firm can progress from scenarios to strategic vision to core capabilities to implementation. In the implementation phase of this example, Schoemaker argued that once a vision had been chosen, the firm "must rethink its organisation design, culture, driving forces, and incentives" (Schoemaker 1992: 79). Following this, attention shifts to strategic options: "vehicles through which a sound vision gets implemented and realized" (Schoemaker 1992: 80). However, despite the call for this phase of creative generation and evaluation to receive special attention (Mason and Mitroff 1981), it is only touched upon by Schoemaker. Similar examples can be found in Schoemaker's (1995) case studies of an advertising agency and Anglo-American corporation: the process deals with the implications of the scenarios but not the follow-through (see Schoemaker 1995).

There would appear to be more to the scenario-to-strategy process than the literature suggests. Schoemaker's (1992) acknowledgement of 'organisational design', 'culture', etc., hints at the messier dynamics involved in using a strategy tool like scenario planning but lacks further, deeper investigation. However, perhaps investigation into the stage in the scenario-to-strategy journey that connects prospective sensemaking (see Weick 1995; Boje 2001, 2008) with strategic choice will yield more satisfactory answers. Van der Heijden (1996, 1997) argues that the 'business idea', a term which also encapsulates the essence of what Lindgren and Bandhold (2002) and Schoemaker (1992) suggested, is a necessary precursor to the learning activity which connects past, present and future and allows the scenarios to be used as transitional objects. This process, described by van der Heijden (1996) as the 'strategic conversation', will be the focus of the following section.

<u>2.1.4.3 Strategic Conversation as a Transitional Object</u>

The two previous sections looked at the strategic approaches and internal reflection involved in the scenario-to-strategy process. However, 'how' organisations actually use scenario planning has yet to be explored in sufficient depth. The interactive element of scenario-informed strategy making will be the focus of this section, concentrating specifically on the concept of strategic conversation and its function as a transitional object used to help managers and organisations evolve to a more enlightened cognitive state.

A strategic conversation can help people "make better decisions by learning about each other's understanding of the world" (Schwartz 1992: 204). Before progressing, however, it is wise to separate individual understanding and the alignment of group or organisational understanding. Individuals can use scenarios to understand better the world around them but in a collective setting, that understanding must be shared. Thus, the 'understanding' must also be articulable and communicable. Van der Heijden (1996) advocates that scenarios are a "ready-made language provider" and a "conversational facilitation vehicle" (van der Heijden 1996: 51). To deconstruct this, an advanced understanding of the world is required to make good strategic decisions; scenario planning processes offer the advanced understanding on an individual level; and the strategic conversation is a way of sharing and aligning the mental models that precede effective joint action (see Starkey et al. 2004). Figure 2.1 (below) illustrates this process:

Figure 2.1 - Scenario planning as a transitional object

As depicted in Figure 2.1, to affect the choice, action and then reflection of the organisation, the mental model shared by the organisation must evolve first. The process of changing mental models is similar to Winnicott's concept of a *Transitional Object* (see 1953; 1971, 1988). Originally conceived in educational theory as a way for children to "transit" from one stage of development to another using objects (e.g., Teddy bears, blankets, etc.) to develop independence, transitional objects have since found relevance in strategy, organisation and change literatures (see, for example, de Geus 1988; Eden 1992; Normann 2001; Carr and Downs 2004). However, while the principles are similar, in terms of using an object to connect the current with the future, there are differences which pose problems for organisations. For example, a child playing with a doll (a transitional object), simulating social interaction, may be learning a great deal (Senge 1990; de Geus 2002) and advancing to an evolved mental position, but there is no deliberate goal of the 'playing' as there would be in a situation of organisational change. The *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines 'playing' as to "engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation, rather than a serious or practical purpose". For organisations, the use of the transitional object is very deliberate and development is expected – the enactment of the transition state (Balogun and Hailey 2004) is a different arena to children playing. It also deals with collective states rather than singular ones. An important outcome of the transition is the alignment of mental models, yet when the number of stakeholders is large it becomes harder to achieve total agreement (see Moyer 1996) and thus change the "corporate microcosm" (Wack 1985a: 84).

In Figure 2.1 (above), the scenario planning process is the transitional object. However, another stage emerges when the nature of the transitional object is deconstructed and examined. In the classic example of transitional objects in child development, the teddy bear is used (subconsciously) as the transitional object to foster independence from the mother. However, accompanying the use of the teddy bear is the separation from the mother, what Winnicott called the 'holding environment' (essentially the duality of combined physical and psychological space from the mother) (see Winnicott 1986). When examining scenario planning as a transitional object connecting current and future, it is clear that the scenario planning process needs to be segmented: the scenario-induced "organizational jolt" (van der

Heijden et al. 2002: 227) provides the necessary challenge to the mental models, creating a separation from the current state (*the mother*); consequently, the strategic conversation, the discussion of the challenges and the articulation of the new "internal compass" (Wack 1985a: 84), becomes the transitional object (*the teddy bear*) that will lead the organisation to the desired future state. From this understanding, the process is not confined to a singular episode but rather can be used to consider future strategies and thus continue the cognitive evolution. Implicit in the concept of transitional objects is also the notion of sequentiality (i.e., current, to transition, to future state). Figure 2.2 (below), however, suggests a duality of scenarios and strategic conversation, whereby each stage provides the other with meaning and context, simultaneously enabling and constraining the discussion.

Figure 2.2 — Strategic conversation as a transitional object
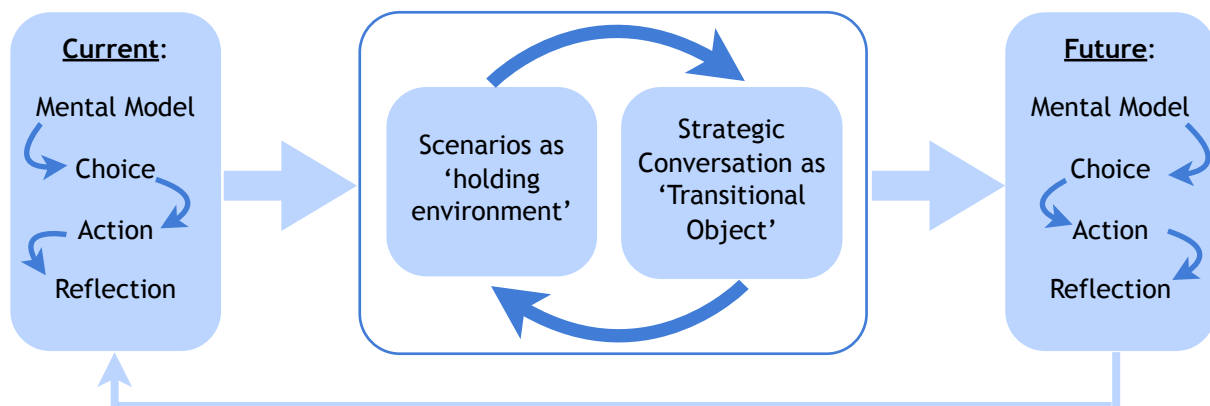
Moreover, accompanying the conversation is "reciprocal intersubjectivity" (Brown 2000) and the emergence of a social practice of interaction which "hold together the collective" (Carr and Downs 2004: 360). This social practice is a conversation facilitated by a language particular to the scenarios and the people and artefacts which make up the organisation. Consequently, to understand this more fully, a greater consideration of the strategic conversation is required. As a precursor to a direct enquiry into a strategic conversation, four stages involved in the reflexive process (above) can be categorised and described as follows:

1) *Prospective Sensemaking (mental models)*: A "social activity whereby, through multi-contextual conversations", a sense of the future is "constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed...to craft, understand and accept new conceptualizations prior to action" (Wright 2005: 86-87). Follow-up processes particular to the scenario process (e.g., early indicators, warning signals, etc., see Gregory et al. 1998) can be used to control and understand the deluge of information (Sull and Bryant 2006).

2) *Choice*: "Conversations to make choices requires team members to argue openly about valid disagreement", and should "conclude when a group agrees on a small number...of clearly articulated priorities consistent with the agreed pattern" (Sull and Bryant 2006). Conversations here follow a similar structure to prospective sensemaking — it is still a social activity, multi-contextual and aims to craft, understand (Wright 2005) and accept that the new conceptualisations are consistent with the new interpretations (see Kezar and Eckel 2002). This conversation involves sensemaking and then latterly, sensegiving (see Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991).

3) *Action*: Conversations on action begin with "sensegiving-for-others" (Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991: 444), a "dissemination of the new understandings" (Foldy et al. 2008: 515) and translation of priorities into action throughout the organisation (Sull and Bryant 2006), echoing Gronn's (2002) assertion that leadership is less of an individualistic and unidirectional sequence of events and more a "contextualised outcome of interactive processes" (Gronn 2002: 444). In this vein, conversation can breakdown when "ineffective commitment" and "bad promises" are made (Sull and Bryant 2006). This can take many forms (adapted from Sull and Bryant 2006):
   • Passive promises occur when people agree to action without understanding the ramifications;
   • Coerced commitments arise when people are compelled to acquiesce to even the most unrealistic requests;
   • Vague commitments offer too much scope to deviate from the intended action;
   • Ad hoc commitments emerge when people sacrifice corporate alignment for local favour.

4) *Reflection*: This periodic conversation should combine the three previous stages. It should be a multi-contextual conversation and consider choice, action, achievements and effectiveness. Borrowing elements from Giddens' Structuration theory (see 1984) to illustrate, those enacting the conversation are simultaneously constrained and enabled by their sensemaking, choices, action and indeed reflection. Their reflection should evolve further their collective mental model as the reflexive interaction with the scenarios (essentially part of the 'structure' which is enabling and constraining their sensemaking) continues.

Strategic conversation has been described as a significant element of a successful scenario planning process (see van der Heijden et al. 2002). Accordingly, focus will now turn to establishing and understanding how the strategic conversation actually works and the impact it can have on the strategic planning process.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the scenario planning literature offers little guidance on the actual *doing* of a strategic conversation (i.e., how it should unfold, the mechanics of the discussion, the time required, the selection of those involved, etc.). Although describing it as being "loosely facilitated" (Schwartz 1998: 221), Schwartz offers "eight precepts for designing a strategic conversation" (Schwartz 1998: 227), primarily for professional/practitioner consumption:

Table 2.5 - Schwartz's eight precepts for designing a strategic conversation

	Precept	Description/Rationale
1)	Create a hospitable climate	Welcome diverse points of view and new discussions and ensure that conversational conflict is not taken personally.
2)	Establish an initial group including key decision makers and outsiders	Ensure presence of senior decision makers as well as diversity of backgrounds among participants, including outside experts. Numbers should be between 15-30.
3)	Include outside information and people	A strategic conversation consisting only internal people can rarely, if ever, generate enough force to break through current thinking.
4)	Look ahead far in advance of decisions	New perspectives at the moment of decision, where there is a need to act, will be inadequate. The need to act overwhelms the willingness to learn.
5)	Begin by looking at the present and past	Understand how the organisation has developed and learned in the past and how it is the way it is and how the environment looks in the present.
6)	Conduct preliminary scenario work in smaller groups	Use sub-groups to study individual issues at depth. Smaller strategic conversations framed by scenarios will help the larger group.
7)	Playing out the conversation	Ask 'what are we going to do?'. The group is no longer trapped in conventional wisdom. Hypotheses are formed, not answers.
8)	Living in a permanent strategic conversation	The process never ends, the conversation just evolves and moves into other venues and becomes the model for discourse. Continual discourse encourages wider thinking and reading.

Source: Adapted from Schwartz (1998: 227-236)

Notably, the conversation itself (precept seven) is not subject to further description or discussion. This heuristic is also an example of the formal conversation and although Schwartz advocates scenario planning as a way of bringing formal and informal conversations together (see 1998: 235), totality of symbiosis is unlikely, especially when the mental models present prior to the intervention are so distinct. Hodgkinson and Wright's (see 2002, 2006; Whittington 2006b) case of a failed scenario intervention illustrates this point and the associated difficulties when the challenges presented by the conversation manifest themselves in an overtly negative and uncontrollable manner:

> "rich and highly diverse views, elicited through the personal interviews conducted prior to the group sessions, visibly shocked the various participants, especially the CEO. One of the participants went so far as to say that the effect

on the CEO had been 'the psychological equivalent of thrusting a medicine ball into her stomach', and that the results of our exercise...had greatly unsettled the rest of the group." (Hodgkinson and Wright 2002: 961-962)

Moreover:

"A prerequisite for the successful application of strategy development techniques is *open* dialogue. However, looking back on the project as a whole, we infer that the organizational culture at Beta Co provided a hostile climate for such dialogue to occur. [...] While our intervention highlighted the fact that there were a number of key external drivers for change, with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the exercise was undertaken in an organization whose inner-context was non-receptive: the psychodynamic basis of the behaviour of the CEO and her relationship to her team of senior managers militated against our best efforts.

Paradoxically, the outer context in which this particular organization was embedded at the time of our intervention may also have militated against our best efforts to implement scenario-planning procedures. Arguably, so strong were the wider institutional forces (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983) impinging on Beta Co at the time of our intervention that our participants were unable to reap the benefits of scenario planning." (Hodgkinson and Wright 2002: 972)

To understand the realities of the strategic conversation, one must consider both formal and informal components of the conversational loop (van der Heijden 2005) as well as ensuring both inner- and outer-contexts are receptive for change (see Pettigrew et al. 1992: 267-299). If intervening in the strategic conversation is tantamount to an intervention in the heart of the organisation itself (van der Heijden 2005), then scenario planning is a process for shaping the organisation; as Hodgkinson and Wright's (2002) case showed, this is not always welcome. A possible *a priori* explanation is simply that if the organisation is involved in constant formal and informal conversations, the scenario planning elements are surely only one part of the organisational dialogue and thus are susceptible to other 'conversations' (e.g., about day-to-day priorities, personnel issues, etc.). Hodgkinson and Wright's (2002) case appears to be an example of such overpowering conversations and subtext. While failing to detect and deal with pernicious sub-cultures which damaged the scenario planning intervention could be attributable partly to facilitators (Hodgkinson and Wright 2006; see, in particular, Whittington 2006b), the case still illustrates both the contextual and social complexity of *doing* scenarios

and strategic conversations. Equally, dysfunctional conversations are not always the product of something or someone sinister, and can be caused by the interference of day-to-day operational minutiae:

> "...the management team drifted away in their conversations, starting to talk about fixing the doorbell at the headquarters, choosing a new secretary, and buying a new coffee machine for their management meetings. [...] This is unfortunately the fate of most, supposedly strategic conversations in many companies." (von Krogh and Roos 1995: 393)

Although scenario planning is offered as a process that benefits strategic conversation, and scenarios as an ideal language generator for framing and facilitating it (van der Heijden 1996), scenario planning is not a panacea. Scenarios help frame both formal and informal conversations (van der Heijden 1996; Schwartz 1998). However, this raises issues of involvement, and who should be involved, why they should be involved (as opposed to someone else), and what they should be involved in. For example, the language of the final scenarios may be shared throughout the organisation but it may be informal points raised during the scenario building process (that did not feature in the narrative) that give a selective group of people further layers of language and meaning from which others are excluded (von Krogh and Roos 1995).

This section has illustrated the use of scenario planning as a mechanism for organising and facilitating a transition from the current state to the future. Similarly, the language of the scenarios has been highlighted as an important conductive element in the transition, insofar that it gives meaning to a strategic conversation, identified as being akin to a transitional object (see, for example, Winnicott 1953), in the collective cognitive development of the organisation. This section has also illustrated further the messy and complex underbelly of the scenario planning and scenario-to-strategy process. The practitioner-orientated veneer is simplistic and prescriptive and appears to mask a difficult process prone to intersubjectivity, social issues of culture and sub-culture, and, perhaps as simple as it is challenging, temporal inconsistency (i.e., ensuring that conversations about the future stay focused on the future and do not descend into an unfocused operational dialogue). The following section will

synthesise the chapter thus far and provide reason and rationale for the next course of enquiry.

2.1.4.4 Scenario-to-Strategy: a synthesis

Section 2.1.4 began with the recognition that scenarios should not be seen as the culmination of the scenario planning process, but rather should act as a stepping stone on a path towards enhanced performance.   The enquiry was focused in three broad areas encapsulating the three significant and interrelated elements of the scenario-to-strategy process.   This section will attempt to synthesise these areas into a coherent understanding and critique of the scenario-to-strategy process that will help justify the central research question of the thesis as well as clarify the need for input from the S-as-P literature, which will comprise the next portion of this review.

The three previous sections have all exhibited a tendency to favour prescriptive frameworks to guide the scenario-to-strategy process. The strategic decision making approaches of Porter (1985), Schnaars (1986), and Fink et al. (2005) (from section 2.1.4.1) were based upon an external perspective of strategy and were driven by risk attitudes of the organisation when considering the alternative futures. Although Wilson (2000) and Lindgren and Bandhold (2002) focused less on how to handle risk, they brushed over complex issues like determining 'choice' and 'vision'.   However, it was their respective work that acknowledged some of the difficulties encountered in the scenario-to-strategy process.   Issues like overcoming the cultural gap in scenario-based strategy (see Wilson 2000: 28-29), balancing communication and involvement, having the stamina to follow thinking with action to achieve the vision, and having the courage to believe in new solutions to old problems (see Lindgren and Bandhold 2002), offered a brief insight into the physical and cognitive realities of using scenarios. Significantly, the first mention of terms like 'culture' emerged in this section, suggesting that the scenario-to-strategy process is subject to social and organisational dynamics and thus more complex than much of the practitioner-orientated literature suggests.

As mentioned above, the perfunctory handling of concepts like choice and vision and even the attitudes towards risk are internal processes woven into an external perspective. Consequently, focus shifted inwards, examining the internal perspective as stimulated by a scenario-based intervention (section 2.1.4.2). Scenarios were shown to help 'scaffold' insights and knowledge about an organisation's strategic capabilities (van der Heijden 1996). By understanding the dynamics that shape the future, organisations are equipped better to reflect upon their portfolio and assess their capacity to succeed in the future. This reflection ranges from simple practitioner-orientated questions (see Lindgren and Bandhold 2002: 86) to more academic and detailed mechanisms, like Amit and Schoemaker's (1993: 43) 'Strategic Industry Factors and Strategic Assets', for comparing strategic vision and core capabilities.

In analysing the two aforementioned sections (2.1.4.1 and 2.1.4.2), a duality emerges between external and internal perspectives. One is implicit in the other. From a purely logical analysis, the two aspects are linked inextricably—it seems impossible to consider effectively one's resource capabilities without considering the future, and, vice versa, equally impossible to determine effectively how much risk to incur without considering appropriately one's resource bundle. Aside from the conceptual shortcomings and the lack of empirical study into the impact of contextual factors or broader societal phenomena (see Whittington 2006b) upon the implementation of scenario planning, the two previous sections concentrated on how the scenarios should be used in the strategy process, on how the scenarios should frame the debate. Ostensibly, they serve a preparatory function insofar as they organise collective action (i.e., the strategic conversation), but they do not simply precede action, nor can they exist outside of action. They are akin to the rules that govern a game. Rules give the game a necessary meaning and structure and though they precede and indeed are required for the game to begin, their involvement ends only when the game does. Neither the rules nor the game can exist independently of each other. Likewise, without the internal or external perspective the strategic conversation becomes a non-strategic conversation, and without the strategic conversation the internal and external perspectives would not exist. This highlights another issue with the scenario planning literature which presents problems for designing research. Much of the literature is segmented and categorised in fairly explicit terms (e.g., scenario-informed strategic approaches, the 'business idea', strategic industry

factors, strategic conversations, etc.), and yet, the reality is far more convoluted and chaotic. These areas are offered as alternative perspectives yet they share a reflexive, inseparable and interdependent connection.

The strategic conversation was shown as the transition object that connects current with future. What makes the future unique is the language that has been created through the scenarios and the wider strategic process. This new language can help overcome entrenched mental models and lead the organisation to an evolved and improved future state. The distinction was made between scenarios and strategic conversation where scenarios provided the "jolt" (see van der Heijden et al. 2002: 227), the separation from the comfort of the current, and the conversation provided the dialogue to consider new possibilities, align thinking, and lead the organisation to prosperity. Key aspects of this conversation were identified as prospective sensemaking (see Weick 1995), the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of mental models (see Wright 2005: 86); choice, where new conceptualisations are consistent with new interpretations (see Kezar and Eckel 2002); action, where understanding is translated into priorities and commitments (see Sull and Bryant 2006; Foldy et al. 2008); and reflection, where mental models, choice, action, and achievements and effectiveness are considered. Again, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the impact of strategic conversations on an organisation that a longitudinal study would offer. There are also examples presented which suggest that it too is a difficult process, subject to cultural, social and organisational phenomena that can both facilitate and militate against any prospective benefits of the strategic conversation and scenario planning process in general (see von Krogh and Roos 1995; Hodgkinson and Wright 2002, 2006).

A final conclusion induced from the analysis of the scenario-to-strategy literature is how overwhelmingly abstract it is. The strategic conversation—a social process—is said to result in an improved state, even although that *improved* or *evolved* state is almost entirely conceptual, and lacks any physical evidence that improvement or enhancement, or indeed change, has occurred. Scenarios have long been used as learning tools (see, for example, de Geus 1988, 2002) but research into how they affect the cognitive processes in an organisation is underdeveloped. Hence, it would benefit the scenario planning literature to investigate,

over an extended period, how an organisation uses scenario planning, even if the process is largely abstract, to understand better how such cognitive processes manifest themselves physically.

2.1.5 Summary and Conclusions on Scenario Planning

Section 2.1 introduced scenario planning as a foresight activity that lacked definitional clarity on what it is, what it does, and how it should be used (see Nicol 2005). Accordingly, the literature review began with the articulation of an aggregated understanding: scenario planning is about using a structured process to imagine, create and explore multiple, internally consistent futures to help stakeholders re-perceive reality and thus better understand today in order to improve strategic and/or policy decisions.

A contextual background showed that American and French developments of scenario planning share commonalities of process but exhibit philosophical differences insofar as the former tends to look outwards and the latter inwards. Following was an analysis of the application and proclaimed benefits of scenario planning. The primary and implicit assumption is that scenario planning improves a) the strategies of an organisation, which should improve performance, and/or b) the policies of a public authority, which should improve social progress. To help understand and investigate this assumption, the literature was segmented into four categories.

Firstly, scenario planning is argued to have the capacity to engender an 'organisational awakening' through the development of stories of possible futures that provide a challenge to the current strategic paradigms. The artistic and scientific components of scenarios provides an "aha" moment for managers (Wack 1985b: 140), leading to fresh perceptions about the environment and the organisation. Again, a series of assumptions implicit to the literature were presented: fresh perceptions are superior to entrenched ones, and thus current (ostensibly, past) thinking is insufficient to prepare effectively for the future; the exploration of extant data will reveal novel insights about the dynamics shaping the future, and the organisation would be unprepared to deal with them otherwise; and, directly related to the

primary assumption, an organisational awakening (a re-perception of the world and re-evaluation of the organisation) will improve the strategic decision making capabilities of managers and thus improve the performance of the organisation.

While the 'organisational awakening' provided the "jolt" (van der Heijden et al. 2002: 227), the section on 'organisational awareness' examined how scenario planning increased an organisation's sensitivity to subtle changes and understanding of causal forces. Underpinning elevated awareness is the concomitant interplay between the mechanisms required to recognise soft and weak signals and the capacity to understand their implications. The assumption that binds together this section is that scenario planning can elevate an organisation's awareness to a more sophisticated level, and that this can increase an organisation's responsiveness to potential threats and opportunities, thereby improving strategic decision making and thus performance.

The third category recognised the increase in the number of scenario-based processes being applied in the public domain (see Bradfield et al. 2005). In this arena, scenarios can trigger a social awakening, achieved primarily through articulation of hope and fear in an attempt to reinforce positive aspects of the agreed ambition for societal progress, which is fundamental to government. The application and understanding of scenarios in government and publicly-orientated organisations aligns the use of scenario planning with a Parsonian view of functionalism in society (see Parsons 1951), where the targeting of specific areas will improve society as a whole. Although changing mindsets is still the goal, scenarios also reinforce the deeply entrenched position that there are functional prerequisites of society, like the presence of universal social stratification, used by the scenarios as the lens and vehicle for social mobility and societal advancement. This category also illustrated the use of scenarios as a tool for negotiation, where opposing views and ideas can be merged into an optimistic, cohesive and collective vision. The assumption derived from this section is that society as a whole can be improved by tackling specific components (like education or transportation), and that scenario planning helps engage stakeholder organisations, and indeed the public, behind a common vision. Consequently, the achievement of social change is dependant on the strategic engagement of stakeholders with the scenarios and scenario planning process.

The final category, 'strategy and engagement' sought to shift the conversation from what scenario planning can do to how it is actually done. Hence, focus concentrated on three areas: strategic decision making, self-reflection, and strategic conversation. Investigation into these areas scratched the veneer of the scenario-to-strategy literature, revealing disjointed and oversimplified research on inter-related and, in some areas, inseparable aspects of the scenario planning and strategy process.

At the outset of section 2.1.4, a number of questions were posited. They asked how scenarios provided a challenge to current thinking? How do scenarios improve long-term strategic decision making? How do scenario planning processes increase awareness? How is scenario planning embedded into the organisation? And, how are these processes managed? The superficial components of these questions have been answered but they do not satisfy the question at the heart of this thesis:

- *How does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process*?

Moreover, it has helped unravel and focus some of the sub-questions which the empirical portion of the thesis will attempt to answer:

- *How do cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation*?

Related to this:

- *How does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?*
- *How does scenario planning affect policy development?*

The scenario planning literature relies heavily on stepped, practitioner-orientated examples that tend to culminate empirically with the generation of scenarios, and thus fail to provide sufficient detail of the activity and process of scenario planning and its strategic followthrough. Put another way, the literature does not explore fully the praxis of scenario-informed strategic planning. It is in this arena where the greatest contribution to the understanding of scenario planning and strategic practices can be made. Although the focus may appear processual, it is argued that a practice perspective can enrich the process tradition with a "broader understanding of the practices and practitioners involved in the

praxis episodes that take place deep inside organizational processes" (Whittington 2006b: 1904). Consequently, to begin answering the central research question in a more satisfactory and rigorous manner, the thesis will emulate the recent practice turn in the strategy literature (see Whittington 2006a). The combination of noun and gerund in the term 'scenario planning' implies that it is a situated activity (see Jarzabkowski 2005: 21). The aforementioned discussion of the role of strategic conversation implies that it is also a social process. Thus, the term scenario planning can be understood as a situated, socially accomplished activity (Jarzabkowski 2005: 7). Accordingly, the final section of this literature review will involve a shift in the conception of strategy from something an organisation *has*, to something people *do* (see Whittington 1996; Jarzabkowski 2004).

2.2 Strategy-as-Practice

2.2.0 Introduction to Strategy-as-Practice

Strategy has traditionally been considered something that an organisation *has* (Jarzabkowski and Whittington 2008). Recently, this tradition has been challenged by the emergence of the notion that strategy is a kind of work (Jarzabkowski and Whittington 2008), something that people *do* (Jarzabkowski 2004: 529)—a shift emulating a broader practice turn in social theory (see Turner 1994; Schatzki et al. 2001; Reckwitz 2002) and management science (Brown and Duguid 1991; Orlikowski 1992, 2000; Brown and Duguid 2001; Jarzabkowski 2005). While the tight ontological grip of industrial economics may have spread the study of strategy far and wide, it has not provided, or indeed allowed, the depth of enquiry needed to research the activities of people inside the firm, and thus understand more fully what *strategizing* actually involved, and also what impact that may have had on strategic outcomes (Johnson et al. 2007). Consequently, a new tradition has emerged, re-asserting the meaning of strategy on economic, theoretical, and practical levels (Jarzabkowski 2005; Johnson et al. 2007), and expanding rapidly throughout a discipline once dominated by firm level, micro-economic theory. Descending from an ethno-methodological extraction (see Garfinkel 1967), Strategy-as-Practice (S-as-P) research attempts to delve into strategic 'life', to embrace the awkward complexities of strategy as a situated human endeavour, to study what a strategy practitioner

does, what tools he or she uses, and the resultant implications for strategy as an organisational activity   (see Whittington 1996; Jarzabkowski 2003; Chia 2004; Jarzabkowski 2004; McKiernan and Carter 2004; Whittington 2004; Jarzabkowski 2005; Whittington 2006a).

This portion of the literature review will begin with a short introduction to the strategy literature, looking briefly at its development and evolution over the past 50 years. Following this, attention will turn to the S-as-P perspective.   Initially, an overview will be presented, before attempting to locate the research question within the scope of the S-as-P literatures. The penultimate section will then attempt to synthesise the two aspects of the literature, presenting an understanding of scenario planning through a S-as-P lens. The final section will summarise and conclude the literature review.

2.2.1 A Brief Introduction to Strategy

In the 20th Century, despite a rich military history spanning over 2500 years[22], the concept of strategy and strategic management became synonymous with the nomenclature of business and organisation. Corporate strategy, as is understood it today, first emerged in the written form in the 1950s (Cummings and Wilson 2003), through works by Selznick (1957), Drucker (1954), Chandler (1962), Sloan (1963) and Ansoff (1965). Separately, they analysed businesses as profit-making entities, studying concurrently the use of strategy to achieve profit. From this narrow beginning, discussions pertaining to the nature of organisation and the function and application of strategy came rapidly and with vigour. New schools of thought emerged, paradigms within schools were formed, and soon numerous definitions, though confusing and often contradictory, somehow solidified the greying concept of strategy, as it diffused throughout management academia.

The creation of strategic taxonomies[23], marking the beginnings of a coherent discipline (Whittington 2001), began in the 1960s with the parallel development of the *design* and

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[22]For a full chronology of the development of the strategy concept see Bracker (1980) and Cummings (2003).

[23] For an extensive review of the strategy schools (here identified as the design school, planning school, positioning school, resource-based view of the firm, and the learning school), see work by Mintzberg (1990); (1998); van der Heijden (1996); McKiernan (1996a); (1996b); Whittington (2001); and Jenkins et al. (2007).

planning schools (see Selznick 1957; Chandler 1962; Ansoff 1965; Learned et al. 1965/1969; Andrews 1971; McCraw 1988). Both schools took a *classical* approach to strategy and represent the stalwart ideas of the "planning and practice school" (see McKiernan 1996a). The tripartite of the classical approach was completed by the *positioning* school (see Porter 1979; 1980, 1985). Although different in nature to the *design* and *planning* schools, the *positioning* school was rooted firmly in industrial organisation economics (see Bain 1951; 1954), and made up of classical attributes (Quinn et al. 1988; Whittington 2001), exemplified by the *deliberate* creation of full-blown strategies (Mintzberg et al. 1998), and the hierarchical command of implementation and control—something reminiscent of the ancient notion of military strategy (see, for example, Tzu 1963; Thucydides 1972; Machiavelli 2005b).

The *classical* (Whittington 2001) and *prescriptive* (Mintzberg et al. 1998) features of the *design*, *planning* and *positioning* schools are far different from the *processual* (Whittington 2001) and *descriptive* (Mintzberg et al. 1998) nature of the *resource-based view* of the firm (*RBV*). The *RBV* (see Wernerfelt 1984; Barney 1986; Hamel and Prahalad 1990; 1991), which can be traced back to Coase (1937) and Penrose (1959), was arguably the dominant strategy paradigm of the 1990s (see, for example, Prahalad and Bettis 1986; Fiol 1991; Grant 1991; Nelson 1991; Black and Boal 1994). It features an inside-out approach to the marketplace (McKiernan 1996b), where the firm is a bundle of idiosyncratic resources and capabilities (Silverman 2002), that builds upon the idea that exploitation of these distinctive competencies (Selznick 1957) can sustain competitive advantage.

The *learning* school, another dominant *processual* perspective of the 1990s (Whittington 2001), views strategy as something infinitely complex and embedded heavily in theories of cognition. Although it is less of a 'formed' school and more a collection of remaining schools and ideas, the *learning* school (see work by Lindblom 1959; Ingvar 1985; de Geus 1988, 2002), views strategy formation as something that is cloaked in rituals (Johnson 1988), organisational routines (Johnson 1988) and politics (see Hickson et al. 1971; Child 1972; Pettigrew 1977; Simon 1979; Pettigrew et al. 1992).

In the last decade there has been a shift in the conception of strategy, moving from being something that an organisation *has*, to being something that people *do* (Jarzabkowski 2004). The S-as-P perspective has gained a large following (evidenced by the growing *www.s-as-p.org* online community), drawing on social theory and practice to help define the praxis of strategy and thus the role of the strategist (Whittington 1996, 2004, 2006a). Strategy-as-*Practice* allows the researcher to delve inside organisational processes to explore the effect of even the most mundane task on the micro-activities of the within. It is argued that S-as-P has given the research into organisations a depth long overlooked (Johnson et al. 2003; Whittington 2006b) as the field of strategy fought the "grip of the positivism of industrial economics" (McKiernan and Carter 2004: 3). However, like the paradigms before it, it is not without its critics; while S-as-P can offer considerable insight, as a collective agenda, it is still, while in its infancy at least, thematically blurred (Carter et al. 2008b). Carter et al. (2008a) argue that philosophical and sociological naïveté has manifested itself in an unnecessarily narrow view of *practice* that lacks engagement with issues of power, reality, and language—concepts integral to strategy's *critical* development.

The chronological development of strategy theory can be seen to shift from the earlier views of intensive, highly controlled, and clearly articulated planning models, to less formal methods that embrace the complexities and uncertainties at both the organisational and individual level. What is apparent also is the shift in thinking from strategy as an organisational process to that of an individual practice that, when aggregated, has wider social implications. This sociological influence, previously overshadowed by the positivism of Industrial Organisation (IO) Economics, can be used to transcend many of the dichotomies of the strategy literature (Jarzabkowski 2005), helping researchers to comprehend more fully the process, complexity, and importance of strategy, and thus the function of the tools and techniques designed to facilitate its practice.

2.2.2 The Strategy-as-Practice Perspective

The practice turn in strategy, symptomatic of the wider practice turn in social theory, can be attributed largely to the works of Bourdieu, de Certeau, Foucault and Giddens, who used

different approaches in an attempt to transcend the dualism of 'individualism' and 'societism'. In an attempt to resolve this, three core themes of practice emerge (Whittington 2006a: 614-615), which, although separate, are interrelated parts of a whole (Giddens 1984):

1) Society – Practice theorists seek to understand how social 'fields' (Bourdieu 1990) or 'systems' (Giddens 1984) constrain and enable human activity through, for example, discipline (Foucault 1977), or the sub-conscious incorporation of social tradition or 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1990).

2) Individuality – The understanding of the individual is preserved by the enquiry into people's activities 'in practice'. It is not just *what* is done but also *how* (De Certeau 1984) as a means of capturing the 'practical sense' of life (Bourdieu 1990).

3) The Actors – Activity is dependent on the skills and initiatives of the actors. These 'practitioners' are interpreters of practice (Bourdieu 1990), who negotiate constraints (De Certeau 1984), and, if they are skilled enough, can themselves become creative agents (Giddens 1984).

It was not just the general progression of the wider social sciences that stimulated this re-evaluation of strategy. Dissatisfaction had been growing within the academic community about what strategy *actually* was, what it had become, and how it was being studied. Consequently, as Johnson et al. (2007) argued, the emergence of the practice perspective can be explained on economic, theoretical, and empirical levels (see Johnson et al. 2007: 8-12). *Economically*, as organisational transparency increased through communication, information, and the mobility of labour, it was thought that perhaps the interaction of 'micro-assets' held the key to achieving competitive advantage. As the market becomes more fluid so too must the strategy creation process, consequently, episodic and deliberate strategy work, like scenario planning, and other decision-making processes must be investigated as organisational activities to accommodate the expanding role of day-to-day practices. On a *theoretical* level, the *RBV* has failed to live up to its promise with 'resources' covering everything in general and nothing in particular, whereas a practice approach allows, to a degree, the identification of resources both within and beyond control (Johnson et al. 2007). Another theoretical problem is that people in organisations were marginalised as the 'organisation' became entities in themselves (Tolbert and Zucker 1996), complete with memories and

personalities (de Geus 2002). *Empirically*, handling organisations as whole units of analysis (Chakravarthy and White 2002) is said to have rendered much of the strategy process research meaningless insofar as it ignores the practice occurring *inside* the process. The acknowledgment of people and what they do as an empirical concern extends beyond process research. For example, after hundreds of process studies, the degree to which methods of corporate diversification affects profitability is still unknown (see Grant 2002), yet it has been long argued that the key to progress in this areas lies in more focused investigations into the actual *practice* of diversification and not the process through which it occurs (see Grant et al. 1988). Similarly, certain corporate structures may or may not affect performance; statistical research, incapable of handling the speed and fluidity of contemporary business (Brown and Eisenhardt 1997), needs to be supported, or even supplanted, with an "appreciation of the activities involved in creating and implementing structures" (Johnson et al. 2007: 10). Part of the allure of the S-as-P perspective seems to be that it restores some lost respect for managers as strategists, and the acknowledgement that the minutiae of the day-to-day is as important as, and gives meaning to, and takes meaning from, the role of the wider society in determining what strategy actually is. However, while some of that minutiae may be of interest and value on an ethno-methodological level, there is also a risk of ascribing too much emphasis to the marginal processes and reducing the *act* of strategy to no more than an enumerated checklist.

While there is a tradition of practice research that focuses on the activities of managers, the context is seldom referred to in a theoretical way (Tsoukas 1994; Willmott 1997), instead focusing on macro-economic and industry levels factors that impact upon the study, but not exploring how the broader 'context' actually affects the activities understudy on any theoretical level (Whittington 2006a). Recently, S-as-P has begun to expand in two diametrically opposing but sociologically related areas. One stream of research seeks to burrow deep inside the intimate details of the organisation to explore the activity of strategy (Hendry 2000; Johnson et al. 2003; Samra-Fredricks 2003; Jarzabkowski 2004). The other seeks to study the aggregation of these activities into a greater and wider social phenomenon (Ghemawat 2002; Clark 2004; Whittington 2006a). As can be seen with the development of strategy research itself, bifurcation is a natural stage in the evolution of theory. However, in

this case, the two branches may be separate but they are very much connected. Applying Giddens' (1984) 'duality of structure', knowledgeable agents are, through the everyday use of *rules* and *resources*, both creators and products of the social systems which simultaneously constrain and enable their action (see Giddens 1984: 17-34). Whittington (2006a) argues that advancing research of S-as-P requires a more integrated view of intra- and extra-organisational activities.

The majority of recent practice work has centred around intra-organisational activity, examining the practices of the firm as strategic devices (see Dougherty 1992; Barry and Elmes 1997; Hardy et al. 2000; Hodgkinson and Wright 2002; Jarzabkowski and Wilson 2002; Grant 2003; Hendry and Seidl 2003; Jarzabkowski 2003; Samra-Fredricks 2003). Whether it be exploring the challenges faced by strategists trying to make strategic discourse both a credible and novel endeavour (Barry and Elmes 1997), studying the formal planning systems of eight of the world's largest oil companies (Grant 2003), or using Bourdieu and Giddens to show the effect of minutiae on shaping strategic change in a university (Jarzabkowski and Wilson 2002), studies at the intra-organisational level "have achieved considerable insight" (Whittington 2006a: 617). It is also at this intra-organisational level where one can find instances of, and thus begin to understand the impact of, foresight techniques as a strategic pursuit. In the practice perspective, the strategist's toolbox is of great concern. Thus, scenario planning is used and referred to in the literature (see Hodgkinson and Wright 2002; Grant 2003), usually, as a *discursive* device used during a strategic *episode* (Jarzabkowski 2005). At the extra-organisational level, several studies have attempted to aggregate the influence of strategy practices into societal wholes. For example, Knights and Morgan (1991) used Foucault to describe the transformation of managers into strategists as a result of the emergence of strategy as powerful discourse; similarly, Hendry (2000) used Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, supplemented by Harré and Gillett's (1994) discourse psychology, to create an integrating conceptualisation of strategic decisions as an element of discourse (Hendry 2000).

Although both intra- and extra-organisational avenues of research have, in their own right, extended knowledge of the practice perspective, Whittington argues that each branch, on its

own is limited, and that, "appreciation of wider contexts" (2006a: 617) can help make sense of the complexities unearthed by intimate research, and that "reciprocally, close engagement can uncover the real ambiguity and fluidity of the broad strategy trends found in sectoral or societal analyses" (2006a: 617). Put simply, the two branches must intertwine if the strategy is to complete its *practice* turn. Johnson et al. (2007) argue that this need for plurality in practice research extends to *levels of analysis*, *actors*, *dependent variables*, and *theories* (see Johnson et al. 2007: 12-15). A large portion of strategy research occurs at the organisational level, whereas a practice perspective seeks to delve beneath those processes and also to search above them to see how practices and tools and technique, like scenario planning, are generated by the wider academic and business environment (Molloy and Whittington 2005). By using, or at least considering, multiple levels of analysis, the practices of strategy and the tools used can be understood not just as a combination of techniques but as institutional phenomena, the effects of which extend far beyond just the organisational level (Johnson et al. 2007).

As mentioned earlier, much of the S-as-P research has focused on the intra-organisational activities. These activities, the so-called 'practices' in the S-as-P agenda, organised as *administrative*, *discursive,* and *episodic*, are the tools and artefacts that people use in doing strategy work (Whittington 2003; Jarzabkowski 2004). Jarzabkowski (2005) and Whittington (2006a) both place them as part of the wider S-as-P research agenda, categorised as *'practice'*, *'practitioners'* and *'practices'*, and, *'practice'*, *'practitioners'* and *'praxis'*, respectively.

The '*practice*' portion seeks to transcend much of the dichotomies and "academic conveniences" (Jarzabkowski 2005: 7) which have come to polarise strategy research. In S-as-P, the 'practice' is not concerned with the conflict that exists between *content* and *process*, *foresight* and *uncertainty*, or *formulation* and *implementation*—dichotomies which still shape the academic lexicon—but rather is concerned with strategy as a "situated, socially accomplished flow of organisational activity" (Jarzabkowski 2005: 11)—a flow of activity that embraces the dichotomies that previously fractured the research agenda. Accordingly, the practice perspective views these dichotomies as being "mutually constitutive" (Jarzabkowski

2005: 8), and thus seeks to understand how they interact and intertwine with their contraries, in an attempt to move beyond the academic inadequacies of the strategy construct.

The *'practitioner'* agenda, which is centred on the notion that it is *people* who *do* strategy, is perhaps more straightforward. A great deal of strategy work has, whether intended or not, marginalised the role of the *actor*. The strong positivistic tradition (Lowendahl and Revang 1998, 2004) looked beyond people at all levels of the firm (senior executives, middle managers, etc.) and supporting services (accountants, consultants, etc.). The practice perspective, however, while acknowledging that not everyone is a *strategist* per se, all contribute to the strategy of the firm (Mantere 2005). The study of the individual goes beyond just organisational interaction too; they are seen as being *social actors*, skilled and knowledgeable agents, whose actions are enabled and constrained by the same social structures they create and recreate. Thus S-as-P seeks to understand *how practitioners act, what they do, with whom they interact*, and *the reasoning they apply* (Chia 2004; Ezzammel and Willmott 2004; Jarzabkowski 2005).

As mentioned above, *'practices'* can be organised as *administrative, discursive*, and *episodic,* and are the tools and artefacts used by practitioners to *do* strategy (Jarzabkowski 2005). However it is not strictly the *practices* themselves that are of primary concern to the practice perspective but rather how the *practices* function as mediators of interaction between *practitioners* and *practice* (Orlikowski 1992, 2000), and thus the consequences for strategy. The *administrative* practices, more rational in purpose, serve as mechanisms for "organising and coordinating strategy" (Jarzabkowski 2005: 9), and often take the form of budgets, forecasts, and performance indicators. As discussed earlier, the false rationality of the planning and design schools (Mintzberg 1994) rendered much of this work as being largely irrelevant. However, their importance to strategy practitioners as a part of the everyday routine of strategy and also as a method of strategic interaction, make these *administrative* practices of significant interest to the practice research agenda.

The *discursive* practices are resources that act as a medium for interaction about strategy (Jarzabkowski 2005).   Strategy is mediated by a specific language created in both academic and business worlds and disseminated through class exercises, textbooks, popular media, even things like an entrepreneur's memoirs.   This language, which can take the form of techniques like SWOT analysis, Porter's 5-forces, and scenario planning, is largely under-explored insofar as studying the consequential effects on the practice of strategy.   Thus, the *discursive* practices research agenda is interested in not just the discourse of strategy, but also the tools and techniques that provide the language.

The final categorisation of practices is described as *episodic* (Jarzabkowski 2005; Johnson et al. 2007).   They are the practices that organise strategy, for example, workshops, away days, etc., and, like the aforementioned *administrative* and *discursive* practices, is an area which has had little empirical attention paid to how they affect the interaction of practitioners of the practice of strategy (Hendry and Seidl 2003).   These practices are often designed to either engender change or reinforce stability and solidarity.   Regardless, the *episodes* can have "powerful effects in…organizational activity" (Jarzabkowski 2005: 9).   There is also a degree of interconnectivity between the *episodic* and *discursive* practices—often the two are part of the same strategic endeavour where an organisation will arrange several away days to utilise a scenario planning exercise in order to challenge the practitioners and bring about a change in organisational focus (see, for example, Moyer 1996).

This section has introduced and explored the emergence of the S-as-P agenda and the influences that have driven its development; it has also examined developing avenues of research and the role of *practice* and *practices* within a wider *practice*, *practitioner*, and *practices* research framework.   If strategy is still in its youth (McKiernan 1997), then the S-as-P agenda is grappling through infancy.   It is a perspective full of questions, seeking theoretical, methodological, and empirical answers that may help understand better what it is that people do in an era defined by organisations.   Accordingly, the next section will attempt to locate the thesis' central research question within the S-as-P perspective.

2.2.3 Locating the Research Question in the Strategy-as-Practice Perspective

The central research question, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process*, is concerned with the *doing* of strategy. However, as as shown in the previous section, S-as-P encompasses a varied and growing collection of perspectives and research agendas. Thus, a brief discussion of where this thesis' research question lies within the S-as-P domain is an important step in clarifying the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions of the thesis.

As a growing and evolving body of research, S-as-P has struggled to define itself against the more entrenched process-orientated research tradition (see, for example, Hodgkinson and Wright 2002; Jarzabkowski and Wilson 2002; Ezzammel and Willmott 2004; Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst 2006; Chia and MacKay 2007; Paroutis and Pettigrew 2007; Whittington 2007). Questions on whether or not practice is an extension, enrichment, or aspect of process, or if it is something quite similar or, indeed, completely different are still prevalent in the literature (see Carter et al. 2008a). Some research (see Ezzammel and Willmott 2004) even suggests that it represents a regression from the capacity of process research to identify and explain issues of power and politics (Carter et al. 2008a: 91). Seemingly, much of the confusion stems from the interchangeable use of concepts of practice and process (Carter et al. 2008a: 90). However, as an emerging research agenda, S-as-P has been described as "open to a range of theoretical approaches" (Jarzabkowski and Whittington 2008: 105). Process is a central word in this thesis' research question, but the enquiry is one of doing, it is about investigating inside the process (Brown and Duguid 2000). It is what Whittington (2006a, 2007) refers to as the 'stuff' of strategy — the practices (e.g., the workshops, the routines, the tools and analytical techniques of strategy), which, although incidental and superlative to process researchers, are of great significance to the practice researcher, who is less absorbed by the fate of organisations that the activities performed by the people in them (see Whittington 2007: 1579).

The nature of the research question guides the research in two directions. In the first instance, because the 'organisation' is the subject and 'scenario planning' is the first object,

the primary direction is to understand how scenario planning is actually done; set against the second object, the 'strategic planning process', and thus encompassing the whole question, the focus extends to how scenario planning informs the wider, formal, strategic planning process. However, as was highlighted by during the discussion of scenario planning, it is also something inherently social and highly cognitive, and dependent on mental models, the presence of multiple perspectives, and the existence of dialogue. Accordingly, while scenario planning can challenge, create and align new perspective, it is inextricably linked to the time and space in which it is enacted. Thus, in practice terms, it is connected to the macro-organisational aspects of strategy the S-as-P agenda seeks to explore (see Whittington 2006a). Consequently, this thesis will also focus on the flow of activity that connects both the intra- and extra-organisational practices—answering Whittington's call for strategy research to complete the practice turn (Whittington 2006a).

To understand better where in the S-as-P research agenda the research question is located, Johnson et al. (2007) provide a useful 'exploded map of strategic management' (see Figure 2.3 below) that will aid further explanation:

Figure 2.3 - An exploded map of strategic management
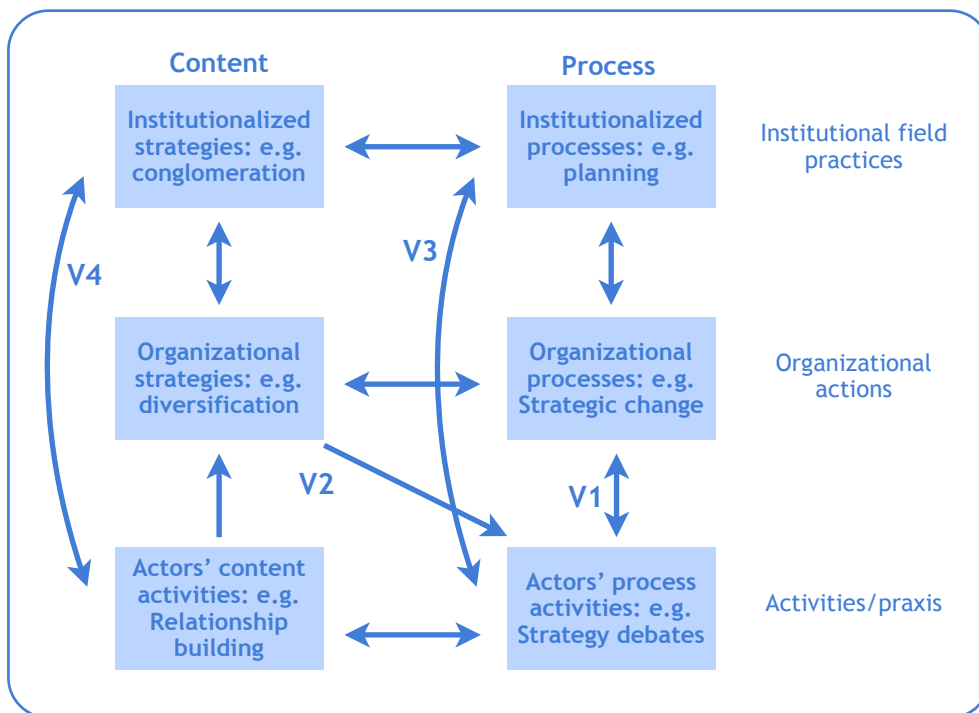
Source: From Johnson et al. (2007: 18)

Johnson et al. argue that the map[24] reflects traditional divisions of enquiry that the practice lens is able to overcome. Accordingly, the S-as-P research agenda is able to traverse the boundaries between traditional strategy dichotomies like content and process, micro and macro, formulation and implementation, foresight and uncertainty (Jarzabkowski and Wilson 2002; Johnson et al. 2003; Clegg et al. 2004; Jarzabkowski 2005). The vertical links (V1 – V4) help identify important research avenues (Johnson et al. 2007: 17-26):

- V1: the link between people's activities and organisational level processes.
- V2: the link between activities within the organisation and the strategies of those organisations.
- V3: the relationship between institutionalised strategic management processes and people's activities within organisations.
- V4: the link between institutionalised strategies actively pursued and people's activities within organisations.

As stated above, the central research question, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process*, exists in both V1 and V3. Accordingly, the two following sections will explore these areas in further detail.

2.2.3.1 People's Activities and Organisational Level Processes

The need for further research in link V1 in Figure 2.3 (above) is justified by Johnson et al. (2007) through a number of streams. Firstly, a key concern is the constituents of organisational processes, and specifically the interactions that bind and inform them. Examples of this are studies on episodes of activity (Hendry and Seidl 2003), consultant interventions (Schwartz 2004), team meetings (Blackler et al. 2000), and strategy workshops or away days (Hodgkinson et al. 2006). Scenario planning is used as a method to facilitate meetings and conversations about strategy, as well as being the focus of strategy days and workshops, as illustrated in Hodgkinson and Wright's (2002) ill-fated workshop. Hodgkinson and Wright (2002) described how the activities of a strategy workshop were both indicative of

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[24] The original map was conceived by Whittington et al. (2004) in a conference paper presented at the 2004 EGOS Colloquium, Slovenia.

and fateful for an organisational on the precipice of strategic change. It is these activities and their relationship with wider organisational processes that provide intrigue for this research. Hodgkinson et al.'s (2006) study of strategy workshops in decision-making acknowledges the use of tools like scenario planning as providing a conceptual framework for discussion, echoing Mintzberg (2000) and Grant's (2003) assertion that strategy workshops have become arenas for coordinating and communicating strategy rather than creating it, and extending their function as positive relationship-building activities (Hodgkinson et al. 2005; 2006). To extend knowledge in this area, Hodgkinson et al. (2006) also proposed a series of questions to guide further research:

> "To what extent and in what ways do the outputs of strategy workshops feed into formal statements of strategic intent, or indeed translate into the realisation of those intentions? What is the role of analytical tools and techniques? In what ways and with what effect do the analytical, discursive, and no doubt political, elements combine in strategy workshops?" (Hodgkinson et al. 2006: 491)

These questions are similar to the central research question and sub-questions articulated in 2.1.5, except the object is specified as scenario planning, rather than 'strategy workshops' or 'analytical techniques':

- How does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?
  - *How do cognitive processes eventuate physically in an organisation*?
  - *How does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?*
  - *How does scenario planning affect policy development?*

The object being 'scenario planning' is also important in considering another angle of research described as important by Johnson et al. (2007). In discussing scenario planning and its relationship with the time and space in which it is enacted, as well as its predilection for viewing society through a functionalist lens, the connection between extra-organisational factors and the activities of those using scenario planning leads to consideration of the link V3 in Figure 2.3 (above).

2.2.3.2 Relationships Between Institutionalised Processes and People's Activities

Studying the intimate relationship between micro-organisational activities and the wider institutional context has been identified as a critical area overlooked by much of the S-as-P literature thus far (Whittington 2006a). V3 in figure 2.3 highlights this link and the importance of understanding the continuous interaction of institutionalised processes and people's activities (Johnson et al. 2007: 22).

Investigation of this continuous interplay provides an avenue for understanding organisational processes as something greater than an organisational phenomenon, exemplified by Oakes et al.'s (1998) study of the introduction of strategic planning into Canadian museums. Other institutionalised processes can include the use of strategy tools (like scenario planning), as well as strategic planning cycles (see Jarzabkowski 2003), or indeed supra-national forces, manifested physically through bodies like the UN and in international law, or, tacitly, through attitudes and perceptions of climate change. The essence of these wider practices is that they create the structure that constrains and enables agency (Giddens 1984)—the rules and resources that govern behavioural norms.

Beyond studying the interaction of intra- and extra-organisational factors and practices, research questions can focus on how what people do informs or changes institutionalised processes. Here, it is also possible to identify the "carriers of institutional norms and practices" (Johnson et al. 2007: 23). Moreover, this area also allows research into how people go about amending these organisational routines (Feldman and Pentland 2003). In both areas, little empirical work exists (Johnson et al. 2007). These two areas, represented by links V1 and V3 on figure 2.3, and identified by scholars at the vanguard of S-as-P research (see Carter et al. 2008a) as important and understudied, both empirically and theoretically, help identify and understand where this thesis' research question, and thus contribution, lies within the S-as-P agenda. Furthermore, as scenario planning is an object of the research question, the following section will describe briefly how to view scenario planning through a S-as-P lens.

2.2.4 Understanding Scenario Planning through the Strategy-as-Practice Lens

A simple and straightforward understanding of scenario planning in a S-as-P context would identify it, as was done above (2.2.2), as an episodic and/or discursive practice. The social aspects of scenario planning and its conversational components, specifically the creation of a common language (see, for example, van der Heijden 1996) would suggest it is a distinctly discursive practice. However, the application and *doing* of a scenario-based intervention can be seen as an episode of strategic activity. The two distinctions are not mutually exclusive but the categorisations highlight conceptual shortcomings of this aspect of the S-as-P perspective. Scenario planning would be understood as a tool or a technique in the *practices* framework. However, if it is understood as a process, the well-defined categories begin to blur together and lose relevance. For example, in an organisation like Royal Dutch/Shell, the use of scenario planning is so embedded in their strategy process that it could be classed as an administrative practice as well as an episodic and discursive one. Viewed as a process, scenario planning involves an intervention—something episodic—but, as language and embedding is so fundamental to scenario planning, the scenarios become a way to discuss long-term and short-term strategy for years after the initial 'episode' has been completed. Put another way, scenario planning is an activity of strategizing (Jarzabkowski 2005). Through the practice, practices, practitioner framework, strategizing can be understood more clearly:

Figure 2.4 - Strategizing nexus
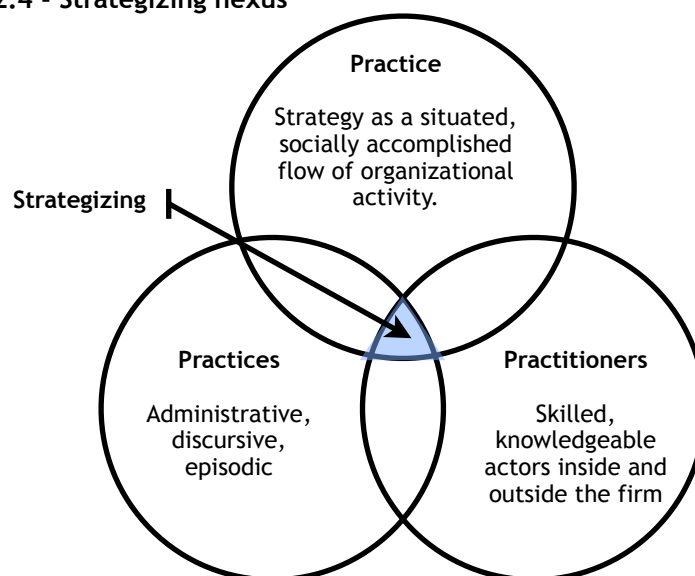
Source: Adapted from Jarzabkowski (2005)and Jarzabkowski et al. (2007)

Scenario planning is a *social* activity. It is facilitated by knowledgeable actors inside and outside the organisation, involving practitioners from a variety of intra- and extra-organisational roles (for example, senior managers, outside experts, facilitators/consultants). Scenario planning is also a *situated* activity; scenarios are constructed within a time and place and has implicit and explicit relevance to the world around it[25]. Although forward looking, the nature and trends of the present are inextricable from the logic used to create the scenarios. Finally, scenario planning is an example of the praxis of strategy; it has been shown to be episodic, discursive, and even administrative. Thus, the area where these three components interact is described by Jarzabkowski (2005) as the nexus of strategizing. Although the concept of scenario planning does not change, the words used within the S-as-P perspective help to refine how it is discussed, which will inform the following empirical analysis. Scenario planning has been described as a social activity, but it is also in fitting with Turner's (1988) classification of being an *interactive* and *shared* activity.   Thus, while an understanding of scenario planning was presented in section 2.1.1, through a S-as-P lens, scenario planning can be understood further as an example of episodic, interactive strategizing.

2.3 Literature Review: Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was two-fold. Firstly, a critique of scenario planning and its role in the strategic planning process was provided to offer a contextual understanding of the theoretical roots and orientation of the thesis.   In so doing, a number of underlying assumptions of the scenario planning literature were exposed. Concurrently, the chapter also acknowledged the conceptual and empirical weakness of the scenario planning literature. These theoretical and empirical shortcomings provided justification for the inclusion of the S-as-P perspective.   A brief history of strategy and overview of S-as-P was described before locating the research questions within the S-as-P perspective.   Finally, the chapter provided an extension of the understanding of scenario planning presented initially in section 2.1.1: 'a

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[25] This has always been the true of scenarios. They started during the cold war to imagine the world after a nuclear exchange, the cognitive enablers and restraints were specific to that period.   In a sense, the conceptual future created using scenario planning is relevant only to the time and place in which it was developed.

structured process to imagine, create and explore multiple futures to help stakeholders re-perceive reality and thus better understand today in order to improve strategic and/or policy decisions'. Through an S-as-P lens, scenario planning can be understood as an example of episodic, interactive strategizing.

Advocates of the recent practice turn in strategy research argue that S-as-P can provide deeper and more revealing insights that extend beyond the capabilities of the strategy process research (see, for example, Johnson et al. 2003). However, S-as-P is by no means a panacea for strategy research. Critics of the emerging perspective have challenged its contribution from varying conceptual and methodological levels. For example, Ezzamel and Willmott (2004) argue that S-as-P's treatment of power and politics actually represents a regression from earlier processual work. Similarly, S-as-P has come under attack from more critical scholars who argue that the perspective borrows from well-established theories and thus does not offer anything 'new' (Carter et al. 2008a, 2008b). Moreover, Carter et al. (2008a) identify problems with the perspective's notion, and use, of the terms 'strategy' and 'practice'. The S-as-P literature presents an ambiguous and often contradictory understanding of practice rather than deriving a more "sophisticated...concept from social theorists such as Garfinkel (1967), Foucault (1977) or Bourdieu (2002)" (Carter et al. 2008a: 90). Consequently, S-as-P does not utilise the practice concept to its fullest extent (Carter et al. 2008a: 91). Carter et al.'s (2008a) criticism of the perspective's use of strategy is centred on the conservatism of the S-as-P approach and the naïveté with which the concept of strategy is viewed, especially Jarzabkowski's (see 2003; 2004, 2005) handling of strategizing:

> "A close reading reveals a somewhat naive concept of strategy. Jarzabkowski's (2003: 35) empirical study focuses on the strategic achievement of the balance that universities attain when they 'gain "strength" through strong leadership combined with excellent performance I research ranking and income-generation, so maintain power in their relationships with the centre'. Such a description of power balances is based on traditional strategy themes....One could argue that while these themes may play an important role in strategizing, there are other obligatory points of passage through which strategy is played out in practice." (Carter et al. 2008a: 86)

Jarzabkowski (2003) identifies examples of these strategic practices as "formal operating procedures involved in the direction setting, resource allocation, and monitoring and control", which she describes as, "theoretically valid within the strategic management literature and are innately 'practical' being concerned with the doing of strategy" (Jarzabkowski 2003: 23). Returning to Carter et al. (2008a: 86-87):

> "Again, direction setting, resource allocation, and monitoring and control resemble Fayol's management principles; strategizing as a verb would surely encompass other, more 'grey' (Foucault 1984, referring to Nietzsche) areas that remain unexplored in current approaches and which frame the labour of strategizing." (Carter et al. 2008a: 86-87)

Consequently, while the S-as-P will provide a theoretical lens for the thesis, it is used with the full understanding that it has conceptual shortcomings. Accordingly, this thesis will attempt to further understanding of the S-as-P's theoretical capability and provide much needed empirical evidence to a strategic approach in need of maturation (Whittington 2007; Carter et al. 2008b).

The second goal of this chapter was the preliminary unraveling and construction of the research questions that will guide the empirical enquiry. The central research is, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?* It was from consideration of this question in tandem with shortcomings in the literature that the following sub questions were generated:

- *How do cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation*?
- *How does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?*
- *How does scenario planning affect policy development?*

It is these questions, alongside the understanding developed of scenario planning, the scenario-to-strategy process, and the S-as-P perspective, that will guide the empirical portion of this thesis.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.0 Chapter Introduction

The previous chapter concluded with an acknowledgement that the scenario planning literatures lacked the empirical and theoretical richness from which to guide the research and that, by understanding scenario planning as an example of episodic, interactive strategizing, the S-as-P perspective could provide a conceptual lens and methodological guidance for the thesis. Accordingly, this chapter will explain the methodological choices and processes undertaken to help answer the central research question, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?* The empirical research will examine the 'how' and 'why' of the scenario-strategy process, applying conceptual guidance formed in the previous chapter and attempting to extend the literatures involved to a more rigorous level of discussion.   There are many alternative ways to conduct social science research.   In this instance, the research agenda will not be one of falsification or confirmation but rather of exploration, illustration and explanation.

This chapter will detail the methodological organisation of the research, describing the logic and method that underpins the study.   In the first instance, the research subject and case study will be described, discussing also the theoretical and practical rationale behind its use and articulating the research objectives and questions guiding the inquiry.   Section 3.3 will discuss the philosophical roots of the research and the paradigms that underpin it.   Following will be an examination of the case study method, and the organisation of the empirical element of the research, justifying the use of a single case and establishing validity within such an approach.   The next sections will discuss data collection methods, and the grounded theory method of data coding and analysis employed, before concluding the chapter with a brief summary of the points covered, as well as an introduction to the structure of the empirical section of the thesis.

3.1 Community Planning in Fife: A Case Study

Nothing is more important than selecting a case properly (Stake 2000). If the choice of case is poor the researcher will struggle to understand the critical phenomena (Patton 1990; Vaughan 1992). Consequently, this section will serve as a precursor to the rest of the chapter and will provide a background and introduction to the case of community planning in Fife (section 3.1.1); section 3.1.2 will discuss some of the theoretical and practical reasons for choosing such a case; and section 3.1.3 will describe briefly the structure of the case study while illustrating how the research goals and objectives are satisfied within the context of the Fife Partnership's community planning process.

3.1.1 Introduction and Background to Community Planning in Fife

Fife is the third largest local authority area in Scotland and has a population of just under 360,000—one third of which live in Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes. The area is governed locally by Fife Council, a unitary body established after the reorganisation of local authorities in 1996[26]. As of 2008, Fife Council operated with a yearly budget of c.£600 million and employed over 22,000 people, delivering more than 900 services to Fife residents. Of those 22,000 employees, only 78 are councillors or *elected members* and the rest are non-political *council officers*. After 11 years of a Labour party majority[27], the 2007 elections saw a new coalition administration between the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Liberal Democrats, with Labour leading the opposition[28].

Fife Council also plays a leading role in the Fife Partnership, the group charged with coordinating Fife's Community Plan. The other partner agencies are NHS Fife, Fife Constabulary, Scottish Enterprise, Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) Fife, Communities

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[26] Previously, the area was segmented into three districts: Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and North-East Fife.

[27] Following the re-organisation of local authorities in 1996.

[28] Fife Council's elected members after the May 2007 elections: Labour – 24; SNP – 23; Liberal Democrats – 21; Conservatives – 5; Independents – 3; and Left Alliance – 2.

Scotland, and Fife's Further and Higher Education sector (short descriptions of these agencies and their function can be found in the Glossary). From the period of March 2002 to December 2007, the Partnership has met on 24 different occasions and has involved nearly 100 different people, the permanent members being the most senior decision-makers from the partner agencies. The Partnership consists of five[29] other 'Strategic Partnerships', namely: the *Fife Community Safety Partnership*, the *Sustainable Communities Group*, the *Fife Economic Forum*, the *Taking a Pride in Fife Environmental Network*, and the *Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance* (see Glossary for further details). The purpose of these groups is to take forward the main themes of the Community Plan—the main planning document for Fife and key responsibility for the Partnership. The Fife Partnership, formed in 1998/9, developed the first Community Plan in 2000 and have produced revised versions in 2004 and 2007; from 2003 onwards they have been supported by the Community Planning Implementation Group (CPIG) [30], whose remit is "focused on maintaining progress, raising the profile, providing guidance to those involved, promoting best practice and giving independent focus to Community Planning" (Improvement Service 2006).

The community planning movement started with the establishment of the Community Planning Working Group by the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) to examine the ways for local authorities to engage in Partnership work to provide and promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the communities they serve (Community Planning Working Group 1998). However, it is argued that community planning is an elusive concept to both define and execute (Lloyd and Illsley 1999), but in a Scottish Context, is viewed as "any process of public administration through which a Council comes together with other organisations to plan, provide for, or promote the well being of communities they serve" (Lloyd and Illsley 1999: 181). The Improvement

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[29] When the Partnership started there were six 'Strategic Partnerships' and included the *Fife Lifelong Learning Partnership*. The six were then reduced to five in 2004 when the *Sustainable Communities Group* was removed. In 2007, the Partnership decided that the *Fife Lifelong Learning Partnership* would be discontinued and that the *Sustainable Communities Group* would be reinstated.

[30] CPIG was preceded by the Community Planning Task Force (CPTF), which was established in March 2001 to facilitate the development of community planning in Scotland. The recommendations of the CPTF's final report were received by the Scottish Executive and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) in May 2003 and led directly to the establishment of CPIG.

Service[31] define community planning as simply a "process which helps public agencies to work together with the community to plan and deliver better services" (Improvement Service 2008). In other words, community planning attempts to "provide a strategic framework for the activities of the multifarious institutions engaged in community capacity building and regeneration" (Lloyd and Illsley 1999: 181).

In Fife Council, the Community Plan "is at the heart" (Fife Council 2007) of everything they do. It is regarded as the "top" policy document for Fife and sets the tone and agenda for all local government services (see Figure 3.1 below for a diagram of Fife Council's planning model):

Figure 3.1 - Fife Council's planning model
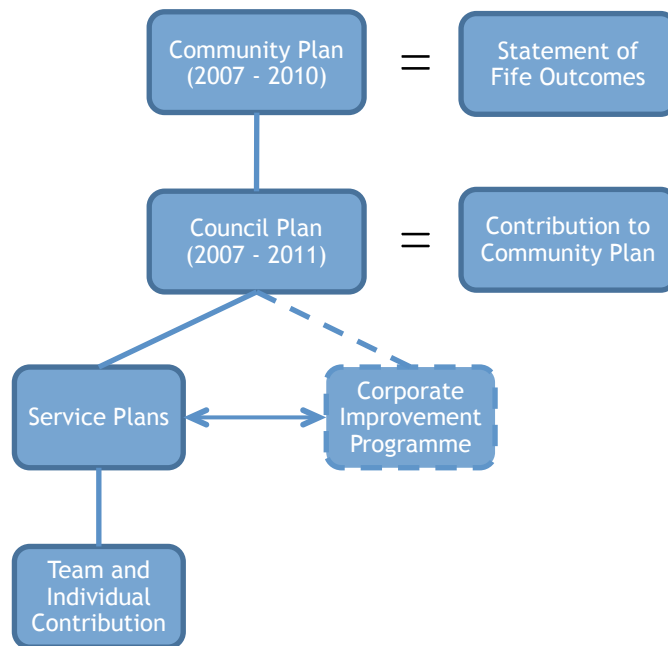
Source: Adapted from Fife Council (2007)

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[31] The Improvement Service was established as a partnership between the Scottish Executive, COSLA, and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to help improve efficiency, quality and accountability of public services in Scotland.

In August of 2002, the Fife Partnership wanted to refresh the Community Plan to reflect changes and achievements made since the initial Community Plan was created in 2000 and to ensure a robust and renewed vision. The partners chose to use scenario planning as a tool to test the assumptions of the first Community Plan and to support the identification of new challenges facing Fife during the period 2003-2013[32]. In November 2002, the Fife Partnership set up a steering group[33] to develop the scenarios, which was supported by experienced[34] scenario planning facilitators from the University of St Andrews, personnel from the 'Policy and Organisational Development' Service, and independent education, economics, and transportation experts. Over a three month period, more than 200 people assisted in the development of the scenario planning process[35]. The first drafts of the scenarios were then tested at the 'Community Planning Gathering', held at the *Rothes Halls* on 27 February 2003, which was attended by 79 representatives from the partner organisations and 10 facilitators. After the Fife Partnership meeting on 12 March 2003, the two scenarios, *Bridging the Gap* and *Mind the Gap*[36] (see Table 3.1 for summarised versions), were finalised.

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[32] Throughout the data collection, a number of reasons emerged explaining how and why a Scenario Planning approach was chosen to refresh the Community Plan. These reasons will be subject to discussion in section 4.1.4.

[33] The steering group was made up of the following: NHS Fife (Chair, Chief Executive, and Director of Public Health); Fife Constabulary (Chief Constable); Fife Council (the Leader, Chief Executive, and Manager of Policy & Organisational Development Service); Scottish Enterprise Fife (Chief Executive); Communities Scotland (Regional Manager); CVS Fife (Manager); and the Community Planning Coordinator.

[34] The Scenario Planning facilitators from St Andrews have worked on over 170 projects worldwide for public, not-for-profit, and private organisations.

[35] The specific details of the first and second Scenario Planning processes are discussed in sections 4.2 and 4.4 respectively.

[36] See Appendices C and D respectively for full versions of scenarios.

Table 3.1 - Summarised versions of '*Mind the Gap*' and '*Bridging the Gap*'

Mind the Gap	Bridging the Gap
In 2013, Fife is an isolated area declining amidst failing industry, dwindling jobs and shrinking public funding. Unemployment is the highest in Scotland and is a contributing factor in the worsening health, increasing poverty, growing exclusion, and general social breakdown of the region. Fife's dire state is blamed largely on not just a global recession and re-definition of the Barnett formula, but on a lack of vision, strategic thinking and Partnership cooperation. Fife should have prospered alongside Edinburgh and Dundee but were stifled by an insufficient transport and communication infrastructure. Despite pockets of success, Fife's loss of the Rosyth ferry service, as well as a year-long closure of the Forth Rail Bridge, following a train derailment, contributed to the intensification of this commuting chaos and has not just restricted the ability of Fife to attract businesses and home owners but has contributed to an exodus of existing companies. Education also has become a humiliating failure for Fife, culminating in the abolition of Fife's Education service, and has led to an ever widening disparity between the richest and poorest areas in the 'Kingdom'—the erosion of the support and voluntary services in the former mining areas have left them without any community cohesion and experiencing an increase in crime and drug abuse. The disadvantaged are stranded as public transport fails to meet the demands of an aging, ailing population; those who do not have cars are trapped in degenerating communities, and those who do are using them to escape to Edinburgh, Stirling and Perth to work, shop or have fun. The result of all of these factors is Fife as an area in isolation, mired in a depressing cycle of decline.	In 2013, Fife is one of the most prosperous regions in Scotland and a European leader in the regeneration of deprived areas. In 2003, Fife faced economic decline and increasing unemployment but through an improved vision, inspired leadership, renewed ambition, connectivity, clever promotion and a little luck, it has been growing in strength and pride ever since. Even a funding shortage was avoided through efficiencies gained through the formation of the Fife Community Partnership Limited. This new model of community vision helped Fife's transition into a booming economy which was able to support the social services and the high environmental standards; traditionally excluded groups enjoyed an enhanced quality of life; and educational standards improved as efficiency savings were reinvested, placing schools at the heart of the community. Edinburgh's growth helped Fife establish itself as not just a home for high-earning executives, but as a corridor for high-tech industries. Another main feature of Fife reducing its jobless rate to the second lowest in Scotland was the increase in indigenous business growth. A major success factor was also the improved transport network: a new airport in Leuchars, a second Kincardine bridge, and a new Forth crossing in the pipeline has helped connect Fife nationally and internationally; and an extension of the rail services has improved access to and from rural areas and towns, which has helped offset the soaring prices and shortage of houses in Dunfermline and East Fife. In 2013, Fife is an area of increasing prosperity with a highly educated workforce and the best road, rail and air links in Scotland. There is an increased sense of pride and renewed spirit of ambition.

Source: Adapted from ID/SP1/3 and ID/SP1/5

After the completion of the scenarios, the Fife Partnership discussed follow-up actions, which informed the 2004 revision of the Community Plan. In March 2005, the 'Winds of Change' document was produced, which described Fife's progress within the context of the two scenarios. While drafting the joint 'State of Fife Report: 2005'[37] and the 'Community Plan Milestones 2005'[38], Fife Council approached the University of St Andrews again in October 2005 to refresh the scenarios as part of the next Community planning cycle. Consequently,

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[37] The 'State of Fife Report' is a part of the community planning process for Fife. Its aim is to provide the Partnership with information about 'current needs and activity', 'external drivers of change and their influence on different futures (or scenarios)', 'current strategic policy activity', and an 'assessment of milestone progress'.

[38] The 'Milestones' report tracks the targets of Fife's Community Plan. It assesses current performance and extrapolates results out to 2010. Its purpose is to serve as a discussion tool to assist strategic partnerships and partnership co-ordinators to revise targets, identify gaps and to reassess priorities.

the Fife Partnership engaged in the 'Managing Fife's Future' (also the title of the 'State of Fife Report: 2005') workshops during 2006 to inform the upcoming revision of the Community Plan (which was done in 2007 and released in 2008). Three workshops were held in 2006 (the first on 18 April, the second on 12 May, and the third on 4 September[39]) and are summarised in Table 3.2 below (as was stipulated above, this process will be discussed in greater depth in section 4.4).

Table 3.2 - 'Managing Fife's Future' Workshops

Managing Fife's Future Workshops	
Workshop 1 18 April 2006	The first workshop discussed how the 2003 scenarios were rolling out based on an analysis of the five key drivers of change. Some of those drivers, i.e. the population increase, were more in-line with *Bridging the Gap*, while others—trends like the cuts in ferry service, the manufacturing decline and the potential weight restrictions on the Forth Road Bridge were more symptomatic of *Mind the Gap*. The group then split into 4 subgroups to evaluate current position against the key components of the aspirational scenario. The workshop concluded by endorsing the value of refreshing the scenarios to represent the current situation, thus extending their timeline to run from 2006-2016.
Workshop 2 12 May 2006	The second workshop began with an explanation and discussion of the refreshed scenarios based on comments during and following the workshop. The workshop then identified a small number of strategic policy priorities and carried out a relevant resource analysis. 5 groups generated a list of potential priorities. They were: transportation (both within and beyond Fife); education and learning (raising attainment in schools and educational ambition in the general community); environmental sustainability (tackling global warming and its problems on a local level); social inclusion (tackling social inequality, disadvantaged areas and worklessness). There was also discussion about the need for more effective use of the diminishing, shared resources across the Fife Partnership, and the need for strong leadership and a powerful voice for Fife. The workshop concluded with the agreement of **three** key policy priorities: Transportation, Education, and Environmental sustainability.
Workshop 3 4 Sept. 2006	At the third and final workshop, **four** key policy priorities, and advice on action, were presented to the group. The four priorities were: 'Energy and Resources'; 'Connectivity beyond and within Fife'; 'Educational attainment and achievement'; and 'Worklessness and employability'. Consensus was reached on the interpretation of the four issues and then presentations were made by relevant internal and external representatives. Areas of action were discussed and in, in some cases, prioritised. Discussion of the policy levers also revisited the two managerial priorities, which were 'Leadership' and 'Resource-sharing and Management'. There was a clear agreement on three of the four priorities, and some uncertainty about the need for 'Worklessness and employability', which some said would be driven through the other priorities. The workshop concluded with the agreement that each of the Fife Partnership's six strategic partnerships must confirm ownership over the four key policy levers.

The Managing Fife's Future process was intended to sit between the Fife Community Plan—the long-term vision with wide-ranging themes and objectives—and the Fife Partnership Action Programme—the operational programme for developing Fife Partnership's activity and

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[39] The September workshop was the first engagement the new Chief Executive of Fife Council had with this process. The previous Chief Executive was present for the first two workshops before leaving post at the end of May 2006.

infrastructure. Consequently, it was asked at the Fife Partnership meeting of 22 November 2006 that the briefing paper written following the workshops, called "Key Messages from Fife Partnership's Managing Fife Process", be considered in the budget deliberations. During 2007, the interaction between the Fife Partnership and the scenarios occurred within the context of the community planning process. The third refresher of the Community Plan was presented to the Partnership in draft form and endorsed broadly at the meeting of 29 August 2007. The final version was released to the public in April 2008, which was chosen as the natural end point of the case study.

3.1.2 Theoretical and Practical Rationale

The reason for choosing such a research vehicle has both a practical and theoretical rationale. In practical terms, the project's timeframe allowed the application of research methods that would yield the most thorough data set and thus allow for the most comprehensive results. Moreover, because of the involvement of the University of St Andrews, access to documents, workshops, and personnel, which is often a methodological stumbling block, was assured. In theoretical terms, the case satisfied the research goals: it captured both a scenario planning intervention and a strategic planning process, allowing a longitudinal study over nine years, from before scenario planning was used to after the development of the third Community Plan. The case allows the research to explore the process and activities, to understand how the process was managed, how policy was affected, how cognitive processes evident in the 'strategic conversations' inspired action and change, and how the use of scenario planning affected the wider community planning process.

3.1.3 Structure of the Case Study

To answer the research questions, insights are needed at every juncture. Consequently, the structure of the case study, as shown in Figure 3.2 (below), is organised as follows: **Pre-Scenario Planning** (episode 1) begins with the formation of the Fife Partnership and creation of the first Community Plan (c. 1999) and extends up to the initiation of the first scenario

planning process in August 2002; **Scenario Planning 2003** (episode 2) begins in September 2002 and follows the scenario planning process through the 'Community Gathering' (described above), ending with the presentation of the final draft of the scenarios to the Fife Partnership on 12 March 2003; **Scenario Planning 2003: Follow-through Process** (episode 3) begins in March 2003, examining the outcomes of the scenario planning process with respect to the Community Plan and the activity of the Partnership itself and that of the partner agencies, and concludes with the decision to re-engage the scenario planning process in October 2005; **Scenario Planning 2006** (episode 4) begins in October 2005 and follows the 'Managing Fife's Future' process (described above) through the final workshop in September 2006; and finally, **Scenario Planning 2006: Follow-through Process** (episode 5) begins in October 2006, again following the outcomes of the scenario planning process with respect to the Community Plan, the Partnership, and the partner agencies, and concludes in April 2008 with the public release of the 2007 Community Plan (Table 3.3 below summarises the timeline of the case and the individual episodes). 291 documents relating to Fife's community planning process have been collected from 1999 through to April 2008; 23 interviews have been conducted from May 2007 through February 2008 to gather information about all five episodes; and non-participant observation occurred during the Managing Fife's Future workshops (episode 4)[40].

Figure 3.2 - Case Study Structure[41]

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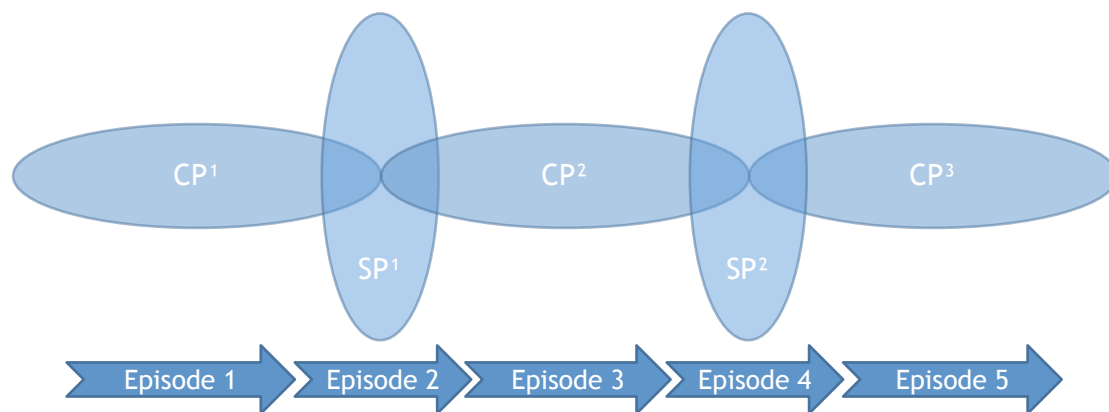
[40] Specific details pertaining to data collection will be described in sections 3.7 and 3.8.

[41] CP refers to the community planning cycle, and SP refers to the Scenario Planning process.

Table 3.3 - Timeline of case study

Episode	Name	Start Date	End Date
1	Pre-Scenario Planning	1999	August 2002
2	Scenario Planning 2003	September 2002	March 2003
3	Scenario Planning 2003: Follow-through Process	March 2003	October 2005
4	Scenario Planning 2006	October 2005	September 2006
5	Scenario Planning 2006: Follow-through Process	October 2006	April 2008

This section has introduced the case study and provided some background information on Fife Council, Fife Partnership and Fife's community planning process. The section defined the Community Plan as the most important planning document for Fife Council and the other partner agencies; it also described how scenario planning has been a part of the community planning process since August 2002. The theoretical and practical rationale for choosing this particular case study was provided before introducing the structure of the empirical part of the thesis. The purpose here is to provide a contextual background for the rest of the chapter and to introduce key terms in the Fife community planning lexicon so that research decisions and the methodical approach can be understood more fully before advancing on to the empirical section of the thesis. Before progressing, appropriate attention is dedicated to the important philosophical questions that helped clarify methodological decisions. Thus, the subsequent sections will deal with the conceptual, ontological, and epistemological foundations of this research.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is the logic that binds theory with research and gives the researcher a theoretical basis from which to begin empirical work. In this case, aspects of the scenario planning literature and the Strategy-as-Practice (S-as-P) perspective, specifically the activity of strategizing, will provide the conceptual foundation for this research. However, as was recognised in the conclusion of the previous chapter, both literatures have methodological, empirical and theoretical shortcomings. Accordingly, the first goal of the case research is to develop a descriptive narrative, the second order findings will attempt to explain the phenomena through reflective analysis with the scenario planning and S-as-P literatures. Hence, due to the exploratory nature of the research, the theoretical

underdevelopment of the scenario planning literature, and the ambiguity of the S-as-P perspective, the role of the conceptual framework is limited insofar as the research will employ a more grounded approach to induce the theoretical components inherent to the scenario-informed planning process. As such, the empirical portion of this research will not be a test of theoretical hypotheses but rather a continual interaction between theory and empirics to help generate a more rigorous and thorough theoretical and empirical understanding of how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process.

3.3 Philosophical Considerations

Every piece of research should begin with a philosophical discussion—a discourse to create a solid foundation that underpins the work that follows. It has been said that, "questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm" (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 105), as such, this section will begin with the definition of the belief system at the core of the investigation (Saunders et al. 2007).

The research literature is abundant with varying definitions of ontological paradigms and epistemological taxonomies. Aligning the research questions within the most suitable ontological and epistemological contexts, the most common being positivism, relativism, and social constructionism, is an awkward but important process. Appropriate discussions help clarify research design, which in turn provides a forum to consider the type of evidence required, how it is to be gathered, and how it is to be interpreted. It also helps recognise research designs that will work and, equally importantly, those that will not.

Quantitative methods have dominated the social science past (Hammersley 1999), using observable data in order to ascertain truth. As the approach progressed and developed, two sub-cultures emerged arguing the nature of the observable data, one advocated it should be deep and rich, the other, that it should be hard and 'generalisable' (Sieber 1973). Since 1960 (Hammersley 1999), the qualitative research method has developed as a means to understand the living world as a reflection of culture and social reality (Kvale 1996). Currently, the

qualitative approach is seen as being largely subjective, providing a deep understanding, but lacking in generality, while the quantitative approach is seen as lacking in depth of understanding and, at times, too general.

This research began with the ontological assumption that, within the context of the study, reality is "socially constructed and given meaning by people" (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002: 29). Subjective reality (see Berger and Luckman 1966; Watzlawick 1984; Shotter 1993) makes sense of the world through language and discussion and the sharing of knowledge and experience, and opposes the detached and unwieldy nature of the positivist approach (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002).

Understanding and explaining experiences from those engaged in the scenario planning process is at the crux of the study. Consequently, the sense that arises from various situations is of critical importance. Table 3.4 (below) highlights the differences between the positivist and social contructionist research designs. The implications favoured by this research are in bold, with the reasons why in the ensuing paragraph:

Table 3.4 - Contrasting implications of positivism and social constructionism

	Positivism	Social Constructionism
The Observer	**Must be independent**	Is part of what is being observed
Human Interests	Should be irrelevant	**Are the main drivers of science**
Explanations	Must demonstrate causality	**Aim to increase general understanding of the situation**
Research progresses through	Hypotheses and deductions	**Gathering rich data from which ideas are induced**
Concepts	Need to be operationalized so that they can be measured	**Should incorporate stakeholder perspectives**
Units of analysis	Should be reduced to simplest terms	**May include the complexity of 'whole' situations**
Generalization through	Statistical probability	**Theoretical abstraction**
Sampling Requires	Large numbers selected randomly	**Small numbers of cases chosen for specific reasons**

Source: Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al. (2002: 30)

After much consideration it was decided that the researcher should be kept independent to the study. Because the focal point of the research is the way in which scenario planning informs the planning process, and therefore the management of the process by the steering group and the subsequent effects on strategy, it is important that the researcher should observe but not be involved with the process. While this is more in line with positivism, the necessity to observe the human interest (as the main driver of the research) lies in a more relativist/social constructionist paradigm. Similarly, while causality will be looked for, its purpose is to increase general understanding of community planning in Fife as a means to learn more about how scenario planning is used to inform the planning process. This leaning towards understanding over explanation is another characteristic of the social constructionist paradigm.

Typically, quantitative research uses logic of deduction, while qualitative uses one of induction (Blaikie 2000). Given the nature of the research question (*how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?*), and the problem it addresses (*the lack of empirical and theoretical understanding of the scenario-to-strategy process*), this study will begin with post priori assumptions, using real-world data, perspectives, concepts and models to allow theories to emerge (Gummesson 2000). The nature of the research question suits an inductive approach, as opposed to a positivistic, deductive approach. Another feature of the positivist perspective is that it tends to reduce data and units of analysis down to their smallest and simplest terms. While this has many advantages for scientific and experimental studies, this piece of research needs to embrace the complexity of the whole situation and thus requires an approach more in line with relativism and social constructionism.

The positivist approach is where knowledge, in an objective sense, is "totally independent of anybody's claim to know; it is also independent of anybody's belief, or disposition to assent; or to assert; or to act" (Popper 1972: 109). It creates a-textual theories, understood and accepted through empirical observation (Ackroyd 1996). It is also guided by theoretical inconsistencies or by gaps between theory and fact. As such, it is suited to research problems that require the examination of fact, not the exploration of opinion. Consequently, while a

positivist approach would suit a question about how many companies in the FTSE 100 used scenario planning and the reasons why, it would not suit the descriptive and exploratory nature of this particular research, which drives at understanding more thoroughly how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform an organisation's strategic planning process. The classical, scientific methods tend to be focused and usually attempt to reduce variables down to their smallest components, which often compromises and loses the 'real' meaning. Scientific methods also tend to be more apt at making statistical generalisations (Morris 2003), and thus less flexible and generally unsuitable for understanding processes (Maylor and Blackmon 2005), which are central to the longitudinal examination of the role of scenario planning process within a wider community planning process. It is for these reasons that the positivistic approach was deemed unsuitable.

It became apparent that the social constructionist paradigm provided the most suitable epistemological position from which to carry out this research. The notion that 'reality' is constantly being created and re-created has the capacity to provide the greatest insight into the process and how the activities involved change, and are changed by, the process. Aspects of relativism were also appealing, for example, the notion that structures exist, are in place and can be mapped out. However, through understanding reality as an enacted world (Smircich and Stubbart 1985), social constructionism offered a sound ontological and epistemological backbone to study scenario-informed strategic planning. Although many of the philosophical positions in social science epistemologies are relatively 'pure' versions, the apparent incompatibility of the beliefs can be overcome in the actual research and methodology employed. For example, Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) categorises the following as aims of the social science epistemology and their corresponding relevance in the particular paradigm. Again, elements central to this study are in bold, and, as is shown, there is a crossover of suitability in the relativism and social constructionism paradigms:

Table 3.5 - Methodological implications of different epistemologies

	Social Science Epistemologies	
	Relativism	**Social Constructionism**
Elements of Methods		
Aims	**Exposure**	Invention
Starting Points	**Suppositions**	**Meanings**
Designs	Triangulation	**Reflexivity**
Techniques	Survey	**Conversation**
Analysis/Interpretation	Probability	**Sense-making**
Outcomes	Correlation	**Understanding**

Source: Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al. (2002: 34)

Much of the literatures (for example Thietart 2001) suggest that it is too tempting to see a relativist position as the safe middle-ground between positivism and social constructivism because it combines the strengths and avoid the limitations of both approaches. While this is a true failing well worth avoiding, the truth of the statement and the seeming simplicity and convenience of it is also what gives the paradigm credence. It *does* fill an expansive gap between the two more extreme positions. However, to protect this research from falling into a trap of convenience, the strengths and weaknesses of the relativist and constructionist positions were weighed against each other (see Table 3.6) and a decision was made based upon the purpose of the thesis, the central research question, and the theoretical base of the thesis. As was shown in the literature review, while suppositions were highlighted that assumed a connection between scenario planning and organisational performance and thus social progress, there is a lack of empirical research on the engagement of scenario planning within the wider strategic planning process. Thus the purpose is to carry out an empirical analysis of the scenario-informed strategic planning process, and the method is guided by the central research question, how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process? Therefore, in reference to the first elements of Table 3.5 (above), although the aim is one of exposure, and the starting point is both suppositions *and* meanings, the design is one of reflexivity, the techniques shall focus on conversation and activity, the analysis will done through sensemaking, and the goal is understanding, the research is mostly social constructionist in nature.

Table 3.6 - The strengths & weaknesses of relativism and social constructionism

	Relativism	Social Constructionism
Strengths	Accepts values of multiple sources of data and perspectives	Has the ability to look at change process over time
	Enables wider generalisations	Understands meanings and can adjust to new issues and ideas
	Can be done efficiently	Contributes to the evolution of new theories
Weaknesses	Large samples are required to establish credibility	Data collection takes a lot of time and resources
	The requirements of standardisation make it less able to deal with cultural and institutional differences	Analysis and Interpretation may be very difficult
	Hard to reconcile discrepant sources of data which point to different conclusions	Hard to control pace and progress and end points of research
		Low credibility is given to subjective opinions by policymakers.

Source: Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al. (2002: 42)

Establishing validity in relation to the social constructionist perspective is an important issue, especially considering the ontological need to create research procedures that accurately represent reality (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002). *Construct validity* (the accurate measure of reality) or *validity*; *internal validity* (the elimination of bias and effects of extraneous variables) or *reliability;* and *external validity* (defining domains to which results may be generalised) or *generalizability*, are the three main fronts from which to fight scrutiny. By choosing the case-study method, many of the criticisms of validity (which will be dealt with in section 3.6) are defended in accordance with Yin's (1994) position. With regard to *construct validity*, Yin stresses the importance of multiple sources of evidence (section 3.7 will describe the multiple data sources used in this research); for *internal validity* he stresses the importance of building cases over time in order to expel alternative explanations—this case study has been built over a period of three years allowing for many instances of reflection and consideration of alternative explanations. Finally, for *external validity*, he points out that case studies rely on analytic rather than statistical generalisations (Yin 1994). In this instance, much of the valuable and unique contribution of the case study lies in its descriptiveness and analysis of the process and is thus not concerned with statistical generalisation—although it should be acknowledged that using a statistical method is an alternative way to conduct research into this area, and may prove to be a fruitful area of further enquiry.

From the very first philosophical considerations of this research, there has been a straddling of the often murky line between a relativist and constructivist position. Yin, whose case method will lie at the empirical heart of this thesis, agrees. In his defence of construct and internal validity, he takes a relativist position, however, his response to external validity is more closely aligned with the constructivist position (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002).

This piece of research has its epistemological roots in a social constructionist paradigm; however the boundaries of that paradigm required stretching. One of the main points of dispute, as is seen above, is the involvement of the researcher. A characteristic of the social constructionism paradigm is the involved role of the researcher. While an acknowledgment is made between the researcher and the object, and the concomitant fact that reality will never be independent of the observer within the context of the relativist paradigm (Thietart 2001), the research sought independence from the subject in so far as to acknowledge that the object has its own essence. This 'dialogue' between paradigms is, in some instances, desirable (Thietart 2001) and has many advocates (Weaver and Gioia 1994; Schultz and Hatch 1996). After considering these points, as well as Easterby-Smith et al.'s (2002: 57) matrix of research designs, Yin's (1994) case study methodology emerged as a research design ideally suited to the ontological and epistemological understanding that reality and knowledge is socially constructed.

3.4 The Case Study Method

It is through a desire to understand complex social phenomena that a distinctive need for case studies arises (Yin 1994). This method "allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as…organizational and managerial processes", (Yin 1994: 3) or, more specific to this research, the scenario-informed strategic planning process. However, methodological choices do not stop after the case method has been decided upon. Case studies—not to be confused with ethnographies (Fetterman 1989) or participant observation (Jorgensen 1989)—and the various alternatives (for example, experiments, surveys, histories), have particular "advantages and disadvantages, depending

upon three conditions: (a) the type of research question, (b) the control an investigator has over actual behavioural events, and (c) the focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena" (Yin 1994: 1).

There are also different types of case studies. Stake (2000) identifies three main types as: the *intrinsic* case study; the *instrumental* case study; and the *collective* case study. The *intrinsic* case study is undertaken to aid understanding of the case, and is done so not because it represents something greater, but merely because the case itself is of interest. In an *instrumental* case study, the case itself is of "secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (Stake 2000: 437). The case study is an in depth look at a phenomena occurring with a bounded context (Miles and Huberman 1994) in order to engage and advance the understanding of the external interest (Stake 2000). The *collective* case study is essentially a multiple version of the *instrumental* case study. Defined in these terms, this study would fall into the category of an *instrumental* case study. The case of community planning in Fife offers an avenue in which to observe, explore, and understand how an uses scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process.

An important aspect of choosing a particular methodology depends on the both the substance and form of the research question driving the study. As was stated in the introduction, this study will attempt to analyse and understand how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process. The key words that underpin the nature of inquiry are 'how' and 'why'.

Considering this, and the fact that the investigator neither wants nor requires control over behavioural events, a case study approach or, as according to Yin (1994: 6), a historical investigation would appear to be best suited to the subject matter. However, considering point (c), it is clear that, given this is to be a study of a contemporary phenomenon within real life context, a historical investigation will not satisfy the demands of the research. In brief, and in accordance with Yin's "conditions", a case study method appears to be the most suitable research method because: (a) the research question is aimed at "how" and "why";

(b) the investigator has little control over events; and (c) the study's focus is of a contemporary phenomenon. While some of the aforementioned research strategies are not mutually exclusive, the case study method has a "distinct advantage…when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control" (Yin 1994: 9).

As it seems with many elements of research in business and management studies, definitions are varied. Definitions of what a case study is fall into the same trap, and tend to merely list varied appliances of the method. A basic definition is that it is a single, bounded entity, studied in detail, with a variety of methods, over an extended period (Creswell 1994: 61). Arguing that there is an absence of a satisfying definition, Platt recommends that the case study method should begin with a "a logic of design" (Platt 1992: 46), which Yin (1994) describes as his technical definition. Other authors (see Punch 2005), follow suit and describe a case study not as a simple one-line definition but as a general set of characteristics that represent the core of the method.

As part of his technical definition, Yin argues that the case study method "is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 1994: 13). Punch (2005), however, points out that while the boundaries may be a little blurry, it is important that the researcher identifies and describes the boundaries of the case (Yin 1994; Punch 2005). Acknowledging that the case is a 'bounded system' is the first of Punch's (2005) four characteristics defining case studies. The second characteristic is designed to identify the essence of the case in order to clarify units of analysis. It is intended to intensify the focus of the research, and echoes the words of Marcus Aurelius, who wrote that of every particular thing, one must ask, "what is this by itself in its own constitution, what is its substance or substrate, what [is] its causal element [?]" (Aurelius 1989: 70). The third characteristic is the attempt to maintain the holistic richness of the case within the specific parameters of the research questions. Finally, Punch (2005) acknowledges the need of not just multiple sources of data but of multiple methods too (further discussion of triangulation will occur in section 3.7). This sentiment is echoed in the second part of Yin's (1994)

technical definition. He also argues of the ability of the case study inquiry to cope with the imbalance between variables of interest and data points, as well as the benefit that comes from using theoretical propositions to guide both data collection and analysis (Yin 1994).

This section has defined, described and detailed the general characteristics of the case study enquiry. However, there are many different research strategies one can employ to examine the phenomenon in question. Thus, the following section will describe some of these competing research designs, articulating the benefits of each approach within the context of the research questions, and also providing reasons for their rejection in favour of the case study method.

3.5 Competing Research Designs

No research strategy is inherently superior or inferior to any other (Saunders et al. 2007). Thus, part of the methodological process is determining what specific research design (or combination of research designs) is to be used to allow the researcher to answer the research questions and fulfil the study's objectives. Part of that process, however, must also include a consideration of alternative designs and an articulation of the theoretical or practical reasons to why they have been discounted. This section will describe briefly some of the competing methods, highlighting strengths and weaknesses and the reasons why they have not been applied in this piece of research. It will be organised as follows: section 3.5.1 will look at the survey method; 3.5.2 will look at action research; and 3.5.3 will look an ethnographic design before concluding the section in 3.5.4. The purpose here is twofold: first, to begin to understand alternative methods for approaching the research problem so that they may guide future research into the contextualisation of the scenario planning process, and secondly, to strengthen the justification for choosing a case study method to guide the empirical portion of this thesis.

3.5.1 Survey Research

The survey method is associated primarily with a deductive, quantitative approach that is adept at answering '*who, what, where, how much,* and *how many*' type of questions (Saunders et al. 2007). They are suited to collecting large amounts of data from a sizeable population, often using a standardised questionnaire that allows straightforward cross-comparison (Thietart 2001)[42]. Although a survey method could have been used to sample the 40,000 people employed by the organisations represented on the Fife Partnership, it is difficult to ascertain how much value could have been gained into determining how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process. The scenario planning process involved only the most senior people from each organisation and was used, primarily, to inform the community planning process—something which also involves only a handful of employees outside of the executive offices of the Partnership organisations. One way a survey could have been used is to try to sample the workforce of each organisation in an attempt to detect a change in opinion as to how the organisation is performing in the wake of a scenario planning process. For example, while a survey method could investigate the assumptions stipulated in 2.1.3 (that scenario planning causes an increase in organisational awareness which should then cause an increase in performance), there are a number of issues that may restrict or diminish its success. Firstly, because scenario planning is used to inform the Community Plan it may be more of an assessment of that plan and the impact it is having/has had rather than contributing any knowledge to the role of scenario planning as part of the wider planning process. Secondly, the sheer size, political orientation and bureaucratic nature of the organisations comprising the Fife Partnership may impede the ability to detect what kind of an impact the scenario planning processes had on the community planning process. One possibility was to survey the individual members of the Fife Partnership over the last ten years and a selection of other people involved with the process, however, after much consideration, it was decided that a more qualitative approach using open, in-depth interviews with many of those involved would provide greater insight into how the process was managed and the extent to which scenario planning informed

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[42] For details of the procedures involved in a survey method, see Albreck and Settle (1989), Fink and Kosecoff (1998), and Schuman and Presser (1996).

strategy.   At a point when the scenario-to-strategy process is better understood, a survey method may provide a more rounded and wider impression of the impact of scenario planning and its relation to performance and social amelioration.   However, given the current state of the literature and lack of theoretical and practical discussion of the scenario-informed planning process, a more in-depth and insightful method was needed.

3.5.2 Action Research

The aim of action research is to contribute to the "practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually accepted ethical framework" (Rappoport 1970: 499).   It has become a term that represents four common themes in the management research literature, and differs from other research strategies in its explicit focus on *action* and the promotion of change within an organisation.   Table 3.7 (below) provides a brief overview of the four themes:

Table 3.7 - Action research

Action Research	
Theme	**Description**
Research *in* Action **not** Research *about* Action (Coghlan and Brannick 2005)	Research is concerned with the resolution of organisational issues, e.g., implications of change and the experience of those initiating or involved.
Collaboration between Practitioners and Researchers	The researcher is part of the research because they are part of the organisation and thus the change process (Eden and Huxham 1996).
Iterative process of *diagnosing*, *planning*, *taking action*, and *evaluating*	This action research spiral is usually focused within a set context and has a clearly expressed objective (see Robson 2002). Diagnosis occurs to enable action planning and a decision about the action and a decision about the actions to be taken, which is then evaluated.
Development of Theory	Action research should have implications that reach beyond the current project and should be conceived specifically to inform other contexts and develop theory (Eden and Huxham 1996).

Source: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2007: 140-142)

Although action research is well-suited to 'how' orientated research questions, the reasons for not using an 'action-based' design in this case are more practical than theoretical.   While acknowledging the potential insights this research design could provide into how the scenario planning process informs, and thus changes, the community planning process, to understand

the extent of the impact of the scenario planning process upon community planning in Fife, the research would have needed to begin as far back as 2000 and continued on until at least the end of 2007, which, in the case of doctoral research, the researcher had neither the time nor financial resources to do. Perhaps a possible future study would be a piece of action research carried out into the scenario-to-strategy process over a shorter, more focused timeframe.

3.5.3 Ethnographic research

The ontological and epistemological foundations of this research may have suited the inductive nature of an ethnographic study. From it anthropological roots, ethnography seeks to describe and explain the social world in the way the subjects themselves would (see Goetz and LeCompte 1984; Fetterman 1989; Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991). Although ethnography is an approach that can yield valuable insights into a particular context to better understand the views of those involved—something which would be of value to the research question—the immersion needed to study the social world of the research subjects (Saunders et al. 2007) would have been too time consuming if applied to community planning in Fife. Also, the partisan political dimension of the council may have made such observation difficult, especially after the change in administration following the 2007 elections—although arguably a finding in and of itself, ethnographic research requires almost total access, which a political organisation may not want to grant. The ethnographic approach is subject to the same temporal and financial restrictions which ruled out an action research design, however there are also more theoretical reasons which pertain to the nature of the research questions and the objective of the study. The focus of the research is on wider strategic involvement of scenario planning, and thus a purely ethnographic study would have to expand throughout most departments, services, and committees of Fife Council to try and understand the impact of the scenario planning process. To do this thoroughly would require a team of researchers, thus, it was determined that it would be more prudent to employ an alternative approach.

3.5.4 Method Justification

This section has described some of the competing research designs and although consideration was given to these alternative methods, it was decided that a case study approach, with its multiple methods of data gathering, provides the longitudinal depth needed to offer a full and complete picture of how scenario planning can inform the organisation's strategic planning process within the practical limitations stipulated above. As was shown, there is significant value in the other approaches, which will hopefully be pursued in due course, but for this thesis, the central research design is an in-depth case study, which will be the subject of the ensuing section.

3.6 The Research Design

The research design can be seen as the empirical backbone of the entire thesis. It is the connecting logic that links the data with the research question, allowing synthesis to occur and conclusions to be formed. As a "comprehensive catalog of research designs" has yet to be created, Yin lays out what he calls a "basic set of research designs," (Yin 1994: 19) but acknowledges the need for continual modification and improvement. As this juncture in the development of case study research designs, many different theorists describe the major conceptual responsibilities that should be adhered to in order to ensure a rigorous case study that is methodologically sound (see Yin 1994; Stake 2000; Maylor and Blackmon 2005; Punch 2005). This section will explore the case study research design, describing how each component pertains to the case of community planning in Fife.

Maylor and Blackmon (2005) describe three key elements of a case study design: defining the case to be studied; determining what data is needed and how to collect it; and, deciding the method of analysis and how to present the data (see Maylor and Blackmon 2005: 243). In a similar but more detailed way, Punch (2005: 148) and Stake (2000: 448) both list six principles, or major conceptual responsibilities, that should make up the case enquiry. In parallel with Maylor and Blackmon's (2005) guidelines, Punch (2005) and Stake (2000) argue the need for definition of the case, its boundaries, the need for the case and its general

purpose. The purpose of these steps is to translate general purpose into specific questions in order to identify an overall strategy for the case study (for example, whether it be single of multiple case) (Punch 2005). Punch's (2005) final two steps mirror the last two of Maylor and Blackmon (2005) stated above.

Selecting the phenomena and developing the research questions, seeking the data to pursue the issues, looking for patterns in the data, triangulation of observation, alternative interpretations, and the development of assertions or generalisations are all characteristics of other forms of qualitative research (Stake 2000). It is the conceptualisation of the issue and the bounding of that issue into a case form is what separates the case study method from other forms of enquiry.

The guidelines described by Punch (2005) and Maylor and Blackmon (2005) are echoed by both Stake (2000) and Yin (1994). Though all slightly different, they each ponder over the same points. Through the synthesis and amalgamation of these literatures on research design, it is possible to deduce that designing a case study consists of four key components. Firstly, the researcher must know what he or she is asking. The research question sets the tone for the rest of the study, for the method that follows, the data recorded, and the ensuing analysis. Secondly, the researcher must consider what type of data is needed to answer his or her question. Thirdly, a decision must be made regarding where and how to pursue the data required by the research question. Finally, the recorded data must be analysed, processed and presented in a fashion that represents the reality and answers the questions at the heart of the study.

To help clarify the goals and methods of the case study, the following section will examine briefly some of the more important questions of the case method within the context of the five components Yin (1994: 20-27) describes as being crucial to research design.

1. The study's questions:

- *How does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?*

    With the key sub-questions being:

    - *How do cognitive processes manifest themselves physically in an organisation?*
    - *How does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?*
    - *How does scenario planning affect policy development?*

2. The study's purpose:

If propositions are difficult to generate, as they are in explorative cases, Yin (1994) states that a purpose of justification will suffice. Therefore, the purpose is to examine how scenario planning informs the strategic planning process. By understanding scenario planning as an activity of episodic, interactive strategizing, findings will address the empirical and theoretical shortcomings in the scenario planning literature, as well as advancing understanding of the growing S-as-P perspective.

3. Unit of analysis:

The specification of the primary research questions should be the first step in selecting appropriate units of analysis. The unit of analysis, a major part of the case study design, can be a group of people, individuals, or even a decision, a program, or an implementation process (Benbasat et al. 1987; Feagin et al. 1991; Yin 1994). However, Yin (1994) warns of using decisions or programs or processes as units of analysis as they are not easily definable. Also, it is not necessary to be restricted to just one unit of analysis; often multiple units are necessary to answer the research questions (Yin 1994).

The case study is about an organisation's scenario-informed planning process, where the development (and subsequent updates) of Fife's Community Plan is an embedded unit of analysis (Yin 1994) used as an illustrative product. Maylor and Blackmon (2005) describe the 'embedded case study' as involving the multiple studies in a single setting, which affords the researcher the ability to keep the context constant while investigating different elements, for

example, hierarchical levels (Maylor and Blackmon 2005: 247). As the conceptual foundations of thesis lie in the scenario planning and S-as-P literatures, the units of analysis are in keeping with the literature. Therefore, as S-as-P research aims to dig underneath the organisational level, the units of analysis are multiple and concentrate on the episodes of strategizing:

- The scenario planning process
- The strategic planning process

As part of these strategizing episodes, three further units of analysis were required:

- The steering group (Fife Partnership)
- The scenarios
- The Community Plan

After deciding upon the units of analysis, it is important to distinguish whom or what is within or outside of the study (i.e., those whom and that which are an immediate topic of the study and those whom and that which form the context of the study). Specifically, the people within the immediate topic of the study:

- The steering group (members of the Fife Partnership)
- The scenario planning facilitators
- Those responsible for the implementation of the work agreed upon by the Steering Group (specifically, individuals who are members of the Fife Council or are associated to the Fife Partnership but not directly involved in the scenario planning process, and individuals within the implementation areas are external and contextual elements)

Also, internal to the entire process are the following episodes (see Figure 3.2, above):

- The **Pre-Scenario Planning** episode
- The **Scenario Planning 2003** episode
- The **Scenario Planning 2003: Follow-through Process** episode
- The **Scenario Planning 2006** episode
- The **Scenario Planning 2006: Follow-through Process** episode

The determination for the timeframe of the beginning and end of the case was made to clarify the length, breadth and depth of the case study. As was mentioned in section 3.1.3, the case begins with the formation of the Fife Partnership and creation of the first Community Plan (c. 1999) and will conclude with the public release of the 2007 edition of the Community Plan in April 2008. It is necessary to consider and answer these queries to help define the unit of analysis and thus determine the limits of the data collection and analysis.

4. Linking data to purpose:

This area of the case study design is underdeveloped (Yin 1994). In this thesis, the case study does not have propositions in so far that it has purpose. However, the prescriptive nature of the literature does allow for reflection and analysis within the guidelines hypothesised.

5. Criteria for interpreting findings:

As with guideline number four, this too is an underdeveloped area of the research design. There is only a hope that patterns are "sufficiently contrasting that…the findings can be interpreted in terms of comparing at least two rival propositions" (Yin 1994: 26). Once again, guidance and reflection is taken from the scenario planning and S-as-P literatures.

3.6.1 Single Case versus Multiple Case Method

The purpose of this section is to justify the reasoning for using an embedded, single case approach. There are many conflicting methods within the case study design, perhaps the most important of which is the decision to do a single case study or multiple ones. Naturally, there are advocates and critics of both approaches. Firstly, the justification for using a single case over a multiple case method will be argued, and then the reasoning for using an embedded approach over a holistic one will be laid out.

There are differing opinions of the rationales of each method, but choosing which one to pursue remains within the same methodological framework. Yin identifies three rationales: 1) a critical case where a well-formulated theory is tested; 2) an extreme, unique or rare case; and 3) a revelatory case (see Yin 1994: 38-41). As with the ontological discussions at the

outset of this chapter, often the pureness with which paradigms and rationales are constructed poses a problem to the researcher. This is a similar situation. Yin (1994) likens the first rationale with an experiment, which, unless using a clear set of propositions, this case study does not follow. The second rationale, however, is more applicable—the timing of the Fife's community planning cycles and the scenario planning exercises and ensuing policy debates presented a rare opportunity to observe much of the steering group's discussions. This rationale is substantiated by Maylor and Blackmon's (2005) argument on when it is suitable to do a case study: when you have "no control over the events you are interested in studying *and* the phenomenon takes place at least partly during the period you are doing your research" (Maylor and Blackmon 2005: 243). Stake's (2000) distinction about the *instrumental* case study is perhaps more helpful when deciding on a single or multiple approach. The *instrumental* case study is designed to provide insight, to refine and to advance the understanding of the focal point of the issue (Stake 2000: 437).

As an entire study, a multiple case approach is considered by many to be more compelling and more robust (Herriott and Firestone 1983), however the actual cases are sometimes criticised for being too shallow (Dyer and Wilkins 1991). This study requires a great deal of depth from the case study as it is essentially an investigation into three steps of the strategy process. While a multiple case method that follows a 'replication logic' (Yin 1994) would likely provide a more robust overall study, the requirement of resources and time and respondents is beyond available means. One of the main motivations of a multiple case approach is to increase the generalisability of the study and remove any doubt regarding the possible effect of idiosyncrasies in the events under study. However, some would argue that generalisation—and the assertion of context-free and enduring values (Lincoln and Guba 2000)—is not the object nor goal of a case study (Denzin 1983; Punch 2005). There is also little benefit in creating multiple cases studies that are simply more of the same, just to increase the statistical significance (Pauwels and Matthyssens 2004). Another downside to a multiple case method is that they tend to be guided by a priori constructs that limits the detail and restricts the richness of the data (Dyer and Wilkins 1991). This is not a problem for single case studies, which are generally accepted for their depth of enquiry and their suitability to exploratory studies (Benbasat et al. 1987) which often lead to path breaking theories (Dyer and Wilkins

1991). Benbasat et al. (1987) state that a multi case method is suitable for description, theory building or theory testing; and while these objectives do seem to be, at surface level anyway, within the parameters of the goals of the study, because of the exploratory nature of the study, the interaction between literature and empirics is more reflective than directive. It is for this reason that a more grounded approach to the coding and analysis of the data is applied. Given the combination of factors listed above, the single case method is more suitable than a multi case method for investigating the phenomenon in this study.

Further refinement of the case study method is needed in determining whether or not the single case method should be of an embedded or holistic nature. This decision was made easier given the earlier choice to use multiple units of analysis. There are, however, some pitfalls associated with an embedded design—for example, when the study locks on to the sub-units of analysis and fails to properly investigate the larger units, which in this case is the process itself. This research will monitor and re-evaluate its focus to ensure that the "original phenomenon of interest" remains the target of the study and not just the context (Yin 1994: 44).

3.7 Creating Validity

Establishing the validity of the research design, and thus the logical foundation of the research, is important in ensuring the quality of the research. Different writers often use different terms for describing the validity criteria. There are differences depending on the philosophical paradigms used and the specific research design (see Lincoln and Guba 1985; Kidder and Judd 1986; Thietart 2001; Easterby-Smith et al. 2002). Punch (2005), for example, argues that validity relates to: *validity of data*, where one questions the representation of the phenomena; the *overall validity of the research*, and the way it fits together; the *internal validity*, where the reflection of the reality is questioned; and, *external validity*, which refers to the generalisability of the study (Punch 2005: 29). Within the parameters of the case study approach, the different terms generally mean the same.

Yin (1994) lists four validity tests: *construct validity*, *internal validity*, *external validity*, and *reliability*. However, *internal validity* is really only applicable for explanatory and causal studies and not for descriptive and exploratory studies, and shall therefore be removed from the following section. Subsequently, the three remaining validity tests shall be described below, along with the tactics used to attain validity.

3.7.1 Construct Validity

Achieving construct validity is about establishing rigorous operational measures to collect and study the data. This has been an area of concern for case study research as subjective judgments on the part of researcher can misrepresent the case (Yin 1994). To counter this concern Yin (1994) lists three main tactics. The first two occur in the data collection phase and involve the use of multiple sources of evidence and establishing a chain of evidence—in this case, a combination of 291 documents, 23 interviews and 12 hours of non-participant observation were used (described further in section 3.8). Using multiple sources of evidence allows a convergence of data to help ensure accuracy and remove subjective tendencies on the part of the researcher. This thesis uses triangulation theory (see section 3.8) in the data collection phase to achieve this. Moreover, a strong chain of evidence (also discussed in section 3.8), has been established, whereby an outside observer should draw the same conclusions, thus increasing the reliability of the case information—in this instance a database was created in line with Yin's case study protocol (see Table 3.8 for an example, and Table 3.9 for an explanatory key). The third tactic, which occurs in the composition phase, is to have some of the key informants in the case study to review the case study report[43]. In a similar vein, Maylor and Blackmon (2005) suggest that such problems with subjectivity can be overcome through deliberate and explicit *neutrality* and *transparency* (Maylor and Blackmon 2005).

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[43] Although a complete case report has not been reviewed, several of the key informants have reviewed, clarified and concurred with a detailed timeline of the case and particular segments of which they have relevant and explicit knowledge. For example, clarification of the early Fife Partnership work was sought from former members of the Fife Partnership.

Table 3.8 - Example of the case study database

Example of Case Study Database

Code	Date Collected	Filename	Description
I.*trans*.3	19 Jun. 2007	Bob McLellan 19.6.07	Transcribed interview with Dr Bob McLellan, head of Fife Council's Transportation Service (length: 8,290 words)
I.*rec*.4	27 Jun. 2007	Paul Vaughan 27.6.07	Audio of interview with Paul Vaughan, senior manager of Policy & Communications in Fife Council (length: 01:12:36)
D.*comm*.2	18 Jan. 2006	Fife Council – process email	Email dialogue from 29 October 2002 between Chris Mitchell (Policy and Communications) and John Randall (scenario planning facilitator) regarding the scenario planning process
D.*meet*.31	4 Dec. 2007	FP/Meetings/ March 28th 2007	Meeting minutes from the Fife Partnership meeting of March 28th 2007
D.*intern*.6	10 May 2007	Strategic Choice n1	1-page memo from 1 April 2003 by Chris Mitchell (Policy and Communications) about the strategic choice faced after the scenario planning project
D.*report*.30	18 March 2008	2007 Community Plan	"A stronger Future for Fife" – The 2007 edition of Fife's Community Plan
NPO.1	12 May 2006	N/A	Handwritten notes from the 2nd workshop of the "Managing Fife's Future" process held at Cluny Clays on 12 May 2006

Table 3.9 - Case study database code key

Case Study Database Code Key

Code	Data Collection Method	Code	Specific Type of Data
I.	Interviews	*trans*.	Transcribed interview
		rec.	Recording of Interview
D.	Documentation	*comm*.	Communiqués (e.g. letters, emails)
		meet.	Meeting information (e.g. minutes, presentations, supplementary reports)
		intern.	Internal documents (e.g. draft reports, internal memos, briefing papers)
		report.	Formal studies and reports (e.g. final reports, planning documents)
NPO.	Non-Participant Observation	N/A	N/A

3.7.2 External Validity

External validity has proved to be a major stumbling block in the case study method (Yin 1994). The only way to achieve real external validity is through using replication logic in a multiple-case design or a *collective* case study (Stake 2000). Single case studies are not highly regarded for generalising. Analytical generalisations are not as widely accepted as statistical generalisations. To generalise a single case requires a mindset similar to a

scientific experiment. Instead of selecting a 'representative' case from which to generalise findings, the analyst should instead generalise findings from the case into 'theory'. This is how external validity shall be attained in this research. A single case was used in this research, not because it was a representative case, but because it was a case from which generalisations could be made back into the theory on the subject.

3.7.3 Reliability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that many of the implications for reliability are dealt with in ensuring construct validity. Put simply, validity implies reliability. A later investigator should be able to retrace the steps taken by the earlier one and arrive at the same conclusions. Maylor and Blackmon (2005) refer to this as *dependability*—which refers to the "repeatability of the process of inducing theory from data" (Maylor and Blackmon 2005: 160). Essentially, it is a method for minimising any errors and biases in a case. The key tactics for achieving this are by using a case study protocol and by developing a case study database, both occur in the data collection phase. The case study protocol and the database documents the procedures needed to be followed in order to correctly assess and retrace the logic and information used in the case (Yin 1994).

This section has highlighted the tactics used to ensure validity in the case. The following section will examine what methods of collection should yield a data set capable of answering the pertinent questions of the research.

3.8 Data Collection

Establishing methodological rigour is a lot like building a legal case: the more supporting evidence you have, the more solid the case. In case study research, many different sources of evidence are used to build the case. The purpose of this section is twofold: firstly, to discuss the various collection techniques used in this study; and secondly, to highlight the principles of data collection. It is a combination of these techniques and principles that allow validity of research to be attained. To minimise any misinterpretation, researchers employ

commonly two main procedures: redundancy of data gathering and procedural challenges to explanations (Goetz and LeCompte 1984; Denzin 1989). This triangulation method is used when there are multiple perceptions and the researcher is trying to clarify meaning and verify and the repeatability (as discussed earlier) of observations and/or interpretations (Stake 2000). Using a triangulation approach, the techniques being used in this piece of research are documentation, non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

Documentation can take many forms and tends to be relevant to every case study topic (Yin 1994). In this instance, 291 documents have been collected—Table 3.10 shows the types of documents collected, the number of each types, and examples of the nature of the corresponding types of documents:

Table 3.10 – Types of Documentation

Document Type	Examples	Number	Date Range
Communiqués	Emails, proposals, invoices.	17	2002–2007
Meeting Information	Minutes, agendas, presentations, supplementary reports.	61	2002–2008
Internal Documents	Internal reports, scenario drafts, analytical summaries, scenario planning interviews.	183	2002–2008
Formal Studies & Reports	Community Plans, Service Reviews, Structure Plans, Improvement Plans, Government Acts.	30	2001–2008

Documentary analysis allows the information to be reviewed repeatedly and contains exact names and references that can corroborate and augment other arguments as well as being a starting point for further research. It is also not created as result of the case study, which helps the researcher maintain a certain distance from the case. Finally the use of documentation affords insight into the process and development of the element under study that could not be witnessed firsthand. However, this also poses a problem for the researcher because some information may be deliberately blocked or ignored to manipulate a specific conclusion. With this taken into account extra precaution was taken to avoid committing any reporting biases.

To maintain the desired separation from the case, this research used non-participant observation to examine and record the steering group's workshops. Non-participant

observation (NPO) affords the researcher the same contextual reality and insights into the interpersonal motives and behaviours as participant observation except the researcher has little or no direct interaction with them (Maylor and Blackmon 2005), thus leaving the discussions (in this case) free of manipulation and any biases on the part of the research. Although it has criticisms (for example, its likeness with 'snooping'), NPO does give an accurate picture of what happens (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002), serving as a preliminary collection of data and as a casual enquiry as to the nature of the workshop (Thietart 2001). In this case study it was used as a preliminary and complimentary data source.

The third and arguably most important method of data collection is interviews, which "are an essential source of case study evidence" (Yin 1994: 85). By using semi-structured or *open-ended* interviews, it is possible to sharpen the focus towards the exact research questions while gathering a large quantity of insights and perceived inferences (Yin 1994) at the relevant stage of the process. However, interviews are subject to many criticisms on many fronts. Often biases in the questions and in the responses can give a false representation of the case; also, respondents can sometimes give interviewers what they think they want to hear (Maylor and Blackmon 2005). To counter this, the interview-questions were constructed carefully, and with guidance from polling and interviewing literatures (for example, Payne 1951), and were tested for biases several times; also, given the exploratory nature of the case study, there is not the same onus on the researcher to produce a set of desired results. The interviews were constructed to extract the most value from the subjects as pertaining to their specific stage and role in the case. A list of all persons interviewed and the outline of the questions used in the interviews can be found in appendix A and B, respectively. While using group interviews can help reduce individual biases, the research is dependent on in-depth explorations, which is seldom achieved in group situations (Maylor and Blackmon 2005).

To maximise the benefit of these sources of evidence, Yin's (1994) three principles of data collection were followed closely. First of all, this research uses multiple sources of evidence, capitalising on the benefits of data triangulation to address a wider range of issues. Findings are more likely to be accurate if they are the conclusion of multiple sources of corroboratory information. It is also through triangulation that the issue of *construct validity* may be dealt

with. The second principle is to create a case database, an example of which was shown in Table 3.8. Essentially, it is a method for organising and documenting data, and is intended to help increase the *reliability* of the entire case study. The third principle is to maintain a chain of evidence to help achieve *construct validity* and thus increase the *reliability* of the information contained within the case study. As was discussed above in section 3.6.3, the "principle is to allow an external observer…to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions" (Yin 1994: 98). The chain of evidence should allow the reader to examine the case itself, being able to traverse easily between findings and evidence that all possess consistent methodological procedures.

3.9 Data Coding & Analysis

Literature describing the analytical stage of qualitative research is underdeveloped, despite its difficulty and importance. Arguing that a "huge chasm often separates data from conclusions" (Eisenhardt 1989: 539), Eisenhardt suggests a 'within-case analysis' to handle the deluge of data that is amassed. Part of this within-case analysis involves a simple write-up describing the case, which is central to the generation of insight (Gersick 1988; Pettigrew 1988) and necessary to help the research to avoid 'death by data asphyxiation' (Pettigrew 1988). Thus it was important to begin with the development of a strong narrative describing the case in its entirety (Maylor and Blackmon 2005). Although this can be done thematically, the case is an investigation into how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process—the key words being 'inform' and 'process'. Therefore, as was seen in Figure 3.1 (above), to understand fully the use of scenario planning within the wider strategic planning process, the case was examined as a chronological process (examples of this in related literature can be seen in Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991; and Masrani et al. 2006). Consequently, the first step was to organise a narrative, helped by the use of a data display (see Eisenhardt 1989; Carter and Mueller 2002) to clarify the type of data to be used at each point in the description (see Table 3.11 below).

Much of the analytical process is dependent on the investigator's rigorous thinking, the presentation of evidence and the openness to alternative interpretations. It has been

suggested that quantification may be possible when cases involve an embedded unit of analysis (Pelz 1981). However, when the main unit of analysis is the process and the embedded unit is a planning document informed by the discursive practices inherent to that process, statistical analysis would not yield the kind of insights this study is attempting to reveal.

The analysis should begin with one of two general strategies: either relying on theoretical propositions, or developing a case description (Yin 1994). As was described during the literature review, the writings on scenario planning are lacking in empirical studies describing the follow-through process and acknowledging scenario planning as an activity of episodic, interactive strategizing. Thus, as the goal is to use a descriptive study to illustrate how scenario planning informs the strategic planning process, the general analytical strategy begins with a desire to develop a descriptive framework for organising the case study.

The specific analytical techniques advocated by Yin (1994: 106-119) do not suit the nature of this case study. To perform a 'pattern-matching' strategy, the analysis must begin with a set of propositions to test, which this thesis does not have; similarly for 'time-series analysis', propositions are used in conjunction with some form of single or multiple temporal scheme; 'program logic' is similar again—described as a combination of pattern-matching and time-series analysis, it uses cause-effect patterns between independent and dependent variables that may suit explanatory and exploratory case studies but not descriptive ones. While this case is exploratory, much of its value comes from its descriptiveness. Yin's final analytical strategy, 'explanation-building', is centred on analysing the case by building an explanation about it (Yin 1982). However, as this is designed for explanatory cases, and this is more exploratory, it is necessary to look towards a similar procedure to help generate, as opposed to test, hypotheses, and develop ideas for further study. Thus, a more grounded approach was employed, where theory is not derived deductively but rather developed inductively from a corpus of data.

Table 3.11 - Data display

Episode	Temporal Period	Event/Description	Data used to study the event
1	2000	Organisation of the Fife Partnership	Documentation (formal studies and reports)
	2000	The first Fife Community plan	Documentation (internal documents; formal studies and reports)
			Interviews (members of the Fife Partnership; former members of the Fife Partnership)
	Oct. 2002	Decision by Fife Council to use Scenario Planning	Documentation (communiqués; meeting information; internal documents)
			Interviews (members of the Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members; scenario planning facilitators)
2	Nov. 2002 – Mar. 2003	Description of Fife Council's Scenario Planning process	Documentation (communiqués; meeting information; internal documents; formal studies and reports)
			Interviews (members of the Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members; scenario planning facilitators)
3	Mar. 2003	The Scenario-to-Policy process	Documentation (communiqués; meeting information; internal documents; formal studies and reports)
			Interviews (members of the Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members; scenario planning facilitators)
	Apr. 2003 – Feb 2005	Outcomes & Follow-through from the Scenario Planning process	Documentation (communiqués; meeting information; internal documents; formal studies and reports)
			Interviews (members of the Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members; scenario planning facilitators; uninvolved non-Partnership members)
	Mar. 2005	Production of 'Winds of Change' Document	Documentation (meeting information; internal documents; formal studies and reports)
			Interviews (members of Policy & Organisational Development; members of the Fife Partnership)
	Oct. 2005	Decision to re-engage the use of scenarios	Documentation (communiqués; meeting information; internal documents)
			Interviews (members of the Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members)
4	Oct. 2005	Publication of 'State of Fife 2005' & 'Progress against Community Plan Milestones 2005'	Documentation (meeting information; internal documents; formal studies and reports)
			Interviews (members of Policy & Organisational Development)
	Apr. 2006	Revisiting the Scenarios	Documentation (communiqués; meeting information; internal documents)
			Non-participant observation (community planning workshops)
			Interviews (members of the Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members; scenario planning facilitators)
	Apr. – Sept. 2006	The Scenario-to-Policy Process	Documentation (meeting information; internal documents)
			Non-participant observation (community planning workshops)
			Interviews (members of the Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members; scenario planning facilitators)
5	Sept. 2006 – present	The Strategy Creation process	Documentation (communiqués; meeting information; internal documents; formal studies and reports)
			Non-participant observation (community planning workshops)
			Interviews (Fife Partnership members from each 'Key' area; non-Partnership members from management teams in each 'Key' area; members of Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members)
	Sept. 2006 – Apr. 2008	Outcomes and follow-through from the Scenario Planning process	Documentation (communiqués; meeting information; internal documents; formal studies and reports)
			Non-participant observation (community planning workshops)
			Interviews (Fife Partnership members from each 'Key' area; non-Partnership members from management teams in each 'Key' area; members of Fife Partnership; supporting non-Partnership members)

3.9.1 Grounded Theory – Coding & Analysis

Advocates of grounded theory (see Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998) suggest beginning with a microscopic examination and interpretation of the data through a line-by-line analysis (though often that can mean single words or complete paragraphs) to generate the initial categories (the process of *open* coding) and to suggest relationships among those categories (the process of *axial* coding). This examination is designed to help discover the relevant dimensions of the case so that, through careful consideration and scrutiny of the data, novel concepts and relationships are revealed to develop systematically the categories and their properties.

The coding of data—part of the analytical process in grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998)—is broken down into three parts: *open*, *axial*, and *selective* (see Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998; Saunders et al. 2007) but is preceded by the identification of critical instances, which involves highlighting key passages in the text. During *open* coding the data was broken down into discrete parts and then examined closely and compared thematically for both similarities and differences. The names attributed for the conceptualisation of the data were derived by both the analyst (through meaning or imagery evoked in the data, for example, "Thinking *as Fife*") or by words or phrases used by the respondents themselves—examples of these '*in vivo'* codes (see Glaser and Strauss 1967) from within the case are "priorities" and "accountability".

After the emergence of phenomena, the data was organised into *categories* and *sub-categories*—during this process no specific computer-based qualitative data programmes (e.g., 'Nvivo') were used, instead coding and analysing was performed by hand before using 'Microsoft Excel' and 'Apple iWork Numbers' to assist in the organisation and display of data. As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), both memos and diagrams were used to assist in the coding and analysis process. Figure 3.3 is a vignette of the coding process using an interview with the Fife Partnership Manager (FPS 1):

Figure 3.3 - Vignette of the coding process

Excerpt
GB: Why was the scenario planning process re-engaged?
FPS 1: My understanding was…that there was a view that, **in terms of further revising the community plan, there needed to be a clearer focus**. There was a sense that although the 2000 and 2004 versions of the community plan were very inclusive and very comprehensive, what they gained from being quite comprehensive was the fact that there was a lack of clarity, in terms of priorities, and there was also a lack of clarity in terms of accountability, in terms of who was responsible for doing what. I think there was an element of confusion about that. So I think there was a sense that it would be really helpful to have this strategic conversation, as they called it, and I think it's to Fife's credit that the partners were able to step back from their sectoral interests and take a longer term look at what the big issues are in Fife.

Open Coding
Reasons for re-engaging the Scenario Planning process – "clearer focus"
Hindering factors – "lack of clarity" – "priorities" & "accountability"
Benefits of a "strategic conversation" – Thinking *as* 'Fife'

Category	Sub-Category	Quote	Source	Page	Line
Reasons for SP2	Clearer Focus	"…in terms of further revising the community plan, there needed to be a clearer focus"	I.*tran*.9	4	24-25
SP1 Hindering Factors	Lack of Clarity in Priorities	"although the 2000 and 2004 versions of the community plan were very inclusive and very comprehensive… there was a lack of clarity, in terms of priorities"	I.*tran*.9	4	26-28
	Lack of Clarity in Accountability	"although the 2000 and 2004 versions of the community plan were very inclusive and very comprehensive… there was also a lack of clarity in terms of accountability"	I.*tran*.9	4	26-28
Benefits of a Strategic Conversation	Thinking *as Fife*	"there was a sense that it would be really helpful to have this strategic conversation…the partners were able to step back from their sectoral interests and take a longer term look at what the big issues are in Fife."	I.*tran*.9	4	30-34

The purpose of *axial* coding is to begin reassembling data fractured during the *open* coding. Although the *axial* coding need not be sequential to *open* coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998), it was done in this case to help form more precise and thorough explanations pertaining to the phenomena. Procedurally, this is done through relating "categories to sub-categories along the lines of their properties and dimensions" (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 124). *Axial* coding[44] equips the researcher to understand more fully the interaction of structure and process to

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[44] For the basic tasks involved in axial coding see Strauss (1987).

capture the dynamic and working nature of events—something which helped answer the research questions stipulated in the introduction to this thesis and in section 3.6 (above).

Finally, *selective* coding is a process of integrating and refining categories that occurs after a period of extensive data collection and the establishment primary and sub categories (Saunders et al. 2007).   The main purpose of this process of integration is discovering the central category from which to relate the other categories.   This stage was assisted by the development of the initial storyline of the case and diagrams illustrating the process and function of the scenario planning exercises.   The final stage after this process was the writing-up of the case itself, presenting a description of the events of community planning in Fife that helps uncover how scenario planning informs and organisation's strategic planning process.

3.10 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe how an empirical analysis of a scenario-informed strategic planning process would be organised and executed.   The methodological organisation of the research was presented, describing also the reasons for using an inductive approach to underpin a qualitative investigation into community planning in Fife using a single, embedded case study method.   The philosophical roots of this research lie in a paradigm of social constructionism, though flexibility was advocated between epistemological taxonomies.   The chapter also described the confluence of practical and theoretical reasons for using community planning in Fife as the central case study of this thesis, and stipulated the research questions that will be answered in the following chapters.   The central research question is, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?* To help achieve the goals and answer the questions, a triangulation strategy of data collection methods (documentary analysis, non-participant observation, and in-depth interviews) was applied.   The data was coded and analysed using a grounded approach which included a within-case analysis, and a process of open, axial, and selective coding.   The aim of this methodological journey is to enrich the empirical and theoretical understanding of the activities involved in the scenario-to-strategy process.

This chapter has been used to link the theoretical backdrop with the empirical analysis by introducing the methodological enquiry designed to answer the research questions stipulated above. The following chapters comprise the empirical part of this dissertation and will be organised as follows: chapter 4 will be a descriptive and detailed narrative of all five episodes of the case study (as summarised in section 3.1); chapter 5 will attempt to answer specifically the research questions, analysing and synthesising aspects of the case study alongside relevant literatures to develop an understanding of how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process; and finally, chapter 6 will conclude the thesis, restating the contributions made to the scenario planning and Strategy-as-Practice literatures.

Chapter 4 – Case Study: Descriptive Narrative

4.0 Chapter Introduction

This case study of community planning in Fife extends from 1999 until April 2008. During this period, three Community Plans were produced by the Fife Partnership: the first in 2000, the second in 2004, and the third in 2007 (though was not released until 2008). Both the 2004 and 2007 editions were produced after the Fife Partnership underwent a scenario planning process. As was shown in the literature review and methodology chapter, there is a lack of empirical and theoretical understanding of how scenario planning is used by an organisation to inform the strategic planning process. This nine year case study offers unique and valuable insights into the actual use, activity and application of a scenario planning process.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the empirical portion of this thesis is broken into two parts: first order findings present a descriptive narrative of the entire case (split into the five episodes described in 3.1.3), which helps answer the research questions, *how does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?*, and, *how does scenario planning affect policy development?*; and second order findings, in the following chapter, which synthesises the knowledge generated in this chapter to tackle the research questions stipulated in 3.6 more directly.

A descriptive, chronological narrative offers a number of different benefits. For example, it provides an opportunity explore the contextual conditions pertinent to the phenomenon (see Yin 1994: 13), while also offering insight into the causal sequences critical to developing understanding of the scenario-to-strategy process. This chapter begins with episode **1** (Pre-Scenario Planning), from the formation of the Fife Partnership and creation of the first Community Plan (c. 1999), and extending up to the initiation of the first scenario planning process in August 2002. Episode **2** (Scenario Planning 2003) runs from September 2002 through the scenario planning process, ending with the final draft of the scenarios, shortly before the scenario-into-action stage of March 2003. Episode **3** (Scenario Planning 2003:

Follow-through Process) begins in March 2003 and concludes with the decision to re-engage the scenario planning process in October 2005. Episode **4** (Scenario Planning 2006) begins in October 2005 and follows the 'Managing Fife's Future' process through to (and including) the second *Managing Fife's Future* workshop in May 2006. Finally, episode **5** (Scenario Planning 2006: Follow-through Process) begins in June 2006, again following the outcomes of the scenario planning and Managing Fife's Future process with respect to the Community Plan, the Partnership, and the partner agencies, and concludes in April 2008 with the public release of the '2007 Community Plan'. The chapter will conclude with a short summary of each episode before progressing on to the discussion and analysis portion of the thesis.

4.1 Episode 1 – Pre-Scenario Planning

The research question asks how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process. Thus the investigation begins before the initiation of the first scenario planning process. This section will look briefly at the genesis of community planning in Scotland and how and why it was instituted by Fife Council. It will also describe the concomitant formation, function and purpose of the Fife Partnership before examining Fife's first community planning process, and some of the tensions therein. The process of creation and content of both the first Community Plan and the 2001 *State of Fife Report* (the community planning process' progress update) is discussed, before concluding with an exploration of the Fife Partnership's decision to use scenario planning.

4.1.1 Community Planning in Scotland

Community planning has a strong tradition in Scotland. Local government has had an important role in community leadership, evidenced by the regional report initiatives of the 1970s, which enabled regional authorities control over their strategic agenda in relation to their district authorities, and other public and private services (Lloyd and Illsley 2001). The *Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994* (enacted in 1996), reconfigured local government in Scotland into a single network of 32 authorities, replacing the old two-tier system of

regional and district authorities, and thus the former organisation and demarcation of strategic and local responsibilities (Lloyd and Illsley 2001).

As a concept, community planning originated in a consultative draft version of the Labour party's 1995 policy document, "Renewing Democracy, Rebuilding Communities" (Labour Party 1995), although at that stage it resembled what has since been called the "Performance Plan" within the "Best Value" regime (Rogers et al. 1999). By the end of 1995, at the invitation of the Labour Party to all (Labour controlled) local authorities, 14 English councils and Clackmannanshire Council, in Scotland, were to take part in a community planning pilot programme (Rogers et al. 1999).

In July of 1997, two years before the transfer of power from Westminster to the Scottish Parliament, the Secretary of State for Scotland (Donald Dewar MP) and the *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities* (COSLA) established the *Community Planning Working Group* (CPWG) to explore ways Scottish Local Authorities can work in partnership with other organisations. Their remit was concentrated around three broad goals:

- Improving public service
- Providing a process for engagement and consultation for Local Authorities, public services, and the private and voluntary sectors
- Assisting councils and partners in identifying and addressing the needs of individuals and communities (see Community Planning Working Group 1998)

For councils, the purpose of the community planning process was to "present an informed view of the challenges and opportunities facing" (Lloyd and Illsley 2001: 126) their community, with the plan itself being a 10-15 year vision (subject to annual review) with "clear statements of progress", and involving "full consultation with individuals, communities and the private sector" (Lloyd and Illsley 2001: 126).

COSLA organised five "pathfinder" projects that would be used for national dissemination. The five test authorities were, Highland Council, City of Edinburgh Council, Perth & Kinross Council, South Lanarkshire Council, and Stirling Council (see Rogers et al. 1999). The

Pathfinder report's findings were presented as a way of overcoming some of the tensions inherent to community planning (synthesised in table 4.1):

Table 4.1 - Tensions inherent to the community planning process

Inherent Tensions in Community Planning			
Underlying Issue	**Tension**		
Thinking / Acting	Vision & Strategic Thinking	Vs	Operational Reality
Top-down / Bottom-up	Focus on Partnership	Vs	Community Involvement
Leadership	Partnership - Strategic Development	Vs	Council - Community Leader
New Leadership Role	Leadership for Partners	Vs	Leadership of Community
Means / Ends	Process and Strategy	Vs	Outcomes

Source: Adapted from Rogers et al. (1999: 8)

The overall evaluation was positive and emphasised the importance of process, engagement and the value of working together and thinking strategically.   The "overall evaluation" is represented in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2 - Evaluation of the pathfinder projects

Overall Evaluation of the Five Pathfinder Projects	
Finding	**Details**
Value of CP beyond doubt	No evidence of any disputes about the fundamental value of CP
Primary Benefits	Shared vision by partner organisations
	Opportunity to improve community consultation & involvement
	Opportunity to develop partnership working
	Can overcome fragmentation of public policy and service provision
Mechanisms for CP	Finding the most suitable mechanisms is problematic
Timescale	Development of Partnership, consultation process, and strategic vision can take a period of 2-3 years
Process not Product	Development of strategic thinking & partnership working more important than production of a plan
Diversity	Many way to approach CP, diversity is legitimate and necessary for local circumstances
Learning Experience	Pathfinder councils have undergone rapid learning, which should continue and extend to include wider groups
Community Leadership	There was a lack of Community leadership from the Council during political uncertainty
Elected & Appointed Members	Direct involvement of members not well spread
	Localised approaches offer best opportunity for wider involvement
Dominant Concepts	Partnership working & Strategic vision. Other themes are less developed, though Stirling excelled at consultation
Pragmatism	Pathfinder projects based on existing initiatives, CP not to be thought of as a blank sheet

Source: Adapted from Rogers et al. (1999: 9-10)

Although community planning would not become a statutory process until the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003*, many councils (including Fife) were quick to endorse and adopt community planning as a way to work in partnership with the rest of the public, private and voluntary sectors to realise a long term vision of community prosperity.

4.1.2 Community Planning in Fife

Fife is unique in Scotland insofar as its public services share a conterminous boundary, i.e. that the council, health board, police, etc. all share a mutual jurisdiction. A lack of such 'coterminosity' (Rogers et al. 1999: 17) was described in Rogers' et al. report to *COSLA* as a significant impediment to the success of the community planning process (for example, Strathclyde Police's geographical area is covered by 13 councils); consequently, aligning support for multiple community planning processes presents resource, logistical, and strategic problems. Fife's geographical organisation made it seem like a perfect, and perhaps the most logical, place in Scotland to work in partnership to produce an overarching vision for the region. In a sense, it was like a convergence of political agenda and geographical suitability: "it [community planning] builds on this trend of decentralisation and Fife's fortunate geography" (FCCP 1). Every respondent commented on Fife's 'coterminosity' as a significant factor in determining the region's aptitude for partnership work and community planning: "because of its coterminous boundary, Fife, in theory, should be a fantastic opportunity to work in true partnership" (FPM 6). It was also a determining factor in the former Chief Executive of the Council's decision to take up the position in Fife:

> "One of the attractions for me in going to Fife was the common boundary—the fact that the Council, Police, Health board, and enterprise company all shared the single boundary. Arguably it made Partnership working a lot easier because you were interacting with the same people at the same level, whereas in other situations, the Health board may be much bigger than the council—you have Tayside, for example, where you've got three Councils and one Health board. That means three sets of relationship rather than just the one relationship as we had in Fife." (FPM 1)

Although the former Chief Executive (1999-2006) was previously at COSLA, who "were very influential and instrumental in getting community planning made a duty for councils and partners" (FPM 1), community planning first appeared in Fife in a background discussion paper in September 1998. The paper discussed the aims of community planning, its origins, its relationship with "Best Value", how it will be done in Fife, and the first steps required for its implementation (ID/FC/1).

At this time, it was viewed that the outcomes of community planning "should be improved use of resources to deliver more appropriate and effective services to the people of Fife" (ID/FC/1). Although not yet statutory, there was a "clear political commitment to community planning within Scotland evidenced by the frequent references to it in Scottish Executive documents and the McIntosh Commission including suggestions about legislating for a duty of community planning" (ID/FC/5). However, despite political pressures, there was a belief amongst those involved with Fife's Corporate Policy department, that community planning would provide "the overarching framework within which to set the many plans and strategies which collectively define the delivery of services within Fife" (ID/FC/5).

Fife's Community Plan would comprise of three major elements. Firstly, the Community Plan would articulate a 10-15 year vision of how Fife should develop. The Fife Partnership would be the main sponsors of the vision, being responsible for ensuring that the plan represented the views of all stakeholder groups. The concept of a Fife 'Partnership' became central to providing a forum for discussion and debate, and in promoting the plan throughout their respective organisations. At this point, Fife Council had the main responsibility for both the community planning process and the organisation of the Fife Partnership. This presented some early tensions as Fife Council's 'lead role' appeared to diminish the perception of both the Community Plan and the Fife Partnership as a multilateral and unified process and also caused some confusion over responsibilities and service delivery:

> "I think there *were* unresolved tensions and to some extent unstated tensions—
> things like the perception that the Council had to *lead* in community planning…
> *what did that actually mean in practice?* I think there were different views. I
> think some views in the Council were leadership by, "we'll tell you what to do",

as opposed to leadership by facilitation, by engagement, by getting people to work to common agendas." (FPM 1)

The second key element was the role of strategic partnerships and planning, which included the *Community Safety Partnership*, the *Health Alliance*, the *Rural Partnership*, the *Economic Forum*, the *Sustainable Fife Roundtable*, and the *Training Partnership*. Those partnerships (and their planning documents) were to work on a 3-year time horizon, and would be informed directly by the content of the Community Plan.

The third element was community and user involvement, where the Community Plan would include the views and opinions of Fife residents. Although the Fife Partnership was a group of the most senior managers in Fife's public and voluntary services, the Community Plan required inputs at all levels to "develop both a realistic vision for the future and practical action programmes to move towards that vision" (ID/FC/3). However, while such user-engagement was perhaps desired, it was never realised to the same degree as the other key elements:

> "…a criticism of community planning…is that these are *our* ideas, but how do we know that they're reflecting what the man in Lochgelly or the woman in Cardenden actually felt were the most important things? community planning is very much producer-driven rather than consumer-driven." (FPM 1)

This is reflective of the council's lead role, where "larger agencies dominated discussions" (FPM 4), despite representatives from the voluntary sector trying to "present issues from a different angle":

> "We're very much a 'community' organisation. We're about community representation as well, it's not just about the voluntary sector as a service provider, it's about the voluntary sector as a voice for community—the community perspective" (FPM 4)

Towards the end of 1998, Fife Council began to refine its first community planning process, with the initial meeting among key partners taking place in October to establish the first steps of the process and key resource requirements. By December, the goal of producing the final version of the Community Plan by September had been agreed upon, and the Corporate

Policy service inside Fife Council had listed eleven key elements to the development of Fife's Community Plan (synthesised in Table 4.3):

Table 4.3 - Key Elements of community planning

Community Planning: Key Elements	
Phase	**Elements**
Identification	Identify all the existing agreements, strategic programs and partnerships between the relevant organisations
	Identify the major issues for key agencies over the next few years and how these might affect Fife
	Carry out issues assessment through locality meetings, with staff and with voluntary/community organisations
Data Collection & Analysis	Collect and analyse existing strategy documents and agreements for common themes and outstanding issues
	Establish a shared demographic and statistical picture of Fife over the next ten years
Synthesis	Develop an annual State of Fife report outlining key indicators of social inclusion, regeneration and economic progress.
Drafting & Consultation	Produce a draft report outlining the major issues identified to date and their potential impact
	Consideration of the first draft by the major players and redraft as appropriate
	Consult widely on the draft with all sectors in Fife
	Redraft on the basis of comments etc.
Publish	Publish Fife Community Plan

Source: Adapted from ID/FC/2

The identification, data collection, and synthesis were done in December 1998 after an 'officer group' was established to analyse the elements described above and report back to key partners. The officer group was "drawn from four main resource providers: the Council, Fife Enterprise, Fife Health Board and Scottish Homes under the chairmanship of the Corporate Manager, Environment and Development Strategy and serviced by Corporate Policy" (FCCP 2). The first draft of the vision document (for the period up to 2009) was presented to the Fife Partnership in February 1999, shortly before the Partnership's official launch on March 17, 1999. Prior to that, the Partnership had discussed the membership and structure of the group, organising it as an equal forum with members receiving an equal voice. However, this was more a theoretical objective than a practical reality. Although an organisation like CVS Fife, who "represent the interests of the voluntary sector at a strategic level", is given an 'equal voice', there is no illusion of actual equality:

> "We're always the non-statutory voice in the Fife Partnership, so we would come in with a different take but we're acutely aware that we're a less influential voice because we don't bring any money to the table, for the community planning agenda. We rely on money from other partners. We have no power to shift resources like the other partners." (FPM 4)

At this point in its genesis, the Fife Partnership was intended to be part of an integrated partnership framework which would lead to a more joined up approach by organisations and groups working towards a better future for Fife. The manager of the Fife Partnership (2006-present), who has been involved with the Partnership since its inception described its purpose as:

> "…the cynical take on that would be to make sense of the really cluttered public sector landscape. And I think, in a sense, it's about joining things up to make sure that the service user has a clear and joined up service." (FPS 1)

At this early stage (March 1999), the Community Plan already had a "primary ethos" (FCCP 2): social inclusion, and sustainable development, which were both seen as being central to Fife's vision of the future. The timetable had also suffered its first delay, with the final draft of the Community Plan set to be published in November 1999, two months later than planned. Over the summer of 1999, time was spent in consultation with partner organisations over the vision, while incorporating updated versions of the Economic Development Strategy, the Community Care Plan, the Children's Services Plan, the Housing Plan, etc. (ID/FC/4), before re-drafting the Community Plan based upon the nature and content of those documents, and then securing the endorsement of the partnership. This process is one that has confused some respondents and caused them to question the importance and added value of the Community Plan. The problem that some seem to have is that while community planning (and thus the Fife Partnership) is credited with shaping the vision and direction of Fife's public services on a holistic level, it is actually an amalgamation of issues from individual services who have informed the Fife Partnership of their own work, critical issues, and targets, who then, in turn, include it in the Community Plan thus re-informing those services of what they should be doing to help realise Fife's vision. The head of the Education service described this process using the most recent community planning process (2007) as an example:

"...the presentation I had made [to the Fife Partnership], in terms of what the key priorities were for education...was adopted by the council more widely and then, rather oddly, was brought back into our planning process. So, if you like, something I presented as key issues for us, as a service, and the means for addressing the concerns, was then taken on by the central planning team and then came back to us so that it may be encompassed in our annual improvement plan." (FCE 1)

This issue has been apparent throughout Fife's community planning history and will be discussed more thoroughly in the following episodes and chapters. The first Community Plan also saw the emergence of other problems and tensions that are prevalent throughout the case study. Three such issues are the role played by conflicting and competing agendas (both those internal to Fife as well as national versus local tensions); the difficulty in getting Fife's public services to think 'corporately'; and the effect that competing processes (whether strategic or legislative) have on the Community Plan and the Partnership. Many of these issues were only realised in the aftermath of the first Community Plan through reflection and justification for the lack of impact or success. They were also driving factors in the decision to use scenario planning and thus will be dealt with more thoroughly at the end of this section.

4.1.3 Developing Fife's Future: a Community Plan for Fife

After a delayed and extended consultation period, Fife Partnership published the final version of their first Community Plan in June 2000. It described community planning as a "statement of commitment by the key agencies in Fife of how we will support and work together with the people of Fife, to improve the quality of life for everyone over the next ten years" (FR/FP/1). In broad terms, the Partnership's vision of Fife was that:

"...in 2010 [Fife]...is ambitious, highly skilled, creative, caring and able to make and take advantage of opportunities. Ambitious not just to help each individual achieve what is best for him or her, but ambitious to improve our environment, health, services, products and infrastructure.

Above all, our vision is of a Fife where quality of life is improving for everyone, and where inequalities between individuals and communities are narrowing." (FR/FP/1)

The specifics of the vision laid out in the plan were segmented into three sections: *A Picture of Fife* (i.e., where are we now?), divided into the six themes of people, economy, health, environment, education and inequality; *Action for Fife's Future* (i.e., what are the overarching priorities?), covers the three main goals, namely to *deliver an inclusive Fife, a sustainable Fife*, and *Best Value for Fife*; and finally, *Working Together to Make it Happen* (i.e., how do we get there?), which details the role of the Fife Partnership and the role of the public consultation, access to services, new technologies, etc., before describing specific actions (and milestones for success) for each of the strategic themes.

The purpose here is not to judge or assess how 'good' or 'successful' this first Community Plan was but rather to understand how and why it was put together and why nearly three years later, a technique like scenario planning was used to inform its second iteration. However, a criticism of the plan itself could that it was over ambitious with regard to its capacity to bring about change, to "break free from...rigid organisational boundaries" (FR/FP/1) and to produce updated progress reports on a yearly basis. The *State of Fife Report*, first published in 2001, was supposed to be produced annually to provide up-to-date information on the progress of the Community Plan, but has only been developed three times over the 9-year duration of the case study. There also seemed to be a disconnection between what the plan iterated and what those who wrote it actually thought about the purpose and process of community planning:

"when the community plan had been developed, we developed a series of strategic themes of the work that needed to be done, but...we weren't really sure that they were correct because we were finding that some themes were heavier than others, and the other part of it was that, even then, [we were] slightly struggling to demonstrate the benefit that was coming from the work that we were doing on community planning, partly because we didn't know what we were actually looking at, what sort of future we were trying to do.

We had the ubiquitous vision statement but it's so long and convoluted that it doesn't really grab anybody and it didn't really allow us to test the work that was actually going on, and whether it was actually doing the job." (FCCP 3)

It was also during this time that a change in leadership was described as playing a role in the direction and method of Fife Council's policy process, shifting the focus from outcomes on to processes:

"...the 1996 council—the first new council after the re-organisation—was led with a very strong emphasis on tackling poverty and social exclusion, and reducing inequality in Fife. That was a clear message of what Fife council ultimately orientated around. You could be providing universal services but also filling any gaps. That strong political leadership that was around then, left when the leader left after 2000. There was a different sort of leadership which was much more receptive to managerial priorities, and meanwhile officers were expected to perform and were meeting increasing scrutiny from government inspection. You're being measured not necessarily on outcomes but on processes so the focus became more process orientated, looking at the means of doing things rather than what they're actually achieving. You see this a lot across the heath service and the council: the target culture. Mostly targets about operational processes rather than outcomes for the citizen." (FCCP 1)

Thus came a desire to be more managerial, more professional, to exist and function in a new era of public service, which thus reinforced and enabled further 'professionalization' of the service akin to Giddens' notion of Structuration (Giddens 1984)—chapter 5 will discuss this more thoroughly. This was especially evident in Fife's newest, most important, and most visible planning document. The Community Plan, after being published in 2000, was elevated to the top of Fife Council's complex policy process:

"At the top, you should have the community plan's overarching goals of an inclusive Fife and a sustainable Fife, and below that are the themes, like stronger community, safer community, and improved learning. Below the *community plan*, you have the *council improvement plan*, which is meant to reflect how local councils are doing on the overarching goal. And below that, we do our *service improvement planning*, which is how services are going to be contributing towards the council's goals and the higher up goals. Below that it varies from service to service, but there will be *team planning or section planning* within services.

We use a system of *contribution management*, which is a combination of work planning for the individual and employee development, so it's meant to say, 'this is your agreed priorities for your work over the next year'. It's meant to fit with what appears in the *service improvement plan*, that in turn is meant to be consistent with what's in the *council improvement plan,* the *community plan,* so there is meant to be, and should be, a fit between what individuals do in their day-to-day jobs and the overall policy context in the organisation." (FCCP 1)

A key part of this new managerial culture was the Community Plan's annual reporting process, the *State of Fife Report*. As noted earlier, the State of Fife Report, first published in June 2001, was intended to be an annual report but has only been produced three times in eight years. The report reiterates the vision of the Community Plan, and stipulates the importance of promoting "debate and discussion on where Fife is going" (FR/FP/2), and its purpose of helping to judge the progress of the overall goals set out in the Community Plan (an *inclusive* and *sustainable* Fife, and *Best Value*).

The report is structured around the main themes of the Community Plan, namely "*A stronger, more flexible and diverse economy*; *A healthier Fife*; *A well educated and skilled Fife*; *Making the most of Leisure*; *Safeguarding and improving our environment*; and, *Stronger, safer communities*". These themes would provide much of the strategic guidance for relevant services or partner organisations, for example, the police "explicitly align ourselves with the community safety partnership" (FPM 9). However, in terms of process and indeed the practice of management, the initial part of the report is a telling indication of the direction strategy-making in Fife would take over the next seven years. The section, entitled "*Working together to Make it Happen*", describes clearly the underlying purpose of community planning: "Developing mutual understanding and working together across our different organisations is at the heart of the Community Plan and is fundamental to achieving the vision it sets out" (FR/FP/2).

By 2001/02, the Fife Partnership was well-established, meeting four times a year, supported by the *Community Planning Working Group* (*CPWG*), and taking a greater role in coordinating partner organisations and supporting strategic partnerships. Although the main focus of the report was the progress of the Community Plan, it was indicated that the importance of the

process outweighs the content of the plan. There was less emphasis on the physical activity of public service delivery and more about improving unity and cohesion through ameliorated understanding and trust, and an increased number of *Joint Service Initiatives*.

Part of the community planning agenda described in the State of Fife Report articulates the Partnership's desire to find new ways to "plan together" and "share information". Much of this was to become the responsibility of Fife Council's Corporate Policy unit (and later the Policy and Organisational Development Service). Both the Community Plan and the State of Fife Report were drafted in Corporate Policy around the Council's main agendas (*Best Value*, *Sustainability*, and *Inclusivity*) and refined through consultation with council services and partner agencies (Police, NHS Fife, etc.). However, although both the Community Plan and State of Fife Report described a clear vision for Fife and a way of monitoring that vision, there was a feeling within Policy and Organisational Development (POD), that the vision itself was generic, "a ubiquitous vision statement" (FCCP 3), and that more refined work was needed to think more carefully and widely about what Fife's future *could* and *should* be.

4.1.4 Deciding to use Scenario Planning

In June 2002, a former member of Scottish Enterprise became Fife Council's *strategy and information manager*, working in POD. Scottish Enterprise had used scenario planning "quite extensively", including "a project which [the scenario planning facilitator] was involved with, in terms of producing scenarios for Scotland[45]" (FCCP 3). Although working at a local level (Tayside then Fife), this person's exposure to scenario planning at Scottish Enterprise had an effect on the strategic work employed by Fife Council:

> "Most of us had been on training—there was a three-day scenario planning course that they ran that tried to put quite a few folk through. It was really through that, and seeing what could be done with them, that we decided to go down that route." (FCCP 3)

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[45] For Further details of the "Scenarios for Scotland" and of Scottish Enterprise's use of scenario planning, see McKiernan (2000; 2001a; 2001b) and Ringland (2002b).

Shortly after this individual joined the council, there were many discussions around how to revise the Community Plan (scheduled for 2003), how to assess if the plan was still "fit for purpose", and to determine what "vision process" they should use. That was when the person "suggested some sort of scenario planning exercise" (FCCP 3). It was felt that scenario planning could not just be used for refining a vision for Fife, but also that it could bring people out of their "service silos", and help build a greater consensus about priorities, "rather than it being from the top-down from Fife Council" (FPM 1).

Scenario Planning was a new concept to most of the partners:

> "I remember [the strategy and information manager] coming into talk to us about scenario planning and none of us having the foggiest idea of what it was." (FPM 4)

However, it was met with optimism, partly because of the sense that not enough progress was being made: "If you don't try new things, you just trundle along in a rut" (FPM 6). Similarly:

> "There was recognition of what was being achieved but at the same time what *wasn't* being achieved and a willingness to look at ways of constantly working together better." (FPM 4)

There was not simply one reason why Fife Council chose to use scenario planning to refresh the Community Plan, but rather it was a confluence of internal and external factors. As mentioned, the fact that one of the most senior strategists had used scenario planning and advocated its use was a major factor in the Partnership's decision. However, there was also a growing dissatisfaction with the council's perceived "lead" role in community planning: "people would always say '*the Council's Community Plan*'" (FPM 4). Thus, an engaging process like scenario planning was seen as something that would allow "strategy to be owned and shared by everyone" (FPM 2), that it "had the potential to engage people beyond the partnership" (FPM 4). Consequently, aside from being "a little different" (FCE 4), scenario planning suited the "long term horizon we were working with, and the need for some kind of process of engagement" (FCE 4). The capacity of scenario planning to provide "a more rigorous approach to the community plan" (FCCP 1) was important: "we needed to be looking at the future, [at] a much longer planning horizon than we were usually used to" (FCCP 1).

Planning cycles in the council (and other public services) are usually three years, but the Community Plan is a ten-year vision:

> "We knew that we would face a great deal of uncertainty about the future and we had expectations that scenario planning might be able to simply give us different scenarios, different stories, about what Fife might look like. And then we could use those to help make the community plan—of what you want to achieve over the next five/ten years—more robust in order to cope with the potential uncertainty. Scenario planning would help us see what might be the variations, what might be different futures, what it might look like in different circumstances." (FCCP 1)

Aside from the technical and practical reasons for using scenario planning, there was also increased pressure for the public sector to think and act more strategically, in essence to practice Best Value themselves: *"how do you get a wide range of people to think about strategy?"* (FCE 4) Thus, a scenario planning process allowed members of the Partnership, often stymied by day-to-day requirements, a chance to *be* strategic:

> "…they probably thought they ought to be doing this sort of thing—they ought to be thinking strategically and looking long-term—in managing health boards, NHS services, council services, police services, much of the time of senior managers is tied up with the more mundane, more short-term problems." (FCCP 1)

Similarly, as much as it was seen as a way for the partners to think strategically, it was also seen as a way for them to think corporately, for them to emerge from their respective services and think magnanimously about how Fife could and should be, and how their respective services can help make that vision a reality.

The experience of Scottish Enterprise with scenario planning and working with scenario facilitators from the University of St Andrews was positive (see Table 4.4), and so it seemed like a logical and prosperous path for the Fife Partnership to pursue. Facilitators from the University of St Andrews were first approached in July 2002. Their response to POD included a proposal regarding how a scenario planning process for Fife might actually work.

Table 4.4 - St Andrews' scenario planning experience (August 2002)

University of St Andrews: Expertise in Scenario Planning
The University of St Andrews has a long established reputation in scenario planning. It has completed scenarios for over 100 clients, including many blue-chip organisations. St Andrews led the 'Scenarios for Scotland' project—probably the largest scenario work ever conducted in the country. In the public sector, recent clients include the Tees Valley Consortia, Scottish Enterprise, Grampian Region, the States of Jersey, the Scottish Tourist Board and the City of Edinburgh Council.

Source: C/UStA/1

The proposal, sent to POD in August 2002 (C/UStA/2), describes the project stages as:

Table 4.5 - Scenario planning in Fife: project proposal

Scenario Planning in Fife: Project Outline	
Stage	Description
Diagnosis	A project scoping exercise to agree project boundaries, the current state of the plan and time frame for the scenarios
Analysis	Web-based data collection and group interviews to identify the key, emerging issues for the future of Fife. This data will be gathered into a workbook and logged under emerging issues e.g. political, economic, socio-demographic, technological, environmental etc.
Synthesis	Organisation of the data and identification of the key drivers of change; more information may be required and experts consulted here
Scenario Building	A one/two day workshop to examine the roll out of the most uncertain drivers and to paint the scenario pictures
Scenario Testing	A test of the first draft scenarios for plausibility, gestalt, acceptability, internal consistency, surprise and difference
Scenario-to-Policy workshop	A half-day workshop focussing on what the scenarios mean for immediate and future public policy in Fife.

Source: Adapted from C/UStA/2

At this point, a report based upon these stages, compiled by POD and the Community Planning Working Group, was submitted to the Fife Partnership for review at its meeting in September 2002.

4.2 Episode 2 – Scenario Planning 2003

Scenario Planning was first mentioned at the meeting of the Fife Partnership on 4 September 2002. During this meeting there was an agreed motion to revisit the targets and goals of the Community Plan to promote debate on how best to align national and local targets. The following item on the agenda related to a report received from the co-ordination group,

stating that it had engaged the services of the University of St Andrews in a scenario planning project which would commence in September 2002 with a view of reporting findings to the State of Fife consultation event in November. The report highlighted the process of the work and noted that "part of the aim of the project would be to develop the Partnership's capacity for such work in the future through direct involvement" (MI/FP/1).

In November 2002, Fife Partnership set up the "Scenario Planning Steering Group", comprising eleven senior members of the Fife Partnership and supported by scenario facilitators from the University of St Andrews and members of the Council's POD service. The group were responsible for the organisation of the scenario planning work, and much of the analysis and issue identification prior to the generation of the scenarios. One of the first things they did was establish the focus of the work to guide the process. This took the form of the following question: "within the overall aim of a more inclusive Fife, what will be the needs and expectations for Fifers in 2013, and how might resources best be used to serve them?"

4.2.1 Analysis & Synthesis

The data collection and analysis process would comprise two main stages: desktop research and interviews. The desktop research included extant data from sources internal and external to Fife. A team of researchers from St Andrews carried out the majority of the external data gathering with POD providing the scenario facilitators the key information from within Fife, e.g. detailed population and demographic information, internal economic appraisals, transportation figures, etc. The internal data was used to develop an understanding of life in Fife and how it has evolved over the last 5-20 years. The external data drew a similar picture of the wider world, showing how the external environment may impact upon Fife. It was also intended to search for the softer signals that hint towards impending change. Whether it be in working patterns and culture, travel needs, new technologies (which may lead to new industries, and thus require new skills), or developments in the provision of health care (which may alter life expectancy), the data gathered in this stage is vital to underpinning the logic and thus plausibility of the scenarios. Consequently, a series of guidelines were followed during this stage. This particular method

of data collection is based upon the CAFE framework, developed by scenario planning consultants at Strathclyde University, and is summarised below:

Table 4.6 - CAFÉ principles

	Construction of Alternative Futures Explorer (CAFÉ)	
Principle	**Description**	**Example**
1	Events (or suggested events), which will have repercussions over a number of years.	Events which will have an impact at some point in the future.
2	A puzzle for the industry.	Conflicts in information or single source puzzles.
3	Political, economic & societal change which will lead to a change in attitudes and demand characteristics.	New legislation, new regulatory systems or the creation of, or action by a powerful lobby group or coalition.
4	Technological Breakthroughs	The emergence of a new or advanced technology.
5	Changes in the volume or structure of a market.	Changes in the competitive positioning between organisations; a change in international trading conditions.
6	A major player showing signs of strategic change.	A major player may be reorganising or restructuring.
7	The resolution or complication of current strategic issues for the industry.	Current, industry wide, strategic issues which are most talked about in the press and in the board room.
8	Analysis of past events or deductions about future events.	An explanation of previous events that now shows a "lock-in" situation or an event that will definitely be a feature of the future.

The second phase of this analysis is done through individual and group interviews. All members of the *Scenario Planning Steering Group* were interviewed as well as other members of the Fife Partnership and other internal and external experts. For the group interviews, a selection of the "informed public" was used. In total, 20 individual interviews and three group interviews (16 people) were conducted. One of the scenario facilitators indicated that the number of interviews was restricted by the budget and resources of the Fife Partnership: "they needed to invest more money and time and resources into the whole project" (SPF 1).

Although the number of people interviewed was smaller than, for example, the *Scenarios for Scotland*, the interviews themselves were of equivalent depth, and followed the third stage of the "St Andrews approach" to scenario planning, as described by Grinyer (2001). This approach, like many other adherents of approaches originating from Shell, used seven questions that may be varied slightly and are designed to be:

> "open ended with the interviewee setting the agenda, 'playful' so encouraging departure from formal, espoused theories and agreed scripts, and stimulating by

means of asking the interviewee to adopt unusual roles" (van der Heijden and Eden 1998)

In the case, the seven questions were:

Table 4.7 The seven questions

The Seven Questions

1. If you could spend time with someone who knew the outcome, what would you want to know? (i.e. what are the critical issues?)
2. If things went well for Fifers, how might Fife look and what would their needs and expectations be?
3. What could go wrong for Fifers (jobs, health, quality of life, etc.) and what, under these circumstances, would their needs and expectations be?
4. From your knowledge of the culture, communities, support systems and resources (including people) in Fife, how would these have to be changed to achieve the optimistic outcome?
5. Looking back how did Fife get where it is today?
6. Looking forward, what decisions need to be made in the near term to achieve the long-term outcome?
7. If you had a mandate, without constraints, what more would you wish to do (achieve)?

The interviews were conducted by two facilitators, one who led the interview, and the other who took verbatim notes, which were transcribed and checked for accuracy (Grinyer 2001). Each interview lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours and was made anonymous so that comments would not be attributable. The interviews were then broken down into discrete statements and organised accordingly; for example, in the interview workbook, each statement was accompanied by a number to indicate how frequently the issue arose. At this point, the data from the desk-based research was compiled together with data gathered from the interviews in the form of the data-workbook. The workbook had five headings (Politics, Infrastructure, Economy, Social Issues, and Fife Public Sector), with each topic split into more specific categories. This document would then form "the basis of information, in addition to the participants' own knowledge and experience, on which they will be identifying the issues around which the scenarios will be developed" (ID/SP1/1).

The first of the issues workshops was held 13 January 2003. The aim of this workshop was to discuss the main issues in the draft workbook and identify the key drivers that would form part of the scenario project at the Community Planning Gathering, scheduled for 27 February 2003. Before the key issues from the workbook were presented, the group were shown some headline statistics on demographics and employment. A host of issues were discussed; some

of the messages coming from these issues were agreed upon, but there were other issues where the group disagreed with the characterisation that came through in the research. Of the 23 issues, only three had differing opinions or general disagreement. The workshop group was then split into two groups to consider six key issues emerging in the 2013 timeframe and then order them by degree of certainty and importance (see below):

Figure 4.1 - Importance and uncertainty matrices

Group 1 Priorities
Most Important

Vision in Context

Economy

Investing in People

Transportation

Funding

Processes and Services

Certain — Uncertain

Least Important

Group 2 Priorities
Most Important

Interplay between Economy & Education

Capacity Building

Transport

Ageing Population

Improving Quality of Life & Environment

Impact of Commuter Belt

Certain — Uncertain

Least Important

These certainty/importance diagrams were reported back to the group and were discussed further at the next workshop on 6 February, 2003.

The key issues identified at the 13 January workshop were broken-down into the key elements and then analysed as being an external issue (for which the Fife Partnership has to make a strategic response), or an internal issue (over which the Fife Partnership has control). The external issues were categorised as Fife's *Resources*, *Economy*, *Education skills*, *Employment*, *Funding*, and *transport*.

On 21 and 23 January, the group workshops of 13 January were reviewed and analysed by the *Scenario Planning Steering Group*. The two matrices (above) were consolidated into one matrix that focused totally on external issues, and not on the internal factors (listed above) over which the Fife Partnership had control[46]. The consolidated issues were:

- Fife's Resources (Age, wealth, human capital, social structures, etc.)
- Fife's Economy (Indigenous, commuter, activity, GDP, etc.)
- Education/Skills (Centralised, external funding, curriculum, etc.)
- Funding (Levels of external funding, private, public, flexibility, etc.)
- Mobility (Growth patterns, modes, etc.)

Although at this stage, the issues had not been placed on an importance/uncertainty matrix, each issue had already been described as being "highly important" and "uncertain".

The next two workshops occurred on 6 and 17 February. The first, after agreeing on the consolidation of issues, explained how the issues might unfold over the next 10 years. To assist in this process, experts on the Fife and Scottish economy, and education and transportation sectors, gave short presentations to the group. Although a fresh perspective (certainly in the case of transportation) was seen as being beneficial to the future thinking process, it was thought by some to have caused mild chagrin with members of Fife's services who weren't involved in this process—another source of early tension in the process.

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[46] Despite the desire to exclude internal factors some issues (education / transportation) are internal as well as external issues.

In Fife's case, the development of the drivers began with a narrow group of people and outside expertise: "We didn't put in the views of people like the head of transportation, the service heads—the one down from the chief execs, the head of service levels—they were not participating" (FCCP 1). Whether or not this did in fact adversely affect the process is unknown:

> "I'm not aware that we had a negative reaction but there could have been. I don't know whether we put people's noses out of joint during that process, but we certainly didn't engage them. That's an issue for me. We went wide with the gathering and brought a lot of people in, but it was to present to them with something where all the thinking had been done, and getting them to prove it rather than [to] be part of thinking that goes into it." (FCCP 1)

Regardless of whether it did offend (though perhaps it is significant that the head of the Transportation service did not plan to attend the Community Planning Gathering where the scenarios were unveiled), it does represent a difficult issue that has the potential to undermine such a process before it even truly begins:

> "[T]hat was a weakness of the system, that, in trying to bring independent thinking, what you do with people who have authoritative responsibility and professional expertise within the service? And I'm not aware that we had a negative reaction but there could have been." (FCCP 1)

This issue of conflict between involvement, engagement and independent thought, will be explored more thoroughly in the following chapter.

The second workshop (17 February) was designed to review progress and refine the importance/uncertainty matrix before exploring the issues to establish common themes to feature in the scenario generation. The issues identified by the two groups in the 17 January workshop were examined against the external issues identified on February 6. Each issue was evaluated as an internal or external factor and categorised into the corresponding external issue. For example, "Schools and Colleges", under the heading "Interplay between Economy and Education", is designated as being a part of the external issue, "Education and Skills".

The external issues were then refined as the following:

Table 4.8 - Fife's key drivers

Fife's Five Key Drivers	
Key Issue	**Sub-Issue**
Fife's Resources	Ageing population Demographic change More older people Fewer younger people More households Influx of key workers/knowledge workers
Fife's Economy	Economic opportunity and change Move to service sector Fife's economic base Wash effects from Edinburgh Changing employment sector Entrepreneurial effort
Education/Skills	Increased education Skills Schools and Colleges Education and Life Long Learning
Funding	More resources to deal with age
Mobility	Accessibility Access to employment Mobility Access to growth poles Accessible services such as health Improving rural and urban transport Making a single Fife

The next task was to develop the story lines. The groups were asked to write the scenarios as a newspaper article looking back on the past 10 years (i.e. from 2013 back to 2003). They were to write one mostly positive and one mostly negative scenario, each with a 'snappy' title. In doing so, they were to consider the drivers, events and catalysts that would push the issues in various directions and thus understand why issues would move in particular directions, and the consequences of such movement. It was seen as an "enjoyable and stimulating" (FPM 3) opportunity for partners to engage in an exercise that involved: "talking to people in a way they've never done before" (FPM 6). In accordance with common scenario testing methods, the groups tested their storylines for *plausibility*, *internal consistency*, *recognisability (from past to present)*, *relevancy and importance*, and their ability to *challenge*, *interest* and *surprise* readers.

Between 18 and 26 February, to reflect outcomes of the testing process, which was applied after each iteration of the scenarios, the scenarios were drafted by a professional storywriter, tested and redrafted in preparation of the 'Partnership Gathering' on 27 February.

4.2.2 The High Road in 2013—Drafts

The first draft of the 'High Road' was highly optimistic though not completely positive. It described Fife as "not only of the most prosperous regions in Scotland, [but] it is also being hailed as a leading example in Europe for its remarkable economic regeneration of areas formerly known for deprivation and high unemployment" (ID/SP1/2). It described the relative bleakness of 10 years ago (i.e. 2003), before explaining how Fife managed such an impressive turnaround. The key issues identified in the scenarios were *vision*, *inspired leadership*, *ambition*, *connectivity* (and *some luck*).

The establishment of the Fife Community Partnership as a limited company was a major factor in the financial turnaround of Fife's public services, indicative of the Partnership's aspirations at that time[47]. Similarly, the development of communications (broadband) and transport links (Kincardine Bridge, internal public transport, etc.) was significant in attracting 'Standard Life' to relocating their headquarters from Edinburgh to Kirkcaldy's new business park. The third major factor was a dramatic improvement in Fife's education service and thus the quality of health and the standard of living.

The structure of the second draft remained largely unchanged, as did the key issues and most of the content. Perhaps the most significant change was the last line of the scenario. Instead of "Fife is the new Edinburgh", the line was changed to "Fife can rightly and proudly boast the title, the 'New Kingdom'" (ID/SP1/3). This was an important ideological change as it acknowledged Fife as an important region of Scotland that enjoys not a competitive relationship with Edinburgh but rather a complimentary one. Some members of the steering

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[47] The prospect of Fife Partnership (Ltd.) was referred to regularly at Partnership meetings and has been the subject of numerous policy papers from as far back as 2001.

group were drawn into thinking that regional prosperity was a zero-sum game, when in fact, if you highlight the key issues in the scenarios (i.e. Edinburgh's economic success, transport links, etc.), it is clear that Fife's success is at least partly dependent on the success of neighbouring regions. Without an economic centre (like Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, etc.), Fife will always be reliant on nearby cities for a significant portion of its economic prosperity. Consequently, the scenario was adapted to reflect the importance of an improved 'Fife' rather than a transition towards a city-like success story which was geographically unattainable.

4.2.3 The Low Road in 2013—Drafts

The first draft of the 'Low Road' was highly pessimistic but not wholly negative. It described Fife as an area of "failing industry, dwindling jobs and shrinking public funding" that had become "totally isolated from the Scottish and UK economy" (ID/SP1/4). Fife's dire state was blamed on a "lack of vision, strategic thinking and cooperation by Fife's lead agencies" (ID/SP1/4), with the major problems emerging in the education and transportation systems.

Fife's education sector was in tatters, with the Scottish Executive finally abolishing the service and taking control over the schools. Poor budget planning took much-needed funds away from investment in infrastructure for transportation and communication. Consequently, the Rosyth ferry service failed; congestion charges in Edinburgh overwhelmed the public transport system; and Fife suffered "bridge-lock" at both the Forth and Tay estuaries. The internal transportation system was just as bad, with the elderly and vulnerable hit hardest by the isolation. "Pockets of prosperity existed" but Fife as a whole was losing the battle against crime and drug abuse. It is a picture of a declining Fife trapped in a depressing cycle with no end in sight.

While the second draft is structured largely the same as the first, some of the negativity was softened while other points were made more extreme. For example, "totally isolated" became "increasingly isolated"; similarly, "Fife has been officially named the least

prosperous area in the UK" became "Fife has been officially named one of the least prosperous areas in the UK" (ID/SP1/5). Fife's early ambitions to become a financial centre by capitalising on its proximity to Edinburgh were added, as were the reasons such prosperity dwindled away. The most significant adjustment to the second draft was the change to the 'crisis point' of the transportation system. In the first draft, this point was reached in 2010 when a road-rage incident on the heavily congested Forth Road Bridge sparked a public riot. In the second draft, the crisis point was far more extreme: a train derailment on the Forth Rail Bridge "caused major structural faults and closed it for a year", and the resulting rise in commuters using cars caused "bridge-lock", eventually causing residents and organisations to relocate to more commuter-friendly areas (ID/SP1/5). Despite some changes to the severity of certain events, the essence of the second draft remains the same—Fife is bleak, isolated and still stuck in a depressing cycle of decline.

4.2.4 Fife Community Planning Gathering

27 February 2003, was an important date for scenario planning in Fife. The Community Planning 'Gathering', held in the Rothes Halls, Glenrothes, was the forum chosen to launch and test the scenarios that would become part of Fife's Community Plan and thus a driving force in Fife's future. With over 80 people in attendance from across a range of services, the purpose of the day was to share the scenarios with the various partnerships and partner organisations.

The day began with an overview of scenario planning, the process undertaken and the method behind the 'Scenarios for Fife'. Storyteller, Millie Gray, then took the stage and presented the positive and negative scenarios:

> "I was a bit worried when the storyteller that we'd got to come across to actually talk about the scenarios stood up, because...you thought, 'oh, this wasn't what I was expecting' because it was this mature lady who stood up and I thought, 'oh no, what's going to happen now?' but actually, it worked really well." (FCCP 3)

Another respondent thought the storyteller was a powerful component in the communication of the key issues:

> "That was very powerful: the way they were presented actually brought it home—what the big issues were for Fife." (FPS 2)

However, responses to this process were not uniformly positive:

> "I don't think people knew it was going to be scenario planning before they got there. I'm not entirely sure that they didn't think it was a bit of a management game. [...] It's not that nobody took it seriously...but I think [it] had one or two people saying *"what's all this about?"*, particularly when the storyteller stood up." (FCE 2)

Similarly, another attendee commented that, "most people went into it cold" (FPM 6). This suggests that the information about the day itself, the method, and the process could have been disseminated better within the council and beyond. This was echoed by the Head of the Transportation Service who arrived late to the 'gathering' after being contacted by a colleague:

> "I have to be absolutely honest...my diary was a nightmare at the time. The advance notice of what it was all about wasn't particularly clear, so...I wasn't going to go. And then my phone was red hot because of a lot of the issues being discussed, transport feeds into, because it's a means to an end. So I came across.
>
> [...]
>
> The initial message, without being critical of any of the organisers, could have been a bit better—that's no reflection on the speakers, or the professor, or anything like that, purely within the council, I think the message hadn't been spread [to] the people who really needed to be there. Thankfully, someone had the sense to give me a buzz pretty quickly." (FCE 3)

This issue will be revisited in more detail in the following chapter.

The rest of the 'Gathering' had two broad goals. Firstly, to "wind-tunnel" the scenarios (see van der Heijden 2005), and secondly, to identify the "needs of individual Fifers given the scenarios" (ID/SP1/6). In each workshop, the participants were split into 10 groups of 8-10 people. Detailed briefing notes were given to the facilitators. In the first workshop, facilitators were to keep score (on a scale of 0-5) of how the group would answer the following questions:

- Have these scenarios challenged your thinking?

- Do they offer a complete view of the possible future that is described?
- Do you think this could happen?
- Can you see how Fife could get there?

The results of this workshop were presented back to the whole gathering in a plenary. The positive scenario was "less familiar and felt less complete to participants than the negative scenario and therefore more surprising" (ID/SP1/6). The negative scenario appeared less surprising as it seemed to describe "many issues there are current in Fife" (ID/SP1/6). Both scenarios scored well in terms of "plausibility and realism", indicating that participants believed both scenarios were achievable: "they were close enough to reality to believe—if it's *too* fantastic then they're *just 'fantastic'*" (FPM 5). Another attendee also commented on their realism: "I think they were sufficiently realistic to drive people to say, '*these are meaningful'*" (FPM 2). However, despite being 'believable' there was also an understanding that they were not intended to be prophetic: "I thought they were powerful while recognising neither would ever come true" (FPM 3).

Participants also identified several areas where they felt the scenarios could be strengthened:
- More community focus, including community involvement, public engagement
- Reference to external factors such as European and global circumstances
- Specific mention of rural issues, lifelong learning, health, housing, sustainability, social inclusion
- The connections between factors e.g. safety, health, and education
- The role of, and implications for, the voluntary sector

Overall, feedback was positive: "the feedback was more about finessing them, rather than things not being right" (FCE 4). These issues were taken into account when redrafting the scenarios after the gathering.

In the second workshop, each group was assigned a specific individual[48] and instructed to imagine a day in 'their life'. Each group was to discuss the impact of each scenario on that individual; identify the individual's needs in each scenario; and then decide upon the five main needs of the individual in priority order to be used in the plenary feedback session. The feedback was indicative of basic principles of social needs theory, like Maslow's (1943) 'hierarchy of needs'. In the negative scenario, the main concern was with providing "basic needs such as food, shelter and warmth" (ID/SP1/6), whereas in the positive scenario people wanted more than the "satisfaction of their basic needs" and instead had high expectations and wanted "added value" (ID/SP1/6). Interestingly, while in the negative scenario, where needs were basic (as one would expect), service demand was very high, but in the positive scenario, the demand on the provision of services also continues to rise.

The main issues identified were:

- Access to learning, education and skills support
- Advocacy
- Communication
- Community activity
- Economic security
- Environment/leisure
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Safety/security
- Transportation/infrastructure

Emerging from the group discussion was also the vulnerability in either scenario of the socially excluded. These people would be the "last to gain and also first to lose" (FPM 1), and so the "challenge for policy makers in Fife is to ensure that in addition to providing for these individual's most basic needs…[they] are prepared to provide a service that takes a

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[48] Ten hypothetical characters from a variety of backgrounds were used. For example, there was a 37 year old plumber from Cupar, who is self-employed but misses 25% of the working year through mental illness, and pays child support for 3 children; a double income couple in their mid 30s, managing a call centre, upwardly mobile and living in their own property in Dalgety Bay; and a retired, non-English speaking, 72 year old Grandmother living in Glenrothes, who doesn't drive or use public transport and is totally dependent on her children.

longer-term view" (FPM 2). What also emerged from the afternoon workshop was the recognition of purpose—about providing an opportunity to those engaged with Community planning to "come together and share experience" to "reinforce the value of partnership working" (FPM 2). It was seen as a way to foster engagement and ownership with the revision of the Community Plan at an early stage in its development. During this stage, it also became apparent that, by getting such a wide audience directly involved with the scenarios, there was a desire for the "wider use of the scenarios as a tool for planning and policy review in future" (ID/SP1/6). The former Chief Executive of Fife Council described this new shared understanding and engagement:

> "...making people feel more comfortable with each other. I think the people felt willing to challenge each other more openly and build trust. As well as it was painting a picture, in painting that picture it helped build relationships, it helped build that sense of common purpose and understanding. I think that's very powerful. I think we've always underestimated in community planning how much you're a prisoner of our own cultures, and our own way of doing things, and our own institutions; and understanding each other's institutions takes a long time. So it's a slow process and it does take time but it's all worth doing it. A by-product, if you want, of scenarios was to deepen understanding and relationships of trust between the partners." (FPM 1)

To put it another way, this was a new beginning for the Fife Partnership.

4.2.5 Post-Gathering Process

The finalisation of the scenarios was scheduled for the Fife Partnership meeting on 12 March 2003, with the broader target of using the findings and the policy implications to produce a draft of the revised Community Plan by September 2003. This ambition came with the caveat that progress was largely dependent on the "involvement of partner organisations and the community planning partnerships in April and May" (ID/SP1/6). In the interim period, it would be the job of the Fife Partnership to identify "which elements of the existing Community Plan have been achieved and which are no longer a priority in improving the quality of life in Fife" as well as "new actions that must be initiated if Fife is...to take advantage of new opportunities (the optimistic scenario); and to deal with challenges (the

negative scenario)" (ID/SP1/6). In the meantime, the scenarios were edited again, this time to reflect suggestions that were raised during the 'gathering'.

Although most of the changes to both scenarios were minor, structural or stylistic ones, language specific to lexicon of local government crept into both stories. Words and phrases like "sustainability", "social service support and delivery", "better sense of well-being", "lifelong learning initiatives", and "social exclusion" were among the more obvious additions, indicative perhaps of Fife Council's strategic priorities as well as those nationally. A new conclusion was added to the positive scenario describing Fifers as more comfortable with themselves and "justly proud of their Kingdom" (ID/SP1/3). This is reflective of the early feedback following the 'gathering' which suggested that value of 'partnership working' was reinforced and that there was a new enthusiasm and sense of ownership of not just the scenarios but of Fife's future.

A report of the Community Planning Gathering and the amended scenarios were circulated at the Fife Partnership meeting of 12 March 2003, prior to a "scenarios into action" workshop, facilitated by experts from the University of St Andrews. Partners were also asked to select names for the scenarios from suggestions received before and during the Gathering, and to comment on the content of both positive and negative scenarios. The content of the final scenarios is discussed below, whereas details of the "scenarios into action" process is dealt with in Episode 3 (see 4.3).

4.2.6 Final Scenarios

The original names of the scenarios were "Tumbleweed" (negative) and "Yellow Brick Road" (positive). However, they did not capture the significance of a 'connected' Fife so the Partners finally decided on "Bridging the Gap" for the positive scenario and "Mind the Gap" for the negative one. The changes to the final drafts were minor, though significant in terms of representing broader thinking at the time. In "Bridging the Gap", additions were made to increase the significance of the voluntary sector, the environment, the engagement of local communities and programmes, and the potential benefits from an Incorporated Fife

Partnership. One of the negative points in the positive scenario, the increase in house prices that accompanies a booming economy, was given a positive spin—that demand would be boosted in "more affordable parts of Fife" (ID/SP1/3). The conclusion of the scenario, formerly a statement of accomplishment and success, was also adapted to include an assertion of continuing ambition.

In "Mind the Gap", three additions were made: the role of limited bridge capacity in the failure of Rosyth's ferry service; the dominance of the public sector in community planning as the voluntary sector struggles for shrinking and increasingly short-term funding; and finally, the erosion of community interaction.

With the scenarios finalised, the task then shifted towards understanding the strategic implications of them. The follow-through process, described below (section 4.3), involved analysis of Fife's resources within the context of the scenarios as a means of updating and refreshing the Community Plan.

4.3 Episode 3 – Scenario Planning 2003 – Follow-through Process

The partnership meeting of 12 March began Fife's transition from scenarios into strategy. Facilitators from the University of St Andrews explained to the partnership the principles of scenario planning and how the process should be taken forward. Specifically, three steps were articulated in the recorded minutes (MI/FP/2): 1) "the identification of the resources required to cope with each of the scenarios", and those which are common to both; 2) "carrying out a gap analysis"; and 3) "identifying the actions which could be taken to address these gaps". The last two steps would be completed by council officers and circulated to partners for comment. This "Scenarios to Action" stage was reported to the scenario planning co-ordination group, along with the final scenarios on 27 March.

4.3.1 Scenarios to Action Stage

The time available to the Partnership at the meeting of 12 March was insufficient "to do complete justice to [the] final stage of the scenario planning, so subsequent policy analysis… sought to complete the process" (MI/SP1/1). Thus, the extra resources discussed after the partnership workshop are identified accordingly[49]. Prior to discussions about resources, the elements of each scenario were presented to the partners in bullet point form:

Table 4.9 Understanding the scenarios: key themes

Understanding the Scenarios	
Mind the Gap	**Bridging the Gap**
Lead agencies blaming and blameful	Vision & Leadership
Barnett reversal, public funds drop	FCPInc : Community-centred Policies
Global recession; finance, tourism suffer	Funding Efficiency
Transport infrastructure overburdened	Connectivity: Rosyth, Leuchars, Rail
Polar Economies do well but Ferry sinks	Edinburgh growth engine
Education in turmoil; curate's egg	Polar Economies Success
Increasing inequality and marginalisation	Commuting has mixed blessings
Middle Fife in crisis; crime and drugs	Schools at heart of community
Commuting Chaos; folk emigrate	

Source: Adapted from MI/SP1/2

For each bullet point, a resource (or resources) was identified, followed by the question, "do we have it?". Answers in this category were varied (for example, 'no', 'not a lot', 'not really', 'not yet', 'small scale', 'developing', 'somewhat', 'started', 'getting there', 'yes', etc.). For some of the resources, corresponding actions were also listed. Interestingly, for most of the specific council-owned resources, especially 'land use', the action was listed as their "20 year plan", referring to the Council's 'Structure Plan', their most important planning document. However, it is unclear whether the specific resources would be dealt with in the structure plan or if the identification of these resources would actually direct the structure plan (see section 4.3.4).

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[49] In the tables below, italicised writing indicates resources identified after the partnership meeting.

When the analysis was completed and the identified resources had been refined, the 'resource gap' was given a score of 1 to 5 (where 1 is well-equipped and 5 is ill-equipped), the 'potential' action was completed, and a 'locus of action' was identified. Moreover, rather than being segmented between the two scenarios, the resources were categorised into the broad themes[50] of *"Fife's Resources or Stock"*; the *"Economy"*; *"Connectivity"*; *"Community Learning"*; and *"Funding"*. Included was a corresponding indication as to whether or not a specific resource was particular to the positive or negative scenario, or was common to both. This was done to illuminate "the scale of shortfalls, and indicate whether common or scenario specific action [was] needed" (MI/SP1/2). The final category of the analysis was who would be taking the 'lead role'. None of the data collected indicated if this was ever articulated, although the responsibility of action is implied within the 'locus of action'.

Below is a reflection of the discussions about each resource[51] under the framework described above and is followed by a brief analysis. The first resource is Fife itself, its stock, its resources, services, and Partnership capabilities:

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[50] These resources mirrored broadly the key drivers identified before the generation of the scenarios. They were *"Fife's resources or stock"* (including its society and environment, services, partnership, culture); the *"Economy"*; *"Connectivity"* (within and out of Fife); *"Community Learning"* (including education and skills); and *"Funding"* (including the influence of national government)

[51] It should be noted that the data from which this information is gathered stipulates that," in some cases, action remains to be specified, [and] in all cases, there is a need for more in-depth work".

Table 4.10 - Resource analysis: Fife's resources and stock

Headline Resources	Resource Gap	Ambitious Response	Defensive Response	Potential Action	Locus of Action
Fife's stock, partnership and organisational capabilities					
Society and Environment					
The potential of all Fifers to be socially included	4	yes	yes	tackle exclusion so all value Fife and all are valued for what they do or have potential to offer	Fife Partnership and partner organisations
Community Capacity and Associational Networks	3		yes	community development to maintain or foster	Social Work, Community Services, SORG
Quality Environment	2	Yes	yes	through Fife Environmental Strategy	Environmental Forum
Services					
Customer/Community focused services	3	Yes	yes	cultural change for user centred services in all operational plans	Fife Partnership and partner organisations
Voluntary sector services and volunteer resources	3		yes	build and resource to cope with high demands	Voluntary Sector Working Group
Quality Private Housing	2	Yes		20 Year Plan implementation	Housing Alliance
Quality Affordable Housing	3		yes	Regeneration programme	SORG/Housing Alliance
Partnership					
Partnership development/ incorporation of Fife Community Partnership Ltd (FCPL)	2	Yes	yes	build and foster relationships of trust between and within partners; commit to incorporate	Fife Partnership and partner organisations
High public expectations of partnership	5	yes		build public's ownership and ambition for partnership	Fife Partnership
Third Sector capacity to engage in FPCL	4	Yes		community development for third sector engagement	Voluntary Sector Working Group
Leadership and Vision	3	Yes	yes	bed in, aggressively promote FCPL	Fife Partnership
Use of Partner Powers	3	Yes		Local Government in Scotland Act 2003	Fife Partnership and partner organisations
City Region - Relationships	4	Yes	yes	co-ordinate/build	Fife Partnership
Culture					
Confidence and reputation	4	yes	yes	Promote and celebrate Fife; External Relations Strategy	CRM & POD
New mindsets - *proactive/adaptive culture*	4	yes	yes	cultural change: user before provider interests; manage priority trade-offs	Fife Partnership

Source: from ID/SP1/7

Arguably, the most significant factors here are funding and transportation. In "Bridging the Gap", the incorporation of the Fife Partnership as the Fife Community Partnership Ltd (FCPL) would appear to be paramount to Fife's future. In the scenario itself, the FCPL leads to social

inclusion, increased tolerance, a renewed sense of community spirit and engagement, and a boost to infrastructure and the allocation and distribution of services. This in turn affects, perhaps most importantly, transportation and education, which are crucial for attaining social inclusion, economic regeneration, and sustainable prosperity.

Conversely, there is no mention of the FCPL in "Mind the Gap". Rather, the organisation of public services, including the Fife Partnership, retains the same structure it had in 2003. Consequently, finances are stretched, service delivery suffers, the excluded remain isolated and Fife slips into constant decline. Similarly, the voluntary sector struggles too, exacerbating the situation. Transportation troubles, through lack of funding, also contribute to the worsening state.

As can be seen from the table above, the '*Potential Action*' is more an assertion of strategic intent, almost restatement of the '*Headline Resources*', albeit in an improved state, than a specific action, which would help achieve the goals stipulated. Regardless, central to the strategy at this juncture is tackling exclusion, changing the service culture, and changing the nature of partnerships. However, causal logic would suggest that tackling exclusion necessitates action elsewhere—rather than being a strategy in and of itself, it would appear more a function of transportation, education, and public service delivery.

In terms of '*Resource Gap*', Fife would appear to be in a rather precarious position. The mean score of the fifteen resources listed above is 3.27, which, although scoring better than any other group of resources, implies (if 1 is well-equipped, 5 is ill-equipped, and 3 is averagely equipped) that Fife's resources are less than averagely equipped to handle the threats and opportunities posed in the two scenarios.

Table 4.11 - Resource analysis: Fife's economy

Headline Resources	Resource Gap	Ambitious Response	Defensive Response	Potential Action	Locus of Action
Economy					
Quality Economic Infrastructure	2	yes	Yes	Shared Agenda, Objective 3/ Enterprise zones	Economic Forum/LLP
Enterprising Economy	4	yes	Yes	Local Economic Dev't Strategy, develop e-business, foster, including immigration	Economic Forum/LLP
Diversified Economy	4		Yes	through Local Economic Dev't Strategy, new mutualism	Economic Forum/LLP
Quality Jobs	4	yes	Yes	through Local Economic Dev't Strategy	Economic Forum/LLP
City growth engines	2	yes		support, capitalise on opportunities and spill over	City-Region links
Growth Poles - St Andrews "World Class", Rosyth/Dunfermline Bridgehead	4	yes		polar successes to deliver major spin off to rest of Fife as they overheat and spill over	20 year development & City Region Plan ; Poss. National Planning Strategy
Economic expansion in central Fife	4		Yes	needs to be population lead, with proactive planning	20 year development & City Region Plan ; Poss. National Planning Strategy

Source: from ID/SP1/7

The most significant action designed to tackle the resource gap in Fife's economy is the then current Local Economic Development Strategy. Beyond this, and the 'spill-over' success from surrounding regions (as well as from Fife's traditionally prosperous areas), a dedication to e-business and indigenous enterprise (including that of immigrants to Fife), is key to Fife's economic strategy. From the scenarios themselves, Fife's economic success or downfall is closely linked to transport, IT/telecommunications, and a skilled workforce. Similarly to the situation above regarding Fife's resources, the economy would seem to be dependent (outside of encouraging enterprise, etc.) on other factors like transportation/telecommunications capability. Moreover, economic failure is blamed partly on a lack of vision and strategic thinking, linking in the necessity of incorporating the Partnership on Fife's ability to regenerate its flagging economy.

The mean score of the seven resources identified as relating to Fife's economy is 3.43. However, as was mentioned above, much of what seems to affect Fife's economic success are resources from other areas in Fife, namely connectivity and education. This would suggest that this particular score is not as meaningful as those from other 'resource areas'.

Table 4.12 - Resource analysis: Fife's connectivity

Headline Resources	Resource Gap	Ambitious Response	Defensive Response	Potential Action	Locus of Action
Connectivity					
Transportation Network Infrastructure	5	yes	yes	Lobby for inter/intra Fife rail links, and third Forth bridge	Local Transportation Strategy
Public transport	4	yes	yes	increase competition, community ownership	Local Transportation Strategy
Transportation investment	5	yes	yes	awake to opportunities, creative Intelligence, access road pricing income, tough investment choices across services, engage private sector	Local Transportation Strategy
Transportation Planning Capacity	3	yes	yes	Local Transport Strategy	Local Transportation Strategy, SESTRAN
IT /Telecoms Infrastructure	4	yes		e-governance, Broadband development	SE Fife & Others

Source: from ID/SP1/7

Connectivity feeds into everything else. It is identified in the negative scenarios as being "key to Fife's prosperity" (ID/SP1/5). Both scenarios dedicate significant sections to describing how crucial transportation (and to a lesser extent, IT/Telecommunications) is to all aspects of Fife's well-being. Success brings investment, commuters, families, and money, which leads to greater social well-being, mobilisation and inclusion for those previously excluded. Its failure isolates further a flailing economy and disjointed region, inward investment plummets, commuters live elsewhere, and those worse off suffer most. From reading all drafts of both scenarios, *connectivity*, is the most consistent and critical component of Fife's future—all transportation related resources and 'potential actions' are deemed as having particular significance to *both* scenarios. It would also appear to be the single issue with which Fife is least well-equipped. The mean score attributed to resources pertaining to connectivity in Fife is 4.20, which is significantly worse than any other set of resources. This number becomes even more important when considering the importance placed upon transportation in the discussion of the two previous resources.

Table 4.13 - Resource analysis: Fife's community learning

Headline Resources	Resource Gap	Ambitious Response	Defensive Response	Potential Action	Locus of Action
Funding					
resourcefulness, creative intelligence for funding streams	4	Yes	yes	Fair Shares for Fife action	Fife Partnership
Resource management / investment processes	4	Yes	yes	effective savings, best value, Corporate Asset Strategy development, do more with less, budget pooling	Fife Council
Influencing resources at National Strategy etc.	4	Yes	yes	Education Asset and External Relations Strategy action	Fife Council
EU funding etc.	2	Yes	yes	External Relations Strategy action	Fife Council
private investment	4	Yes	yes	public private partnerships in broadest sense	Finance and Asset Management, SE Fife

Source: from ID/SP1/7

Learning and education, like connectivity, feeds into everything else. Thus it may appear worrying for Fife that, out of the four resources selected three of them have particular significance to the negative scenario. In "Bridging the Gap", there are frequent references to the Fife's skilled workforce as a way to attract inward investment and stimulate indigenous business growth, yet only quality educational standards are identified as having significance to both scenarios. The mean score in this instance is 3.75, which implies that 'education' is the second most ill-equipped resource.

Table 4.14 - Resource analysis: Fife's funding

Headline Resources	Resource Gap	Ambitious Response	Defensive Response	Potential Action	Locus of Action
Community Learning					
Quality educational standards	3	Yes	yes	good minimum standards everywhere, but target priorities	Education, LLP, Economic Forum (Shared Agenda)
Educational potential of all Fifers	4		yes	include alternative curriculum, returning to education (class-room?) later in life,	Education, LLP
Capacity to think outwith professional boundaries	4		yes	innovate e.g. engage with 'barefoot' doctors and teachers, harnessing appropriate skills	Education, LLP
School/College links potential	4		yes	blur school/college boundaries and better integrate	Education, LLP

Source: from ID/SP1/7

The overarching strategy for dealing with this resource seems to be increasing efficiency and attracting greater levels of funding. Funding has particular significance in both scenarios, and as much as transportation and education are huge functions of success, funding dictates (to some extent) the degree to which those resources can realistically achieve their goals. The most manageable of these resources is "resource management / investment processes", where cost saving, best value and budget planning can attempt to stretch their budget as far as possible. However, as will be discussed later, something like budget pooling can be a source of great frustration for partnership working as it struggles to alleviate public needs while balancing bureaucratic restrictions and national agendas. The mean score of funding is 3.60, which places it exactly in the middle of the resource bundle (see below for a summary of resource scores).

Table 4.15 - Summary of resource scores

Resource	Number of Resources	Average Score	Ambitious & Defensive	Average Score	Only Ambitious	Average Score	Only Defensive	Average Score
Fife's Resources	15	3.27	8	3.25	4	3.50	3	3.00
Economy	7	3.43	3	3.33	2	3.00	2	4.00
Connectivity	5	_4.20_	4	_4.25_	1	4.00	N/A	N/A
Community Learning	4	3.75	1	3.00	N/A	N/A	3	_4.00_
Funding	5	3.60	5	3.60	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	36	3.53	21	3.52	7	3.43	8	3.63

As can be seen from the table above, the areas in which Fife was least well-equipped were transportation and Education, also the two areas on which so much of Fife's success seems dependent. This Gap analysis was described as having particular relevance as the scenarios were to be used to proof the (then) current Community Plan to help assess the robustness of "the aims, partnership provisions and broad thematic objectives" (MI/SP1/1.

Alongside the 'proofing' of the Community Plan, the scenarios were to be considered by Fife's Service and Strategic Partnerships. Aside from using such considerations for "updating and milestone review, their responses will form key contributions to the refreshed plan" (MI/ SP1/1), the first draft of which was scheduled for 31 May. At this stage in the process, there

was discussion about using the scenarios for more detailed strategic development and review by individual services and partnerships: "further scenario work that nests within the Fife Scenarios is already being planned for Fife Council's Local Services and related decentralisation developments" (MI/SP1/1).   However, it should be noted that these plans never materialised to the extent the steering group envisioned.   This seemed partly due to existing service agendas, and to a general (though non-deliberate) state of apathy: "I'm not really sure why…why we didn't do them at the next level, the service level…there was a lot going on then with best value, etc." (FCCP 1).   Regardless, the primary goal was always to create a robust process for revising the Community Plan, so Fife would be more adept at understanding the uncertainties it faced, and thus be able to prioritise resources accordingly.

4.3.2 Fife's Community Plan (Revised Edition) 2004 – A stronger Future for Fife

The 2004 Community Plan was a lengthy, consultative process.   It was written primarily by members of POD, before being circulated for comment to a wide variety of stakeholders.   It began shortly after the scenarios-to-action workshop in March and was approved by partners (with minor amendments) in late November 2003, and finally released at the end of February 2004.   Including the scenario planning process, over 250 people were involved in the production of this revision of the Plan.   A major issue raised during early feedback was that there was a lack of understanding as to the significance of the scenario planning process and the impact it had.   It was agreed that this issue be addressed.   Thus the second appendix mentions the scenario planning process but neglects to describe the two scenarios or the extensive resource analysis mentioned above.

Although the scenario planning process was instigated to inform the revision of the Community Plan, its direct impact in the plan itself is not readily apparent:

> "I don't think we capitalised on them sufficiently in the plan-making, in the review of the community plan. I don't think you can look at the community plan that came out in 2004 and say, '*right, that is the influence of the scenario process*'. I think the scenario planning process was acknowledged in the re-write of the community plan but I'm not sure you can easily trace the outcomes in the

revised community plan, in terms of what it was proposing, to change thinking arising from the scenario process—I was disappointed in that." (FCCP 1)

Put another way: "I don't think all the effort that went into the scenarios resulted in a significantly different community plan" (FCE 4).

When comparing the 2000 Community Plan with the 2004 revision, it is difficult to highlight specific (and significant) areas affected by the scenario process.   Without seeing earlier versions of the plan, it is hard to judge whether or not this was the case throughout the process, or if the content was altered dramatically after feedback from services and partner agencies.   It is mentioned in the meeting minutes from the Fife Partnership meeting of 27 August, 2003, that the plan should be edited to include the aims of the 2000 plan (i.e., 'Social Inclusion', 'Sustainability', and 'Best Value').   Perhaps the most significant explicit contribution of the scenario planning process is apparent in the discussion of the future challenges facing Fife:

Table 4.16 - Fife's "Challenges from the Future"

Challenges for the Future		
Area	**Specifics**	**Justification**
Demographic Trends	Ageing population, growing inequality	Resource pressure (social care, education & transportation), which will intensify in economic downturn; the worst off will suffer first and most
Congestion	Increasing congestion within and out of Fife	Deter population and economic growth
Economy	Diversification and Sustainability	Flexible to technological opportunities; requires good IT & transport to attract new business
Housing	Good quality and affordable	Crucial to economic, environmental and health improvements, and thus to reduce social disadvantage
Education	Skills shortage	Children and young people require the right education and skills set for enterprise and active citizenship
Communities	Strong, attractive, vibrant and thriving	Fundamental to a high quality of life, and delivery of community programmes
Equality	Inequality and Discrimination	Tackling Inequality must underpin all activity in Fife
Voluntary Sector	Involvement in Community Planning	Provide support and build capacity in Voluntary sector
Environment	Balance pressure for growth and limit negative environmental impact	Overdependence on landfill must decrease. Waste disposal is a high priority
Leadership & Vision	Within and out of Fife	Redevelopment of Fife's town centres; promotion of Fife's interest with adjacent cities and the Scottish Parliament

Source: Adapted from FR/FP/3

The main themes of the revised Community Plan remained largely unchanged: *'A Stronger, More Flexible and Diverse Economy'* stayed the same, as did *'A Well Educated and Skilled Fife'*, and *'Safeguarding and Improving our Environment'*; *'A Healthier Fife'* became *'Improving the Health and Wellbeing in Fife'*; *'Stronger, Safer Communities'* was split into both *'Strengthening our Communities'* and *'Making Communities Safer'*; and finally, *'Making the Most of Leisure'* was removed as an individual action and "integrated within the themes on the economy, education and learning, environment and stronger communities" (FR/FP/3).

Significant too is the similarity of milestones in the revised plan. Of the 48 Milestones listed, 40 were almost exactly the same as in the original plan, which contained 62 Milestones (43 of which made it into the revision[52]). Interestingly, three of the milestones that did not make it into the revised Community Plan were about areas identified as being significant in the scenario process. In the *economic* area, the milestone "achieve an increase in the volume of freight transported by rail in Fife" was omitted, which is surprising giving the scenarios identified the necessity of transportation for economic purposes. This issue of freight travel and its relation to economic prosperity was also raised by the head of Fife Council's Transportation Service:

> "[W]e've got discussion on going with Diageo and companies like that…because they want to put their stuff on to freight, onto rail, onto an existing railway line— the only question there is, how do we get the railway line to speed up from 20mph to 50mph?
> […]
> The cross Forth, central Fife stuff is crucial for the regeneration of Fife" (FCE 3)

Another transportation issue omitted inexplicably, this from the original *stronger, safer communities* action, was the milestone: "improved access to a wider range of transport choices within Fife". Similarly, the development of quality, affordable housing has been identified as crucial, in terms of the Community Plan and Fife Council's 20-year Structure Plan, yet the milestone, "Improve the quality and condition of housing" was left out of the *environmental* action. The only explanation for these omissions is that some of the "original milestones have been changed or deleted where it has become apparent that they are not

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[52] The discrepancy between 43 and 40 milestones is due to both the duplication of some milestones and the separation of others.

measurable as intended" (FR/FP/3). These Milestones will de discussed further later in this section.

There is a distinct similarity between some of the scenario planning work and the section of the Community Plan describing the key issues identified from the review of progress since 2000. Seven issues are articulated:

1. **Developing the role and capacity of the Fife Partnership and its relationship to partner agencies and specific partnerships**.

2. **Develop joint approaches** to customer contact.

3. **Developing joint planning** and commissioning.

4. Developing local community planning.

5. Continuing to develop and **align internal processes**, particularly around information sharing, skills development and asset and resource sharing.

6. **Working to increase participation by the voluntary and private sectors in community planning.**

7. **Developing Participation.**

The issues identified in bold type were evident in the discussion of the scenarios, specifically the possibilities and (potential) benefits of an incorporated Fife Partnership, the importance of 'joint working', and the importance of the voluntary sector. However, just because these issues were prominent in the scenarios does not necessarily imply that it is *because* of the scenarios that they are mentioned here. These seem to be overarching issues embedded deeply within the Fife Partnership's organisational psyche. Thus it would be reasonable to assume that these issues would be at the forefront of any exercise which involves the articulation of key issues pertaining to the future of Fife's public sector.

The most significant mention of the scenario planning exercise is in the appendix, where an outline of the process is described along with the purpose of project and a statement of how it has helped the community planning process:

> "Scenario Planning allowed us to test our priorities against these two widely contrasting possible futures for Fife. This has helped is to adjust the priorities and

actions in this revised Community Plan so that we can make the best of whatever the future holds for Fife." (FR/FP/3)

Also mentioned in the appendix were the various initiatives, plans and strategic documents taken into consideration in the writing of the Community Plan. There were 34 in total. Perhaps this is why it is not as easy to trace the specific ways in which the scenario planning work has informed the Community Plan. Scenario planning was something fresh—a new way to work in partnership—which also meant that it was not embedded in Fife's public sector policy practice, and thus was competing with deeply engrained practices, some of which were local, regional, and often national. The NHS, Police, even individual services within Fife Council have well-developed strategy and planning processes which, at the more specific thematic levels of the Community Plan, are bound to take precedent.

4.3.3 The Praxis of Scenario Planning and the 2004 Community Plan

The lack of an explicit link between the scenarios and the Community Plan does not necessarily mean that there were no benefits—quite the opposite. All respondents complimented the process and the benefits, which though subtle were still evident:

> "The benefits were more subtle, they were: the gelling of the partnership…the willingness of people to think longer term about possible futures and challenges. And the plan itself? Well, as Churchill said: *"plans are of little importance but planning is essential"*. And I think there's truth in that, the plan itself did not clearly show the influence of the scenario process, albeit it was acknowledged. A lot of the evidence that had been collected in the scenario process was reflected in the analysis of the needs and the challenges that Fife faced." (FCCP 1)

Another said:

> "I think it freed up peoples' thinking, in terms of the kind of issues that the partnership needed to concentrate on in order to ensure that Fife is a competitive and attractive place to be." (FCCP 3)

Although difficult to locate physically, the cognitive impact of the "emotional" and "intellectual" (FPM 3) process was regarded highly:

> "it started with an emotional view that we should be working together for the good of Fife and gave it some factual and intellectual underpinning, which is still there (even possibly hidden) but instead of doing something because I'm sure it's the right thing to do, I'm taking a line because fastidiously I remember that there's an evidence-base for it, if that makes sense. I don't refer constantly to the evidence-base, but the judgement is more confident in the knowledge that there was an evidence-base for that". (FPM 3)

Moreover:

> "They were there in the back of your consciousness and it was something you associated the partnership with." (FPM 6)

It was also apparent that the Partnership needed the scenario planning process to bring together the public sector, which was restricted previously to a culture of 'service silos': "the Fife Partnership provides a mechanism for making sense of a lot of the work so that it's not just taking place in isolation" (FPM 3). Thus the scenario planning process was a way to facilitate that 'mechanism', to create a framework for it. As the former Chief Executive of the Council said, "I think it give a clear framework to what the partnership was about" (FPM 1). Similarly, at a service level, the Director for Education said, "It gives us a common language and it gives us a common focus and a kind of neutral one where we can talk about the different contribution our different services could make" (FCE 1). Despite the desire to use "the breadth of vision to try to contribute to others" (FPM 8) and a general commitment towards partnership working, there were still hindrances: "the [partnership's] difficulty is giving up individual agendas" (FPM 2).

Even though the scenarios were not embedded as deeply or as firmly as some envisioned, or achieved all that was expected or intended, they were still apparent, albeit fighting against the day-to-day priorities which can consume organisational focus:

> "All of us, obviously, draw up plans for each of our services, and that would have been in the background for the plans. I guess, though, there's a tendency, in any large service, for activities that are focused right across the council to play second fiddle to the day-to-day realities that are running a service. So while they would've been there in the background, if you think about it, the day job would have continued." (FCE 2)

Similarly, the head of Transportation reiterated that the scenarios, though in the background, still affected the creation of the Fife Council's Structure Plan, which extended from 2006 - 2026: "It found its way into the structure plan...so it wasn't just on the day then forget about it, which can quite easily happen in a lot of things...the follow-through was definitely there" (FCE 3).

However, others commented on the difficulty of sustaining momentum following 'the gathering':

> "One of the frustrations of days like 'the gathering', and things like scenario planning, is that you come out of a day like that and think, '*right! I know where we're going!*' and six months later you're in your office thinking, '*what happened to that?*' And that's not the fault of scenario planning." (FPM 4)

For some partner organisations, the lack of impact was less to do with a lack of momentum, and more to do with a lack of relevance. In Fife Constabulary, for example, the impact was minimal:

> "There wasn't a change. There wasn't a 'light coming on moment'...They didn't really affect our discussions in here...We're aware of them, but they're not in areas where we have any primacy...There may be a link between the scenarios and the police vision but it doesn't extend to the particular substantive tasks" (FPM 2)

Similarly, some of those involved with the scenario planning steering group were disappointed and frustrated by the lack of direct, explicit impact:

> "The scenarios acted as a good mirror to set those things in context but I don't think they directly challenged and changed what were our objectives, what were our performance measures and so on. And that was a disappointment for me— that it hadn't been more influential in the plan, but then the plan is maybe not the most important thing." (FPS 3)

Though it seems that this was not for a lack of effort:

> "There were briefings done to management teams, and there was encouragement given to services to use the contextual analysis that the scenarios offer. We gave an input to that process, but I don't think the organisation is receptive to that." (FCCP 3)

Effort alone appeared insufficient to establish the scenarios in the way they were intended. Part of the issue seemed to be simply time-related, an ongoing issue with both scenario planning processes: "we ran out of time…we did a huge amount [with the scenario process], but with the follow-up, we just ran out of time" (FPM 6). However, this was not thought too surprising, given the size of Fife's public services[53]:

> Scenario Planning gave momentum to Partnership working…to maintain that degree of cooperation and joint-working in an area the size of Fife is really difficult. Momentum is probably the hardest thing to hold onto because Fife is *big* and the structures are *huge* and *slow*. It's like turning a tanker." (FPM 4)

Similarly, part of this delay has also been attributed to democracy itself:

> "NHS, Scottish Enterprise, Communities Scotland [all] find the councillors the most frustrating people because the democracy gets in the way of them being able to get on with their decision making. So everything has to go at the pace of the slowest organisation—*that's us!* So you have to fit with committee rotations, decisions, whereas the others have boards and just get on with it." (FPM 6).

Strangely, despite the council thinking it held up proceedings, it was thought of by others as being more advanced in embedding the scenario planning work, primarily because structural changes had been in place for six years, whereas NHS Fife had completed "massive structural changes" (FPM 3) six months earlier:

> "We took it [the scenario work], but not as far as Fife Council, partly because it was arguably easier for them because they have fewer competing masters…they were also six years on from reorganisation where we were only six months...The culture takes a long, long while to change." (FPM 3)

The following section details three overarching factors which impeded the effectiveness of the scenarios and the scenario planning exercise during the scenario-to-strategy process.

4.3.3.1 Strategic Fatigue

Within POD, the Council service charged with the management of the strategic follow-through process, the lack of engagement and adoption of the organisation was attributed mainly to

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[53] Fife is the third largest local authority in Scotland and tenth largest in the UK.

'strategic fatigue'.   Progress seemed to slow down amidst "so many tiers of local government" (FPM 4) and an uncertainty about how to actually manage this process:

> "That's where we lost momentum.   I just remember [a member of POD] producing endless charts and excel spreadsheets and trying to turn a story into a cold, hard strategy.   I don't know how it's supposed to be done, how if scenario planning is part of a core strategy like this, how that connection is made.   But that was probably the weakest part of what we did.   We lost steam." (FPS 3)

Although the work was well intentioned and started off on the right track, in terms of analysis, etc., enthusiasm tailed off towards the end of the scenario-to-policy process:

> "And in doing some resource analysis of how fit our resources were to deal with the two scenarios, we started to get down that road, but tiredness crept in and we didn't really go that step further, which is to say that the next round of community planning should now be putting things in place to guard against 'minding the gap' or putting things in place to go for 'bridging the gap'." (FCCP 1)

Part of this tiredness can also be attributed to the competing strategic process discussed below.

4.3.3.2 Assumption of Strategic Singularity

In Fife, the positive scenario lost some of its significance when the process entered the strategy (community planning) phase.   While it "instilled an understanding of what we're doing" (FPM 4), what seemed to develop was the underlying assumption that the positive scenario was very close to, and almost interchangeable with, the ambitious vision defined clearly in the 2000 Community Plan.   The belief that the council was working towards the positive scenario anyway, resulted in the implication that little strategic change was actually needed.   This was described by a member of the scenario planning steering group as strategy "by default":

> "there was a tacit assumption that 'bridging the gap' was close to the ambitions in the community plan, therefore we were going to carry on as we were, which is a bit of a combination of *let's carry on with what we're doing* and *not do anything different* because it's actually pursuing the ambitious scenario.   But it was a bit by default, really.   We didn't do a conscious decision about what our strategic choice would be, we just carried on doing what we were going to do

because the scenario planning process had given us comfort, perhaps, that 'bridging the gap' and the ambitions of the community plan were the same." (FCCP 1)

This opinion filtered widely through the senior management of Fife Council: "I think we were probably going in that direction anyway, to be truthful, because the council itself was the leading instigator of the scenario planning sessions" (FCE 2). This sentiment was echoed throughout the organisation but was particularly prevalent in the Education and Transportation services:

"The things we [education] were trying to do and are continuing to try to do, as an organisation, are pretty much aligned with the best outcome scenarios that we have anyway." (FCE 1)

Members of the transportation service held a similar opinion. Except that because of their limited ability to control their own future (see vignette 4.1), the most they can realistically do is work towards the positive future and try as best as they can to influence that which they cannot control:

"I would say that I don't think they changed the course we were on…if anything, what we were doing was heading towards the positive scenario anyway, but it's just a case of how close can you get to that positive scenario, and then you come back to what I said about how much are you in control, and if you're not in control you've got to make sure you've got a seat at the table to influence." (SLS 1)

Specific to the "Bridging the Gap" scenario, this assumption of strategic singularity could be interpreted as having both positive and negative implications. While it has helped to solidify and legitimise the existing vision of Fife Council and the Partnership, it has also afforded services, particularly, a way of participating in a process without having to actuate change— almost paying "lip-service" and evoking the illusion of genuine involvement while maintaining the same strategic direction as before:

"what was happening was that folk were paying lip-service to that as a strategic document and either able to hang their hats on it any which way they wanted just because it was so broad, or just quietly ignoring it, and they would write paragraphs saying, 'this is consistent with…', but actually it wasn't, they were on a completely different planet from where the community plan had actually headed." (FCCP 3)

Of course, one must not fall into the trap of assuming that because explicit change has not occurred that the process has failed. Quite the opposite, change for change's sake is as dangerous as inactivity in the name of apathy. Also, wit must not be assumed that this represents a failing of the scenarios either. In services like Education and Transportation, where the scenarios may not have stimulated change, the ancillary benefits of scenario planning should not be forgotten. The strategy may not change but most respondents acknowledged the power of understanding the future and thus the implications and importance of their work.

Vignette 4.1 – The Forth Road Bridge

The Forth Bridge is identified in both positive and negative scenarios as being critical to Fife's success. It connects Fife with Edinburgh and beyond—not just the rest of Scotland but England too (in fact, only half of the traffic crossing the bridge southwards is actually going to Edinburgh). However, despite its identification as such a key issue to Fife's (and the rest of Scotland's) economic prosperity, as a local authority, Fife has little control over its own destiny. Part of the reason why can be attributed to bureaucratic structures, and competing interests and agendas.

In 2007, the head of the Transportation service in Fife described the problem:

> "The crazy situation is that we have a bridge that is managed by one organisation, the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA); the road at the other side is owned and managed by the City of Edinburgh Council, not the Scottish Executive, and the road this side is owned and managed by Fife Council, not the Scottish Executive. The A8000 is an Edinburgh Council project but will be taken over and managed by the Executive when it's finished." (FCE 3)

One of the problems seemed to be that while FETA is responsible "for the existing bridge, technically nobody has the responsibility for any new crossing" (FCE 3). FETA is also a deeply political body:

> "The governance of FETA is such that there [are] four politicians from Edinburgh, four from Fife, one from Perth and Kinross, and one from West Lothian, the chair alternates between Fife and Edinburgh and holds the casting vote. At least on two occasions they've come out with absolutely absurd decisions because they forced it to the vote, and if you can get your buddy in West Lothian to join up with you, or Perth and Kinross, for that matter, you end up with a situation where you've got one of the most important transport links in Scotland being governed on a casting vote." (FCE 3)

FETA is also only one level of transportation bureaucracy that exists. There are three levels:
- Council/Local – for example, Fife Council's *Transportation Service*
- Regional – Transportation Partnerships, *SESTran* (South-East Scotland Transport)
- National – *Transportation Scotland*, run by the Scottish Executive, and *FETA*

The impact of such bureaucracy on Fife's ability to manage its own destiny is substantial: "All that Fife has is a seat at the table to influence" (SLS 1). Thus all the "big ideas" and "aims and objectives...and goals and targets" are largely out of reach: "if you're not in control of the piece of infrastructure or funding related to do it, then it's very difficult" (SLS 1). In turn, this restricts the perceived effective of scenario planning: that it is "too aspirational", and out of touch with the strategic context in which the organisation operates. However, the counter to that argument is that scenario planning *has* highlighted the areas where Fife Council has little or no control and has thus *solidified* the need for a "much stronger influencing and lobbying type role" (SLS 1).

4.3.3.3 Competing Strategic Processes

Strategy in the Fife Partnership has become overly complicated; the scenario planning process was supposed to simplify it but the pressure of competing strategic plans and policy interests was relentless. Eventually, 37 different strategic plans were considered in the writing of the

2004 Community Plan—something which the head of POD and newly appointed Fife Partnership manager saw as a major shortcoming:

> "One of the things that [the Fife Partnership manager] and myself have really had to really crack the whip on is to get this thing simplified again because it'd grown arms and legs and was creating lots of complexity and we'd lost the brevity of what we'd been trying to do. There was a disjoint that had emerged between what we had used the scenarios for to develop these sort of overarching outcome themes, and then what was actually going on, on the ground. Some of that is to do with the fact that there were lots of different planning processes going on underneath the community plan, all at different stages and all at different time periods." (FCCP 3)

However, as long as the Community Plan remained at the forefront of everyone's focus, it was thought that these competing processes would not have had a detrimental effect:

> "But my view was that if they were always going back to the community plan it wouldn't have mattered, but what was happening was that folk were paying lip-service to that as a strategic document and either able to hang their hats on it any which way they wanted just because it was so broad, or just quietly ignoring it, and they would write paragraphs saying, '*this is consistent with…*', but actually it wasn't, they were on a completely different planet from where the community plan was actually headed." (FCCP 3)

This bears relevance to the previous point about the assumption of strategic singularity, except what is being referred to here is more deceitful, where services and managers are guilty of constructing the illusion of strategic alignment. However, a lack of change is not always an attempt at strategic duplicity. In transportation, a "well-established strategic development process" (SLS 1) was identified as a reason why the scenarios had not "really" improved the policy process. However, the recognition of the importance and consequence of work, especially as part of other plans, has been a positive outcome.

On a partnership level, the situation for non-council organisations like NHS Fife, and the Police, is even more difficult to balance, especially considering natural frameworks and regulations:

> "I think it's also quite difficult for people like health, and probably police and fire, because they are much more reactive in terms of the issues of the day, and

in terms of emergency services.   Their long-term planning is about...the Open golf tournament coming." (FPS 3)

In the NHS Fife, it was described as almost a continuous flow of strategy: "there is an overarching compendium of strategies to which we are always adding and reviewing and refining" (FPM 3). Similarly, another partner from Scottish Enterprise Fife echoed this notion of a constant stream of strategy and strategic documents: "the number of strategic documents that pass my desk are vast and many" (FPM 8). Scottish Enterprise Fife, like NHS Fife, sits between a national framework and local objectives:

> "Our strategic hierarchy starts with what was the framework for economic development for Scotland, which which was then translated into a document called the A Smart, Successful Scotland: Ambitions for the Enterprise Networks. The task of an organisation like SE Fife is to sit between the national strategic environment and the local strategic environment and to build a bridge between the two." (FPM 8)

Even at a local level, SE Fife's ambitions are driven through the Fife Economic Forum, one of the strategic partnerships that sits beneath the Fife Partnership, and the local economic development strategy:

> "The local economic forum is the primary conduit for the economic theme [and] *Growing Fife's Future*, the local economic development strategy, is effectively the blueprint for the development of the Fife economy." (FPM 8)

CVS Fife are perhaps in an even more complicated position because of their reliance on (usually short-term) local, national and European funding and the concomitant requirement to adapt their strategy accordingly: "Our biggest funding source up to this year has been European funding, but that's all dried up this year" (FPM 5).

With so many layers of planning (as described in section 4.1.3), perhaps it is unsurprising that one of the greatest challenges of the scenario planning process is other local and national strategic requirements:

> "the strategic direction comes from all sides: from the Scottish Government, especially if ministers want to see specific outcomes in specific areas and if there's funding associated with that, from the Council's structure plan, and from the Community Plan." (FCE 4)

Although the scenario development process was supposed to align the overarching strategies, the *Structure Plans*, *Service Improvement Plans*, *National Frameworks*, etc., are so deeply embedded that they compete against, and, to some extent, dampen the impact of the scenario and community planning processes.

4.3.4 Fife's Structure Plan

Fife's Structure plan, entitled '*Fife Matters*', sets out the development strategy and strategic land use policies and identifies the general scale and location of development. The Structure Plan also sets the context for *Local Plans* which combined for the *Fife Development Plan*. The consultative draft Structure Plan, published in March 2005, was subject to widespread public consultation—in fact, the statutory process began in January 2003. Almost 600 consultees participated and over 3000 comments were received from members of Fife Council and "interested parties" from external bodies.

The Structure Plan was required to fit into a wider legal context set by European Directives and to be guided by the Scottish Executives Scottish Planning (SPPs), National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPGs), Planning Advice Notes (PANs), and Circulars. In the introduction of the plan, it stipulated that "the content of these documents is reflected, but not repeated in the policies of this Plan" (FR/FC/1). It then mentions that the national planning framework (2004) "identifies the likely change to 2025 and sets out an achievable long-term for Scotland" (FR/FC/1). Similarly, that "the Fife Community Plan (2004) sets out the shared vision of public sector providers and the wider Fife community over the next 10 years" (FR/ FC/1).

Much of the the forethought upon which the Structure Plan is based comes directly from the Community Plan. The driving vision refers explicitly to the one described in the Community Plan, as do the "challenges for the future". However, the most significant link to the scenarios is the expanded scenario-style vision (which extends to 2026) that introduces the document. Thematically, it is very similar to 'Bridging the Gap' but it does not use any of the

same language, nor was there any reference to the scenarios at the initial presentation of the draft plan to the Fife Partnership. However, respondents believed this to be an explicit consequence of the scenario planning exercise and evidence that the scenario planning process was beginning to become etched into Fife Council's strategic toolbox:

> "I think [the scenario exercise] influenced quite a lot. It found its way into the structure plan, which is a document that goes all the way to 2026, so it wasn't just on the day then forget about it, which can quite easily happen in a lot of things". (FCE 3)

Despite the apparent impact of the scenarios on the Structure Plan, especially in terms of the focus on the housing market, regenerated communities, an educated workforce and improved transportation network, it is difficult to judge accurately the true impact of the scenario process. Although it was thought that the scenarios did have a significant effect, much like with the Community Plan, a number of respondents felt that although the scenarios helped, they did not alter the path that they were already on.

4.3.5 Other Strategic Processes and Monitoring Systems

The scenario planning and community planning processes were the significant strategic initiatives of 2003 and 2004. In 2005, this focus shifted to a broad array of other strategic processes, for example, *Fife's Structure Plan* (above), the *Efficient Government Initiative*, the establishment of a new partnership to oversee the "strengthening our communities" theme from the Community Plan, the *Fit-for-Purpose* Review of Strategic Partnerships, an incorporated Fife Partnership, and the *State of Fife Report*. It was during the discussions of the *State of Fife Report* in September 2005 that the CPIG recommended that the scenario planning consultants from the University of St Andrews be re-engaged to facilitate the finalisation of the report (see section 4.3.6). During this time, Fife's economic partnership, the Fife Economic Forum, also published their development strategy 2005-2015, called "Growing Fife's Future". This document was being refreshed to reflect both the Community Plan and Fife's Structure Plan: "a pragmatic approach to opportunity must be the core of our economic strategy" (FPM 8). Similar to the situation described above with the Structure Plan, while there were no direct references to the scenarios, the effect the scenario planning

process had on the Community Plan implies that the scenario exercise had at least a tacit impact on the strategic and economic direction of Fife.

What followed from POD was an attempt to use the scenario planning process to propel Fife Council's intelligence gathering to a more relevant and inter-connected level:

> "From '*Bridging the Gap*', we had a template (for lack of a better word) to see how well we were doing…We had a report to tell us we were doing, if we were '*Bridging the Gap*'. In some areas, we were doing well, and in other areas we were not succeeding. It gave us a starting point." (FPS 2).

The 'Milestones' were envisioned as a means of "collecting evidence from other services about environmental context and what indicators could be used to say whether economic, financial, and demographic changes were taking place" (FCCP 1). The objective of the data collection was to bring "evidence into strategic thinking to understand what sort of future is rolling out for Fife based upon the external drivers" (FCCP 1). The Community Planning Milestones was a quantitative process, where a colour of red, amber or green was assigned to a number of indicators which were part of each Community Plan theme. Interestingly, despite overwhelmingly negative findings with regards to Fife's Resources (see table 4.15), the analysis for the Milestones report was significantly more optimistic—out of 65 indicators, 14 were classified as red[54], 9 as amber[55], and 42 as green[56] (FR/FP/4).

There was also a belief that a more qualitative analysis was needed. A memo written by Fife Council's Corporate Research in February 2005 detailed the unit's desire to embed scenario planning into the organisational psyche of Fife Council. The paper described the process undergone, illustrating the "iterative nature of scenario planning" (ID/FC/6), before stipulating the next challenge: "to continue to encourage free thinking and to incorporate this into the formal strategic planning process" (ID/FC/6). The memo proposed to "embed

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[54] Red indicates that should performance continue, targets for 2010 will not be met.

[55] Amber indicates that while progress is being made, if performance continues at the current rate, targets for 2010 will not be met.

[56] Green indicates that performance has already met or surpassed or, if performance continues at the current rate, will meet or surpass targets for 2010.

the scenario planning process as an annual element of strategic review" and "adopt a framework for scenario review" (ID/FC/6).

The framework for strategic review was intended to review the scenarios, determine the range of future directions, and to deploy appropriate strategic options. This process had four elements:

- Monitoring quantitative environmental information
- Monitoring qualitative environmental information
- Identifying significant events
- Testing key drivers and significant events against strategic options.

The actual manifestation of this proposal was known as the "Winds of Change", first presented in April 2005 and subsequently refreshed and reviewed in November 2005. The "Winds of Change" provided a simple, colour-coordinated way to visualise the progress of the key drivers in the context of the scenarios. For each major driver, a number of significant data points were placed in either the 'Bridging the Gap' or 'Mind the Gap' column. For example, for connectivity, the data point, "Rosyth-Zeebrugge ferry sailings are halved as *Superfast* withdraw one boat", was seen as being a signal of the more negative scenario, whereas, "Exploratory studies into 3rd Forth Bridge and cross-Forth commissioned; Edinburgh rejects road charging" (FR/FP/5), was more symptomatic of the positive scenario.

The *Winds of Change* reports were based upon significant analyses, combining demographic, economic, social data from a multitude of source both within and outside of Fife. Within POD, the opinion of the *Winds of Change* was high, and that it had a significant impact on the Partnership. It was noted by a member of POD that the above point about the ferry, and its implications for connectivity, had a significant effect on the partners:

> "I think one of the times we produced that document, it was just after Superfast Ferries had halved the ferry service from Rosyth, and we, because there had been quite a big play made on that in the scenarios, specifically around the connectivity issue, thought that this was a bit of a setback. Interestingly, even by just putting it in the document and saying that it was taking us down the wrong road, we caused quite a stir with some of the partners who felt that it was maybe

being a little bit disingenuous and might not be helping them in their battle to try and bring back the double sailing. So it's been interesting that folk do actually take it seriously from that perspective, in terms of what the impact might actually have been." (FCCP 3)

However, despite these claims and the depth of analysis, and the clarity and simplicity of the diagrams, the *Winds of Change* never seemed to find a captive audience. Although they were included in the *State of Fife Report* and in the *Managing Fife's Futures* workshops (see 4.4.1), almost all respondents not involved with Corporate Research had little or no memory of the presentations: "I'm struggling to even remember that…No, I don't even recall the damn thing" (FCE 2). Of those that did recall it, it was an exercise cast off as "another" one of POD's creations (FCE 4). Again, this can be partly attributed to competing strategic priorities and day-to-day pressures. From a service point of view, the scenarios were to assist in the Community Plan, which was to guide and inform the Structure Plan, which in turn guides their Service Improvement Plan.   While embedding the scenario planning process was a high priority for the strategists and policy-makers in the Corporate Research and Development wing, it was far less important to the services and senior managers of the Partnership, who had to deliver on national and/or local targets, while managing the myriad of other strategic initiatives and policy agendas.

4.3.6 State of Fife Report 2005 and Re-engaging the Scenario Planning Process

As mentioned above, it was the *State of Fife Report 2005* process that re-ignited Fife's interest in scenario planning.   Corporate researchers and community planning managers recommended that the team from the University of St Andrews that worked on the scenario planning process in 2003 lead "two or more workshops to facilitate the State of Fife process" (MI/FP/3).   The joint report, presented to the Fife Partnership on 30 November, 2005, highlighted:

> "a number of key points and questions which had emerged from scenario planning in relation to the review of the Community Plan 2004, including environmental and health factors, potential drivers of change, the impact of Edinburgh on Fife and the implications arising from the reduction in sailings from the Rosyth ferry services". (MI/FP/3)

What emerged from discussions was a desire of the Partnership to reduce the number of Milestones (from 84) combined with a clearer focus on delivery. Perhaps more significant was an acknowledged "need" for partner organisations to review the *Milestones* to "feed into" the scenario exercise and to make "scenario planning and the development of milestones… feed into the strategic planning cycles [of] partner organisations, in order that it might inform the strategic plans of each partner organisations" (MI/FP/3.

The Draft State of Fife Report 2005 drew together four strands of analysis: the *Winds of Change*; Fife's needs; the *Milestones* of the community planning process; and (then) current policy activity. It was the articulation of a wider consensus that a valuable endeavour needed refreshing, that clarity and focus, in terms of priorities and accountability, was required: "The scenarios showed the potential for partnership working and this maybe made us realise that we were working in second gear and needed to move up." (FCE 4). What also emerged was a need to simultaneously look wider, to see the "bigger picture"—to "look, listen and think bigger" (FPS 1), and to clarify focus: "there still wasn't a clear enough focus; I thought we really needed to concentrate on four or five key things" (FPS 2).

4.4 Episode 4 – Scenario Planning 2006

In October 2005, a month before the presentation of the *State of Fife* report to the Fife Partnership, members of Fife Council's Policy and Organisational Development Service (POD), responsible for the *State of Fife* process, met facilitators from the University of St Andrews to discuss the development of scenario planning in Fife.   At that meeting, council representatives discussed their intention to "embed scenario planning within the knowledge base" of the organisation.   They felt there was no substantial engagement with the 2003 scenario work, attributed mainly to a lack of ownership as the scenarios filtered through the organisation, which, in turn, has been attributed to a lack of understanding. Consequently, members of POD thought that by increasing the organisational *understanding* of the scenarios (and scenario planning in general), there would be greater *engagement* and thus *ownership*, which would lead to better *policy development* and *action*. It was also their opinion that the

best way to achieve this was through the interaction of members of the Fife Partnership and other senior managers of partner organisations: that by achieving "cross-learning" within the group, they could then go beyond it and achieve some form of continuity.

It was agreed that the University of St Andrews would facilitate "three 3-4 hour workshops with +/- 20 key representatives from the Fife Partnership" (ID/FC/7). It was agreed that the first workshop would "compare Fife's situation today with the 2002 Scenarios, identifying important similarities and differences", also serving as a "situation audit and [involving] the identification and appraisal of key signposts" (ID/FC/7).   Workshop two would "revise the scenarios to reflect any important changes that have occurred in the underlying drivers over the past 3 years" (ID/FC/7).   The final workshop would involve the "establishment of a resource- based audit and the identification of policies and actions necessary to push Fife towards the positive 'Bridging the Gap' scenario and those that will help to prevent it from drifting toward the negative 'Mind the Gap' scenario" (ID/FC/7).

4.4.1 Re-engaging the Scenario Planning Process

The decision to reengage the scenario planning process began with the realisation that the *State of Fife* process should not finish with just the publication of the *Community Planning Milestones* and the *State of Fife Report*.   Rather, the broader aim of the process was to "equip the Partnership with evidence for reflection, discussion, possibly option appraisal and further action; in other words, a 'strategic conversation' for the long term planning and management of Fife" (MI/FP/3/1); put simply, "to get to the heart of what matters" (FPS 2). The notion of 'strategic conversation' is a deliberate reference by senior members of POD to the book of the same name by van der Heijden: "in 2005, I came up with this idea of strategic conversations—picking up on the book title" (FCCP 1).

After renewed contact between members of POD and the University of St Andrews, it was proposed that the workshops be facilitated to "engage Fife Partnership members together with strategic planners, managers and coordinators of our organisations and partnerships" (MI/FP/3/1). The outcomes were listed as:

- Refreshed contextual scenarios as a baseline for more detailed planning across the partnership, e.g. the 20 Year development plan
- Agreed guidance for corporate planning by partners
- Practical action on strategically important questions and problem solving
- A shared agenda amongst partners for prioritising resources e.g. budget planning
- Update community planning in the light of emerging needs and influences e.g. selective milestone revision
- Embed scenario planning as a process in partners' day to day thinking: changing the culture
- Build capacity within Fife Partnership to think more towards long term strategic goals, enabling deeper understanding of the implications of big decisions and fostering relevant and meaningful policies
- An informed Strategic Futures Group to support Fife Partnership with regular analysis and intelligence
- Begin the process of refreshing the Community Plan for 2007.

The *State of Fife* process appeared to stimulate a feeling of "dissatisfaction" among those involved with the first scenario process—that not enough had been done with the first set of scenarios. Thus, it presented an excellent opportunity to re-start the process, to re-establish "momentum…on a successful endeavour" (FPM 1) and to check their "validity and to clarify focus on priorities and accountability" (FPS 1): "the first [scenario process] was about creating, the second was about conforming" (FCE 4).

As stated above, the *State of Fife* process triggered a renewed interest in long-term planning. Scenario Planning was a way to embed, not just long term thinking, but also the monitoring process—the *Community Planning Milestones* and the *Winds of Change*—into the Fife Partnership's strategic process. The enthusiasm was not just limited to POD either. It was noted that members of the Planning service, the group responsible developing the Council's Structure Plan, were "keen to use scenario planning for the development of the planning service" (FCE 5): "They were quite interested in working off the back of a refresh of the scenarios, or a refresher of the community plan and the scenario planning contribution to that" (FCCP 1). Thus, the *State of Fife* Report, essentially a stock-take exercise and precursor to the next iteration of the community planning process, provided the Fife Partnership a convenient juncture to revisit its 2003 scenario.

4.4.2 Refreshing the Scenarios

After discussions with facilitators from the University of St Andrews on how to move the process forward, it was agreed that the first step should be to refresh the two scenarios. However, before the scenarios could be refreshed, the facilitators advised comparing "Fife today [i.e. 2005/2006] with the 2002/2003 scenarios" (SPF 1): "the first thing would be a stock-take—workshop one would be a stock-take [on] how we were doing in light of the scenarios, using the evidence from the 'Winds of Change'" (FCCP 1). There was also a decision made at this time that the old scenarios could provide a valuable context for evaluating progress:

> "we wouldn't tear them up and start again. We wanted to see if they could be tweaked in light of new thinking, or new circumstances, or new influences; and then let's look at how we use them to start to influence policy plans." (FCCP 1)

Accordingly, the first of the three workshops in the *Managing Fife's Future* process, held on 18 April 2006, discussed how the "Fife community planning scenarios are rolling out based on an analysis of the five key external drivers of change" (MI/FP/4/1). The medium for this analysis was the *Winds of Change* diagrams (see section 4.3.5). Despite consistent optimism about Fife's future, this was the first occasion where the general progression was identified as being more consistent with the 'Mind the Gap' scenario. The key factors in this realisation were the increased population projections (due to inward migration), the "halving of the ferry service", an accelerated decline in manufacturing, and the likelihood of weight limits on the Forth Road Bridge. Although 26 out of the 40 data points were aligned with the 'Mind the Gap' scenario, the official report of the meeting indicated that the "future rolling out for Fife under these influences is thus somewhere in between the two scenarios" (MI/FP/4/1).

Following the presentation of the *Winds of Change*, discussions regarding the sustainability of using scenarios were positive—the group acknowledged their "continuing relevance" and identified additional factors to help update them (for example, government policy, increasing sustainability issues, health issues like increasing obesity). It was through these discussions

that the Fife Partnership acknowledged that they should be more "proactive in a strategic sense" (FPM 2), and try to exert a positive influence on some of these changing priorities.

The benchmarking exercise, the broad goal of the first workshop, was done by splitting the workshop into four groups of seven people. Their task was to evaluate how Fife was "fairing now on key components of the aspirational scenario, 'Bridging the Gap', and whether the direction of travel was positive or negative" (MI/FP/4/1). The results of this reflected the preceding presentation on the generally negative state of Fife. However, what this did show was the almost unified opinion that Fife was moving in a positive direction:

Table 4.17 - Benchmark analysis: '*Bridging the Gap*'

	Current Progress (Avg.)	Current Direction
Leadership	1.75	A
Structure	1.88	A
Funding/Finance	2.13	B
Housing	2.00	A
Connectivity/Transport	1.75	A
Industry/Jobs	1.81	A
Education	2	A
Health	1.88	A
Sustainability/Regeneration	1*	A
Quality of life	2.13	A
Population	2.33*	A

Source: from MI/FP/4/1

*Only three groups responded
Key: 1 = Poor; 2 = Satisfactory; 3 = Good; A = Positive B = Negative;

As can be seen above, the only area where there was consistent pessimism was the issue of funding and tightening finances. In terms of "current progress" only "Funding/Finance", "Housing", "Education", "Quality of Life", and "Population", were deemed to be "satisfactory" or higher. Two of the key areas identified in the 2003 scenarios as being crucial to Fife's success, "Leadership" and "Connectivity/Transport", were two of the three lowest scoring areas. Only "Sustainability/Regeneration", an issue of increasing importance at the time, was deemed worse.

The workshop concluded by "endorsing the value of refreshing the scenarios, continuing the conversation with focus on identifying agreed priorities for proactive strategic action" (MI/

FP/4/1). This goal would drive the agenda for the remaining workshops. What was also discussed was the need for "corporate planning guidance" for the partner organisations and for a way to reach an agreed balance between local and national priorities, something which impeded the first process.

Before these issues could be tackled, members of POD took responsibility for refreshing and editing the scenarios, rather than using a professional storywriter as had been done in the first place. As a result, the stories did not seem to have the same impact:

> "The first time around we actually sent all the stuff to a copywriter to actually get it professionally done, and this time we didn't, we just added things in ourselves and no matter how good draftsmen we think we actually are, I think it's just lost the impact that the original ones had.
>
> (…)
>
> I think because we kept that same sort of newspaper story format, they now don't read terribly well. I don't think they've got the impact that the original ones had, they now feel too much written by public sector speak." (FCCP 3)

Although the diminished power of the stories was attributed to a lack of style, it was also suggested that repetition may have also played a significant role:

> "What was different the second time around was the power of the stories. When you're seeing the same thing, they're not quite as compelling the second time around." (FPM 3)

Despite stylistic shortcomings in the writing, other members of the Council's services, especially those new to the process (but who had still read the original scenarios), preferred the edited, refreshed versions. Aside from "reflecting what was said" (SLS 1) in the workshops, a member of the education service commented on their realism:

> "I would say they were perhaps more realistic. The initial ones could have been seen as almost apocalyptic and the subsequent ones, I think, were informed more by a sense of what the real issues for the council were." (FCE 1)

This would appear to be an issue connected to the level of engagement the participants had with the process. Generally, those who experienced the first process thought the revisited scenarios had lost a part of their initial spark in favour of a more 'realistic', public sector

tone, whereas those not involved with the original process seemed to prefer the 'reality' of the revisited scenarios. However, interestingly, members of the partnership involved with the first process thought ownership from people not involved in the 2002/03 scenario process was lessened because, despite having the intellectual engagement, there was little or no emotional attachment to them:

> "Because of the change in personnel, there wasn't the same sense of ownership. People could understand them intellectually but didn't have the emotional sense of ownership. Some of us did, others didn't, and didn't have, as it were, the residual memory of the process." (FPM 3)

The addition of these 'real issues' gave the scenarios a list-like feel, referencing a number of (then) current initiatives which muddled the tense of the stories, thus rendering them less of a 'narrative from 2016' and more like a future-orientated checklist of public sector initiatives. In 'Bridging the Gap', the more positive scenario, the major additions were three extra paragraphs about the benefits of the FCPL (Fife Community Partnership Ltd.), which, despite being a constant theme in Partnership meetings between 2001 and 2007, never materialised into an actual entity. The two other significant additions were the impact of Eastern European migrants on the demographics and economy, and the issue of renewable energy, sustainability and environmental protection.

In 'Mind the Gap', the mostly negative scenario, the problems were attributed more to over-regulation from the Scottish Executive and increased micro-management from national agencies, rather than the absence of local leadership, which was described in the first scenarios. The issue of child and adult obesity was given a paragraph in between a section on education and the types of careers young people wanted, disturbing the thematic flow of the scenario. There was little mention of the influx of Eastern Europeans in this scenario but the effects of climate change, fossil fuels and the need to be renewable and sustainable was given a paragraph before discussing Fife's transportation problems. There was also a paragraph about the need for bio-diversity and the problems associated with over-intensive agriculture responses, and the need to improve the skills gap of farmers (who make up only 2% of Fife's workforce).

Overall, the scenarios remained largely the same. There were some amendments where the original scenarios referred to schemes or events scheduled between 2003 and 2006 that either did not happen or changed in nature; and there were additions to reflect the current thinking of the Fife Partnership, but on the whole, the essence of each scenario remained intact. The purpose of this exercise was really to provide an up-to-date platform from which to consider the long-term strategic goals of Fife's public services, which was the subject of the second workshop, entitled "State of Fife Reporting and Planning Process as a 'Strategic Conversation'".

4.4.3 Managing Fife's Future – the Strategic Conversation

The second workshop, held on 12 May 2006, was attended by 23 people (37 were invited), 15 of whom attended the first workshop.   It began with an explanation and discussion of the refreshed scenarios.   Table 4.18 (below) depicts how the scenarios were summarised (the significant additions are in italics):

Table 4.18 - Scenario summaries

Bridging the Gap	Mind the Gap
• Vision & Leadership	• Lead agencies blaming and blameful
• FCPL: Community-centred policies	• Barnett reversal, public funds drop
• Compact for governance with Scottish Executive/neighbouring authorities	• *Centralisation hits local priorities*
• Funding efficiency; joint procurement	• Global recession; finance, tourism suffer
• Connectivity: Rosyth, rail, bridges	• Transport infrastructure *deteriorating*
• Edinburgh growth engine; Polar economies success	• Polar Economies do well but Ferry sinks
• *Renewables cut fuel costs, create jobs*	• Education in turmoil; curate's egg
• Commuting has mixed blessings	• *Obesity & mental health epidemics*
• Schools at heart of *active, health communities*	• Mid Fife in crisis; crime, drugs, *worklessness*
• **All** of Fife a place of choice to line and move to	• Commuting Chaos; folk emigrate
	• *High cost fossil fuel dependency*

Source: synthesised from MI/MFF/1

The presentation of these scenarios stimulated debate around two main points: the issue of 'impact' and 'leadership'. There was an opinion that the scenarios focused too much on what

the Fife Partnership can *influence*, and not enough on what they can actually *do*. The second issue of leadership was indicative of some of the problems and discrepancies that plagued the follow-through process of the first set of scenarios, and to some extent, the effectiveness of the Community Plan. In this case, there was dissatisfaction with where the Fife Partnership and the community planning process sat within the overall framework of the Scottish Executive, whereby services would have to juggle between and/or balance accountability at both a national and local level. The lack of uniformity of this issue complicated matters further, for example, the Education and Transportation services, NHS Fife, and the Police all operate under different frameworks. Theoretically, this should be less of a problem for Fife, given its conterminous public service structure; and perhaps it is compared to other areas bound by regional, as well as national and local frameworks, but it is still a pervading issue which generates constant friction and uncertainty.

After the discussion of the scenarios, the workshop then moved on to the main purpose of the session: establishing the main strategic priorities that could push Fife towards the 'Bridging the Gap' scenario. To facilitate this 'strategic conversation', the group was split up into five tables (two of four people, and three of five) and asked to identify three "Strategic Policy Priorities" in order of importance and provide an assessment of the "Resource Capabilities", in terms of "good, fair, or poor", with an explanation of their reasoning. Each table was given a sheet of paper on which to write their opinions, which gave an example of the "Strategic Policy Priorities" as "aspects of key issues, drivers or consequences of change, such as transportation, population change, funding, economy, governance, health, environment". Similarly, the examples of "Resource Capabilities" were 'finance', 'organisational culture', 'leadership', 'influence', 'skills', 'knowledge', 'people', 'processes'. The groups were given an hour to do this task before presenting back to the whole workshop.

The table below summarises the findings of the exercise but paints a rather static, clinical picture that masks the lively debate and personal interests that shaped proceedings, for example, table three was made up mostly of members of Fife's Economic Forum, whereas table four consisted of members of Fife's environmental network and representatives from CVS Fife.

Table 4.19 - Emerging priorities and resource analysis (workshop 2)

Strategic Policy Priorities	Table 1		Table 2		Table 3		Table 4		Table 5	
	Rank	Res.Gap	Rank	Res.Gap	Rank	Res.Gap	Rank	Res.Gap	Rank	Res.Gap
Investment	1	Poor								
Environment/Energy	2	Fair							2	Fair
Sustainability	3	Poor	3	Fair			1	Poor		
Strategic Transportation			1	Good/Fair	2	Poor	2	Fair/Poor	3	Good
Education/Learning			2	Poor	3	Fair			1	Fair
Economy					1	No Rank				
Promotions					4	Poor				
Social Inclusion							3	Fair		

Source: synthesised from MI/MFF/2

Key: Res.Gap = Resource Capabilities

Typically, "strategic transportation" received the most attention. Cross-Forth travel was seen as critical, and was accompanied by doubts over Fife Partnership's capacity to effect change, given "recent decisions by the Scottish Executive" (ID/MFF/1/1). However, internal connectivity, especially rail links was also seen as a significant factor for Fife Residents. What emerged from the discussions around transportation was the notion of the interrelated nature of society, specifically that the transportation network had a "duty to connect people with opportunities" (ID/MFF/1/1).

Unsurprisingly, another key priority was education and learning. However, what was surprising were the problems surrounding what was actually meant by 'education'. Raising attainment in schools was a high priority. However, it was also the opinions of other groups that focusing on schools alone would only be effective if there was an overarching educational ambition in the general population. Instead, what was said was needed was a more consistent strategy, targeting "early years through to a receptive culture of life-long learning and making university education an achievable aspiration for more people" (ID/MFF/1/1).

The third most significant priority was related to energy and environmental sustainability. Initially, this was a point of dispute because of differing definitions. One group, which included the Chief Executive of Fife Council, identified sustainability as a form of social inclusion, where "inequality" and worklessness would be tackled as Fife adjusted and evolved into a knowledge economy. However, the predominant definition was related to a more effective use of resources and firmer action, as opposed to "just expressions of willingness" in tackling issues ranging from "fuel poverty" to "making businesses more environmentally sensitive" to "making Fife, the place, our biggest asset" (ID/MFF/1/1).

Other points raised at this stage were: the need for a more effective use of "diminishing, shared resources"; the need to avoid the dangers of "unsustainable short-term funding streams"; and the importance of strong leadership—a powerful voice to express and explain Partner priorities and capitalise on the knowledge, skill and resources available.

The purpose of the discussions following each group's presentation was to reach a consensus on the three 'strategic policy priorities'. Although some issues were agreed upon quickly, others were subject to extensive discussion, focused mainly around particular definitions and determinations over understanding the implications of ends and means. For example, the issue of 'strategic transportation' or 'connectivity' was a fairly straightforward consensus choice, whereas the issue of education was disputed on the grounds that educational attainment was a vastly different issue than educational ambition. An interesting point, perhaps reflective of the outcome focused nature of local government, was raised by the Chief Executive of NHS Fife, who argued that attainment should not be the priority because it would take almost 20 years to see results but the timeline in question was only 10 years. This resulted in a spirited discussion between the Chief Executive of Fife Council and the Chief Executive of NHS Fife—the two most powerful figures in the room. However, because of the their respective seniority, the other members of the workshop seemed far less willing to engage in the conversation, thus transforming a discussion of ideas into a dispute between two chief executives (see section 4.4.5.3).

The facilitators moved the discussion forward to the issue of sustainability. However, whether the mood had changed because of the preceding discussion, or that simply "it was getting late on a Friday afternoon" (SLS 1), what ensued was another long discussion over what sustainability actually meant, specifically what it meant as an 'end point' and as a means for working. As mentioned earlier, for some it was purely resource-based, others argued it was a form of social equality, and for others, it was a way of handling specific environmental problems.

Naturally, respective expertise also played a role in these discussions. Laterally, it became a quasi-lobbying process, where representatives from NHS Fife argued for the inclusion of health; representatives from CVS Fife argued for social inclusion; members of the environmental network fought for the more explicit, environmental aspects of sustainability; and perhaps most obviously, members of Fife's Economic Forum, who had recently completed their 2005-2015 economic development strategy, argued extensively for the economy to be the key priority.

After approximately one hour of discussions, a consensus over the top three, albeit a fragile one, was reached. The three key strategic policy priorities were agreed as "sustainability", "connectivity", and "education". The workshop concluded with an agreement that a clearer focus of each issue was needed before proceeding.

4.4.4 Fife's Key Priorities

As was described above, the workshop of 12 May 2006 concluded with the agreement of three key priorities: sustainability; connectivity; and education. However, at the Fife Partnership meeting of 14 June, four strategic priorities were presented as well as two other "managerial" priorities. The fourth priority was described as an offshoot of sustainability, pertaining explicitly to "social inclusion", specifically to tackling inequality and "worklessness". The managerial priorities were "increasing efficiency" and "strong leadership".

Little attention was paid to the two managerial levers but the addition of "social inclusion" stood out as inconsistent with the consensus reached at the second workshop. Its emergence can be attributed to a flow of events that highlights both the systemic nature of the public sector and the conflict between 'partnership' working and executive decisions.

After seven years in post, the Chief Executive of Fife Council was scheduled to retire at the end of May 2006. He was responsible for the decision to include "worklessness" (as it would be known):

> "Unemployment? Yes. I think it's a huge issue. Yep, guilty!
>
> It is a huge problem throughout Scotland. The number of people on incapacity [benefits] who, with a bit of encouragement, could work, is massive." (FPM 1)

It was well known amongst partners and workshop attendees that it was the outgoing Chief Executive who made "the late intervention" (FPS 1). The decision caused a split between those who supported the intervention and those who felt that it was an "interference of due process" (FCE 2). Those who supported it exhibited a combination of allegiance to the leader and support of the issue:

> "That's leadership. That comes down to leadership. You may say it came down to Chief Executive exercising his clout. Worklessness was the narrowing down of deprivation, and rightly so." (FCCP 1)

Others thought it was a sensible intervention by the Chief Executive as a mean of appeasing the members of the workshop that thought economy should be a high priority:

> "I think the Worklessness one is an interesting one because there was a big lobby at the end of that discussion that you'll remember about economic development. And I think the worklessness thing was almost a compromise." (FPS 1)

While for others, it was purely issue-based, and seen as fitting that local government would follow central government in making it a priority:

> "The worklessness agenda's always been getting driven very strongly from central government and now the Executive." (SLS 2)

Similarly, another respondent echoed the influence of central government:

"At some stage you just have got to go with leadership, and I think it's justified by the fact that it was a very strong thread coming through from central government." (FCCP 1)

However, those of the dissenting opinion called the decision "bizarre" (FCE 2), and were dismissive of the 'leadership':

"That wasn't a result of due process, that was an interference, if you like, of heroic leaders coming in and saying, '*we should do this*'. So there was a bit of imposition of will by the then chief executive." (FCE 2)

While critical of the "imposition", the unimpressed respondents also blamed the lack of political leadership at the time (this will be discussed further below). The CPIG criticised and challenged the addition but to no avail. A lack of time in the initial discussion was mentioned as a possible explanation: "again, I suspect we didn't give this process enough time, and that's probably why three became four" (FPM 6). While the issue of time may have impeded the discussions that could have resolved the 'fourth' priority, it also helped facilitate the inclusion of the fourth priority after the workshops, as the write-up of the process was disseminated to partners in preparation for their quarterly meetings. As mentioned above, the member of POD who agreed with the Chief Executive, and showed a strong personal and political allegiance to him, was also responsible for much of what was written and disseminated afterwards. So while it was the Chief Executive's will, it relied on the agreement and cooperation of a less senior manager to embed the thinking into the reports and synthesised findings which would shape future documents and thus strategic direction:

"I must admit, I agree with him so I don't know whether I allowed my opinions to interfere in writing things up, and trying to get the fourth lever out, and I wasn't even sure that we wanted four, but it was a clear message that was coming through from him.
(...)
So when [the former Chief Executive] came and said, '*we need to be concentrating on unemployment and worklessness*', it got written up on that basis. Other people would have challenged that, I think, and subsequently did challenge it and have done within CPIG, but I nevertheless think it was right." (FCCP 1)

Although assisted by the agreement of others, and regardless of whether or not he was right to do so, the former Chief Executive used his executive power to override a partnership process of negotiation and consensus-building. However, that does not imply that it was any sort of arbitrary decision. Rather, there is evidence of a confluence of factors and circumstances that highlight the systemic nature of Scotland's public sector. Five main issues appeared to factor both directly and indirectly in the former Chief Executive's decision:

Table 4.20 - Five determining factors

Issue	Description
Personal	The Chief Executive was set to retire in less than two weeks. He recognised the importance of worklessness and saw it as his last chance to really affect Fife Council's policy and to make a lasting difference.
Political Leadership	The political leadership in both Fife Council and Fife Partnership had weakened: "the leadership became quite disengaged because the administration was in decline and most people were retiring anyway…the level of commitment and drive actually dropped off" (FCE 2). This seemed to be one of the reasons why the Chief Executive was able to "push through" the issue of worklessness.
Political Agenda	Although organisational fatigue may have set in, the Chief Executive's intervention had the implicit backing of the Scottish Parliament and, specifically, the SNP agenda. Although still a Labour controlled government, the SNP and Liberal Democrats were growing in popularity ahead of their 'victory' in 2007 and establishment of a coalition government. The Fife Partnership manager rationalised the Chief Executive's decision in those terms: "I think there were partners within the the workshop that were saying, '*it's going to be the economy*', just as the SNP were saying, '*it's got to be the economy*'" (FPS 1).
Political Compromise	It was also suggested that worklessness was a compromise with the partners advocating the inclusion of the economy: "there was a big lobby at the end of the workshop about economic development, and I think worklessness was a bit of a compromise—it's a kind of social equality objective but it still embraces the whole thing about the economy" (FPS 1). It is also an example of how post-hoc rationalisations are used not just to legitimise the issue but also how it should satisfy some of those who objected to its inclusion: "worklessness was a reasonable aspiration given you're talking about 40,000 people who are out of work out of a total population 350,000. So I suppose, in a sense, it's always going to be a compromise" (FPS 1).
Political Emulation	A few months prior to Fife's 2006 scenario work, Glasgow City Council went through a strategic review with a view of identifying partnership priorities and generating a "very clear political message from a strong, articulate, political leader, which Fife didn't have" (FCCP 3). At a press call, Glasgow announced they would have two key priorities for community planning: tackling 'worklessness' and 'substance misuse'. The boldness of the goals attracted admiration from within Fife Council: "Glasgow were getting lots of plaudits for saying, '*our three [sic] priorities are drugs, alcohol, and worklessness and that's it, that's all we're going to focus on*'. So I think folk over here thought, '*oh well, we'll have to do that as well*'". Those critical of the inclusion of worklessness thought Glasgow's work put pressure on Fife to emulate their and/or gave the Chief Executive an evidence-base to defend his intervention: "the Chief Executive decided that because somebody else said to focus on the big things, and then we were, not bullied into it, but directed into having these 'big things'" (FCCP 3).

These five areas and circumstances provide an insight into the complexity of Fife Council's strategic context. It also highlights the difficulty of running a scenario planning process from

start to finish.   Regardless of how good the process is or how well managed it is, as soon as the work re-enters the organisation, the political processes and negotiations and personal motivations enter into the fray and steadily erode the objectivity of the process, which, ironically, was one of the main reasons for using scenarios in the first place.   As mentioned above, the addition of this fourth issue also magnified an underlying dissatisfaction with the process and its purpose at this stage.   The following section will discuss some of the issues with involvement and engagement amidst a shifting political and managerial landscape.

4.4.5 Involvement and Engagement

Although difficult to determine the overall success of a scenario planning project, it is more straightforward to gain an understanding of the level of involvement and engagement delegates and stakeholders had in the workshops.   While the first process was received positively, feelings towards the second process were mixed:

> "I think its intent was honourable but I don't think it was taken seriously by the majority of people that turned up.   I think the first scenarios one was good, it was good engagement and it went very well.   I think the subsequent ones were progressively more marginalised and seen as not to be a hugely important use of our time." (FCE 2)

The Chief Executive of Fife Council viewed the process as a great success:

> "My sense of the involvement and engagement was very positive." (FPM 1)

Similarly, the Fife Partnership manager had largely positive recollections:

> "And as I remember the workshops were pretty good as well, and our group was good in that people weren't just arguing for their own area of interest." (FPS 1)

He also highlighted the important contributions from senior managers:

> "But I thought, in particular, some of the key players, like the chief constable and the chief executive of NHS Fife, their contributions were really good—they weren't trying to defend their own areas, they were seeing the bigger picture and they could see the linkages between these bigger issues with their own area whether it's health or crime, which is the way that these things should work. People should be taking part on a corporate basis rather than a sectoral basis." (FPS 1)

However, most people interviewed had less positive impressions of the process: "the buy-in varied...the change in personnel makes it very difficult" (FPM 6). Their reservations can be categorised broadly under three headings: Purpose and Content; Continuity; and Conflicting Agendas.

4.4.5.1 Purpose and Content

From the outset of the second process, senior managers were questioning the need for another scenario planning exercise, as opposed to, for example, a series of workshops on "how we are getting on with the scenarios" (FCE 2), which would feed into the Community Plan's development and "how to drive that forward" (FCE 2). Whether or not it was due to a disagreement with the purpose and/or structure of the workshops or the nature of what was being discussed, the engagement from senior managers was subdued:

> "A lot of senior management across the partnerships, didn't seriously engage with it—that may be a bit cruel but that's probably people being brutally honest, I think they were saying, '*well, actually why am I going to this, what's it going to bring because the first one brought some real benefit?*'." (FCE 2)

This notion of 'real benefit' was echoed at a service level too. Two main problems emerged: the opinion that the workshops were overly simplistic; and the belief that the issues would have been the same had there not been any workshops:

> "I remember the way the sessions were summed up, I felt they were overly simplistic, and there wasn't enough detail to clearly show a direction.
> (...)
> As the key issues were getting summarised on the board I thought, well, these would be the issues anyway. It was almost like we'd been there before. But maybe that's not unexpected at that particular stage because we weren't starting at the beginning." (SLS 1)

Similarly, with regards to the worklessness priority, there was a sense that a lot of what was being said was already being done:

> "We were glad that it came up as a part in one of the scenarios because of both the work we were doing and that it made the other partners more aware...of the

impact locally for worklessness, but we would have been doing that work as a matter of course anyway." (SLS 2)

This highlights an important point about national agendas. Transportation, Education, and JobCentre Plus all have national directors or frameworks that must be adhered to. Consequently, as these areas were identified as key priorities, much of what was being discussed was largely repetitious of the work they were already undertaking, either from their own analyses and strategic processes or from superseding national directives.

As much as the content of what was included was questioned, some parties also question the selection of the key areas:

> "I don't think we got the drivers [meaning levers] right. That's my personal view. The drivers we ended up with only came out of the scenarios, and I think we missed out some points. Where was health? Where was health and well-being? If you don't have healthy people then you're not going to have a healthy economy" (FPM 5)

However, this would appear to be an inevitable and necessary outcome of any prioritisation process: "if we have too many priorities, we don't have any priorities" (FPS 2). Consequently, this prioritisation gave the second scenario planning process a much needed focus:

> "It [the second scenario process] appears to have delivered something more focused. The reason I think people buy into them is because of the no surprises element. I think if you got any group of people involved with service delivery or planning or business in Fife and asked them to talk about what are the critical strategic levers in Fife, the list they'd come out with would not be so different to what came out of the second scenario exercise, so there is more of a gut-feeling kind of buy-in to them." (FCE 4)

4.4.5.2 Continuity

The issue of continuity can be split into two main areas: the decline of leadership and the number of personnel changes. As was mentioned earlier, there was a distinct sense that,

during the workshops, the Council and Partnership were in decline. Consequently, apathy towards the process seemed to seep into some participants:

> "The [workshops] were progressively more marginalised and seen as not to be a hugely important use of our time." (FCE 2)

Almost every person interviewed described how the lack of administrative drive sapped energy from the process:

> "My memories of the sessions was that it was in the latter stages of [the Chief Executive's] reign…and I felt that the council partners were kind of struggling to see where they were going at that point." (SLS 1)

This issue was not helped by both the increase in numbers and the lack of continuity in attendance: "there was less engagement, the cohort was bigger, and leadership wasn't as strong" (FPM 3). Aside from disrupting the flow of the 'strategic conversation', it also resulted in latecomers to the process struggling to 'buy-in to the process':

> "I felt like I had joined a process after it had started. To get buy-in from everyone, everyone needs to be involved from the start, from the same blank sheet of paper." (FPM 5)

It also resulted in some latecomers trying to manipulate the direction of the conversation. However, even those critical of the discontinuity and the personal agendas at work were themselves guilty of sporadic attendance:

> "I think it [the process] was made difficult…because there was a certain amount of lack of continuity. I think I went to two of them, and of the two that I went to some of the personnel had changed and when a new person comes along, and I know one particular senior council officer came to the last one and tried to skew things over to his sectoral interests." (FPS 1)

One of the main organisers only managed to attend one of the sessions, and other senior managers deputised attendance to subsequent workshops:

> "Through the three workshops we didn't have the same people attending, maybe because we invited more people, which makes it more difficult to get continuity of attendance. And that's reflected in some in some of the queries about how the thinking developed." (FCCP 1)

There was also a question of the type of people attending the workshops: "it felt like it wasn't quite the right people" (FCE 4). The varying levels of seniority would have an effect on the 'strategic conversation' (see 4.4.5.3).

The lack of ownership was described by a member of POD as one of the main disappointments of the process:

> "I think there wasn't clear ownership, there wasn't a clear, strong, broadly-based ownership of the three workshops but that's because the more people you involve the more difficult it to get complete engagement. Though it wasn't during the process, it was a pity that [the former Chief Executive] left in the middle of it— he was a key player. That was a particular discontinuity because he left after the second one, and wasn't there for the final, so [the new Chief Executive] did come into the final one, just after he started. I think it was a pity that we didn't get electoral, political engagement, but that's a weakness of the last administration— we had really weak political leadership, and probably no political leadership towards the end." (FCCP 1)

This lack of direction and uncertainty was echoed by the head of Fife Council's Transportation service:

> "I think I did attend two—I thought there was only two—I missed one, I know that, I definitely missed. The first one I went to wasn't quite as clear as it might've been in terms of what was being put forward.   Again, no disrespect to [the organisers in POD] or anybody, but I think it could've been better structured. And I think what was coming out of it was just drab one lines and one words when we'd already developed a vision in 2002.
> (...)
> And certainly one of them [the workshops], I can't remember the specific dates, I came out thinking, '*are we going anywhere with it?*'" (FCE 3)

This disillusion was compounded further by the inclusion of the fourth priority, and by the conflicting agendas between both groups and individuals, which characterised the second workshop and illustrated some of the difficulties of a strategic conversation.

<u>4.4.5.3 Conflicting Agendas</u>

Lobbying for self-interest is an entrenched component of government but was particularly apparent in the Fife Partnership at that time: "there were a lot of individual agendas in the partnership at that time, which wasn't right" (FPM 5). In the *Managing Fife's Future* process, such lobbying was concentrated in four areas: Incorporation, Fife's Economic Forum, the inclusion of the 'worklessness' priority, and the dispute between health and education.

The idea of incorporating the Fife Partnership was a significant thread in the positive scenario. It was advocated strongly by the outgoing Chief Executive, and had been for a number of years. Although it was a popular idea within the frame of 'best value', e.g. through shared services, etc., 'buy-in' to the *Managing Fife's Future* process lessened among partners who wanted to distance themselves from incorporation:

> "What altered a lot of buy-in was all the talk of incorporation. And there were
> some organisations that then backed off. Because [the former Chief Executive]
> was so keen on this, it became more focused and some organisations really
> backed of, citing differences in governance, etc." (FPM 6)

As was described above, the Fife Economic Forum entered into this process questioning its validity and purpose, given their recent completion of Fife's long-term economic development strategy. They made up the majority of those advocating the acknowledgement of the economy as a priority. Again, as was described above, their late push for the economy was thought to have given the former Chief Executive the opportunity to offer 'worklessness' as a form of compromise to those touting economic aspirations.

Regardless of whether it was right or wrong to include 'worklessness', the addition of a fourth key priority undermined the purpose of and justification for the process. While the outputs are obviously of great importance, the *Managing Fife's Future* process was a forum for senior managers of Fife's public sector to come together, to discuss, and to agree upon the key priorities they ought to be concentrating resources on. Thus any manipulation of that process or the chosen priorities erodes the communal ownership and engagement of the decisions:

"If you go through a process of consultation and partnership and come up with three key things and somebody else just decides to stick another one in out of the blue, I can see how folk would be a bit disgruntled to say the least." (SLS 2)

While this "imposition on the part of the outgoing Chief Executive" (FCE 2) occurred after the second workshop, one of the most memorable moments of the whole process was an argument at the tail end of the second workshop between the retiring Chief Executive of Fife Council and the Chief Executive of NHS Fife, over the inclusion of education as a priority ahead of health. The Chief Executive of NHS Fife maintained that 'educational attainment' would take 20 years see results, and that the timescale of the exercise was only 10 years. Thus, he advocated for the inclusion of healthcare because a "concentration on health issues could yield hard results over 10 years"[57]. The Chief Executive of the council disagreed, arguing that health improvements were greatly dependent on improving education, which then sparked another debate between what was educational attainment and educational achievement. This raises two interesting points: firstly, that the strategic conversation was achieving exactly what it should do—a dialectic between knowledgeable parties arguing over definitions and causal logic and possibility; and secondly, the importance of being able to quantify success—despite being "awash with data" the NHS was "not using the information sets in a way that…[allows]…them to answer the question, *'what does a healthier Fife look like?'*" (FCCP 3). So although the main reason for including health (from the Chief Executive's perspective) was its 'hard' outcomes, it was its lack of definitive focus that ultimately restricted its inclusion:

"It strikes me that the problem there was that as there was no evaluation evidence to backup why you would want to necessarily pick another aspect of health and raise it to that high level, they weren't ever going to actually get anything there, because there was nothing to force the issue.
(…)
So I suspect that was kind of why the health stuff didn't necessarily get that spotlight put on it, and why they might have felt a bit prickly about the final outcome. (FCCP 3)

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[57] Paraphrased from research notes taken during Non-participant Observation of the second workshop.

While the argument seemed to have no lasting impact, attendees attributed the tension to a "bit of a turf war":

> "I guess that was probably a bit of turf war...marking out territory." (FCE 1)

However, another complimented the Chief Executive of NHS Fife for not just lobbying for his own area of interest:

> "Some of the key players, like the chief constable and the chief executive of NHS Fife, their contributions were really good—they weren't trying to defend their own areas, they were seeing the bigger picture and they could see the linkages between these bigger issues with their own area whether it's health or crime, which is the way that these things should work." (FPS 1)

Afterwards, the Chief Executive of the council said that it was NHS Fife's Chief Executive's "job to argue for health" but added that "the challenge is to see it not from the producer's point of view" but to look at what matters most for "our community" (FPM 1). Interestingly, the Chief Executive of NHS Fife said it was more a case of them "agreeing violently than disagreeing violently" (FPM 3):

> "It was more sound and fury. What he was arguing, and I would accept, was that if you can identify groups of people who are educationally excluded, you can do something about the, whereas I was arguing, and I think [he] would accept, was that if you see education as a major societal lever for change and we want to start changing through the school system, then you've got a 15 to 20 year lag because you've got to start before it impacts." (FPM 3)

Regardless, the problem with the argument was that, while both Chief Executives were comfortable with each other's position, it actually stifled debate and ended the workshop on a rather sour note. As one attendee said:

> "There were quite a few senior people there mixed in with the less senior—I wonder if that stifled the debate, particularly given that there are these quite difficult conflicts to deal with. I don't know; there are pros and cons. If you split the process down so you are dealing just at the very top level, the very top level isn't actually getting to hear what people think down below so you do actually need to get a mix." (SLS 1)

Prior to the argument, discussions were varied and fruitful but as soon as the two most powerful figures in the room collided, the less senior members were powerless to intervene. This even proved difficult for one of the workshop organisers, an employee of Fife Council:

> "Of course we had a 'barney', didn't we, between [the Chief Executive of the council and the Chief Executive of NHS Fife], and that was over education against healthcare. I don't know if I was getting tired or [the facilitator] was getting tired….But we should've brought that to an end, we should've drawn the meeting to a close—I think [the scenario planning facilitator] would have resolved that. I think [the facilitator] and I didn't really know how to handle them. And that was becoming quite difficult because it was the Chief executive of the health service and the Chief Executive of the council, and it was becoming quite personal, it had a real edge, and you don't want to jump in when it is your boss and another very senior member of the partnership. So it'd have been good to smooth that over and draw it back." (FCCP 1)

Essentially, this is strategic conversation at its best and worst: ostensibly, two of the most powerful and knowledgeable figures in Fife's public sector engaging in a thoughtful albeit heated dialectic on the priorities that will shape Fife's future; the downside being that their respective power precluded anyone else (including the facilitators) from interjecting and either joining or ending the debate.

4.4.6 Sustaining the Strategic Conversation

The second workshop left delegates with a sense of unease as to where the process was going. Thus it was recommended to the Fife Partnership that a third workshop be held to discuss the chosen priorities in more detail and to provide the partners with "guidance on actions and implementation". There was a worry that while there was a commitment to the workshops, there was not a long-term commitment:

> "People will happily commit to coming along to a half-day workshop but how much can they commit in terms of really thinking through some of the issues both [sic] before, during, and after. I think that is a problem, and it was certainly a problem the last time, in terms of getting the right people in the room at the right time and keeping them there through the process" (FCE 4).

It was decided that this workshop also be facilitated by the team from the University of St Andrews. Significantly, the next workshop, scheduled for September, would be the first one attended by the new Chief Executive of Fife Council. The workshop represents the beginning of Fife's second scenario-to-strategy process and, accordingly, will serve as the starting point for the final episode of the case study.

4.5 Episode 5 – Scenario Planning 2006 – Follow-through Process

After reporting findings from the first two workshops to the Fife Partnership on 14 June 2006, the period leading up to the third and final workshop (4 September 2006) was spent on a number of issues that would have a bearing on the content of discussions of the final workshop and the report which followed. The report on the two workshops, compiled and submitted by Fife Council's Corporate Research, served three functions: 1) to provide an evidenced report of the workshops and of Fife's "strategic conversation"; 2) to advocate the need for a final workshop; and 3) to recommend an initial framework for developing Fife's community planning process.

This framework was a synthesis of relevant "corporate plans and strategies of partners, services and strategic partnerships" into a "comparable strategy mapping format under each existing Community Plan theme" (MI/FP/4). The use of "strategy mapping" is defined as a "tool…to summarise aims, objective and the high level means of facilitation or delivery" (MI/FP/4). Little comment was received from the partners in relation to this framework other than comments that further clarity was needed "between issues which were long and short term priorities" (MI/FP/4).

Regarding the selection of the key priorities, the Partnership agreed that a third workshop be organised and that it should consider "the principles of sustainability", "the state of existing resources in terms of the agreed priorities", and the role of the "priorities in terms of reforming public services" (MI/FP/4). At this meeting, partners also discussed the incorporation of Fife Partnership—a significant part of both iterations of the "Bridging the Gap" scenario. This was the outgoing Chief Executive's last contribution to the Fife

Partnership. It was recommended that the Partnership apply to ministers "to become an incorporated partnership under section 19 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003" (MI/FP/4). The group approved the recommendation and established a steering group to lead the process.

4.5.1 Continuing the Strategic Conversation – Workshop 3

The third workshop of the *Managing Fife's Future* process, held on 4 September 2006, sought to identify key actions for each of the four policy priorities. These priorities were defined at the outset of the workshop as:

1. "Connectivity and Transport to/from and within Fife—principally the Forth crossing but also linking people with opportunities within Fife"

2. "Educational attainment/achievement (school age or lifelong learning)"

3. "Energy and resource conversation"

4. Social inclusion/worklessness

The two "managerial priorities", identified as necessary means in the delivery "on the chosen ends" were:

5. Leadership

6. (Organisational) Resource sharing and management

Although identified in the aftermath of the second workshop, these two principles were described as being "closely related to Fife Partnership's incorporation plans and Tom McCabe's consultative document on Transforming Police Services[58]" (see Scottish Executive 2006). The overall aim of the workshop was to "refine and agree key strategic policy and managerial priorities, and start to develop guidance for partners and services on corporate and budgetary planning, actions and implementation" (MI/MFF/3). The following four sections will describe the four areas.

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[58] This refers to the then Minister's of Finance's, Labour's Tom McCabe, report on "Transforming Public Services: the next phase of reform", which attempted to provoke debate on ways to "generate maximum benefit from every pound spent.

<u>4.5.1.1 Energy and Resource Conservation</u>

Fife Council's strategic manager for environment and development[59], presented on sustainable development. His first aim was to clarify the meaning of the term—something which caused disputes during the previous two workshops. However, rather than focusing in on a definition, a broad range of principles were described as being key components of 'sustainability'. These principles (see below) were preceded by the following statement:

> "Sustainability is something that effects us all. It is about the future, making sure that the solutions to today's problems don't store up trouble at a later date." (MI/MFF/3/1)

Principles of sustainability:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibility

Following on from these principles, were four key priorities:

Table 4.21 — Four priorities of sustainability in Fife

Priorities	Description
Sustainable consumption and production	Achieving more with less. The fastest growing pressure on the global environment stem from household energy, water consumption, food consumption, transport and tourism.
Climate Change and Energy	The need to change the way in which we generate and use energy. Leadership must be demonstrated by public sector and others to set example and encourage other to follow.
Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement	Natural resources are key to success. Health and well-being are closely linked to the quality of air, water, soil, biological resources.
Sustainable Communities	Creating communities where people want to live and work. This is achieved by improving life in deprived communities.

Source: from MI/MFF/3/1

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[59] His role was described as covering "all the support services" and as part of that "to embed the principles of sustainable development into the organisation as a whole" (FCE 2).

Here, the role of national priorities and the need to satisfy (or even lead) national agendas became more explicit:

> "Arguably, of the four priority areas covered, two at least fit the priorities for sustainable development in Scotland being sustainable communities for which we already have a strategic partnership which covers social inclusion and worklessness and indeed education and energy and resources which coincides conveniently with the generation and use of energy and sustainable consumption and production.
>
> (…)
>
> So specifically under using less resources and energy use and driving towards more effective and efficient operation allows us to demonstrate progress with another key government agenda, that of shared services agenda, which will contribute towards a reduction in resource or energy use by greater collaboration and joint management operations." (MI/MFF/3/1)

Accordingly, priority actions for the partnership were articulated[60]:

1. Integrate principles of sustainable development into all partner organisations

2. Reactivate the Fife-wide Energy Strategy, which would lead to:

    -   Reduced power use

    -   Introducing design guides and higher building requirements

    -   Increase the update of renewable energy by encouraging and using alternative fuel sources

    -   Public sector leading by example by minimising energy use in heat, light and transportation costs

3. Programme to effect behavioural change amongst all individuals in Fife

4. Develop a partnership approach to sustainable paramount

5. Establish a programme of sustainable construction and refurbishment

6. Favour investments with revenue payback benefits

7. Through partnership working and shared service delivery, lead by example to reduce resource usage and waste production.

The presentation concluded with the following statement:

> "A reduction in energy and resource usage is fundamental to services and the above actions allow all partners to take an active part and through joint working also deliver another government priority under the shared services banner." (MI/ MFF/3/1)

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[60] Only the first three were described as being in order of importance.

The questions and and following discussions focused on sources of friction between the economy and the environment and on aspirations and actions, questioning whether or not it was Fife's or Fife Council's job. At this point, one of the facilitators asked how many of the 20 people in attendance shared a vehicle when travelling to the workshop. Nobody said yes. This prompted further debate on the leadership role needed from Fife's public services, before progressing on to the issue of connectivity.

4.5.1.2 Connectivity and Transport

The main focus of the connectivity presentation came as little surprise to participants. It focused on the recognised capacity problems and the "emerging doubts over the structural conditions of the Forth Road Bridge; and travel concerns of those commuting within Fife" (ID/ MFF/2). As mentioned earlier, cross-Forth travel was an issue receiving lots of national attention. It was seen as being of upmost significance to not just the economy of Fife but also of the whole of East/Central Scotland. As was also mentioned earlier, there is no illusion with regards to what Fife can and cannot do in regards to the Forth Road Bridge issue. However, there was discussion about the need for an 'awareness event'—something to ensure the issue remained at the forefront of the upcoming election cycle.

The second paper, presented by representatives of Fife Council's Transportation Service, discussed the issue of travel within Fife, which although seemingly less important economically accounts for 80% of Fife travel (as opposed to the 8% that cross the Forth Road Bridge). The transportation service were arguing about the importance of intra-Fife travel as a means of contributing to education, jobs and leisure, which all add up to social inclusion. They also discussed some salient points regarding the cost of accidents, the impact of travel habits, and the need for whole lifecycle costing for transportation infrastructure.

Questions following the presentation were dominated by issues surrounding the bridge—from costs of the projects, to the threats faced by a changing political climate. There was also

evidence of wider thinking entering the discussions when asked to quantify the economic impact of transportation. Work relevant to the cross-service, cost-cutting managerial lever was already underway—it had been calculated that NHS Fife was responsible for seven-million miles of travel within Fife each year. However, while this was described as something that should be reduced, it was also acknowledged that, if an overarching theme is "social inclusion", access to services and healthcare provided by NHS Fife is crucial to that endeavour.

4.5.1.3 Educational Attainment and Achievement

Fife's education service is subject to overarching national priorities. Accordingly, shortly into the presentation, Fife's Education Service's aspirations were articulated alongside the Scottish Executive's:

Table 4.22 - Fife and Scottish aspirations

Fife Education Service Aspirations	Scottish Executive Aspirations
• "Excellence for all" • Raising attainment • Promoting achievement and inclusion • Developing our staff • Focusing on customers • Providing high quality schools & resources • Building partnerships	• Every child Safe; Nurtured; Attaining/ Achieving; Respected and Responsible; Healthy; Active; Included • The curriculum should aspire to create: • Successful learners • Confident individuals • Responsible citizens • Effective contributions

Source: from MI/MFF/3/2

Educational achievement has long been the focus of community planning as a driver of Fife's well-being and as a barometer of success in creating an inclusive Fife:

> "So long as people lack confidence and belief in their abilities or get messages of failure from education, it will be so much more difficult for them to participate to their potential as citizens and contribute to Fife's future. Poor physical and mental health, long term unemployment, mismatches in the labour market, alienation and substance misuse can all have roots in poor educational experience." (MI/FP/5)

Thus, it was argued that if "concerted action [was] taken now to foster achievement", some of the "necessary conditions to realise other ambitions in the Community Plan" (MI/FP/4/1) would also be created.

The head of Fife's Education Service identified four issues and four actions that Fife could take to improve its education system:

Table 4.23 - Four issues and four actions

Four Issues	Four Actions
• What else would we as an education service pursue but improved outcomes for pupils? • Who are our 'competitors' and what are they achieving? • Will the effects of our efforts be even across Fife? Does equity require uniformity: is equity relative? • Is the Council's approach sufficiently sophisticated or coherent, given the complexity of the influences on educational attainment?	• Earlier intervention, more personalisation of the needs of individuals/groups • More consensus about the rationale for targeting resources and setting expectations (FME/PCA etc) • More devolution of decision-making to schools but relentless accountability (intervention proportionate to effectiveness) • Accountability for attainment/achievement is better distributed and attributed across the Council

Source: from MI/MFF/3/2

The influence of the heavily quantified, results-orientated nature of education was apparent in discussions that followed the presentation. Education was seen as a key measurement of a Local Authority's success. Three 'Highers' or more was seen as success; however those failing to reach that mark were described as "lacking belief" that there is a valuable future for them. Consequently, rather than discussing ways to increase the number of people attaining three 'Highers', discussion gravitated towards how to revisit the meaning of High School success, and whether or not it should be seen as something to serve universities or to serve society.

What also emerged during discussion was a sense of long term necessity—that this educational push must begin with the youngest children in the system—that optimism and confidence must be instilled in the nurseries and primary schools. There was also consideration of the changing nature of work and the acknowledgement that "Lifelong Learning" would become an

absolute necessity of any successful economy as people would need to retrain for "multiple careers".

4.5.1.4 Social Inclusion and Worklessness

Although workless and social inclusion was a disputed policy priority at the time of the second workshop, nothing to this effect was mentioned prior to the presentation. The statistics supporting 'worklessness' as a key priority were compelling (MI/MFF/3/3):

- Fife's unemployment rate was 3.8% (Scotland's was 3%, the UK's was 2.7%)

- 44,000 people in Fife fall into the workless category

- 19, 124 are on some form of incapacity benefit

- 4,400 are lone parents

- 7,354 are on a 'Job Seeker's' allowance

- 2,500 fall into the NEET[61] category

- 1/3 of households have a gross annual income of less that £10,000

Accordingly, three key priorities were identified. The table below illustrates the three priorities and the areas in which these priorities should be addressed:

Table 4.24 - Three priorities of social inclusion

Key Priorities	Sub-Issues
Strategic Ownership of Employability Framework	• Leadership • Shared budgets / delivery / monitoring • Restructuring / rationalisation / realignment • Moving from short term to sustainable funding
Employer Engagement	• Labour source • Incapacity Benefit customers • Migrant labour • Exemplar employers (Fife Council, NHS Fife, etc.)
Tackling Barriers	• Benefit trap / Financial awareness • Transport • Childcare • Health issues (mental health)

Source: from MI/MFF/3/3

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[61] NEET is defined as "Not in Employment, Education or Training"

The last point of the first priority, funding and the need to go from short-term to long-term, also raises an important issue for an organisation like CVS Fife. Much of what can be done in these areas is based on yearly funding. Thus, working towards a long-term goal become difficult without significantly over- or under-estimating the funding stream and the consequent effect it would have.

There was also questions and discussions around the changing nature of society and young people, where representatives from the 'worklessness' priority described an evolving culture where those without work were becoming far more "choosy" and "picky" about where they worked and what they did. Following this, the group brought the point back to the 'success' stigma mentioned in the education presentation, agreeing that the two were inter-related and could be tackled (over the long-term anyway) through education.

4.5.1.5 Confirmation of Key Policy Levers

The discussions that followed the presentation of the key areas were enthusiastic and engaging. The 'strategic conversation' seemed to illuminate connections between issues and pursuits that inspired a collective optimism. Specific points of discussion focused mainly on balance, for example, between narrowing or widening focus, between the prioritisation or equality of goals, and between the government's role in the culture of Fife—whether or not they could affect or it if they would have to adapt to it.

Although all four key areas seemed to resonate with the groups, it was argued by members of the *Fife Economic Forum* that the "unique selling points" (FCCP 1) were transportation, connectivity and employability. However, this was followed quickly by another point that social inclusion will be driven through other elements and so should be removed. In the end, it was agreed that the four 'policy levers' remain the same.

Finally, although not mentioned explicitly, the two 'managerial levers', leadership and resource sharing were discussed throughout the workshop. The nature of their role in the

'policy levers' was made more explicit in the literature disseminated after the workshop and in the presentation made to the Fife Partnership nine days later.

4.5.2 Towards a Managing Fife's Future Programme

Within two weeks, the language used to describe the four key areas had changed mildly but deliberately. At the presentation to the Fife Partnership, on 13 September 2006, what had previously been referred to as 'key areas', were now called 'key policy levers for change' and 'policy priorities' interchangeably. They were presented alongside a "draft programme for work", of which the "strategic actions" varied from short to long term, and covered a range of issues, from budgetary to cultural change (MI/FP/5).

The Managing Fife's Future process, based on Fife's scenario work, was envisaged to sit between the Community Plan and Fife Partnership's 'Action Programme'—the former being a "comprehensive and durable plan that sets out the vision with long term goals", and the latter being "more of an operational programme for developing Fife Partnership's activity and infrastructure". It was stated that the "proposed Managing Fife's Future programme takes the action planning approach and applies it to more regular strategic management of community planning" (MI/FP/4/1).

There was also a note of caution in this proposal. It was stated explicitly that the Managing Fife's Future programme should "draw on the strengths" of the Community Plan and 'Action Programme' and should not create a new planning system in its own right. To prevent this, it was argued that the key elements are:

> "Focus on change to deliver strategic outcomes, good evidence, good communication, accountability for and delivery of action and an organic process that adapts to significant events and emerging needs". (Managing Fife's Future report)

To illustrate this in real terms, a draft programme was produced that, for each 'lever for change', articulated "strategic actions", a comment on delivery (i.e. how it should be done),

who should "lead" it, who should have "organisational responsibility", how the outcomes should be measured, and when it was necessary to review progress.

The report to the Fife Partnership described the *Managing Fife's Future* process as something that "began as 'strategic conversation' to explore the appetite across the partners and partnerships for strategic management as a more continuous process of community planning" (ID/MFF/2). It asked that partners agree to the focus of the four levers of change and "consider the implications for their budgetary and policy cycles now in progress" (ID/ MFF/2). Finally, the report also asked partners to approve the proposals for developing a Managing Fife's Future programme.

In the same Fife Partnership meeting of 13 September, the scenarios, though referred to, were not done so by name. Rather, they were described as "optimistic" and "pessimistic", and were only done so to provide a contextual overview of the reasoning for having the four levers—simply, that by focusing on the four levers, Fife would move "towards the in the Community Plan and more 'optimistic' scenario which had been agreed by the Fife Partnership following an earlier workshop" (MI/FP/5).

This development scratches the surface of the contextual changes experienced during this episode. It represents the transition between two contextual reference points: from the scenarios to the 'policy priorities'. This transition began back during the first scenario-to-strategy process, where there was a growing assumption that the positive scenario, 'Bridging the Gap', was interchangeable with the general strategic objective of Fife's public services. Accordingly, if 'Bridging the Gap' was where Fife wanted to be, 'Mind the Gap' was what they wanted to avoid. However, as 'Bridging the Gap' became the general goal, any unwanted deviation from that vision was seen as being negative, thus the negative scenario, which did present some positive implications, dissolved into an all encompassing notion of failure. Consequently, the negative scenario, as a concept, became little more than an unarticulated antithesis of the positive scenario. As a contextual reference point, the nuanced, evidence-based scenarios had become a fairly redundant way to understand trends as 'good' or 'bad'. For example, the creation of a third Forth crossing is obviously a positive step for Fife's

economic and social prosperity—it doesn't need to be set against a context of 'Bridging the Gap' or 'Mind the Gap' to understand whether or not it is a good or bad thing. Similarly, with the progression towards economic and social measurements firmly in place, increasing employment rates and educational attainments are very obvious symptoms of success. Likewise, high unemployment rates and declining educational standards are very obvious indicators of decline.   Perhaps it was different when the scenarios were used to identify specific resources (as described in 4.3.1), but scenarios are hardly necessary to understand these more obvious factors.

Thus, when considering these points, and the fact that there are no weak-signal monitoring processes in place, one wonders why the scenarios are still referred to at all. The only trends being watched are those that are the dominant issues of the present and/or those that can be measured.   One possible explanation is that the logical processes inherent to scenario planning, and the resulting instinct to attribute a long-term value (be it positive or negative) to a current event has become an embedded 'habit' of the Fife Partnership's strategic repertoire. This issue will be discussed further in the following chapter.

4.5.3 The Impact of the Scenario Planning Process

While the evidence suggests that the scenarios lost some of their explicit, contextual significance, it is prudent to attempt to understand whether or not this dampened the impact of Fife's scenario planning process. This section will examine ways and areas where scenario planning had an impact, and equally, where they did not. These areas will combine tacit and explicit levels of action and influence and will lead into the following section's examination of the 2007/08 community planning process.

4.5.3.1 Achieving Strategic Maturity

The use of scenarios in the community planning process and the following identification of the four policy priorities through strategic conversation seemed to stimulate a form of local,

strategic fervour. There was a sense that the Fife Partnership had reached a level of strategic maturity:

> "I think…having these four key challenges has primarily showed that the Fife Partnership is at a level of maturity where it can have this conversation and come up with a consensus around policy areas." (FPS 1)

This maturity also seemed apparent at the organisational level, at least in the case of NHS Fife: "We'd refer more to the key challenges than we did to the scenarios. But that's probably more of a function of organisational maturity" (FPM 3). However, other organisations more dependent on funding, like CVS Fife, can only work towards the levers one they are embedded in the Community Plan: "The levers won't affect us until the refresh of the Community Plan comes through" (FPM 5).

Alongside the maturity also came a sense of strategic independence:

> "Those four policy levers were the big ones that are of particular significance to Fife. In other words, it wasn't just the usual bland five or six community planning themes that community partnerships in Scotland all share, and they share them along with the Scottish Government." (FPS 1)

This success in consensus-building, fostered through scenario planning and strategic conversation, and set against the comparative difficulty of other regional partnerships to achieve such, was evidence of a growing confidence of the Fife Partnership's own strategic capacity:

> "I've spoken to colleagues in other community planning partnerships where we said, '*well, we'll probably come up with three or four key areas where partners agree that we need to have some focus*', and they've said, '*how on earth do you do that, because in our community planning partnership we're struggling to get consensus around 30?*'. I think that it is a sign of confidence." (FPS 1)

However, while the identification of the four policy priorities was thought of as an important strategic accomplishment, there were no illusions about either the nature of the priorities or the position they held in the wider strategy process.

<u>4.5.3.2 The Four Policy Priorities</u>

There was a simultaneous understanding that, although the four policy priorities would not replace the community planning themes, it was important to ensure that they remained identifiable:

> "We've had this dialogue about insuring that the levers that were identified were still recognisable and were not completely lost while recognising that there's no way that they're going to completely take over from the six policy themes that had been identified in 2000." (FPS 1)

Part of the reason why these 'priorities' would not replace the community planning themes was attributable to changes in the political and corporate leadership:

> "The first time around, the leadership from the council was very strong and engaging and positive. The second time around, you had moved from a confident leader who going on to further things, politically, and a Chief Executive who was wholly comfortable in his role to a leader who was presiding over a minority administration, who knew she was standing down at the next election and a Chief Executive who'd been in post for a relatively short period of time. So the 'lead' partner had changed quite radically, not in terms of a commitment to the process, but in terms of the people who were 'leading', so that quite a major shift." (FPM 3)

Consequently, a new council and Chief Executive were unlikely to follow in their predecessors' footsteps:

> "I don't think there was ever the willingness, particularly not with the new chief executive within the council, to say that '*these are our new policy priorities*' as you will see from the new council plan that's just come out and they're looking at seven or eight—it might even be more—policy priorities.
>
> What they've done is enable people to focus on these areas, but there's no point pretending that the other policy priorities are going to be forgotten or are going to be diminished. It's quite a subtle process, I think. I don't think you can oversimplify it and say that Fife's going to put all of its money into achieving these four policy levers." (FPS 1)

While the four policy priorities may not have actually become Fife's new priorities, they may have had an influence on the Fife Structure plan:

"We're doing our Council Plan and have eight priorities and the four key challenges are very much a part of those discussions...There is overlap, because its common sense. But have they been influenced? Yes, probably." (FPM 6)

It was also through the identification of the policy priorities and the strategic conversation that the scenario process had a positive impact on the mindsets of those involved, at both the corporate and service level:

"I think that when people are developing and reviewing their own corporate and service plans and their partnership priorities they are making **reference** to the policy levers. I think they've raised the profile, and the revised community plan will do that as well, in terms of saying that these are issues that we'll really need to keep an eye on." (FPS 1)

The interesting word here is 'reference'. While scenario planning is a technique used to help strategy development, in this case, the identification of policy levers does not cause strategic change to cascade down through the organisation but rather it gives services (like education, transportation, etc.) a common point to 'reference' as a way to articulate their contribution to the corporate goals. The statement above is indicative of respondents who offer strategic support to the Fife Partnership or are involved with POD in Fife Council. At the service level, the impact was thought of as minimal, with no real strategic consequences but perhaps an elevated awareness of the wider impact of their role in Fife's success. Other Partner agencies were mixed in their assessment of the impact of the identification of the priorities. For example, in the Police, the levers had little effect because they had little relevance:

"We're aware of them but they're not areas where we have any primacy...It's not as if they're contrary, it's just that we're not in the lead, [we're] very much in the background." (FPM 2)

However, in NHS Fife there was a concerted and deliberate effort to articulate their contribution to the four priorities:

"We were more enjoined by Partners to make sure that [the priorities were] part of our everyday strategy. So, for example, in my personal objectives for last year and this year as the lead for community planning, I look at how NHS Fife is contributing to these four. It doesn't mean you don't do what your core business is, but you've always got these things in the back of your mind." (FPS 2)

This was reiterated by NHS Fife's Chief Executive: "we're beginning to ensure the community planning levers feature more strongly in our strategic and operational planning and our

delivery" (FPM 3). Table 4.25 (below) illustrates some of the opinions on the impact that the scenario process had on each of the areas identified as policy levers:

Table 4.25 - Impact of scenario planning

Key Policy Lever	Evidence
Energy and Resource Conversation	"They [the scenarios] haven't aided it [the strategy development process], because some of the outcomes and themes are quite clear. If you look at the vehement reaction that the council had to the ship-to-ship oil transfer, where we know the risk of a spill is reasonably small but we can't afford the risk of even having one—I won't say the scenarios helped that, but, because people understand that the environment in Fife is so precious to its economy and its well-being...any threat to that has created a huge backlash. So you could track it back to the scenarios and...say, yes, awareness has been enhanced, and I think that's possibly the case, but without having done the exercise, you wouldn't know." (FCE 2)
Connectivity and Transportation	"They do play a part in our thinking, definitely. But it's very much at the higher level... Everything we do essentially has to follow STAG, the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance...The process for strategy development is really quite clearly defined in this document. So in terms of scenario planning...the work of the community plan is always in the back of our minds, there are no two doubts about it, but in doing what we've got to do to produce one of the LTS [Local Transport Strategy], the process is quite clearly laid down." (SLS 1) "We seem to have had a lot of exercises at putting together strategies and priorities and policies, and afterwards it's difficult to see how they're actually translated into actions that make any difference to people. In connectivity, there was a theoretical commitment to connectivity as a top priority for the council but at the same time Fife Council clearly showed no enthusiasm whatsoever for the re-establishment of a rail link to Levenmouth. When the council were given the chance to actively support something that seemingly ticked all the boxes, they didn't. I don't think that's because of any malice or anything, it's just that they haven't been consistent." (FPM 9)
Education	"The question I'd ask myself is, *would I be doing anything different if it hadn't been for the scenarios*? I guess the focus of the work wouldn't have been any different. The awareness of the potential impact on the wider reputation of Fife, if you like, I think that has increased. So, it hasn't changed the direction of what we would have been doing in any case, but it has, maybe, raised a bit of urgency about the relationships with others and about the importance of [our work] to Fife's more general reputation." (FCE 1) "...it may be a question of more corporate parity" (FCE 1) "...the scenarios would not frequently be mentioned in the senior management team in here. In the Fife management team, though...they would be referred to from time to time, and at the heads of service meetings led by POD. So, if you like, they're at a slightly different level—a non-service based, non-departmental level, if you think of it that way, so there's a corporate sense, but at department level, it's been morphed into the thinking around the planning process." (FCE 1)
Social Inclusion and Worklessness	"We were glad that it came up...because of both the work we were doing and in making other partners more aware, I suppose, of the impact locally for worklessness, but we would have been doing that work as a matter of course anyway, and trying to persuade and influence others to get involved in it. From the perspective of what jobcentre plus have done the other way, is that we've certainly added our backing to a lot of the debate about the Forth Bridge and these kind of things; and the other parts of the scenarios we've tried to add our weight to say, '*yes, we fully support the partnership— this is something that needs to be taken forward*'. And obviously I've fed that kind of information back through our own channels, as well. Our director for Scotland, for example, if he's questioned about what are the big issues for this district, we'd be able to feed in the issue about the drive towards worklessness." (SLS 2)

A number of factors accounted for the diminished impact of the four policy priorities, the following section will examine some of these reasons and the resulting effect they had, despite a growing commitment to long-term strategic thinking.

4.5.3.3 From 'Priorities' to 'Levers' to 'Challenges'

In November 2006, shortly before Fife Council's budget process, a memo from Corporate Research was circulated amongst Fife Council's executive.   The memo synthesised the key messages from the *Managing Fife's Future* process.   The final section discussed the "Implications for linking budgetary and policy processes" (ID/MFF/2):

> "The four policy levers, which give focus to Fife's community planning, should guide thinking about the priorities for: corporate planning of partners; for service improvement planning; and have some influence on budgetary planning too. However they should not be seen to be at odds with immediate pressing priorities from current service demand and collective challenge. Rather they are about influencing the context and levels of demand for such planning in future years with proactive action in present. It is about getting the right balance between Managing Fife's Present and Fife's Future." (ID/MFF/3)

While there was a more definite commitment and belief in the benefits of scenario planning (and long-term thinking in general) at the corporate (and partnership) level, certainly by those in a supporting role, short-term issues and demands of the present restricted the ability to maintain the long-term focus:

> "There is a genuine willingness to do longer-term strategic management but we are faced with short-term restrictions such as financial and political and managerial priorities." (FCCP 1)

These financial and managerial priorities would have a significant impact on Fife Council's budget negotiations (held in November 2006), which were also the first of the new Chief Executive's tenure.   The result was no budgetary change to reflect the so-called 'four policy priorities':

> "If these are priorities, then they've got to influence the budget and if they don't influence the budget then they're not policy priorities." (FPS 1)

Consequently, to avoid the competition between Fife's 'future' and Fife's 'present', the language had to change accordingly—the policy *priorities* became policy *levers*:

> "On top of just short-term financial demands, you also do have genuine financial crises in some services, which has a major impact on how we used the last round of scenario planning. Even using the term *levers* was a way of avoiding the competition between short-term and long-term priorities." (FCCP 1)

The term 'policy levers' only existed for a short period between the budget negotiations and the drafting of the Community Plan—"people didn't really understand what that meant" (FPS 1), so the term 'key challenges' was agreed upon:

> "We think it's probably a close reflection of their status, given that we've said that these are four things we're going to tackle and get right but that we're not necessarily going to skew funding towards them in a significant way." (FPS 1)

To compensate for the lack in budget changes, a more passive system of 'encouragement' was used to keep the 'key challenges' within the organisation's strategic outlook:

> "Those priorities were hindered by the financial pressures the organisation faced, so we reconciled that with building a process of short-term priorities and encouragement to think about the longer-term issues in these areas. And that's something that really is in the system, it's perhaps not embedded as much as it should be but people still do agree with what we're doing, often coming back to us, asking about the levers of change and the progress being made." (FCCP 1)

However, the former chief executive questioned the purpose of the exercise if the budget did not reflect the agreed priorities:

> "Otherwise, what's the point? If you don't do that [budget according to the priorities], it would just be cynicism, and then people think community planning is just a game and it doesn't really matter. And that would be a sign of failure." (FPM 1)

This viewpoint was echoed by other Partners:

> "What's the point of doing scenario planning when you're not going to align your budget to it, but then the council doesn't have all that much control over their budget—they have to respond to the Government at national and UK levels." (FPM 5)

This raises an interesting point on the dynamics between the Community Plan and Fife Council's structure plan. The council stipulate very clearly that their strategic direction comes from the Community Plan. However, in this instance, something that was agreed by the Partnership, which should then become part of the Community Plan, and thus part of

Fife's Structure Plan, was downgraded by the Council's budget process before reaching the Community Plan stage. In effect, the Community Plan, in this instance certainly, is actually being guided by the Council's objectives and strategic and political context. To put it another way, the Council is exerting a pre-emptive influence on the Community Plan, which will then 'lead' and 'influence' the creation of the Structure Plan. This was actually acknowledged as a deliberate measure by the newly elected leader for the Council:

> "There's a fair amount of common ground between our [the Council's] priorities and the priorities the community planning partnership have set previously. What will start to happen now is that the community planning partnership will start to refine its own objectives to bring it more into line with the objectives the council has set. I don't think there's any areas of complete contradiction but there will be differences of focus and differences of emphasis which, I suppose, is where the discussions have to start." (FPM 9)

Aside from the Council's influence on the community planning process and the financial pressures squeezing out the four priorities, the upcoming rewrite of the next Community Plan (in 2010) also seemed to pit long-term thinking against short-term priorities. While the 2004 and 2007 Community Plans were "refreshed", the 2010 Community Plan is to be totally rewritten. Consequently, the identification of the four policy levers was rationalised as a way to preserve a long-term view of crucial issues while focusing on the three years prior to the total rewrite of the Community Plan:

> "Once we launch the revised community plan we will be saying, '*right, this is what we're planning to do for the next three years until we completely re-write the community plan, but at the same time we've taken a long-term view over some of the big challenges facing Fife, and these are four of them*'. I think that'll be helpful in terms of showing the added value of doing community planning, the fact that it gives an opportunity for some of the key partners to sit down and take a strategic longer term view, which wouldn't have been done 10 years ago." (FPS 1)

Obviously, it is unclear at this juncture whether or not the four priorities will indeed be carried forward, or if the re-write of the Community Plan will start with a blank page, although perhaps it is telling that the new leader of the Fife Council could not recollect either the key priorities or the scenarios: "you had to remind me of what they were, so that tells you how much impact they had" (FPM 9). Regardless, the 2007 iteration of the

Community Plan (section 4.5.X) was written with a three-year mentality, almost like the long-term thinking was merely a stop-gap before everything can be done afresh in 2010. This also seems to be something that was set in motion several years ago, and not a response to the limited impact of the scenario-based work. The result was an awkward transposition of a short-term mentality on to a long-term process.

Although all the evidence supports the steady decline in influence and importance of the once 'key priorities', it is perhaps wise to recall the nature of those priorities to help us understand if anything is *actually* changing. Each key area suggested that, while the process of identifying the four key priorities helped raise awareness, it did not change the focus of their work. There is almost an illusion of strategy here. And consequently an illusion that something has failed. In reality, this process is a strategic charade—but not a deliberate deception of any sort, rather, an important process of corporate communication executed in a 'strategic' setting (e.g. through workshops and during planning cycles) and involving 'strategists' (e.g. senior managers, corporate policy staff, and consultants). This is by no means suggesting that the entire process is some kind of charade. On the contrary, the use of scenario planning has helped create a framework for *doing* community planning—one of the original goals of the process.

4.5.3.4 An Emerging Strategic Framework

Although it may contain components that appear more communicatory than strategic, the scenario-based process helped to "focus the Fife Partnership's mind" (FPM 5) and to create a framework for long-term thinking:

> "It does provide a framework for taking that longer term view and not just muddling along." (FPS 1)

Despite helping to "organise ambition", the scenario process was still met with cynicism:

> "there is a tendency for a lot of people to be quite cynical about a lot of these management methodologies but I think it was a useful way of approaching it." (FPS 1)

One respondent attributed this cynicism to a proclivity towards day-to-day operational fire-fighting, seemingly endemic to the public-sector:

> "If you look at the senior management and leadership across the public sector, I would wonder how many of them have been exposed to this type of thinking—it is seen as, *'it's the boffins in POD or in the policy units or in the strategy units that know all this stuff!'* Whereas, certainly from where I came from, in terms of economic development, it was kind of seen as this was something a leader of an organisation needed to know about, you needed to be aware of these techniques, you needed to be aware of what strategic management was rather than operational day-to-day type stuff. And I do get an impression, quite regularly, when we're doing these sorts of exercises that an awful lot of senior management time in the public sector is spent on operational fire-fighting issues and not so much is spent on understanding that broader context within which they work." (FCCP 3)

As mentioned earlier, the scenario planning process was a contributing factor in the strategic maturation of the Fife Partnership. However, while it was the genesis for the strategic conversation, it also instilled a false hope that it would provide a clear strategic focus for Partners and support staff, although this was attributed more to the strength of short-term issues than to any failing of the process:

> "I don't think there have been any major downsides, probably apart from the raising of expectations that this will provide a very clear strategic focus because if you look at the broad range of shorter term issues that need to be dealt with, it's very difficult to focus things down to two or three policy priorities." (FPS 1)

Interestingly, when discussing how scenario planning had been used, the same respondent said:

> "The scenario planning process itself, in terms of providing a template for presenting the key trends, was a useful one." (FPS 1)

As was described above, towards the end of the process, scenario planning had also become a form of trend analysis. It was also something POD used as a strategic language to facilitate corporate level interaction:

> "I was disappointed that we didn't find them being used more often, and, as I say, they became more the POD toolbox and part of what we were using when we were discussing the strategy-type issues with folk." (FCCP 3)

Those who had been involved with strategy development for some time (e.g. members of POD), also viewed it as the beginnings of a genuine strategic development process:

"I think that it's *actually given us* a policy development process (laughing). Yeah, no, I do, I genuinely think that. Policy and Organisational Development's there, but there's not a procedure, though, that I follow. There was no manual that said, '*this is how we develop policy for the council*'. I'm not sure there is anywhere. There are things like the Magenta book and the Green book that are used in central government, but there's never really been anything like that for local government."

"There's a lot of stuff about strategy development, but let's be honest, strategy development is just, in a public sector context, another development of how you develop policy—it's just the private sector jargon getting brought into it. I think it has helped, because I think it's given us additional tools we can actually use; and one of the things over the last few year that I hope folk would've noticed here is that we've put in a lot of the building blocks that you actually need to get to the stage where you can actually write a strategy document or a policy document and have it be more robust than it would have been in the past, so the scenarios give you a context in which to look at what the future might be, in terms of what you're trying to do." (FCCP 3)

However, while there were numerous benefits to having a strategy development process in place, it was also seen as something disconnected with the reality of local needs:

"You've got all the noble ideas at the top and you've got people working very hard at the front line; and somewhere in between the two of them, they just get completely disconnected." (FPM 9)

Part of this issue can be attributed to the discursive nature of strategy development process, which has contributed to a lack of decision, follow-through and accountability on implementation:

"From our perspective, we wanted this to be more of an ongoing process so that, annually, we were taking stock and moving it forward. It didn't really happen like that because scrutiny processes hadn't been put in place, so one of the things we'll look to do over the next few months is to move the Community Plan process—the Partnership process—to a more managerial footing, so away from coming together to discuss issues, to coming together to deliver particular objectives, and to scrutinise whether those objectives are being delivered, and to discuss issues."

…Because there's no-one sitting there saying…*"why haven't you done that?"*, it just moseyed along—there's no real drive to it." (FCCP 3)

This lack of drive can be attributed partly to the changing strategic context, both politically and managerially. The newly appointed Chief Executive of Fife Council's decision not to adapt the budget to reflect the four key priorities lessened the priority to deliver on these areas. Although this was described above as being an issue of perception rather than reality, from a process point of view, the cessation of the *Managing Fife's Future* process removed the explicit mention of the key challenges. The *Managing Fife's Future* process was initially intended as a parallel process to the Community Plan and Action programme, however, to avoid complication and duplication, it was agreed that the four key challenges would be reported as part of the Community Plan.

4.5.4 Community Plan 2007

The 2007 Community Plan was written in a different political and managerial climate from the two previous editions. As was mentioned previously, Fife Council had appointed a new Chief Executive in June 2006, but perhaps more significant was the change in political leadership of the Council following the local government elections in May, 2007. The Labour party majority was relegated into opposition after the formation of a SNP-Liberal Democrat coalition. The Fife Partnership meeting on 28 March, 2007, was the last before the elections, but also the first of the 2007 community planning cycle.

Similarly to the 2004 revision, it was a lengthy, consultative process, written by members of POD in Fife Council's Corporate Research. The first step, reported at the Fife Partnership meeting, was a review of community planning progress. The review contained six components: a short review of progress from 2004 – 2007; a report of progress against community planning milestones; an "update on the scenarios"; a report on a confidential, internal audit of community planning; a report on how community planning has developed in Fife; and an articulation of the need to coordinate strategic planning among partners (MI/FP/6).

The "scenarios update" referred to a Corporate Research-generated report on the *Managing Fife's Future* process. The report "advised that there had been no major changes in the five key drivers from the last update and that for a number of indicators, there had been no significant movement" (MI/FP/6). Table 4.26 (below) synthesises the original five drivers and the comments attributed to each resource:

Table 4.26 - 2007 scenario planning drivers update

Drivers	Comments
Fife's Resources	Unknown – it is unclear whether or not data for this driver was presented
Economy	"Good news in the growth of renewable energy activity associated with the Fife Energy Park and Fife adapting its engineering base to new and developing markets".
Education	"new government policy for school age and post school education and training had provided a positive impact on inclusion. However social exclusion remained a significant barrier to raising achievement in Fife".
Connectivity	"Favourable decision" on additional Forth crossing but indicator remains largely unchanged
External Funding	Unchanged – significant challenges in funding and spending reviews

Source: from MI/FP/6

The report reached a general conclusion, whereby Fife will continue to "face considerable uncertainties in the influences on its future". Accordingly, the "refresh of the Community Plan would need to take account for these uncertainties and build in considerable flexibility of response in order to take advantage of opportunities and guard against more challenging times in the future" (MI/FP/6).

The presentation at the Partnership meeting which synthesised the six components covered three important points: firstly, the Partnership was advised on progress being made against milestones and future scenarios—43% of the milestones were on target to be met by 2010; secondly, it was suggested that the Community Plan become more outcome and delivery focused with a clear focus on responsibility and lead action; and thirdly, that the 'Winds of Change'—the document which uses the scenarios as the contextual background for assessing progress—be considered when developing the Community Plan, particularly in terms of

resource allocation to help establish clear links with partnerships and partner organisations responsible for delivery.

When a background and update of the Community Plan refresher was presented to the Fife Partnership in June 2007 (the first meeting after the elections), the four 'policy priorities' and two managerial levers were a key component of the revision of the Community Plan. At this juncture, the partners wanted the Community Plan to be more simple and condensed than it had been in the past. It was agreed that these comments would be taken under advisement prior to the drafting and consultative process, scheduled for July/August 2007.

The first working draft was presented to the Partnership in preparation for the 29 August meeting. Scenario Planning was mentioned explicitly as a "process" used to "track some of the key trends in Fife", which "enabled community planning partners to identify and agree upon four key challenges that will have to be addressed…to ensure that Fife has a successful and sustainable future" (MI/FP/7). Also mentioned in the framework of the plan was the reduction in the "number of outcome themes from six to five by removing '*Strengthening our Communities*' as a standalone theme" (MI/FP/7). The rational for this decision was that all the plan's remaining outcome themes should "contribute to building stronger communities" (MI/FP/7). However, while it focused the Community Plan and the remaining themes, it created a problem of symmetry for the placement of the four key challenges generated during the scenario planning process.

Highlighted under the heading of the Community Plan theme of 'Fife's Economy' (*Building a stronger, more flexible and diverse economy*) was the key challenge, 'Tackling Worklessness', described as:

> "Long term unemployment impacts on personal and family incomes, on how people feel valued and the expectation of them as citizens. Getting more people in Fife into work is a necessary condition for success across community planning themes. . Once people are in work they need to be provided with the skills they need to help support the continued growth of Fife's economy." (ID/FP/1)

Highlighted under the heading of 'Educational Achievement' (*A well-educated and skilled Fife*) was the key challenge, 'Educational achievement for all', described as:

> Education is vital in enabling everyone to participate to their full potential as citizens and to contribute to Fife's future. Concerted action to foster achievement before, during and beyond school age can create many of the conditions necessary to realise other ambitions in the community plan. (ID/FP/1)

Under 'Our Environment' (*Sustaining and improving our environment*) were the key challenges of 'Conserving energy and resources' and 'Keeping Fife connected':

Table 4.27 - Environmental challenges and connectivity

Conserving Energy and Resources	"There is growing evidence of climate change, over consumption of the world's resources and threats to biodiversity. This is a problem that needs to be tackled by all individuals and organisations. In Fife we can and must make a decisive move towards sustainable development because it is in our own long term interests and everybody has a part to play." (ID/FP/1)
Keeping Fife Connected	"Emerging doubts over the structural condition of the Forth Road Bridge have compounded the already recognised capacity problems for travel across the Forth. Early decisions on a multi-modal crossing and substantially expanded cross-Forth capacity are critical, not just for Fife but to confidence in the whole of East Central Scotland. Equally important is connectivity within Fife. Getting this right will not only connect people with opportunities but also help the local economy and achieve sustainability gains. Good transport links are of particular importance to people living in rural Fife and in Fife's regeneration areas." (ID/FP/1)

No 'key challenges' were identified for 'Health and Well-being' and 'Safer Communities'. In the consultation, which extended from August to November 2007, several comments on the first draft (which were unattributed) drew attention to the lack of key challenges for 'Health and Well-being' and 'Making Communities Safer'. Other comments pertaining to the four key challenges showed inconsistencies with the process partners underwent, with many respondents even suggesting additional challenges. Some of the suggestions included (ID/FP/2):

- "'Tackling Worklessness' not sustainable due to high levels of immigration"
- "'Keeping Fife Connected' should be updated due to Scottish Government support for new crossing"
- "Should include 'Tackling Homelessness'."
- "Should include 'Protecting the environment from overdevelopment'."

- "Include a further Key Challenge entitled 'Improving Community Safety'."

However, comments attributed to Fife Council supported the inclusion of the key challenges but argued they should include evidence explaining how and why they were chosen. This suggestion was echoed in two other comments.

In general, comments on the draft were positive: "the revised plan is clearer, sharper and more concise than previous versions" (ID/FP/2). However, comments pertaining to the "Today and Tomorrow" section, which included the key challenges, raised two issues in particular that illustrate the political rather than strategic nature of the Community Plan. Firstly, it was thought that the whole "Today and Tomorrow" section, which provides information on key trends and identifies the key challenges which Fife must overcome if it is to achieve prosperity, was too negative, arguing that the Fife also has "a great deal to be positive about" (ID/FP/2). This highlights a strange dilemma specific (perhaps) to strategic plans of a public and political nature, whereby optimism is preferred over reality despite the obvious implications, i.e. if something negative is hidden in order to maintain a positive outlook, it is highly unlikely that the problem will be resolved. The second issue was related to the nature of the key challenges and the opinion that they are "overtly political and will change as the local authority changes", i.e. that they were the choice of the previous administration and were aligned with the Labour governments' social and economic agenda (ID/FP/2).

Unsurprisingly, in the final draft of the 2007 Community Plan, released in April 2008, the four key challenges were separated from the five community planning outcomes (FR/FP/6). Instead, they became a separation section in the front end of the "Fife Today and Tomorrow" section, however all descriptions remained unchanged. This structural change was the most significant difference between the first and final draft.

The 2007 Community Plan was structured with ownership in mind. Delivery was seen as a problem with the 2004 Community plan. Thus, in this revision, instead of just listing milestones for each theme, specific outcomes, relevant milestones and a list of responsible

parties and targeted strategic documents were detailed for each theme: "The political leadership of the Partnership…is very different to what was there before; they're all looking for measurable outcomes now—much more than before" (FPM 5). This addition was popular amongst those consulted on early drafts of the plan, as if it somehow forced ownership of issues upon partners and partnerships. However, one has to question the relevance and necessity of such an inclusion—for building 'a stronger, more flexible and diverse economy', the 'lead partner' was identified as Scottish Enterprise Fife, and the 'lead partnership' as the Fife Economic Forum; similarly, for 'Improving health and well-being in Fife', the 'lead partner' is NHS Fife, and the 'lead partnership' is the Health and Well-being Alliance. Thus the obvious question is, *why would anyone other than the NHS and Health and Well-being Alliance be in charge of leading the 'Health and Well-being' outcome theme?* Yet this was seen as a very worthwhile inclusion, as if somehow the articulation of these lead agencies will improve the likelihood of achieving the success and delivery of objectives not met in the 2004 plan.

4.5.4.1 A Different Journey Plagued by the Same Problems

In the 2004 Community Plan, an appendix dedicated to a description of the scenario planning work was the only explicit reference to the scenario process. There was no such mention in the 2007 plan. However, the explicit contribution of the second scenario process was the selection of four key challenges—the articulation of common reference points for Fife's public services to work towards. The impact of these issues as part of the scenario process (as described in 4.5.3), were also subject to many of the same problems which affected the first scenario process into strategy episode (see 4.3.3), i.e.:

- Strategic Fatigue
- Assumption of Strategic Singularity (though this was less of an issue as the memory of the scenarios diminished while the four key challenges gained prominence)
- Competing Strategic Process

Competing Strategic Process became a more prominent issue as the key challenges focused attention on the structure of strategy in each area. This manifested itself on two levels: the

capacity of each area to work within a national framework; and the role of established local planning documents.

As was described above, much of the worklessness agenda is governed, funded and directed by national standards. Transportation, which already has a well-developed strategy process, is subject to national and regional requirements as well as its local obligations. Similarly, for education, national standards and frameworks supersede any local ambitions that outside such requirements. There is scope for freedom in the environmental challenge, where because there is no associated service delivery requirement, the council and the Fife Partnership have the ability to be more entrepreneurial in this endeavour.

Fife's Structure Plan, which stretches from 2006 to 2026, and requires parliamentary approval, was decided before the agreement of the key challenges. Accordingly, there were no budgetary adjustments to reflect the key challenges. Some of their eight key areas encompassed elements of two of the key challenges, but Fife Council's budget is designed to correspond with the goals of the Structure Plan. Similarly, the Fife Economic Forum, who had already agreed their 10-year economic strategy, was reluctant to engage with the key challenges.

Beyond issues of fatigue, singularity, competing processes, the issue of leadership emerged as one of the most important factors in the process. As has been seen throughout the case study, Fife's strategic process is subject to a host of external factors. There are cultural factors, issues of power and accountability and national directives, as stipulated above, and political issues. There 'political' issues can be separated into strategic leadership and political leadership. Both had significant but also immeasurable consequences for this process:

The issue of *strategic* leadership encapsulated two decisions either side of a leadership change. The former Chief Executive compromised the integrity of the second scenario process by pushing through the addition of the 'worklessness' challenge. The new Chief Executive, with new opinions and agendas and no connection or engagement to the scenario

or the process, was responsible for the council's decision not to alter its budget to reflect the selection of the key challenges.

The issue of *political* leadership again encapsulates the differences in situation and commitment either side of a change in leadership. However, this issue relates to the local elections in May 2007. As was described in section 4.4.4, there was a lack of drive in the political leadership in the latter part of 2006—many of the councillors and political leaders of the Fife Partnership were set to retire at the election, which caused the process to stagnate:

> "the political leadership, and the leadership of late, became quite disengaged because the administration was in decline, and most people were retiring anyway —I'm not criticising them for that—so the level of commitment and drive actually dropped off." (FCE 2)

Similar to the situation with the new Chief Executive, the new councillors were disconnected with the process and were now faced with a previous administration's agenda—this issue was partly responsible for the comments pertaining to the inclusion of the key challenges on the Community Plan. However, it is worth noting that this change, this new leadership, was not seen with negativity. Rather, there was optimism that the political leadership, necessary for instilling ownership of the scenarios and community planning process, could be renewed:

> "It would be quite interesting to see with the new members around the partnership table, as we now have, whether or not we'll go back a bit and re-activate the scenarios and say, '*this is where we are, and this is how we need to take it forward*'. Not saying we exactly have to revisit it...but try to re-engender some leadership about the place because it did go into a decline." (FCE 2)

As it was, there was a concerted effort to engage new members of the council with the scenario-based work:

> "Interestingly, over the last few weeks we've been running the induction sessions for the new council and...introduced the scenarios to them, very briefly, in one of the sessions. They did sit up, the newly elected members thought they could relate to them, they could see what potentially was going on there. So it would be interesting to see because we've got other prioritisation sessions coming up with the new administration, so I think I want to throw some of this stuff into them again, because some of them are aware of it, some of them won't have ever seen it, so I do want to give them a flavour of what's actually being said

from that perspective, and then see how we can actually use that in conjunction with manifestos to actually get some prioritisation again." (FCCP 3)

"I've had some briefings...to try to get up to speed with the issues the Partnership were involved with." (FPM 9)

These issues are an inevitable component of government-planning processes and this should not be unexpected: "it cannot be a 'problem' because it is the reality of organisational life" (FPM 3). However, they do add to the complexity of Fife's community planning process. The sheer size of the public sector in Fife—35,000 employees and a combined annual budget of £1.6 billion—makes it difficult to achieve to the sort of strategic focus partners would ideally like. Thus the next next best option is to try to organise and make sense of the environmental and strategic chaos so that they can identify and communicate what they see as the crucial components for Fife's success.

4.5.5 Reflections of the Scenario Planning Process

In a review of the Fife Partnership's effectiveness, partners were asked to answer a questionnaire[62] on a number of categories (Leadership, Strategy and Direction, People Management, Management of Resources, Processes, and Performance Management). Each category had a number of statements with which the partners had to attribute a response of "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree". Out of 42 statements, partners "Agreed" with 28, "Disagreed" with 6, and "Strongly Agreed" with 8. Of the 8 statements partners "Strongly Agreed" with, 4 were associated to the scenario planning process (ID/FP/3):

- The partnership periodically reviews the wider external operating environment
- Effective processes are in place for the development and review of strategy
- Effective processes are in place to gather and report performance information
- Clear reporting framework (format and calendar)

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[62] This was an internally generated questionnaire and was not connected with this piece of research.

Interestingly, despite the communicative and consultative nature and benefits of the scenario planning process, 2 of the 6 statements partners "Disagreed" with were:

- Effective communications are in place; and
- Effective processes are in place to gather and report performance information

In section 4.1.4, three reasons for using scenario planning were articulated. These reasons can serve as a contextual marker from which to reflect upon Fife's use of scenario planning (See Table 4.28):

Table 4.28 - Reasons for using (and reflections of) scenario planning

Reason for using Scenario Planning	Reflections
Tackling the perception of Fife Council's lead role in Community Planning	Although the scenario planning process has solidified the position of the Fife Partnership as collective leaders of community planning, Fife Council's decision not to make any financial adjustments to reflect the selection of the key challenges actually reinforces the council's position as de facto 'leaders' in the community planning process and agenda.
Strategy should be owned and shared by everyone	The community planning process has become owned and shared by partners but is that process a strategic one? As it has become a more collective experience, it has become more communicative and less strategic.
Providing a more rigorous approach to long-term planning	There is evidence to suggest that the Partnership and members of the council's Corporate Research have become more conscious of long-term issues. However, there is also evidence suggesting that a concentration on ownership and delivery on the 2007 plan (given the total rewrite in 2010), diminishes the 10-year, long-term vision in favour of a 3-year, short-term focus.

This makes Fife's journey with scenario planning look like an unsuccessful one. However, when considering the original remit of the Community Plan (see section 4.1.1), the use of scenario planning has served the Fife Partnership well. The three broad goals were:

- Improving public service
- Providing a process for engagement and consultation for Local Authorities, public services, and the private and voluntary sectors
- Assisting councils and partners in identifying and addressing the needs of individuals and communities (see Community Planning Working Group 1998)

With respect to the third goal, the focus and purpose of scenario planning is to identify key drivers and understand how they will evolve and the impact this will have for the organisation/situation, etc.. In both situations, it was used to identify drivers, resources and challenges deemed crucial to Fife's economic, social and environmental prosperity.   The second goal, about providing a process for engagement and consultation, is achieved in the practice of scenario planning. Despite an absence of 'actual strategy', the scenario planning process helped establish a framework to facilitate the consultation and engagement process. The Community Plan has become a document of compromise, almost an example of corporate communication.   However, it still requires the synthesis of an enormous amount of information from a multitude of services and organisations at local, regional and national levels.   The scenario planning process has helped organise and analyse this data, both in preparation of the writing of the plan and in the monitoring of the milestones identified therein.

Fife's scenario planning process has been a complex and difficult endeavour that, at times, has had to struggle against a plethora of impeding forces.   However, despite the lack of a clear and explicit follow-through from scenarios into strategy, Fife's scenario planning process has created and embedded a framework for facilitating the community planning process. There is a commitment towards the long-term thinking which scenario planning provides. Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Fife Partnership have decided to use scenario planning again when they perform the total rewrite of the Community Plan in 2010.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In the 9-year duration of this case study, the Fife Partnership produced three Community Plans, the first in 2000 and two subsequent 'refreshers' in 2004 and 2007.   Both revisions were produced after undergoing a scenario planning process. This case study was designed as a descriptive, chronological narrative to explore how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform a strategic planning process.   The case, split into five episodes, illustrated Fife Partnership's use of the strategic tool scenario planning within the broader context of the community planning process.   It also highlighted some significant elements, events and

situations that had an impact on the scenario planning and community planning processes, and revealed the many layers of complexity inherent to the process and practice of strategy in the public domain.

This section will offer a brief summary of the five episodes of the case study before introducing the structure of the following discussion and analysis portion of the thesis.

Episode 1 began with a description of the initial goals of the community planning process:
- Improving public service
- Providing a process for engagement and consultation for Local Authorities, public services, and the private and voluntary sectors
- Assisting councils and partners in identifying and addressing the needs of individuals and communities

Fife's 'coterminosity' was seen as a significant advantage in organising partnership working, deemed necessary to facilitate community planning. The Fife Partnership first produced the Community Plan in 2000. It articulated a 10-year for Fife that sought to '*deliver an inclusive Fife*', '*a sustainable Fife*', and '*best value for Fife*'. The plan was divided into six themes (people, economy, health, environment, education, and inequality), each supported by a strategic partnership which sat beneath the Fife Partnership and worked to a three-year planning horizon.

The Community Plan was designed to sit above all public sector planning documents. It was to set the tone, vision and ambition from Fife. However, what had developed was an opinion that it was Fife Council who led this process. Thus, planners wanted to create a plan that was robust and "was owned and shared by everyone" (FPM 2). It was thought that scenario planning offered a rigorous approach to the type of long-term thinking and planning that partners and members of Fife Council's Corporate Research unit admired. Consequently, scenario planning experts from the University of St Andrews were asked to facilitate a process that would feed into the upcoming 2004 revision of the Community Plan.

Episode 2 covered the first scenario planning process, which began in September 2002 and extended up to March 2003. The question that guided the scenario planning process was: "within the overall aim of a more inclusive Fife, what will be the needs and expectations for Fifers in 2013, and how might resources best be used to serve them?" (ID/SP1/8). The scenario planning method used extensive desktop research as well as individual and group interviews to generate a number of issues around which the scenario would be created. After a series of group workshops to refine and consolidate key issues, five areas were identified:

- Fife's Resources
- Fife's Economy
- Education/Skills
- Funding
- Mobility

These issues were 'rolled out' over 10 years, the outcomes of which were used to generate two scenarios: '*Bridging the Gap*' and '*Mind the Gap*'. *Bridging the Gap* was a largely optimistic scenario that depicted Fife in 2013 as a region of prosperity which rallied against economic decline and unemployment to forge a bright future through an improved vision, inspired leadership, renewed ambition, and increased connectivity. *Mind the Gap* was a highly pessimistic but not entirely negative scenario. Fife was described as an area of "failing industry and shrinking public funding" that had become "totally isolated from Scottish and UK economy" (ID/SP1/5). The dire state was blamed on a "lack of vision, strategic thinking and cooperation by Fife's lead agencies" (ID/SP1/5). The scenarios were released to invited members of Fife's public services at the Community Planning Gathering, held at the end of February, 2003.

Episode 3 tracks the first scenario follow-through process, extending from March 2003 to October 2005. The early part of the period was spent analysing the scenario planning work. After the categorisation of the key resources, a resource analysis was conducted, which, despite painting a relatively bleak picture, was met with overwhelming optimism.

The 2004 Community Plan was a lengthy consultative process involving over 250 people. Although the scenario process was instigated to inform the revision of the community planning, its direct impact on the plan was not readily apparent. However, all respondents involved with the process were positive about the more subtle benefits (e.g. 'freeing' peoples' thinking, breaking down the 'service silos', etc.). The lack of impact was attributed partly to three impeding factors:

- Strategic fatigue

- The assumption of strategic singularity

- Competing strategic processes

There was little activity with the scenarios and community planning between February 2004 and October 2005. However, the release of the State of Fife Report 2005 stimulated a renewed desire to see the "bigger picture" that also sparked a consensus that the scenario planning process was a valuable endeavour that ought to be refreshed.

Episode 4 encompasses Fife's second scenario planning process, beginning in October 2005, and concluding in June 2006. Dissatisfaction with the level of engagement of the 2003 scenario planning work reignited the Fife Partnership's strategic support teams' desire to *be* more strategic and embed scenario planning into the knowledge base of the organisation. Thus, the process was reengaged—the first step being to update the contextual understanding and to update the scenarios accordingly. This was done at the first of three '*Managing Fife's future*' workshops, attended by Partners and senior managers from partner organisations and strategic partnerships).

It was through a process of '*Strategic Conversation*' that workshop participants agreed upon three 'policy priorities', deemed crucial for Fife's success. They were:

- Sustainability

- Connectivity

- Education

However, when the outcomes of the workshop were disseminated, a fourth key policy priority had been included at the behest of the outgoing Chief Executive of Fife Council. The addition of "social inclusion and worklessness" magnified an underlying dissatisfaction with the process and its purpose. At this point, the administration was in decline and on the verge of a change in political and strategic leadership—many councillors were retiring at the next election, the Chief Executive was also set to retire and his successor was completely new to the process. Fife Council had also just released its Structure Plan (2006 – 2026) and the Fife Economic Forum had agreed their 10-year economic development strategy. Thus the workshops struggled with involvement and engagement with attendees questioning the purpose of the workshops, the level of continuity, and the role of conflicting agendas at local, regional, and national levels.

Episode 5 begins before the final *Managing Fife's Future* workshop and concludes with the public release of the 2007 Community Plan in April 2008. The final instalment of the strategic conversation sought to identify actions for each of the four policy priorities. Although thought of as a strategic exercise, it appeared to be more of an exercise in corporate communication—representatives from services identified as key priorities presented actions being taken to tackle these issues; these actions were agreed upon and endorsed by the Fife Partnership; who then filtered these 'strategies' down to the services which initially suggested them. Consequently, most services questioned whether or not they would be doing anything differently had they not participated in the scenario planning process.

The impact of the scenarios was restricted most significantly by Fife Council's decision not to make any budgetary adjustments to reflect the selection of the policy priorities (which became 'key challenges' to remove the disconnect between the name 'priority' and the lack of financial commitment). Despite the explicit shortcomings, the use of scenario planning has taken the Fife Partnership to an elevated level of strategic maturity which has helped transform a technique for long-term thinking and planning into an established strategic framework—it has become how Fife Partnership *does* community planning.

The Community Plan itself, another lengthy consultative process, made little explicit reference to scenario planning (despite performing and updated analysis of the resources agreed upon in 2003), describing it as only as a method for identifying and monitoring key trends. The key challenges too were separated from the main section of the plan—four challenges and five outcomes presented a problem of symmetry that members of Fife Partnership felt lessoned the importance of themes which did not have an associated key challenge. Although the 2007 Community Plan was a different journey, it was affected by the same issues as in 2004, but with the changes in leadership assuming a more prominent role. Despite apparent successes and failures in the process, scenario planning has become the way in which the Fife Partnership *does* community planning—it was used in 2003 and 2006, and will be used again in 2009 to inform the total rewrite of the 2010 Community Plan.

This chapter has provided a valuable and necessary illustration and exploration of the Fife Partnership's use of scenario planning in its community planning process, helping to establish how the scenario planning process was managed, and the effect it had on policy development. The next chapter will extend and refine some of the explanations offered here in an attempt to understand, through theoretical reflection, how scenario planning has been used to inform a strategic planning process.

Chapter 5 - Case Study: Answering the Research Questions

5.0 Introduction

The detailed narrative presented in the previous chapter helps answer two of the research sub-questions, namely, *How does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?*[63], and, *How does scenario planning affect policy development?*[64]. Before progressing on to tackle the more elusive research question, *How do cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation?*, and the central research question, *How does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?*, this chapter will offer some further explanation to accompany the answers developed in the case narrative. The purpose of this section is to present a succinct answer to the research questions listed above. It is through answering these research questions and combining theoretical knowledge with empirical evidence, that the conclusion of this thesis (Chapter 6) can articulate the key contributions, describing how knowledge and understanding of the scenario planning and S-as-P literatures has been extended, and also present some limitations of the research as well as offering some avenues for future research.

5.1 Managing the Scenario Planning Process

The structure of the first scenario planning process was fairly indicative of the intuitive logics method of scenario building (see, for example, Wack 1985a, 1985b; van der Heijden 1996). The extensive data collection and analysis, and the discursive nature of the workshops, helped create respect for the method and catalyse the enthusiasm for thinking about the future:

> "It started with an emotional view that we should be working together for the good of Fife and gave it some factual and intellectual underpinning, which is still there…instead of doing something because I'm sure it's the right thing to do, I'm taking a line because fastidiously I remember that there's an evidence-base for

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[63] The case narrative provides a number of areas where the research questions are addressed, specifically, attention is directed towards Table 4.5, sections 4.2.1, 4.2.4, 4.3.1, 4.3.5, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, 4.5.1, and 4.5.2.

[64] As above, attention is directed to sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3.1, 4.3.3.2, 4.3.3.2, 4.3.4, 4.5.3, 4.5.4, and 4.5.5.

it, if that makes sense. I don't refer constantly to the evidence-base, but the judgement is more confident in the knowledge that there was an evidence-base for that". (FPM 3)

The pre-scenario planning time-period highlighted some crucial points that would feature throughout the case study. The dichotomy of content and process, incorporated in S-as-P as mutually constructive parts of a flow of organisational activity (see Jarzabkowski 2005: 7-8), is apparent in both scenario planning episodes.   Research from the evaluation of the community planning Pathfinder projects argued that the "development of the processes of strategic thinking, partnership...was more important than the production of a plan" (Rogers et al. 1999: 10). At that time, the public sector was experiencing "enormous pressures for more managerialism" (FCCP 1), to participate and engage in more professional activities, rather than focusing on "outcomes for the citizen" (FCCP 1):

> "You're being measured not necessarily on outcomes but on processes so the focus became more process orientated, looking at the means of doing things rather than what they're actually achieving" (FCCP 1)

Similarly, a more "rigorous approach to the Community Plan" (FFCP 1) was required that would answer the call of the *Best Value* agenda to, "get a wide range of people to think about strategy" (FCE 4). Moreover, the assumption that the council led community planning activity was damaging the wider perception of the process. Thus, scenario planning was seen as a way of bringing people out of their "service silos...rather than being top down from Fife Council" (FPM 1). The Partnership responded positively to the use of their local partners, University of St Andrews, as facilitators. Key policy advisors suggested the involvement of St Andrews after positive experiences of a scenario planning process at Scottish Enterprise. Additionally, respect for the expertise of the facilitators is in contrast with the problems experienced by Hodgkinson and Wright (see 2002), and also challenged Whittington's (see 2006b) claims that full-time, large-scale consulting houses are best placed to command the level of respect needed in interventions of this nature.

Broadly, there are four key constituents of this chronicle of strategizing: the Fife Partnership, the Community Plan, the community planning process, and the scenario planning process.

Essentially, the Fife Partnership, through the Community Plan and the community planning process, is a sensemaking and sensegiving entity (see Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991): "the Fife Partnership provides a mechanism for making sense of a lot of the work so that it's not just taking place in isolation" (FPM 3). However, the perceptions about the council's role in community planning suggested that the Fife Partnership struggled with establishing legitimacy[65]. Thus, a scenario-informed intervention was seen as a way of improving and facilitating the Fife Partnership's community planning mechanism: "it gives a clear framework to what the partnership was about" (FPM 1). From an external perspective, the application of an advanced strategy technique (i.e., long-term thinking, scenario planning) could be interpreted as a form of social conformity, where a new practice is employed because of cultural compatibility (Soule 1999) or to appease stakeholders' normative expectations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Abrahamson 1991), regardless of whether or not it is the right practice to adopt (see Ansari et al. 2010: 72-73). Internally, it gave the Fife Partnership a "common language and...a common focus...where we can talk about the different contribution our different services could make" (FCE 1). This suggests that the scenario planning process, through analysis and storytelling resources (see, for example, Novak 1975; MacIntyre 1981; Fisher 1987; Polkinghorne 1988; Bruner 1990; Polkinghorne 1995), became a sensemaking and sensegiving *activity* performed by a sensemaking and sensegiving *entity*. Gioia and Chittipedi's (1991: 444) 'processes involved in the initiation of strategic change' (see Figure 5.1 below) is broadly similar, where *envisioning* and *signaling* represent the stories produced and activities involved in scenario planning, and *re-visioning* and *energizing* encompass the production and dissemination of the Community Plan:

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[65] Here, legitimacy is understood as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions" (Suchman 1995: 574).

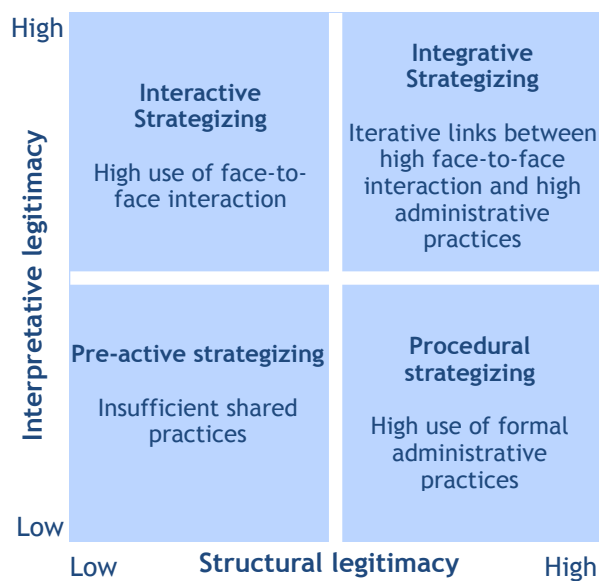**Figure 5.1 - Processes involved in the initiation of strategic change**
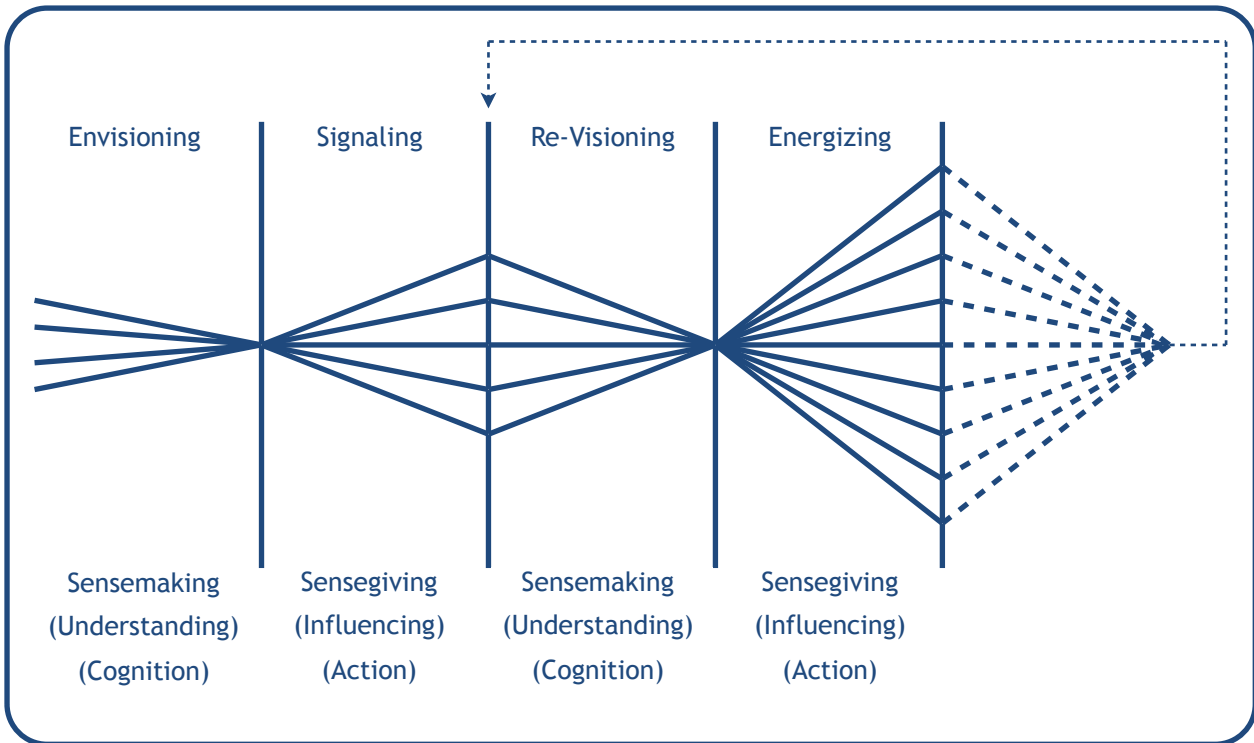
Source: Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991: 444)

The utilisation of scenario planning's sensemaking and sensegiving capabilities was a way to help the Fife Partnership with what Jarzabkowski (2005) refers to as interpretive and structural legitimacy:

Figure 5.2 - The strategizing matrix

Source: Jarzabkowski (2005: 161)

Scenario planning was a way to advance the Fife Partnership and the activity of community planning through the procedural and interactive quadrants to become the location of integrative strategizing. Jarzabkowski (2005) refers to this process as "reframing":

> "It first involves a shift from procedural strategizing, where the activity has high structural legitimacy but has also suffered the inertial effects associated with it, to interactive strategizing. Interactive strategizing is important for reframing the meaning surrounding the activity in order to shift it from its inertial pattern and better align it with intended changes in the activity. This is followed by integrative strategizing in order to develop new formal practices that will structurally embed the changes, but with ongoing re-enforcement of the new interpretative legitimacy of the change." (Jarzabkowski 2005: 165)

However, a problem with Jarzabkowski's strategizing matrix, and indeed *reframing* process, is that the quadrants suggest a static location and that dynamism occurs between, rather than within, quadrants (see 2005: 169). Considering also Whittington's assertion that wider societal phenomena (e.g., the emphasis of process over content) should be seen as part of the strategizing episode rather than just organisational context (see Whittington 2006a, 2006b), it becomes difficult to locate in the strategizing matrix the Fife Partnership's community planning activities. The activities of the Fife Partnership during the pre-scenario planning phase would appear to fit into the category Jarzabkowski (2005) identifies as pre-active strategizing, where intended activity is at a very early phase of development. Viewed in isolation, this is not an accurate account of the Fife Partnership nor of the community planning process. Community planning was a statutory requirement, which would assume logically, at least, high *structural legitimacy*. However, when compared to the more entrenched administrative practices of its constituent members (e.g., Fife Council's *Structure Plan* and *Service Improvement Plans*, Fife Constabulary's *Policing Plan*, etc.), it is far less procedural. Accordingly, the first scenario planning process was an experimental activity designed to strengthen the partnership's community planning process (under the implicit assumption that a sound community planning process would help improve Fife's public sector).

The second scenario planning process was less conventional and seemed to address specifically the inertia that had returned the community planning process into the *procedural* strategizing category. However, that is not necessarily a failing of the first scenario planning process or the scenario-to-strategy process. Indeed, it is surely expected that an outcome focused process will stall (or stop completely) after the sensegiving action (the release of the Community Plan) is completed—that is, until it is time to reengage the process, which, in this case, was governed by statutory obligations[66]. Jarzabkowski's (2005) strategizing matrix also invokes a singularity to the activity of strategizing, when this case would suggest that episodes of strategizing occur as layers. For example, one could argue that the activity of scenario planning was an interconnected layer of integrative strategizing that occurred within the community planning process, which is, in and of itself, a strategizing activity. To put it another way, scenario planning became the mechanism used to *do* community planning because its discursive and analytical nature achieved the structural and interpretative legitimacy the Fife Partnership needed. The Fife Partnership wanted "to continue to encourage free thinking and to incorporate this into the formal strategic planning process" (ID/FC/6), to equip itself "with evidence for reflection, discussion, possibly option appraisal and further action; in other words, a 'strategic conversation' for the long term planning and management of Fife" (MI/FP/3/1). Essentially, the broader goal was to "embed scenario planning within the knowledge base" of the partnership.

Rather than beginning again with extensive data collection and analysis, and following the intuitive logics method, the Fife Partnership chose simply to refresh the scenarios:

> "A decision was made that we wouldn't tear them up and start again. We wanted to see if they could be tweaked in light of new thinking, or new circumstances, or new influences; and then let's look at how we use them to start to influence policy plans." (FCCP 1)

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[66] An interesting avenue of research by Farjoun (2010) explores an alternative view of the paradoxical relationship between stability and change. Viewed as a contradictory but mutually enabling duality, stability can promote adaptability, innovation and exploration, and mechanisms of change (like experimentation) can be instrumental in maintaining stability. Applied in this case, the experimentation of scenario planning is used to create a unifying, and thus stabilising, vision in the form of the Community Plan; and it is the mechanism and nature of the statutory community planning process that facilitates regular, organisational change.

In the first process, sensemaking and sensegiving activities were conducted through the creation and dissemination of stories, whereas, in the second process, sensemaking was performed through the reflection and updating of the scenarios, and the sensegiving activity was the establishment of strategic priorities. Unfortunately, the refreshed scenarios lacked the initial spark of the originals in favour of a more "realistic" (FCE 1), "public sector" (FCCP 3) tone:

> "The first time around we actually sent all the stuff to a copywriter to actually get it professionally done, and this time we didn't, we just added things in ourselves and no matter how good draftsmen we think we actually are, I think it's just lost the impact that the original ones had...they now don't read terribly well. I don't think they've got the impact that the original ones had, they now feel too much written by public sector speak." (FCCP 3)

Consequently, the power of the narrative was lost as the scenarios resembled more a public sector checklist, reaffirming also the structural functionalist (for example, Parsons 1951) underpinnings of publicly-orientated scenarios (see section 2.1.3.3).

Despite the loss of impact on a storytelling front, the process was viewed positively by some of those attending the workshops: "My sense of the involvement and engagement was very positive." (FPM 1). However, others presented an alternative view:

> "I think its intent was honourable but I don't think it was taken seriously by the majority of people that turned up. I think the first scenarios one was good, it was good engagement and it went very well. I think the subsequent ones were progressively more marginalised and seen as not to be a hugely important use of our time." (FCE 2)

Regardless of opinion, the scenario planning process still contributed to the management and organisation of the community planning process: "It does provide a framework for taking that longer term view and not just muddling along." (FPS 1). Moreover, the process and activities involved suggested that the Fife Partnership had gained a level of maturity:

> "I think this revision has clarified a lot of things and also having these four key challenges has primarily showed that the Fife Partnership is at a level of maturity where it can have this conversation and come up with a consensus around policy areas." FPS 1

Although an examination of the activities involved suggest it was an example of *integrative* strategizing, describing it as something that achieved high *interpretative* legitimacy would be misleading. For example, the second process was subject to a significant change in participants, which seemed to damage the emotional buy-in of the first process:

> "Because of the change in personnel, there wasn't the same sense of ownership. People could understand them intellectually but didn't have the emotional sense of ownership. Some of us did, others didn't, and didn't have, as it were, the residual memory of the process." (FPM 3)

Similarly, another senior manager added, "the buy-in varied...the change in personnel makes it very difficult" (FPM 6). While illustrating 'involvement' as a key implication for managing the scenario planning process, this also raises questions for the S-as-P perspective. Examining the activities and actions of participants in this episode of strategizing helped highlight the connection between macro- and micro-organisational activities (e.g., the Chief Executive's desire to emulate Glasgow's focus and include 'worklessness' as a 'key challenge' over and above the agreed priorities, and the push to instil environmental action at the core of all Fife's activities), however, a significant, and somewhat damaging, factor in the success of the 'Managing Fife's Future' workshops was the lack of attendance of key people. The absence of specific people (usually the most senior) from the workshops was symbolic and conveyed significant meaning that is difficult to handle from a practice perspective. S-as-P is conceived as a way of studying strategic activity, i.e., the *doing* of strategy, whereas in this episode, a significant factor was the (obvious) lack of *doing* and *saying* by those not there. Although referring to static states and process research, Pettigrew's assertion that "language can be an analytical prison" (Pettigrew 1997: 444) is applicable in this case and captures a shortcoming of the S-as-P agenda — if an analytical framework is constructed to examine *doing* and *activity*, how does one study, and indeed capture the significance of, things not said by people not there?

The second scenario process also illustrated the beginnings of a societal shift from a process focus, which epitomised the first scenario-informed intervention, to an outcomes orientated

agenda—a greater emphasis was being placed upon achievable outcomes and delivering results:

> "the first scenario planning process...gave us a direction. But I was one of the ones that said we still needed to focus much more on the absolutes, that we needed to be very clear on the four or five key things we *needed to do.* And then in the scenario exercise we did in '06...we honed in on...the four key areas." (FPS 2)

Hence, while the goal of the first scenario planning intervention was more processual and integrative, the selection of key challenges in the second scenario planning exercise highlighted the need for focused, results-orientated public sector delivery.   Regardless of focus or purpose, the management of both scenario planning process is broadly indicative of the public sector climate and organisational conditions at the time of action, reinforcing the notion of reflexivity and the duality of structure and agency (see Giddens 1979; 1984) as actors appear to be both producers and products (see Sztompka 1991; Pettigrew 1997).

5.2 Affecting Policy Development with Scenario Planning

The narrative presented in sections 4.3 and 4.5 concentrated on the first and second scenario-to-strategy processes, offering a detailed account of how scenario planning was used in policy development.   Accordingly, this section will provide a short synthesis of those findings, discussing them from the S-as-P perspective, as well as drawing from other literatures to help develop and further understanding of how the use of scenario panning affected policy development in Fife.

In keeping with the S-as-P agenda, policy development in this case is to be understood as an activity, something that encompasses (but is not restricted to) the processes involves as well the outcome.   The path from scenario planning through policy development is complicated, awkward, and somewhat disjointed.   There is no clear, linear path of causality that says *'policy X was developed because of issue Y in the positive scenario'*.   Indeed, the intervention of a cognitive process is likely to raise questions of cause and effect.   Some respondents said that although they believed the scenarios were a positive experience, 'Fife' would be

concentrating on the same things as before. This is especially true for services with specific remits (Police, NHS, and Council services like transportation): "I don't think they changed the course we were on to any great extent because we're very clear in our minds that transportation is not an end in itself, transportation is there to serve…" (SLS 1). Logically, it is impossible to say whether or not a preceding action changed the outcomes, but it seems more likely when considering how scenarios are created in a time and space particular to the entity employing them and, in Giddensian terms (1984), are thus constrained (and enabled) by the rules and resources which govern activity. Moreover, the positive/negative nature of scenario-building is susceptible to the projection of current ambition and goals onto the hypothetical future. Therefore, if all units/services, etc., were to achieve their goals, they would surely find themselves in a place very near to the one they created in the positive scenario and very far from the one in the negative scenario.

The analytical followthrough of the first scenario planning process again reflected the desire at the time to be strategic, evidence-based, and analytical and to treat policy development and support as "developing intelligence" (FCCP 1) on a corporate level. However, analysing the post-scenario followthrough process offered insight into the reality of the Fife Partnership's and the scenario planning steering group's strategizing activities. As was described in section 5.3.1, after extensive analysis on resource gaps of critical issues, the practitioners involved identified potential actions. However, these 'actions' were agreed by the steering group (essentially a top management team) and did not engage at service level. Consequently, the 'actions' were more akin to statements of intent, rather than a new strategy for achieving the goals or defending against the threats of the positive and negative scenarios respectively. Similarly as before, this activity is more a process of sensemaking, performed also to help identify the areas targeted for sensegiving. Moreover, a telling insight into the unintended function of the scenario planning was in the resource analysis category called 'locus of action', which stated the strategic document or entity responsible for tackling these research gaps. Strategically, this appears somewhat superfluous, but it actually captures the unifying capacity of scenario planning and community planning, albeit performed through an act of sensemaking. This process was providing a mechanism for understanding how and where previously disparate services contributed to the overall well-

being of Fife, something too broad for individual services to appreciate; and though perhaps this was something they did not *need* to have an appreciation of, communicating a powerful signal of togetherness and singularity (essentially the sensegiving) helped draw the disconnected public sector out of its service silos to connect on a more corporate level and embrace the emerging central government themes of joint working and joint-service provision.

The benefits of joining together Fife's disparate public sector appears far removed from the idea of using scenario planning and strategic conversations like Winnicott's (see 1953) *Transitional Object* to navigate participants between current and future mental states (see section 2.1.4.3). The focus on the "jolt" of the scenarios (van der Heijden et al. 2002: 227), serving as the 'holding environment' before the strategic conversation facilitates the transition to a more enlightened cognitive position through a process of choice, action and reflection, is too clean and clear cut to be representative of this situation. However, when stripping away loaded words and terms like 'strategic' and "organizational jot", and allowing binary terms like 'current' and 'future state' to grey, the fundamentals of the transition activities are evident. The scenarios presented an alternative future that was underpinned by joined up public services, which allowed disparate forces to understand their contribution to tackling societal problems. Thus, by identifying relevant actions and talking about Fife as a single entity, a subtle transformation in policy development was occurring— perhaps not in terms of actual policy, but in the way services and institutions understood and viewed their role in achieving what had become a unifying vision: "they could recognise it, they could actually feel it and see things in it, they could understand and appreciate what was actually going on" (FCCP 3). Similarly, "people could see that they on their own couldn't do things and they needed to work in true partnership with people in other organisations and i'm sure that it's the scenario planning that woke them up" (FPM 6). In that regard, it could be argued that scenario planning actually gave Fife a policy development framework (see 4.5.3.4). Perhaps not in the most conventional sense, but one that embodied principles of partnership and unity, and was fostered through communication, understanding and appreciation:

"I think that it's _actually given us_ a policy development process (laughing). Yeah, no, I do, I genuinely think that. Policy and Organisational Development's there, but there's not a procedure, though, that I follow. There was no manual that said, '_this is how we develop policy for the council_'. I'm not sure there is anywhere. There are things like the Magenta book and the Green book that are used in central government, but there's never really been anything like that for local government." (FCCP 3)

Put simply, scenario planning helped establish a "clear framework to what the partnership was about" (FPM 1). It is noteworthy, however, to point out that the use of scenario planning, especially considering the extensive resource analysis, sought to improve the strategic effectiveness of the Fife Partnership and Fife's public sector. Efforts were made, but the impact was less than desired. Fife struggled "to get any further with them, [which] was more to do with where the current administration were, in terms of the capacity they had to actually deliver things any further" (FCCP 3). Similarly, there was disappointment that the scenarios had not "been more influential in the plan", that they "acted as a good mirror to set those things in context" but never "challenged and changed...objectives, [or] performance measures" (FCCP 1).

The most explicit attempt of the scenario planning process to engender policy development was through the selection of priorities in the second intervention. The interaction of practitioners in the Managing Fife's Future workshops exemplified key points of commonality and conflict, and also served as a very clear reminder of how inseparable strategic activity is from the time and place in which it is enacted. The series of three Managing Fife's Future workshops, which served as the second scenario-based episode, demonstrated the desire to _do_ more, to get to the "the heart of what matters" (FPS 2), but to do so in a more focused and achievable way:

"What are the absolute essentials? What do we really need to focus on for Fife's future? If we have too many priorities, we don't have any priorities because it's the usual story, things tend to get lost, so that was the reason that...in the sessions of the second revision...there was a push to say, _look we need to identify three or four_." (FPS 2)

However, despite good intentions, the second process, much like the first, showed that corporate-level strategizing in Fife is more communicative than strategic, and is concerned fundamentally (and perhaps unknowingly) with sensemaking and sensegiving rather than the creation of specific policies to tackle key areas and issues of concern. As was described in the previous chapter, the Fife Partnership identified key areas, invited representatives from those areas to present a strategic overview of the work being done, endorsed that work and, in doing so, 'set' the 'strategic direction' for these areas:

> "...the presentation I had made [to the Fife Partnership], in terms of what the key priorities were for education...was adopted by the council more widely and then, rather oddly, was brought back into our planning process. So, if you like, something I presented as key issues for us, as a service, and the means for addressing the concerns, was then taken on by the central planning team and then came back to us so that it may be encompassed in our annual improvement plan." (FCE 1)

A non-council service experienced a similar chain of events. On being asked if direction was being given by the Fife Partnership:

> "it's more the other way round. I mean we were glad that it came up...but we would have been doing that work as a matter of course, anyway, and trying to persuade and influence others to get involved in it." (SLS 2)

Interestingly, this "bizarre", quasi-strategic process suggests a duality sensemaking and sensegiving. The evidence suggests that the workshop served as both a sensemaking and sensegiving activity, for example, the presenters of the worklessness (or indeed education/ connectivity, etc.) agenda are engaging in sensegiving, whereas the rest of the workshop (i.e., the Fife Partnership) are engaging in sensemaking, so that it may inform their sensegiving, which extends also to the people conveying the original knowledge. Accordingly, because of the corporate nature of the workshops a natural reflexivity occurs between sensemaking and sensegiving:

> "From the perspective of what JobCentre Plus have done, the other way is that we've certainly added our backing to a lot of the debate about the Forth Bridge and these kind of things; and the other parts of the scenarios we've tried to add our weight to say, 'yes, we fully support the partnership—this is something that needs to be taken forward'. And obviously I've fed that kind of information back through our own channels, as well. Our director for Scotland, for example, if

he's questioned about what are the big issues for this district, we'd be able to feed in the issue about the drive towards worklessness." (SLS 2)

In the case of worklessness, members of JobCentre Plus were invited to aid the sensemaking of the Fife Partnership. However, by being part of the activity, the representatives from JobCentre Plus were also receptive to the other sensegiving participants. Through internalisation (i.e., sensemaking) and sensegiving back into its own organisation, the local body of JobCentre Plus was able to translate the local issues for Fife to the national body, and so forth. As a result, a sensemaking-sensegiving web begins to spread through Fife and Scotland's public sector. In a classical sense, this process is not the most overtly typical or at least deliberately strategic process, but it is one that seems effective when considering the goals of the Fife Partnership (see section 4.5.5).

The lack of strategy in the strategizing activities raises further questions of the S-as-P perspective. Despite advocating a new understanding of strategy (see Jarzabkowski 2003; 2005; Whittington 2006a; Johnson et al. 2007, etc.), the meaning of the word (and what *being* strategic means) remains classical (see Jarzabkowski 2003; Balogun and Johnson 2004) and is duly criticised by critical scholars for the Ansoff/Fayol-esque understanding of strategy (see Carter et al. 2008a: 86; 2008b: 108). Examining the doing of strategy but maintaining an "overly conservative conception of strategy" (Carter et al. 2008b: 108) creates a form of linguistic and analytical prison (Pettigrew 1997) that (because of the lack of hard, explicit strategy) makes the strategizing activities of Fife appear superficial, as if the sensemaking, sensegiving and organising are audience distractions in an illusion of strategic activity. However, in drawing together public services through sensemaking and sensegiving, the overall strategic capabilities of Fife appear more sophisticated and connected than they were previously. Thus, although the activity is not *strategic* on a micro- or even organisational-level, aggregated institutionally over time, the more subtle but nevertheless important strategic benefits emerge.

This also provides some empirical support for Carter et al.'s (2008a: 91-92) criticism of the notion of practice in S-as-P. Borrowing from Paul Veyne's discussion of practice (see 1997:

153-154), the S-as-P projects a presupposition of strategy onto activity when, in actuality, the practice, separated from the forced conception of strategy, does not suggest something strategic: to parallel Veyne's consideration of madness, a person must be "objectivised" as a strategist "for the prediscursive referent to appear retrospectively as material" for strategy (Veyne 1997: 170). Put another way, strategy "exists as an object only in and through a practice, but the practice in question is not itself" strategy (1997: 167), i.e., people talking about Fife's most pressing priorities only becomes identifiably strategic when one draws back from the activity and views the passage as a constructed, situated episode within a long process of organisational activity; but without appreciating and understanding that wider, more subtle process, it is wrong to objectivise any organisational activity (e.g., a workshop) as a *strategic* practice or an episode of *strategizing*.

On a less theoretical level, the prioritisation process highlighted the vulnerability of strategizing activities to external and overarching power. Evidence was presented in chapter 4 of supra-institutional forces (like the global green movement), the effect of national institutions (for example, central government agendas and national priorities of JobCentre Plus, the education service, etc.), the dominance of large agencies (typified in the financial powers of the council and NHS Fife, and the ability of the council to change the Community Plan, which should direct its strategic focus, not be subject to it), the pervasiveness of small power centres (for example, the Fife Economic Forum releasing its 10-year economic development plan shortly before the Managing Fife's Future process), and, perhaps most obviously, the role of personal agendas (exemplified by the memorable argument between the Chief Executives of the council and NHS Fife, and the Chief Executive of the council's intervention and addition of a fourth key priority). Moreover, the followthrough from the Managing Fife's Future process also highlighted the susceptibility of the process to 'strategy overload' and the pressures of public sector work. The scenario planning process was one strategic episode in an area of work typified by working groups, strategic initiatives and directives, and replete with a seemingly never-ending stream of strategic documents and plans, as well as the day-to-day pressures of service provision, etc.. As powerful as the scenario planning activity may have been, the fatigue and inertial forces of public sector,

local authority bureaucracy is difficult to overcome: "the willingness to do the longer-term strategic management is always going to be up against short-term demands" (FCCP 1).

A powerful example of these inertial forces and the negotiated softening of ambition can be seen in the the development of language used to describe the key priorities (see 4.5.3.3). The Fife Partnership's four priorities were not aligned with the new political and managerial leadership of the council's eight priorities. As the new council did not adapt its budget to reflect the four priorities, the actual term was changed to 'policy levers'. However, as this caused some confusion, it was changed again to 'key challenges'—something which communicated importance but did not require financial commitment. The symbolism of these changes communicated the desire of the new administration to start anew, also an act of sensegiving that stimulated frustration amongst those invested in the process: "If you don't do that [budget according to the priorities]…people think community planning is just a game and it doesn't really matter" (FPM 1). Similarly:

> "What's the point of doing scenario planning when you're not going to align your budget to it, but then the council doesn't have all that much control over their budget—they have to respond to the Government at national and UK levels." (FPM 5)

From a public sector perspective, the problem with establishing priorities is an intriguing one. In the Managing Fife's Future process, health was a notable omission from the list of Fife's 'priorities', something that provoked much debate and dissatisfaction:

> "I think we ended up with very limited drivers, frankly. […]Where was the issue about health in there? Where was health and well-being? if you don't have health and well-being and healthy people then you're never going to have a healthy economy. If you don't have health and well-being, people won't be able to learn and achieve their educational potential." (FPM 5)

This issue and the problems of prioritisation has resonance with research on stakeholder salience (see, for example, Mitchell et al. 1997). Essentially, the problem is that each priority represents a stakeholder group (or multiple groups). Thus, prioritising some stakeholders over others, especially if there are budgetary or service provision implications, is difficult, especially factoring in political ramifications. This also helps explain the

rationale of the council not to adjust its budget to reflect the priorities of the Managing Fife's Future process and to create a set of 'priorities' that incorporates every stakeholder group. The application of stakeholder theory (see, for example, Freeman 1984, 1994; Frooman 1999; Jones and Wicks 1999; Friedman and Miles 2006), and specifically stakeholder salience (see Mitchell et al. 1997), into this domain would be an exciting and important avenue of future research.

This section has attempted to combine case evidence and theoretical issues raised in the literature review to develop an understanding of how scenario planning affected policy development. In so doing, a number of issues, empirical and theoretical, have also been raised that will help inform the following section where the concentration will shift to understanding how cognitive process manifest physically in an organisation.

5.3 Cognitive Action

Scenario planning has been shown to be a cognitive process incorporating a number of different elements whose function has been to advance the understanding of the Fife Partnership. These elements have been described as storytelling/narrative, sensemaking/ sensegiving, and organising; even the activities through which these elements have been performed have contributed to a form of situated cognition (see Brown et al. 1989; Brown and Duguid 2000). Following Brown et al. (1989), scenario planning created a "structuring activity" through which practitioners, engaged with community planning and the Fife Partnership, could learn. This engagement creates a form of "community of practice" (see Lave and Wenger 1991), understood as a group who share common interest and desire to interact and contribute to the 'community'. The development and structure of a community of practice is based on legitimation and participation, and bears an obvious similarity to Jarzabkowski's (2005: 161) strategizing matrix, which is framed in terms of establishing structural and interpretative legitimacy. Even Wenger's (1998: 72-73) three interrelated parts of a community of practice shares more than a resemblance to Jarzabkowski's (2005: 155-169) categories of strategizing: *mutual engagement*, formed as a social entity through participation, establishing norms and building relationships, is similar to the *procedural*

beginnings of strategic activity; *joint enterprise*, formed through interaction and negotiation, creates shared understanding of their activities, and is similar to *interactive* strategizing; and *shared repertoire*, the development of communal resources, a practice of the community to aid the pursuit of common interest, is similar to the *integrative* strategizing. The purpose of highlighting this similarity is not to criticise, or indeed compliment, Jarzabkowski's strategizing matrix, rather it is to question the originality of the contribution of the S-as-P agenda. While the S-as-P community is growing rapidly in Europe and in North America, the major theoretical contribution seems to occur in the repackaging of established concepts into a strategy domain. The above illustrates the role and understanding of practice and activity in a cognitive arena, born from established and respected anthropological and epistemological enquiries. These are not new, radical concepts, yet their parallel application in a strategizing domain is treated (wrongly) as something profoundly original.

The scenario planning literature suggests that the analytical aspects of scenarios and the shock provided by conceiving of an "unthinkable", hypothetical future should propel an organisation into action; first in a form of awakening, i.e. The cognitive developments cause a reaction to a story for which, if realised, people are unprepared. Second, after a shock, senses are heightened to detect threats, and knowledge-seeking mechanisms and activities are executed to prepare the organisation for future threats. Here, cognition seems to work in two ways: first, the knowing of how to detect potential surprises or weak signals of change, and secondly, the knowing of how to act when signals are detected. Fundamental to cognitive processes in this domain are intelligence gathering and analytical know-how. Although not advocated as such, there is an air of contingency to processes involved in translating scenarios into action. Sections 2.1.4.2 and 2.1.4.3 attempted to delve inside the internal aspects of the post-scenario mechanisms. The literature discussed as being indicative of the self-reflection was aligned closely to risk attitudes and analytical investigations of resource requirements and capabilities. The section on the Transitional Object, borrowed from educational psychology, offered some insight as to how the cognitive development was achieved between the current and future state. However, as was discussed in the previous section, that transition process did not appear as clear cut as the scenario literature would suggest. It also highlighted an issue of conception, identifying the

predilection of scenario planning processes to be consumed by content, which helps explain why, in the case presented, the cognitive transition did not occur in the analytical way. Organisation, create scenarios based around the interplay between 'predetermined' factors and critical uncertainties. Consequently, critical issues or choke points emerge that must be accounted for strategically (e.g., market awareness, sensitivity to competitive dynamics, technological flexibility, etc.). Although critical issues were raised in the Fife scenarios, the critical aspect was not creating action around, for example, protecting the bridge, but rather it was to engage with a then disparate public sector, to bring people together to help them and their institution's to understand Fife's key issues and thus consider, not necessarily *how* best to help, but to articulate *who* is responsible for *what*, and *who* and *how* people and services are contributing towards improving them. This cognitive development was achieved through the mechanism of scenario planning as an emerging framework of community planning. In this case, the mechanism can be understood as an interaction of sensemaking, sensegiving and organising.

To illustrate further and chronologically, the first physical manifestation of a cognitive process was the selection of key drivers. In this activity, and indeed throughout the case study, the duality of structure and agency (see Giddens 1984), specifically the constraining and enabling role of rules and resources, is evident. Scenario planning makes explicit the connection between macro- and micro-organisational activity. This is achieved primarily through the active search for relevant data (i.e., which is direct and indirect), this is then combined with a selection of interviews with key members of society (e.g., elected members, bankers, environmentalists, etc.). The interviews are based upon the seven questions (see 4.2.1), which invite contribution from within the 'community of practice' about current threats, future hopes, critical issues. Accordingly, they seek out wider global issues, key political and economic issues relevant to the time and place of the interview, and reinforce the functionalist underpinnings of the scenario method (e.g., the bridge and transportation is deemed to be important, thus contribution is invited from relevant key stakeholders). These interviews are combined with desk-based research, synthesised and presented to workshops with the task of agreeing on a number of key drivers of change. Again, the community of practice was engaged in a process of negotiation, simultaneously constrained by the

preceding work and changing the structures that would govern the next step in the process. The scenarios, drawn from the negotiated drivers, are indicative of prospective sensemaking, essentially what Boje refers to as a "forward-looking ante-narrative"—a story that can "transform" an organisation (Boje 2008: 13). However, as has been discussed, the scenarios provided a backdrop for the multilateral agreement on Fife's future. To understand better the importance of the scenarios at this juncture, it is worth considering Weick's (1995) recantation of Holub's (1977) poem about Hungarian soldiers lost in the Alps:

> "The young lieutenant of a small Hungarian detachment in the Alps sent a reconnaissance
> unit out into the icy wasteland.
> It began to snow
> immediately,
> snowed for two days and the unit
> did not return.
> The lieutenant suffered:
> he had dispatched
> his own people to death.
>
> But the third day the unit came back.
> Where had they been? How had they made their way?
> Yes, they said, we considered ourselves
> lost and waited for the end. And then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us
> down.
> We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm and then with the map
> we discovered our bearings.
> And here we are.
>
> The lieutenant borrowed this remarkable map
> and had a good look at it. It was not a map of the Alps
> but of the Pyrenees."

Mintzberg et al. (1998) point out the moral of story: "when you are lost, any map will do!" (1998: 160). Although not 'lost', Fife's public services were disconnected; and the scenarios served as a cognitive map that allowed them to explore and consider the route they were taking, how they contributed to the future of Fife, and how they were dependant also on the actions of others. Weick (1990) suggests that the map becomes metaphorical and quite irrelevant, and that it is the processes it inspires that are important. However, while not refuting the essence of Weick's parable, Mintzberg et al. (1998) suggest that the process

is not *everything*, and content, especially if navigating difficult terrain, is still important. This is echoed in the data where participants discussed how important the realism of the scenarios was, and how believing the logic of the stories was important in trusting the integrity and sincerity of the process. This also helps explain some of the dissatisfaction and frustration In the second scenario process, where people thought that direction had been established, that the cognitive map had served its purpose, and that there was no need to revisit the path they were on:

> "The scenarios were done and dusted; the direction of travel was agreed. A lot of outcomes had already cascaded into the community plan and therefore into some of the service plans we have. I don't think, at that point in time, anybody took that second coming, if you like, particularly seriously at all, if I'm actually brutally honest. I think it was a bit of an, 'yeah, okay, I remember that but I'm getting on with my job now', so it's almost like the big scenario planning was a kind of '*the one off thing*' that set the direction, and then it's kind of like, 'well, what do we do with that then?', so I think the importance and realism of the process was not understood." (FCE 2)

The underlying point for the broader application of scenario planning in this arena, is the role of subjectivity and confusion. The cognitive aspects of the scenario-based intervention were apparent in peoples' reflections of how they used the process. Words like "recognise", "feel", "see", "think", used to illustrate how the scenarios affected day-to-day work, suggest an interaction of senses and cognition. However, the lack of any explicit, consequential activities, makes it difficult to conclude the impact of the cognitive aspects of scenario planning processes. There were attempts to elucidate the processes through extensive reports, released after both the Gathering and the Managing Fife's Future workshops. Moreover, despite being chosen for its capacity to join-up services and inspire long-term thinking, there were always pressures to prove the impact and connect something cognitive with a physical outcome:

> "If you start off with a scenario planning process and you construct a couple of scenarios and then you bring in drivers to deal with these scenarios then you drill that down, but somewhere along the lines what you're doing at street level has to be connected back to the scenarios, but I'm not sure we're doing that." (FPM 5)

Part of the problem appeared to be the interplay between scenario planning and community planning. The scenario planning processes were engaged to improve community planning. Thus, connecting "street level" outcomes with the scenario work is difficult because the area between the two comprises a community planning process which, although facilitated and informed by the scenario planning activities, is in reality a compilation of the current strategic initiatives and plans of Fife's public services. Each of these plans and initiatives is affected by, for example, national agendas, issues of power (individual and organisational), political and economic factors, and formed through negotiations reflective of the time and space in which they were created. That is not to say that the scenarios have no impact, just that connecting thinking activities with physical action, which manifests itself weeks, months, or even years later, is difficult to prove. As was mentioned earlier, the cognitive processes involved in scenario planning ended with the release of the Community Plan—the release of the plan, quite appropriately, represented the end of a planning phase, and the beginning (or, more accurately, the continuation) of the action phase. Accordingly, the collective practice, the new mechanism for learning, stops. Returning to research on cognition processes, the release of the Community Plan curtails what is referred to as the *perceptible affordance*, i.e., the ability and capacity to learn (see Gaver 1991). However, applying the theory of affordance (see Gibson 1979), it could be argued that because nothing physical really changed, in terms of the Community Plan, Fife's Structure Plan, or Policing plan, etc., that the use of scenario planning process was really a *false affordance* (Gaver 1991), a strategic placebo, that made participants feel satisfied about being strategic and fulfilling a strategic role or activity without actually engaging in *strategy*. The previous section suggests that is not the case, that when aggregated and viewed as a longitudinal process, the scenario-based activities did provide strategic outcomes. This highlights the importance of time in conducting strategy research, especially in a public sector domain, and when concentrating on the activity of people.

This section has highlighted the difficulty in connecting cognition with action. The role and effect of scenario planning remains elusive amidst the convoluted and disjointed nature of Fife's public sector. A significant contribution in this section has been further illustration of the theoretical underdevelopment of the S-as-P research agenda. Literature from the areas

of cognition and practice and cognitive psychology appear to offer more interesting and significant theoretical insights into the practice of strategy than can be found in the S-as-P agenda. The S-as-P perspective appears to contribute more as an amalgamator of practice-orientated research, than as an original theoretical contribution in the field of strategy.

5.4 Using Scenario Planning to Inform a Strategic Planning Process

The previous sections have provided answers to the three sub-questions, *how does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?, how does scenario planning affect policy development?, and how do cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation?* The answers to these questions also provides the understanding needed to tackle directly the central research question, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process.* Thus, this section will attempt to provide a succinct but satisfactory answer to that question, before summarising and concluding the chapter.

The mainstream focus of the scenario planning literature (for examples, see Wack 1985a, 1985b; Schwartz 1992; Schoemaker 1993, 1995, 1997; Schwartz et al. 1997; Ringland 1998; Schwartz 1998; Schwartz et al. 2000; van der Heijden et al. 2002; Ringland 2002a, 2002b; Schwartz 2003; van der Heijden 2005) has centred on the scenarios themselves, the content of hypothetical futures, as a means of challenging conceptual and mental models, creating an organisational "jolt" (van der Heijden et al. 2002: 227) or "aha moment" (Wack 1985b: 140) that triggers strategic action. However, from a S-as-P perspective, the activities involved in scenario planning and especially the scenario-to-strategy process (of which little empirical research exists), challenge the Anglo-American notion of how scenario planning actually works. While the stories and narrative of the first process was thought of as superior to the second, respondents struggled to remember specific details or either set of scenarios, remembering instead a more generic good and bad scenario (the exception being recollections of "stuff around the bridge" (FPM 5), which referred to the hypothetical train derailment on the Forth Rail Bridge). More pertinent, though, are the recollections of process, specifically the way in which the process (specifically the workshops and conversations therein) drew people out of "service silos" and galvanised Fife's public sector

to work together in achieving the vision set out in the Community Plan. The dialogue stimulated by the scenario planning process has been referred to as a "Strategic Conversation" (see van der Heijden 2005), but as has been discussed in previous sections, by understanding the episodes from a practice perspective, the strategic activity was far from explicit. The conversations were not followed up with actual strategic outcomes that informed explicitly the writing of the Community Plan; the scenarios did not cause a great "jolt" or "aha" moment that caused a reconceptualisation in Fife's strategic direction. Actually, it was quite the opposite, the positive scenario solidified the ambitions of Fife and the negative scenario solidified the fears already shared by those involved. The extensive resource analysis in the first process indicated a desire to be more strategic, to be more concrete in embedding the analytical activities into the community planning process. However, despite being present in the minds of the practitioners, that analysis was not used in the writing of the Community Plan. Similarly, explicit efforts were made in the second scenario planning process to establish the role of scenarios, connecting them to physical outcomes, specifically through the creation of four key policy priorities. Again, despite the intentions of those involved, the weight of the public sector structures rendered their explicit impact minimal. However, as mentioned previously (see 4.5.5), while the explicit impact of both scenario planning processes is not evident, the use of scenario planning did help inform Fife's community planning process.

The empirical evidence presented in the thesis suggests that scenario planning has been used as an organising activity that drew people together through a iterative and reifying process of sensemaking and sensegiving. Scenario planning was used by the Fife Partnership (ostensibly a top-management team) to understand and draw together Fife's disparate public services. From the case study, one can see that, in the scenario planning and community planning context, the Partnership is not a strategic body; strategy occurs at the lower levels and is communicated upwards, before being interpreted, accepted, and then communicated back downwards. Thus, scenario planning created a sensemaking/sensegiving framework that provided structural and interpretive legitimacy which facilitated the communicative activities, and helped the Fife Partnership understand the interconnectedness of Fife's public services in order to improve community planning.

5.5 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

This section has tackled directly the research questions upon which this thesis was based. The section began by expanding, through theoretical reflection and explanation, the answers to the questions, *how does an organisation manage the scenario planning process?*, and, *how does scenario planning affect policy development?*. The third section tackled the research question that sought to understand *how cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation*. Incorporating knowledge gained from the other research questions, the final section addressed the study's central research question, *how does an organisation use scenario planning to inform the strategic planning process?* The section concludes that scenario planning created a sensemaking/sensegiving framework that provided structural and interpretive legitimacy which facilitated the communicative activities, and helped the Fife Partnership understand and improve the interconnectedness of Fife's public services. The next chapter will conclude the thesis, presenting an overview of the research presented thus far, highlighting the thesis' key contributions and limitations, as well as suggesting avenues for further research, before offering some final, reflective remarks.

Chapter 6 - Summary and Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

The thesis began by stipulating two specific goals. Firstly, to perform an empirical analysis of the scenario-to-strategy process to help develop an academic understanding of how scenario planning actually works, how it helps people think, and how it makes them act. Secondly, to advance understanding of the S-as-P perspective and research agenda by addressing the criticisms as well as contributing to the body of practice-based research. Through drawing together scenario planning and S-as-P literature, conducting a piece of rigorous research, producing a detailed case narrative, analysing the empirical evidence, and answering the research questions, this thesis has achieved the goals stipulated at the outset. This final, concluding chapter will provide a brief overview of the thesis before articulating key theoretical and practical contributions, suggesting avenues for future research, highlighting the limitations of the study, and, ultimately, offering some final reflective comments.

6.1 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 1 introduced the thesis, beginning with an articulation of the rationale and justification for the study, before presenting the research questions that guided the theoretical and empirical journey, and the research vehicle upon which the empirical analysis was based. The chapter concluded with a structural outline of the thesis.

Chapter 2 provided a review of both scenario planning and S-as-P literatures. The first section of the review introduced scenario planning as a structured process used to imagine, create and explore multiple futures to help stakeholders re-perceive reality and thus better understand today in order to improve strategic and/or policy decisions. The review identified and critiqued key assumptions underpinning the concepts pertinent to the research. The section on Organisational Awakening unravelled some of the reasons why an organisation would use scenario planning, identifying the benefits as being predicated on the assumption that a re-perception of the world and re-evaluation of the organisation would improve decision-making capabilities and hence increase performance. The section on Organisational

Awareness demonstrated the claims of scenario planning research to facilitate the elevation and perpetuation of organisational awareness, again identifying the assumption that increasing awareness leads to improved responsiveness to threats and opportunities, thus improving decisions and eventual performance. The section on Social Awakening extended the investigation of scenario planning into a a public sector domain. Here, the ideological functions of scenario planning were explored, which, while uncovering the assumption that society as a whole can be improved by targeting specific elements, also exposed its inadvertent but deeply functionalist underpinnings. Societal scenarios also seemed to depend on alignment and engagement of key stakeholder groups through the establishment of a common goal, though this is an area largely overlooked in the scenario planning literature. The Engagement and Strategy section focused on the scenario-to-strategy process, highlighting the lack of empirical research on the engagement of scenario planning within a wider strategic planning process. Three areas were studied. The use of scenarios in strategic decision-making highlighted the prescriptive, stepped nature of the scenario-to-strategy framework, although sporadic (and unexplored) references to terms like 'culture' and 'context' alluded to a more complex process. The second section focused on a post-scenario self reflection and the third section investigated the role of strategic conversation as a transitional object that helps managers make a cognitive transition from the 'current' to the 'future' state. Although the literature presented scenarios and strategic conversation as sequential processes, analysis of the process and theoretical interplay suggest more of a duality where one is meaningless, and, indeed, non-existent without the other. The scenario planning part of the literature review concluded with a recognition of the fundamental issues undermining the effectiveness of the scenario planning literature as the sole foundation of a piece of theoretically and empirically rigorous research, and with an articulation of the sub-research questions that have guided the research. The second section of the literature review acknowledged scenario planning as a practice employed in the *doing* of strategy, utilising the Strategy-as-Practice research agenda to better inform understanding of the scenario-strategy nexus, which has been the focal point of this thesis. This part of the literature review presented the development and origins of S-as-P, discussing and critiquing the praxis, practices, practitioner framework (Jarzabkowski 2005) before addressing recent criticisms and areas of contention. The literature review concluded by locating the research

question, and scenario planning in general, within the S-as-P agenda, and offering a reconceptualisation of scenario planning as an example of episodic, interactive strategizing.

Chapter 3 explained the methodological choices and processes undertaken to help answer the central research question. The purpose of the empirical research was to examine the 'how' and 'why' of the scenario-strategy process, applying conceptual guidance formed in the literature review and attempting to extend the literatures involved to a more rigorous level of discussion. The research agenda was not one of falsification or confirmation but rather of exploration, illustration and explanation. The chapter detailed the methodological organisation of the research, describing the logic and method that has underpinned the study, the research subject and case study at the heart of the thesis, the theoretical and practical rationale behind its use, and the research objectives and questions that have guided the enquiry. Following a discussion of the philosophical roots of the research and the paradigms that underpin it, the chapter provided a justification for the use of a single in-depth case study, discussing also data collection methods, and the grounded theory method of data coding and analysis employed.

Chapter 4 represented the first of two empirical sections of the thesis, presenting a detailed, descriptive and chronological narrative of the case study, which is an unique contribution to the scenario planning literature. The case of community planning in Fife, which extends from 1999 until April 2008, provided an opportunity explore the contextual conditions pertinent to the phenomenon (see Yin 1994: 13), while also offering insight into the causal sequences critical to developing understanding of the scenario-to-strategy process. The case began with Episode 1 (Pre-Scenario Planning), which started with the formation of the Fife Partnership and creation of the first Community Plan (c. 1999), and extended up to the initiation of the first scenario planning process in August 2002. Episode 2 (Scenario Planning 2003) ran from September 2002 through the scenario planning process, and ended with the final draft of the scenarios, shortly before the scenario-into-action stage of March 2003. Episode 3 (Scenario Planning 2003: Follow-through Process) began in March 2003 and concluded with the decision to re-engage the scenario planning process in October 2005. Episode 4 (Scenario Planning 2006) began in October 2005 and followed the 'Managing Fife's Future' process through to

(and including) the second *Managing Fife's Future* workshop in May 2006. Finally, Episode 5 (Scenario Planning 2006: Follow-through Process) began in June 2006, again following the outcomes of the scenario planning and Managing Fife's Future process with respect to the Community Plan, the Partnership, and the partner agencies, and concluded in April 2008 with the public release of the '2007 Community Plan'. The chapter provided a valuable and necessary illustration and exploration of the Fife Partnership's use of scenario planning in its community planning process, and helped establish how the scenario planning process was managed, and the effect it had on policy development.

Chapter 5 concluded the empirical part of the study, tackling directly the central and sub-research questions of the thesis. The chapter added further explanation to answers developed in the case narrative, and combined theoretical knowledge and empirical evidence to extend understanding of scenario planning, the scenario-strategy nexus, and the research capabilities of the S-as-P perspective. In understanding how an organisation manages the scenario planning process, how scenario planning affects policy development, and how cognitive processes manifest physically in an organisation, the chapter concluded by tackling the central research question, suggesting that scenario planning created a sensemaking/ sensegiving framework that provided structural and interpretive legitimacy which facilitated the communicative activities, and helped the Fife Partnership understand the interconnectedness of Fife public services in order to improve community planning.

This, the final chapter, provides a summary of the thesis before articulating key theoretical and practical contributions, discussing limitations of the study, and suggesting avenues of further research. The thesis will conclude with some final reflections on the journey taken.

6.2 Key Contributions

The thesis had made several contributions to the understanding of both scenario planning and the S-as-P research agenda. To distinguish between theory and practice, this section will be separated in two parts. The first will discuss the key theoretical contributions, and the second will explore briefly the more practical contributions that can be drawn from the study.

6.2.1 Key Theoretical Contributions

In section 2.2.3 of the literature review, the research question was located within two areas of the S-as-P research agenda as suggested by Johnson et al. (2007), namely *people's activities and organisational level processes*, and the *relationship between institutionalised processes and people's activities*. Research on activities and organisational processes has concentrated on episodes of activity (Hendry and Seidl 2003), consultant interventions (Schwartz 2004), team meetings (Blackler et al. 2000), and strategy workshops or away days (Hodgkinson et al. 2006). In Hodgkinson's et al.'s (2006) study of strategy workshop, several questions were posed that mirrored broadly this thesis' research questions and helped justify the significance of its contribution:

> "To what extent and in what ways do the outputs of strategy workshops feed into formal statements of strategic intent, or indeed translate into the realisation of those intentions? What is the role of analytical tools and techniques? In what ways and with what effect do the analytical, discursive, and no doubt political, elements combine in strategy workshops?" (Hodgkinson et al. 2006: 491)

This study has provided answers for these questions, detailed in the previous sections of this chapter. A key point was the complexity and subtleties involved in scenario-based interventions in a strategic planning process. Moreover, related to the last question, the case study revealed the realities of analytical work and how the softer elements planted strategic seeds that emerged slowly and implicitly as the process progressed. Highlighted also was personnel and involvement as an aspect of power. The process was vulnerable to change in personnel and policies of political bodies which possess strategic oversight. The case study also showed the added difficulties of strategy processes and workshops that include different inter- and intra-organisational groups (e.g. Fife Partnership members are also members of lower partnership groups, like the Fife Economic Forum, which has its own strategic objectives, and is also made up of people from multiple public sector agencies).

As much as this and the two previous chapters have provided valuable and much needed answers to move forward the S-as-P perspective, the study has also exposed some significant

problems inherent to S-as-P. When considering the absence of explicit strategic followthrough after the more analytical activities, and the subtle emergence of strategic change (in terms of how the Fife Partnership did community planning) following predominantly sensemaking and sensegiving organising activities, the use of a S-as-P perspective alone does not provide the answers that are truly important. The power dynamics, the effect of a lame duck Chief Executive and Partnership in the second process (see section 4.4.4), the general difficulties of doing prioritisation activities in the public sector (as just a few examples), cannot be performed by studying only the actions of people. It needs an added consideration of time and context, and/or process and causality. As mentioned, from an activity point of view, the use of scenario planning makes 'strategy' appear illusory, as if it is a strategic placebo to make people feel strategic without actually being strategic.   The subtleties of the intervention, the slow change in understanding of how Community Plan is done, suggests that the conversations stimulated by scenario planning planted the seeds of strategy, but that they are strategic only in terms of conception, about how Fife can work together, how they can find commonality.

The community planning process has been shown to be an iterative process of sensemaking/ sensegiving. Accordingly, whether or not that is 'strategic', depends on what is understood as *strategy*. This, perhaps represents the most significant criticism of S-as-P. What strategy *is*, in S-as-P, is ambiguous, and actually contradicts the application of a *practice* enquiry. Ironically, the first line of many S-as-P articles is that S-as-P represents a shift in the conception of strategy as something an *organisation has* to something that *people do*. Yet, that requires a presupposition of strategy that is based predominantly on notions of change, resource allocation, performance (see Jarzabkowski 2003), which are the very things the *new* perspective is supposed to transcend.   Fundamental also to the critique are the logical inconsistencies of S-as-P.   For example, examining the production and reproduction of strategic action requires the comparison of practices through a strategic lens, which requires a presupposition of strategy. Applying Veyne's (1997) example of the practice of madness, one would have to apply a "prediscursive referent" to both production and reproduction in order to understand either "retrospectively as material" for strategy (Veyne 1997: 170). The problem, essentially, is that if every organisational practice is understood as *strategy*, then

strategy as a material term and as a concept becomes irrelevant to the study of organisations. Veyne (1997) argues the "material for madness (behavior, neuromicrobiology) really exists, but not as madness; to be mad only materially is precisely not yet to be mad" (Veyne 1997: 170). Hence, in S-as-P, strategy is viewed and studied as a ready-made entity, so the activity or practice is deemed *strategic* before the practice is understood, and regardless of what it is, or what it becomes. Empirically, this case has highlighted the complexities and subtleties of strategic activities, showing also how a processual understanding actually helps establish whether or not the activities were strategic. This highlights a second problem with S-as-P, how should one view strategic activities that did not cause organisational change or positive strategic outcomes? The conservative understanding (Carter et al. 2008a) of strategic practices all imply strategic action. Indeed, the people involved in both scenario planning episodes thought they were being strategic. Similarly, the S-as-P literature would suggest it was strategy, that these people were *doing* strategy, that a workshop using a tool like scenario planning is a perfect example of the *doing* of strategy, yet, in some way, it feels like strategic posturing, or perhaps a football or rugby team practicing before the season, discussing tactics and opponents, but then not actually playing a single game.

To synthesis these thoughts, a key contribution of the thesis has been to challenge some of the claims of the S-as-P agenda. The concepts of practice and strategy are complex, and while combining the two as a means of understanding what people do in organisations is admirable, there is too much confusion and inconsistency to make the kind of contribution claimed by researchers at the vanguard of the agenda (for example, Jarzabkowski 2003; Whittington 2006a; Johnson et al. 2007). There is ambiguity over the understanding of both practice and strategy. The thesis has shown how a practice may look and feel strategic without actually being strategic, and also how those *non-strategic* activities, can, over time, develop subtly into something strategic. That may appear self-contradictory but understanding the practice as the practice really is, as suggested by Foucault and Veyne (see Veyne 1997), uncovers the lack of strategy in the practice. Only when viewed as a step in a chain of causality that extends over a period of time, and applying a retrospective understanding of strategy, does the process emerge subtly as being strategic. This would

suggest that perhaps Langley (1999) is correct, that S-as-P should be considered a branch of process research. Certainly, while Whittington (2006a, 2007) may be correct, that the practice agenda delves deeper than process studies, to understand the activities as strategic or not, they must be located within a consideration of the process.

Another contribution of the thesis to the S-as-P agenda is the role of the scenario planning in making explicit the connections and interplay between extra- and micro-organisational practices. The use of scenario planning and the way in which the processes were conducted reflected the then current agendas of the public sector, and also the transition in society from a process culture to one focused on justifiable and measurable outcomes. Within the scenario planning processes themselves, scenario planning seems to actually force people to project supra- and extra-institutional practices on to the micro practices. For example, the initial search for data starts a process of reification that solidifies key issues as the process progresses. In the first process, it was the Forth bridge. The bridge was a key issue in data collection, reflected also in the interviews, as indeed it was in the workshops; outside experts were consulted explicitly, and the negative story was remembered for the disaster on the bridge. Similarly, the second process was affected more directly by extra-organisational forces: the green movement and focus on carbon reduction was reflected in the discussions of the workshops, in the emergence of emails bearing the signature line "Think Green and only print this email if absolutely necessary", and in the selection of energy and resource conversation as Fife's number one priority, followed, somewhat ironically, with transportation and connectivity as the second key priority. The link between macro- and micro-activity was also apparent at its most explicit level with the Chief Executive "copying" Glasgow's community planning focus and imposing worklessness as a key priority, and also in more subtle ways, where a debate on education centred purely on the use of the words 'attainment' and 'achievement' and their different meanings in the public sector lexicon, and in the Scottish Government's education agenda.

What was also seen in this case, which offers a valuable contribution to the link between intra- and extra-organisational forces, was the way in which a micro practice (scenario planning), chosen because of extra-organisational factors (e.g., experience with scenario

planning at other organisations, knowledge of literature, specifically the work of van der Heijden (1996) and Porter (1985)), itself became an institutionalised practice: services within Fife Council want to use scenario planning because it is scenario planning that is used to do community planning. Thus, the thesis has shown how, through continuous interplay, a practice adopted to help inform an institutionalised process, actually became an institutionalised force in itself. In a way, scenario planning has become how Fife's public services think about the future.

This thesis began with a desire to satisfy a sense of intrigue and curiosity about how people and organisations think about the future and, more specifically, how scenario planning actually works. Thus, it is appropriate to conclude the thesis' theoretical contributions by returning to the topic of scenario planning. For too long, scenario planning literature has relied on anecdotal, practitioner-based accounts of scenario-building exercises. One of the major goals stipulated in the introduction was to provide a much needed detailed account of how an organisation actually *does* scenario planning, to investigate how scenario planning is actually used in the strategic planning process. Moreover, during the course of studying the realities of a scenario-based intervention, a significant theme was prevalent throughout: the importance of process over content, of organising over analysing. Much like Weick's (1995) notion of a cognitive map, the scenario planning process became an organising activity that provided participants with a framework for sensemaking and sensegiving. Apropos, it is time for researchers to reconsider the essence of scenario planning, to realise, embrace, and explore the softer role of scenario planning, particularly in the public sector. The thesis has highlighted the subtleties and complexity involved in using scenarios, showing the function and benefits of using scenario planning as a process of organising and uniting that utilises sensemaking/sensegiving (Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991) and positive relationship-building (Hodgkinson et al. 2005; 2006) activities as a means of coordinating and communications (Mintzberg 2000; Grant 2003), rather than being merely an analytical tool used to determine risk attitudes and appraise strategic alternatives (see Porter 1985; Schnaars 1987; Wilson 2000; Fink et al. 2005, etc.). Over the last 30 years, strategy has faced repeated calls to mature conceptually and empirically (S-as-P is experiencing such calls currently), reflected in the move away from Industrial Organisation economics to more sociological concerns. Now,

scenario planning must embark upon the same journey. To mature, and advance, theoretically, methodologically, and empirically, researchers of scenario planning must dispel the clean, prescriptive, heuristic-based illusion and accept and embrace the sociological complexity of the activities and processes of scenario planning, warts and all.

This section has highlighted the significant contributions of the thesis. The final part also has relevance for a practical audience. Accordingly, the next section will look briefly at the more practice-based contributions of the thesis, prior to suggesting some avenues for further research.

6.2.2 Key Practical Contributions

The thesis also makes several contributions to the practice of scenario planning and strategy. This section will describe briefly the implications of the research to both scenario planning practitioners and public sector managers. As was discussed above, scenario planning can have many subtle benefits. The tendency of the scenario planning research is to be consumed with heuristics and creating interesting stories that will change mindsets, and to follow up these stories with gap analyses, and resource analyses to identify specific strategic actions. These are valuable processes and are important in developing the legitimacy required to carry the more subtle benefits. However, if the scenario planning literature is to mature and embrace the more processual and sociological aspects of doing scenario planning, then at some stage practitioners must follow suit. In the case presented herein, facilitators adapted a process to suit the needs of the client (in the way that Hodgkinson and Wright (2002) did not). Thus, a skilled practitioner should be able to understand the problems they have been asked to address and construct a scenario process that can utilise the sensemaking/sensegiving capabilities to align vision, join disconnected units and services, and even, at the most basic level, construct a framework that allows people to talk together about the future they face. Of course, the counter to this is that if the process is adapted too much at first, and/or if the practitioners do not command respect, the subtleties of the process may not be strong enough to command the legitimacy required to generate a positive experience.

From a public sector managers' point of view, a key word is *trust*; the manager must trust the role and power of the cognitive effects of scenario planning. However, as was shown in the case study, the public sector seems to experience waves where, at one time, process is all-important, and at another, specific actionable outcomes must be reached. Another important point, also related to trust, is the need for managers to have faith in the knowledge and expertise of the scenario planning facilitators, rather than trying to impose a private sector, decision-orientated, Shell-like notion of scenario planning on to an arena subject to the kind of bureaucratic pressures and social structure inherent to the public sector.

This section has detailed the critical theoretical and practical contributions of the thesis. However, despite providing answers to the research questions and advancing, through empirical analysis, understanding of S-as-P and scenario planning, this thesis is by no means exhaustive. In fact, it has raised more questions than it answered. Accordingly, the following section will discuss some alternative ways the thesis could have been performed, and suggest possible avenues for further research.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The size and scope of this research project would have suited the application of a number of different theoretical lenses. This section will explore some of those alternatives, and, in doing so, suggest possible avenues of future research.

From a theoretical perspective, a number of alternatives could have been used. Throughout the thesis Giddens' (1984) Structuration theory has been referred to. A *Structurationist* account of the scenario planning and scenario-to-strategy process would be a natural choice for another study of this nature. The role of structure and agency, rules and resources, and the inherent reflexivity, provides an interesting and important way to understand the scenario process and the intersection and multiplicity of structures one would find in the public sector. The way in which strategic activities did not result in explicit strategic action was interesting and deserves a dedicated study investigating the problem. It appeared that the fundamental problem is the use of prioritisation activities in a public sector setting. While prioritisation

exercises helped the partnership bond, they also stymied further action and left people frustrated with a lack of action. The application of stakeholder theory, and specifically, stakeholder salience, would offer valuable insights into performing activities of that ilk in the public sector, perhaps also offering practical insights that would help practitioners adapt processes that yield the positive experiences without the frustrations that come from a perceived lack of action and followthrough.

Another interesting avenue of research would be an attempt to study what S-as-P cannot: the lack of activity. As mentioned throughout, both scenario planning processes were subject to a great deal of complexity and inner political disputes. However, a problem with the second scenario planning process especially was a lack of consistency in attendance. A study of those not there, the reasons why and the effects on the wider process and their own areas would yield some very interesting implications for the *doing* of strategy.

Although the findings of the case study are valuable, they are restricted to a single public sector case. Thus, four further studies would be helpful in understanding better how an organisation uses scenario planning to inform its strategic planning process. The first study would be to compare multiple public sector cases to identify any commonalities or differences that may yield more generalisable results. The problem, however, of constructing such a study is finding suitable cases that possess enough similarities to make meaningful generalisations. Fife was a special case insofar as that it was going through a second scenario planning process, and presented an opportunity to understand the process over a long time frame—a drawback of many scenario studies is that they take a snapshot of only a few weeks or months (see, for example, Moyer 1996). The second study would be a single case of a private sector scenario-to-strategy process. A third study, following a similar pattern, would involve the comparison of multiple private sector cases. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, a study comparing multiple public and private sector scenario-to-strategy process would help make more general conclusions about the reality of scenario planning and how organisations (public or private) may utilise it to help improve what they do and how they do it. Moreover, another comparative study of public and private scenario-to-strategy

processes, examined through a structuration lens would provide a fascinating insight into the structures and rules and resources which constrain and enable action in both arenas.

Perhaps the most prudent avenue of future research would be returning to Fife to investigate how the Fife Partnership have used scenario planning for a third time to inform the new Community Plan, scheduled for release in 2010.

6.4 Limitations

Although the findings of this research are important, there are several limitations worth noting. One of the first limitations the study encountered was the lack of theoretical rigour in the scenario planning literature. Moreover, much of the scenario planning literature and practice-based examples and studies are snapshots of private sector scenario exercises, and those that do extend into the scenario-to-strategy process are written for a practitioner rather than academic audience. The S-as-P perspective appeared to offer insights into the focal areas of the research. However, the ambiguities and inconsistencies of S-as-P complicated an already complex process. S-as-P seems to repackage a sociological tradition that encourages new researchers to operate at the vanguard of strategy research and adopt a S-as-P approach. The problem being that the S-as-P perspective is actually a mixed bag approach, formed in sociological naiveté that involves contradictory theories and concepts, rather than presenting a coherent way of understanding and researching strategy as is offered by a process or resource-based tradition.

The thesis is also subject to a number of methodological limitations. Single studies, even involving large partnership-based organisations are limited irrevocably to a single organisational context. Different organisations will likely employ different methods and systems for organising, sensemaking and sensegiving. Although the rationale for a single case study was presented in section 3.6.1, identifying the rarity (Yin 1994) and timeframe (Maylor and Blackmon 2005) of the case of scenario planning in Fife as well the need for longitudinal appreciation and depth of enquiry as key justifications, the single case limits the generalisability of the findings. It is for this reason that the previous section highlighted the

need for multiple case studies of both public and private sectors as an avenue for further research.

Although extensive data collection was performed using a triangulation approach to ensure validity and reduce bias, in-depth interviews, though combined with documentary evidence and non-participant observation, provided much of the insights into the scenario processes. Thus, the study is reliant on individual perceptions of processes and activities, which in some cases occurred up to seven years prior to the interview. Equally, some of the questions probed issues that were (then) currently ongoing, which may have caused people to misrepresent reality, either by overstating impact or importance or understating it. Furthermore, the Fife Partnership is a political body which includes elected members of both the administration and the opposition. The longitudinal nature of the study exposed the case to a change in Fife Council's political leadership (from Labour to a SNP-Liberal Democrat coalition), which meant that some of those interviewed had, during the scenario planning process, transferred from opposition into power. Whether or not that affected responses or perceptions of past work or future capabilities is unknown.

A final limitation is to do with the public sector itself. Studying the impact of something in a private organisation can be ascribed as positive or negative depending on explicit factors like revenues, profit margins, or share price. In the public sector, judging effectiveness is extremely difficult. It is not to say that judging effectiveness was the goal of this thesis, it is simply to illustrate that investigating a strategic process in the public sector is very challenging because it is almost impossible to look at actual outcomes unless using economic indicators, which are subject to enormous influence from a variety of different sources. The challenge of making explicit the connection between scenario planning, or indeed community planning, and effectiveness has caused some respondents (FPM 5 and FPM 9) to challenge the purpose of doing something like community planning in the first place. For the case study, it meant that as there is almost no way to determine feasibly the effectiveness of community planning, judging whether or not the scenario planning process improved community planning is factually impossible. Thus, in a way, the limitation is a conceptual one, and one that requires the capacity to trust in the benefits people have talked about (e.g., working,

talking, thinking, and understanding *together*) and not be consumed by satisfying the burden of proof.

6.5 Final Reflections

This thesis represents the culmination of a long, complex journey. Its genesis was simple curiosity about how organisations use hypothetical stories to plan for the future. The theoretical and empirical weakness of the majority of the scenario planning literature was an early source of frustration. However, it also provided, along with the research questions, the opportunity to engage with the S-as-P literatures. Initially, S-as-P appeared as novel and important as those at its vanguard kept repeating. However, as the case analysis progressed, a growing dissatisfaction with S-as-P began to emerge. The essence of the S-as-P is admirable but the ambiguities and contradictions detract and distract from its apparent value. More specifically, the rationale justifying S-as-P's superiority over processual research seems hasty and disingenuous. For example, in the evidence provided in the empirical part of the thesis, attention is drawn to the apparent lack of strategy and the problems it raises for S-as-P. By analysing the practice as only a practice, there would appear to be no 'strategy' taking place. However, the only way one can tell that no strategy is occurring is because S-as-P imposes a presupposition upon the study of practice as to what strategy is. Another more significant twist emerges when drawing back from the activity and seeing how the process has evolved over time. Scenario planning became a framework that has helped connect people and organisations, changing how people actually do strategy. Therefore, the 'non-strategic' activities became strategic, except, to see and understand how they became strategic, a broader view and the consideration of time, context, causality, and process was required. This contradicts the rationale for using S-as-P over traditional processual research, where, in this case, more has been learned about the doing of strategy by drawing back from the intimate activities than was understood from burrowing deep inside them. Carter et al. (2008b) and Whittington (2007) agree, albeit for different reasons, that S-as-P needs to mature. It is hoped that the contributions of this thesis can help it on its precarious journey out of adolescence.

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Appendix B - Interview Questions

The interviews followed an open-ended style that allowed the researcher to ask probing questions where appropriate. Moreover, different questions were asked to different people depending on the job they held and the organisation they worked for. The following set of question represents the general structure and content of the interviews:

Category	Questions
Context: [if relevant]	What is your job? How long have you been in post? Has your role changed over the last 8 years? If so, in what ways has it changed? When were you first involved with the Fife Partnership/Scenario Steering Group? What would you say is the purpose of the partnership/group? What is/was your role in the partnership/group?
Episode 1:	What was the purpose of the first Community Plan? Why was Scenario Planning used? What expectations did you have at the time?
Episode 2:	Please describe the first scenario planning process? What were your thoughts on the process, specifically, the analysis, the identification of the key drivers, the workshops, and the creation of the scenarios? Do you think the scenarios reflected accurately the outcomes of the workshops? Did any of the scenario surprise you? Would you say the scenarios disappointed you or inspired you in any way? Did the stories instil a sense of urgency or a need for action? Would you describe your mindset as being 'altered'? If yes, in what way? If not, why? Do you think the first process could have been improved? If so, what & why?
Episode 3:	What happened following the completion of the scenarios? Can you please describe briefly how policy is created in [your organisation]? Did the scenarios shape policy? If yes, how and in what ways? If no, why not? Were any mechanisms set up to monitor the key drivers identified in the SP workshops? If yes, what, how & why? If not, why? What, if anything, hindered the process? How readily did the scenarios feature in day-to-day work from April 2003 through February 2005? Why? Describe briefly the period April 2003 to February 2005? [allow for further enquiry] What, if anything, hindered the process? What was the nature and purpose of the 'Winds of Change' document? What kind of influence did the scenario planning process have on the production of this document? What was the nature and purpose of the State of Fife report? What kind of influence did the scenario planning process have on the production of this document?
Episode 4:	Who made the decision to re-engage the scenarios? Why was such a decision made? Describe briefly the events that followed this decision? Can you describe how the partnership/steering group was functioning at that time? Why were the scenarios revised? What informed the changes? Did the revised stories capture you in the same way as before? What was your opinion of the Managing Fife's Future Process?

Category	Questions
Episode 5:	Please describe what happened between April and September 2006? What was the purpose of identifying three key areas? Why was a fourth added later? Were you happy with the agreement of the key areas and the discussion leading to it? Could any improvements have been made at this point? Who is responsible for creating strategy for the key areas? What level of involvement do you have at this stage? Do the key areas report on their strategies or progress? If so, what has been reported? If not, why not? What impact did the revisited scenarios have on your organisation? How did you filter outcomes through the organisation? Are you aware of any specific outcomes from any of the key areas? Has the scenario planning process influenced your organisation? What factors impinge on the influence of the scenario planning process?
Specific to key areas:	[if relevant] How was the selection of your area as a key priority viewed by those in your organisation? Has its selection had any affect on the policies and/or direction of your organisation? How were the outcomes introduced/relayed to you and to the rest of the organisation? What steps were taken immediately after the conclusion of the scenario phase? After the workshops finished, how did you go about achieving the desired changes? What, if anything, happened in your organisation? [probe with 'how?' and 'why?' questions] What was your role during this period, and did it change? What role did the language of the scenarios play? Would anyone else in your organisation know what '*Bridging the Gap*' and '*Mind the Gap*' referred to?
Overall:	If there has been previously, is there still a connection between the scenario planning process and policy development? Are the initial goals of the scenario planning process still relevant? Do you still refer to the scenarios by name? Does your staff? How do you think scenario planning informed policy, and do you think it has improved the policy development process? What are your overall thoughts on the process? What, if any, do you think are the main impediments to the turning scenario planning activities into explicit policies? Is there anything I haven't asked you that you would like to say?

Appendix C - Fife's Scenarios: '*Bridging the Gap*' (2003)

A report from the EU Committee of the Regions has hailed the 'New Kingdom of Fife' as not only one of the most prosperous areas in Scotland, but also as a leading example in Europe for its remarkable regeneration of deprived and low employment areas, such as Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy and former mining communities. This follows the European Commission singling out Fife for its successful implementation of EU policies on sustainability.

This is no mean feat as just a decade ago Fife was facing economic decline and increasing unemployment. This was due to the collapse of traditional industries and the prospect of 'new' industries, such as electronics, call centres and other 'knowledge business' going overseas. Other factors were Fife's pervasive inward looking culture and geographic isolation; the latter, caused by bridge-lock at the Forth and Tay as well as poor public transport.

So how has Fife turned a dire prognosis into a healthy future? Through vision, inspired leadership, ambition, connectivity, clever promotion – and some luck.

After several better years, Fife was faced with the prospect of a sharp drop in funding from the Scottish Executive, resulting from English devolution, causing a crisis in public service delivery and knock on cuts for voluntary sector services.

Fife's leading agencies responded by forming the Fife Community Partnership Ltd (FCPL) to create a more effective local organisation that could compensate for the anticipated loss of funding and hopefully lead towards a more prosperous future. Looking back, this model of community vision, the ownership of it and determined management significantly helped Fife's transition into a booming economy, one able to support quality social services and high environmental standards.

Political arguments over the centralisation/decentralisation of public services, plus the possessive culture of management in some of the partners, delayed and could have destroyed the vision – bold leadership, encouraged by the ambitions of active communities engaged through local forums, eventually won the day.

Through FCPL, spending was devolved from the Scottish Executive in what the Chancellor saw as a pilot scheme for the UK. Agencies have saved millions by pooling resources. The resulting savings and growth in the local commercial and residential tax base have helped finance the demands presented by an ageing population and the challenges of the regenerating depressed areas such as Levenmouth, Abbeyview, Kirkcaldy and Lochgelly. There, unemployment is now 20 per cent below the national average. The traditionally excluded groups enjoy an improved quality of life and sense of wellbeing - although State pensions and benefits remain linked to

inflation. Key to these achievements was the partners' commitment to putting communities at the heart of decision making on local programmes.

Some of the money saved by the falling school population has been ploughed back into educational improvements, and is beginning to show through for school leavers entering the workforce

By working with the private sector, for example on developing the new Levenmouth rail spur, FCPL has boosted Fife's infrastructure, helped achieve local environment targets, and enhanced the quality of life. Fife is now a much more attractive place to live and work.

The first stroke of luck came from the resurgence of the EU economy in 2005 and the continued growth of the Edinburgh region over the last 10 years. Business confidence is at an all time high, with companies relocating to Fife's new high-technology industrial parks located throughout the Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline corridor and benefiting from Fife's sophisticated IT/telecommunications networks.

Traditionally strong areas of Fife's economy have flourished. St Andrews with its University commercial spin-offs and tourism has capitalised on the opening of Leuchars air base to commercial traffic over the past six years. Rosyth Dockyard has successfully balanced diversification with new defence contracts.

FCPL set out to promote Fife's quality of life and foster a culture of tolerance and opportunity. As a result high earning executives and their families have committed to stay in Fife. Migrants with entrepreneurial skills and resources have also found and created business opportunities in a welcoming community. One of Fife's historic weaknesses, its lack of indigenous business growth, is thus being reversed.

The successful ferry link between Rosyth and European destinations has seen the bridgehead area become the transportation hub for eastern central Scotland and a business magnet.

Today Fife has the second lowest jobless rate in Scotland, (after the Edinburgh region) and the decision by finance giant Intelligent Life last year to relocate its global headquarters from the capital to John Smith Business Park in Kirkcaldy is proof indeed that FCPL's vision is working.

An improved transport network has been one of the key drivers to success. Through collaboration with the City Regions, Fife gained a commercial airport at Leuchars and enjoyed greatly improved access to the capital and its airport, Indeed, following the opening of the Dunfermline to Alloa rail extension in 2005, innovative funding and land use produced the popular Levenmouth link three years later.

Integrated and flexible transport both in rural areas and towns has seen a 20 per cent improvement in access to services resulting in society's disadvantaged groups being able to share in, and contribute to, the wider prosperity of Fife. This has vastly improved their quality of life resulting in a substantial drop in crime and an increasingly fit and healthy population.

Commuting, while still a headache, has not yet become 'bridgelocked' as was feared. This is mainly due to Edinburgh introducing congestion charges in 2005, and the completion of the second Kincardine bridge in 2008, with upgraded links from Dunfermline. In response to the congestion charges, public transport was significantly expanded in 2006, particularly park and ride services north of the Forth to Edinburgh and its outlying areas. Plans are now well under way to build another Forth Bridge, a double-decker with road and a light rail link to the employment centres around and about the capital.

Another key driver in Fife's success has been the influx of commuters and highly skilled workers/professionals with their families attracted by the high quality of life, safe neighbourhoods, a pleasing environment and prospering cities and small town centres. This has created a new problem for Fife: soaring prices and house shortages around Dunfermline and in east Fife. The difficulties for new entrants to the housing market in these areas has nevertheless helped boost demand in more affordable parts of Fife which had been losing population.

Again, the success of improved transport links and IT/telecommunications networks within Fife have made it easier to relocate health facilities across the Kingdom, resulting in better and more efficient services.

Finally, Fife's continued improvements can be increasingly attributed to success in education, in its colleges and through life-long learning initiatives and particularly in its schools. Smaller class sizes, centres of excellence, an engaging alternative curriculum and alliances with colleges mean that all Fife schools now excel – a dramatic turnaround.

Schools are no longer just buildings but are the heart of the community, offering seamless access to employment, health and support services - the benefits have been dramatic. Older people, parents and other members of the community are particularly encouraged and have enthusiastically taken up learning and support roles in schools. These innovative measures mean Fife's educational establishments are now top of the class in Scotland for pupil attainment, teaching standards and the quality of resources.

This was underlined by the Chief Executive of Intelligent Life, James Johnson, who said the area's skilled workforce and quality of life had been a key factor in the business coming to Fife.

He concluded: "Fife has a highly educated workforce and the best road, rail and air links. Fife can rightly and proudly boast the title the 'New Kingdom'."

On the whole, Fifers are much more at ease with themselves, content and feeling justly proud of their Kingdom. Their efforts and involvement have played a significant part in Fife's success but they are still ambitious for the future.

Appendix D - Fife's Scenarios: '*Mind the Gap*' (2003)

The inability of Fife's lead agencies to face up to the reality of failing industry, dwindling jobs and shrinking public funding has led to the area becoming increasingly isolated from the Scottish and UK economy, according to a Best Value report from the Government's spending watchdog Audit Scotland.

Fife's community planning leaders have hit back saying that the Scottish Executive's new funding methods, and the redefining of the Barnett Formula, have made it all the more difficult to deal with the continuing global recession. These factors have led to economic meltdown. Fife now suffers the highest unemployment in Scotland and consequent problems of poor health, poverty, exclusion, crime and social breakdown.

Inward investment is non-existent and indigenous companies have struggled, blaming archaic transport systems, chaotic infrastructure and lack of communications technology. Now, Fife has been officially named one of the least prosperous areas in the UK in a report from the Office for National Statistics.

Industry has blamed the Kingdom's dire state on a lack of vision, strategic thinking and co-operation by Fife's lead agencies back in 2003, when community planning partners were on the verge of gaining new powers and autonomy.

Fife had great plans to transform its economy through the financial services sector, capitalising on its proximity to the Edinburgh global financial centre. However hopes have been dashed. Jobs have transferred overseas, and new investment lost to international competition. Transport and communications infrastructure to connect Fife to the Edinburgh growth engine has been inadequate. Fife has therefore failed to realise its economic potential from the spin-off. In fact today it's more a question of survival – sustainability initiatives will have to wait.

Fife as a whole should have prospered as part of the Edinburgh and Dundee city regions. However difficulties travelling and the lack of proper IT/telecommunication networks within Fife have stifled growth.

Nevertheless parts of Fife are doing well, such as the huge corporate farms, St Andrews and, despite expensive housing and commuting difficulties, the Rosyth bridgehead area. Scientists at St Andrews University have succeeded in setting up new small businesses to cash in on their research. While around the Forth bridgehead, technical design and research facilities sprang up to benefit from the revival in fortunes of the dockyard from increased defence spending to fight the war on terror.

The prosperity of the bridgehead area has not been enough however to secure the future of the Rosyth ferry service which was withdrawn in 2005. Its operators cited disappointing tourism traffic and freight, due in part to the post Iraq war hike in fuel costs, and an increased fear of international travel, but also the capacity problems of the Bridges.

Perhaps the most humiliating failure of all has been in education. While struggling to divert funds to provide more services to the increasingly ageing population, Fife has failed to improve substantially on its HMI report of 10 years ago. Some of the resources freed up from a 20% fall in school rolls were retained to improve services in more disadvantaged areas, resulting in well resourced schools, well skilled teachers and an educated local population.

However in better off areas, parents are at odds with this policy. Some, who can afford to move or educate their children independently, are going outwith Fife to find better schools. Now, amid protests from the local authority over lack of funding, the Scottish Executive has intervened, abolished Fife's education authority and taken direct control of its schools. With reduced budgets and the crisis in schools taking up much time, effort and resources, initiatives such as the promotion of life-long learning are getting nothing more than lip service.

Young people are leaving in search of careers. Fife has been abandoned in favour of opportunities down south or in areas like West Lothian and Falkirk which have better access to Edinburgh, Glasgow and the central belt.

Fife is showing stark contrasts between its better off areas of opportunity and the depressed areas in historic decline such as Levenmouth and Benarty. Such areas and wider population groups - including people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and low income families – continue to be excluded from finding work, health services and leisure opportunities, despite some major housing and environmental investment. Amongst these communities, there is an overwhelming sense of despair. Yet the local authority has been forced to focus on providing only statutory services, These disadvantaged communities have seen the erosion of support and voluntary services, a loss of cohesion and community networks, and a substantial rise in crime, harassment and drug abuse. Proper housing, policing, health and related social support are becoming desperately needed. Demand on the voluntary sector has never been higher and their budgets never more inadequate.

Despite its positive beginnings, community planning in Fife is increasingly public sector dominated. Voluntary sector partners' are pre-occupied with survival, competing for ever-smaller pots of short-term funding.

Ten years ago a transportation revolution was seen as key to Fife's prosperity. However, Fife failed to attract sufficient funding from the Scottish Executive and Europe quickly enough. Congestion charges introduced in Edinburgh in 2005 had drivers at breaking point. The demand for public transport has soared but can't be met.

Commuting chaos reached crisis point seven years ago when a train derailment on the Forth Bridge caused major structural faults and closed it for a year. The rise in commuters taking the car caused bridge-lock. The continuing lack of investment in rail has seen services halved and doubled the delays. As frustrated drivers have decided the commute isn't worth it, they've moved to the Lothians and Perth & Kinross and existing businesses have followed them. To cap it all, Fife lost its last major electronic manufacturing business in 2008.

Poor, disadvantaged and excluded people living in remote rural communities and in less well off areas within Fife's major towns are isolated like never before. The demise of village buses, and the lack of a reliable, co-ordinated public transport system, means Fifers, particularly vulnerable and older people, have been unable to get to the shops or clubs or even visit their doctors surgery or keep hospital appointments.

Community spokesperson Jane Jones complained: "Older people's health and well-being are suffering. The support that neighbours used to give and receive without a second thought is now less obvious. People can't rely on public transport to get to the shops and town centres are dying."

"The irony is that more people own cars in order to get to work. But as Fife's retail centres have shrunk, people who do have access to a car are driving to Edinburgh, Stirling and Perth for work, shopping and leisure."

Mrs Jones added: "As the council tax rises to pay for services even more people leave the area. It's a depressing cycle that I just can't see us breaking out of."

Interview Coding

Code	Reference
FPM	Fife Partnership Member
FCE	Fife Council Executive
FCCP	Fife Council Corporate Policy
FPS	Fife Partnership Support
SLS	Service Level Support
SPF	Scenario Planning Facilitator

Documentary Coding

Code	Source Reference
FR/FC/1	Fife Matters: Finalised Fife Structure Plan 2006 – 2026
FR/FP	**Formal Report – Fife Partnership**
FR/FP/1	Developing Fife's Future: A Community Plan for Fife (2000)
FR/FP/2	State of Fife Report 2001
FR/FP/3	A Stronger Future for Fife: Fife's Community Plan (Revised edition 2004)
FR/FP/4	Progress Against Community Planning Milestones 2005
FR/FP/5	Managing Fife's Future: State of Fife 2005
FR/FP/6	A Stronger Future for Fife: Fife's Community Plan (Revised edition 2007)
ID/FC	**Internal Document – Fife Council**
ID/FC/1	Community Planning background paper (1998)
ID/FC/2	Outline of Community Planning process (1998)
ID/FC/3	Community Plan development proposals for Fife (1998)
ID/FC/4	Community Planning Timetable (1999)
ID/FC/5	Community Plan & Local Agenda 21: Internal discussion paper (1999)
ID/FC/6	Tell Tales for the Winds of Change: rolling forward the Fife scenarios (2005)
ID/FC/7	Fife Council Follow-up: Scenario Planning for Fife (2005)
ID/MFF	**Internal Document – Managing Fife's Future**
ID/MFF/1	Managing Fife's Future process: report of workshops (2006)
ID/MFF/1/1	Appendix 1: Scenario Planning Feedback and next steps (2006)
ID/MFF/2	Key Messages from Fife Partnership's Managing Fife's Future process (2006)
ID/MFF/3	General Policy Budget Process – Corporate Research (2006)
ID/SP1	**Internal Document – First Scenario Planning process**
ID/SP1/1	Data Workbook (2002-03)
ID/SP1/2	Scenario: 'Bridging the Gap' first draft (2003)
ID/SP1/3	Scenario: 'Bridging the Gap' final draft (2003)
ID/SP1/4	Scenario: 'Mind the Gap' first draft (2003)
ID/SP1/5	Scenario: 'Mind the Gap' final draft (2003)
ID/SP1/6	Community Planning Gathering Report (2003)
ID/SP1/7	Scenario Planning Feedback & next steps – excel spreadsheet (2003)
ID/SP1/8	Fife Scenarios Project – Corporate Research (2003)

Code	Source Reference
ID/FP	**Internal Document – Fife Partnership**
ID/FP/1	A Stronger Future for Fife: Fife's Community Plan (Revised edition 2007 Draft)
ID/FP/2	Community Plan (revision 2007) – Summary of Consultation Responses (2007)
ID/FP/3	Fife Partnership Effectiveness Questionnaire (2007)
MI/FP	**Meeting Information – Fife Partnership**
MI/FP/1	Fife Partnership Meeting Minutes (4 September 2002)
MI/FP/2	Fife Partnership Meeting Minutes (12 March 2003)
MI/FP/3	Fife Partnership Meeting Minutes (30 November 2005)
MI/FP/3/1	Agenda item 3 – Fife Partnership Meeting (30 November 2005)
MI/FP/4	Fife Partnership Meeting Minutes (14 June 2006)
MI/FP/4/1	Agenda item 6 – Fife Partnership Meeting (14 June 2006)
MI/FP/5	Fife Partnership meeting Minutes (13 September 2006)
MI/FP/6	Fife Partnership Meeting Minutes (28 March 2007)
MI/FP/7	Fife Partnership Meeting Minutes (29 August 2007)
MI/MFF	**Meeting Information – Managing Fife's Future process**
MI/MFF/1	Managing Fife's Future workshop: Winds of Change presentation (12 May 2006)
MI/MFF/2	Managing Fife's Future: 2nd Workshop (12 May 2006)
MI/MFF/3	Managing Fife's Future: 3rd Workshop (4 September 2006)
MI/MFF/3/1	Briefing Paper on Sustainable Development (4 September 2006)
MI/MFF/3/2	Presentation on Educational Attainment/Achievement (4 September 2006)
MI/MFF/3/3	Presentation on Worklessness (4 September 2006)
MI/SP1	**Meeting Information – First Scenario Planning process**
MI/SP1/1	Scenarios to Action Stage: agenda item 5 (27 March 2003)
MI/SP1/2	Presentation of Scenarios to Action Stage: agenda item 5 (27 March 2003)
C/UStA	**Communication – University of St Andrews**
C/UStA/1	Scenario Planning in Fife: project preamble (2002)
C/UStA/2	Fife Scenario Planning Process email exchange (2002)

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