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The contribution of stakeholder involvement to policy making for sustainable development in National Parks

FULL REPORT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

1. Background

It is widely accepted that new governance structures are needed to support sustainable development, because of both the nature of the challenges faced, and the incapacity of existing modes of government to address them in a context of eroded legitimacy. A burgeoning range of participatory practices rests on an established orthodoxy that sustainable development requires increased public involvement in policy making. Alongside this, governance is increasingly characterised by partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. However evidence suggests that radical policy ideas may be weakened rather than strengthened by deliberation, and there is as yet limited understanding of the effectiveness of different deliberative practices.

The aim of the research was to examine this problem by analysing and comparing the contribution of different forms of stakeholder representation and involvement to the capacity of planning authorities to make the difficult choices and trade-offs implicit in implementing sustainable development. This was achieved through analysis of transport policy making within the Peak District National Park which allowed comparison between the effectiveness of 'old' and 'new' deliberative processes.

2. Objectives

The project had four main objectives which did not change during the research.

> (a) To identify practical lessons for increasing the effectiveness of stakeholder representation and involvement in governance for

sustainability in protected areas and in the broader context of Community Planning.

This objective was met by drawing a range of general practical lessons from the conceptual work and empirical analysis, reflecting on how deliberative governance can most effectively involve stakeholders and represent their interests in planning for sustainability in protected areas, and considering the broader implications for Community Planning (Section 4.4).

(b) To provide tools for comparative analysis of forms of stakeholder involvement based on rationales which draw on differing democratic norms.

This objective was met through the methodological innovation required in this research. The *effective deliberation framework* and the elaboration of a straightforward set of questions to guide analysis provide a tool which this project demonstrates can be used to analyse different forms of stakeholder representation and involvement (Section 4.2).

(c) To advance theoretical understanding of the linkages between public involvement and sustainability on the one hand and public involvement and complex policy making and governance processes on the other.

Current conceptualisations of the linkages between public involvement and sustainability on the one hand, and public involvement and policy making processes on the other, are weak and under-supported by critical and analytic empirical research. This objective has been met through the examination of these linkages in the field and using these both to test current orthodoxies and contribute to a more sophisticated general conception of these linkages grounded in ideas of stakeholder representation and involvement (Section 4.3).

(d) To develop further a methodology for policy analysis based on the conceptualisation of the policy making process as one of competing 'discourses' comprised of both linguistic and material practice.

The methodology analyses discourse within a wider framework informed by political theory, allowing situated judgements about the qualities of policy discourses: their sustainability content, their legitimacy, and their capacity to

effect change. This innovation allows discourse analysis, through storylines, to be used in a more directly practical way than hitherto (Section 3.2).

3. Methods

3.1 The case study

Transport planning in a national park brings up the tensions within sustainable development planning very forcefully, as it raises inevitable questions about controls on private transport. In the Peak District this issue of possible traffic restraint is particularly controversial because of the barrier to cross-Pennine travel it presents, and also because it is the most accessible English National Park for car-borne recreation. Managing traffic flows has involved balancing the regeneration interests of neighbouring authorities, the need for accessibility to support the Park's local economy, environmental protection and residents' quality of life.

However, though the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) makes policy on transport, statutory transport planning powers are held by local authorities. Consequently the PDNPA has responded to longstanding stakeholder conflicts by extending its policy deliberation into new arenas, seeking consensus around policy outcomes.

The research analysed the mediation of traffic restraint options within the PDNPA and in two of these new arenas. First it examined deliberation within the PDNPA, where stakeholder views are represented by Members (Secretary of State appointees and representatives of local authorities and local town and parish councils) in its policy committees.

The second arena examined was the Stanage Forum (SF): an inclusive, facilitated consensus-building process concerned with preparing and implementing a management plan for the small, intensively used climbing area of Stanage Edge and surrounding countryside.

The third arena examined was the Peak Park Transport Forum (PPTF), a partnership between the PDNPA local authorities and other stakeholders, established to develop a strategic approach to transport issues. Operating through an officers' group and a Members' group, it has produced the South Pennines Integrated Transport Strategy (SPITS).

3.2 Story lines

The analysis used Hajer's notion of 'story lines' - simplifications of common problems, used as 'common currency' to create and bind together interests and
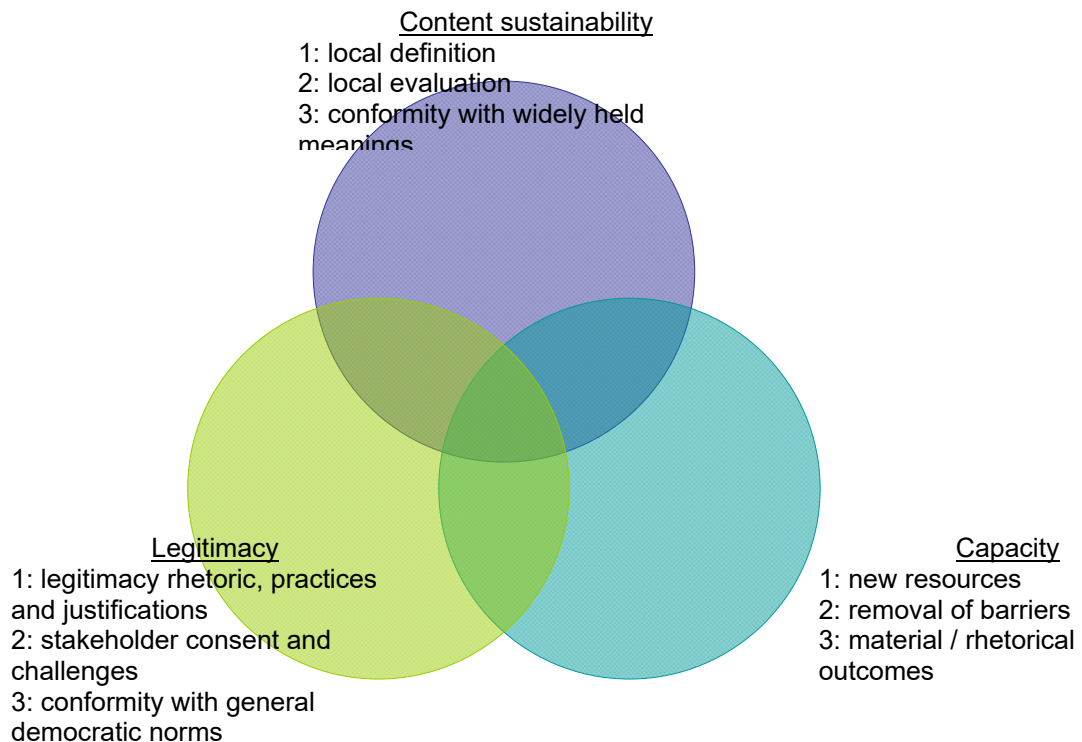
coalitions of actors within a decision making arena (Hajer 1995). Story lines provide the language and ideas through which concepts such as 'sustainable transport' are given specific local meanings, and the vehicles by which certain interests can come to be dominant. Story lines may be manifested in, for example, speech, policy documents and technical studies.

3.3 Analysis of 'effective deliberation'

The central task of analysing different modes of deliberation depended on operationalising the concept of 'effective deliberation'. This was done by analysing the three interlinked concepts of *content sustainability*, *legitimacy* and *capacity*, where effectiveness in delivering a specific desirable policy outcome (sustainable transport) rests on the collective capacity of stakeholders to act, which in turn is at least partially dependant on the legitimacy of the process.

The resulting analytic framework meets Objective 2 and provided the basis for delivering the other objectives (see Figure 1 and the questions below, and Section 6).

Figure 1. Effective deliberation framework

Content sustainability
1: local definition
2: local evaluation
3: conformity with widely held meanings

Legitimacy
1: legitimacy rhetoric, practices and justifications
2: stakeholder consent and challenges
3: conformity with general democratic norms

Capacity
1: new resources
2: removal of barriers
3: material / rhetorical outcomes

Each aspect of effectiveness was interrogated through three questions:

Content sustainability

a) *How is sustainable transport defined in the process?*

b) *How is this local definition evaluated by stakeholders?*

c) *Is this definition in conformity with meanings of sustainable transport in more general use (e.g. in national policy debates)?*

Legitimacy

a) *What rhetorical rules and actual practices characterise the deliberative process and how are these justified?*

b) *To what extent did stakeholders consent to or, alternatively, challenge the process's legitimacy?*

c) *To what extent were the rules and practices, and the claims made for these, justifiable in terms of general norms of democratic process?*

Capacity

a) *Did the process generate new resources (such as knowledge, finance, decision-making powers)?*

b) *Did the process result in the removal of previous barriers (e.g. bridging historical stakeholder divides), to achieving progress in policy making?*

c) *Did the process result in material outcomes (either physical or institutional change)?*

3.4 Data collection

Qualitative data was collected through:

- examination of internal and public policy documents to identify stakeholders, prominent interests and story lines, and develop a historical framework for the description of the interactions and institutionalisation of story lines;

- Xx interviews to reveal the detailed interaction of story lines in each arena, and to enable evaluation of perceptions of legitimacy and fair consideration of interests;

- observation of PDNPA, PPTF and SF meetings to gain unmediated access to the processes of deliberation.

Interviews were digitally recorded, coded and archived using qualitative data software (NVivo). Due to the sensitive and ongoing nature of the deliberative processes, a Qualidata deposit waiver has been granted. Despite this sensitivity, the researchers were given unexpectedly full access to private meetings of both the PDNPA and PPTF officers group, and experienced a high level of open-ness from interviewees.   However, during the research period the PDNPA was undergoing major reorganisation, which precluded the involvement of PDNPA Members and officers in a project steering group, and led to two senior Members declining to be interviewed on conflict of interest grounds.   These unavoidable problems did not materially affect either the outcomes or the quality of the research.

4. Results

4.1 Empirical findings

4.1.1. Content sustainability

The interplay and mediation between alternative framings of traffic restraint and sustainable transport in each arena were analysed by focusing on story lines and applying the framework for effective deliberation (results are summarised in Table 1).

Nationally, sustainable transport embodies traffic restraint story lines relate to demand management and modal shift. Yet in the Peak District all three arenas adopted a position of *pragmatic compromise* (reflecting Shaw and Walton 2001; Banister 2003). The dominant storylines in the PPTF and SF largely accepted existing traffic levels, reflecting powerful interests of economic liberalisation and freedom of personal mobility. Deliberation in the PDNPA is in a period of flux, with tension between competing story lines, and no clear policy outcome.

4.1.2. Legitimacy

The importance of establishing legitimacy as a condition for effective governance was recognised by the participants in all three arenas. Conscious efforts were made to create, maintain and challenge the legitimacy of elements of the processes. In each arena an overriding public rhetoric – different in each case - provided a legitimising rationale governing its explicit rules and accepted procedures. The legitimacy of the PDNPA was justified by the representative nature of its deliberative practices, while the SF was justified through explicit reference to its deliberative democratic groundrules. The conformity of the PPTF to representative norms was taken for granted.

In each case some of the deliberative practice followed this rhetoric, while some did not. 'Rule breaking' practices were almost always justified by alternative

legitimising rationales - either explicitly invoked or which could be summoned up on challenge within the deliberative process or under scrutiny by a researcher. Each arena thus relied on a complex and opportunistic mix of different legitimising principles, and could not be satisfactorily legitimised against any single norm (summarised in Table 2).

4.1.3. Capacity

The PDNPA has been successful in engaging with a wider range of stakeholders. Despite lacking powers over transport, it has influenced the sub-regional transport agenda through the PPTF. Overcoming historical divides, this body's capacity rests on its ability to build and maintain agreement. New knowledge resources have been central, where transport studies were used to facilitate rather than inform decision-making.

The SF also successfully integrated new knowledge and bridged stakeholder divides, but the process did not adequately engage or involve the authorities with decision power and resources.

Within the PDNPA, broadening representation has increased the range of conflicting interests, each reinforced by their own knowledge. The lack of any imperative to determine policy outcomes hindered the creation of an independent capacity to act, leaving radical positions to be debated elsewhere (summarised in Table 3).

4.1.4. Overall case study findings

The working practices of each arena and the combination of stakeholders present critically influenced the construction of traffic restraint. As stakeholders identified policy solutions and adopted working practices to assist deliberation, responded to external events and gradually accepted or rejected certain policy ideas, dominant story lines emerged. As expected, content sustainability, capacity and legitimacy were intricately linked. These were not, however, mutually reinforcing and trade-offs were observable. For example, the PPTF arguably created the strongest storyline of restraint and built most capacity, but was least legitimate by wider standards. The other arenas, with stronger legitimacy claims, failed to generate such capacity. The most explicitly inclusive process, the SF, failed to generate outcomes which were 'sustainable' against wider criteria.

Table 1. Content sustainability

	Definitions of sustainable transport: **Dominant storyline(s)**, *contributory storylines* and [excluded storylines]	Local evaluation	Conformity to wider debates
PDNPA	**Pragmatic compromise** *Prioritise environment* *Modal shift* *Park impotence* *Road User Charging* *Local Needs*	Internal dispute over pragmatism vs. environmental priorities. 'Local needs' developing amongst town/parish councillors. No consensus.	Weak construction of restraint. Dominance of pragmatic compromise parallels recent policy changes, but not broader conceptions of 'sustainable transport'.
PPTF	**Pragmatic compromise** *The wider economy* *Restraint as diversion* *Road Pricing*	Tacit acceptance of first three storylines, leading to careful deliberation on road pricing.	As above, but this arena produced the most 'radical' proposals of the three. Road Pricing similarly reflects emerging wider discourse.
SF	**Free access** *Integrated Transport Package* *Modal shift* *Visual Amenity* [Environmental Limits]	Dispute between limits (environmental interests and PDNPA) and free access (recreational interests) reconciled through integrated transport story line.	Weak construction of restraint. 'Sustainability' more in terms of process (highly participative) than substantive outcome.

Table 2. Legitimacy

	Legitimacy: rhetoric, practices and justifications	Stakeholder consent and challenges	External evaluation against wider norms
PDNPA	Rhetoric: representative democracy. Practice: small officers/member groups, very local interests excluded. Justification: officer expertise, need for outputs, the importance of the 'bigger picture'.	Overall legitimacy unquestioned. Internal challenges to legitimacy of particular coalitions.	Automatic legitimacy as the local representative government, weakened by indirectly elected & appointed membership. Actual practices not in conformity with traditional representative norms.
PPTF	Rhetoric and some practice: representative democracy Other practices: led by private officer deliberation. Limited involvement of other stakeholders. Justification: the need for practicable outcomes, officer expertise, legitimising through wider stakeholder engagement	Accepted by all participants. Concerns about wider acceptability prompted inclusion of environmental stakeholder and ad hoc wider stakeholder involvement.	Closed partnership of elected members arguably legitimate as part of representative democracy. Flawed in practice by officer-led nature. Nor in conformity with deliberative democracy: many stakeholders and environmental interests excluded.
SF	Rhetoric: deliberative democracy Practice: managed debate, control by steering group, voting when debate broke down Justification: need for consensus, 'sustainable' outcome, decisions	Accepted overall by all participants. Concerns about inclusivity of participants and issues, the consensus principle, and acceptability of outcomes. Weak acceptance of legitimacy by stakeholders outside the arena (e.g.PDNPA officers).	Legitimate by the norms of deliberative democracy, but not by representative democratic standards. Deliberative credentials flawed by management of process.

Table 3. Capacity to act

	New resources	Removal of barriers	Material / rhetorical outcomes
PDNPA	Local voices. Specialist expertise through Secretary of State appointees Local knowledge through Parish Council members.	Reframing of issues through deliberation and coalition formation may actually have constrained progress.	No clear internally generated position; acceptance of SPITS output.
PPTF	New, selective knowledge resources created through technical studies	Fragile political consensus between authorities – crossing historical divides	SPITS strategy: package including road improvements, public transport and traffic restraint.
SF	Local knowledge resources integrated	Bridging stakeholder divides – but unable to remove external barriers	Management Plan (package of bus improvements, limited parking, integrated train and bus services) but not deliverable

4.2 Tool for comparative analysis of forms of stakeholder involvement

The analytical framework provides a tool for the comparative analysis of different forms of stakeholder involvement. It can be used in research crossing the boundaries between public involvement and partnership working, and analysing processes resting on representative and participative norms. It can also be used as a practical tool (Section 4.4).

4.3 Theoretical contribution

These findings lead to a series of theoretical propositions concerning the linkages between public involvement and complex policy making and governance processes, and between public involvement and sustainability. Each of these propositions challenges prevailing orthodoxies and would benefit from further research.

4.3.1. Increased public involvement does not necessarily lead to more effective governance

Broadening the range of involved stakeholders in new forms of deliberation does not automatically lead to greater legitimacy for a process. Although these processes can establish their legitimacy internally, they are not sufficiently widely

accepted to be granted the almost automatic − if somewhat begrudged - legitimacy held by an elected, representative body. Also, the pragmatic appeal to a range of legitimising principles within a single process weakens its legitimacy when assessed from 'outside', without the benefit of access to reasoned justifications.

Furthermore, capacity is not necessarily increased by bringing in more voices. The impact is more context-specific, depending partly on who is involved and whether they bring decision making resources, and partly on whether the group as a whole is motivated to produce a substantive outcome.

4.3.2. Radical ideas may grow better behind closed doors, where deliberation takes place among professionals

Public involvement, and deliberation by elected representatives, appears able to stifle the emergence of radical ideas. The most significant progress towards a radical position on sustainable transport was achieved in the closed partnership arena where sensitive issues could be tabled. This is not, however, an argument against local government or open processes, since the 'cost' of the partnership approach was a weakening of substantive outcomes (see next point) and legitimacy weaknesses which may be damaging in the long term.

4.3.3. Increased deliberative democracy may not lead to more sustainable development

The often asserted connection between widening public involvement in deliberation and achieving progress towards sustainable development is not borne out in the case studied. Rather, it would appear that such participation may simply bring more voices to the debate, and so hamper effective decision making, or that a need to achieve consensus results in weakened local constructions of 'sustainability' and processes of questionable legitimacy.

4.3.3. Increased deliberation is failing to deliver strong sustainable transport

In each arena the meaning of sustainable transport was weakened as stronger, non-environment interests dominated. This was directly related to the intrinsically deliberative nature of each arena (albeit differently managed), reinforced by the pressure to reach a decision. Radical traffic restraint measures are contentious and fragile, and were difficult to sustain. Progress required trade-offs at the expense of legitimate process and environmental knowledge.

4.3.4. The will to consensus can weaken the sustainability content of policy

The PDNPA faced serious constraints as it sought to formulate sustainable transport policies. In a situation of fragmented governance it adopted a strategy of persuasion. Building capacity within the PPTF relied upon building consensus among powerful stakeholders and ensuring that those policies were politically acceptable to them. Attempting to do this required significant compromises over

sustainability. Its longstanding position of resisting cross-park road upgrades could not be continued whilst building capacity to act. In the SF, the need to reach consensus marginalised deliberation of 'difficult' issues and encouraged a weak definition of sustainable transport favouring powerful stakeholders at the expense of the PDNPA's environmental commitments. Conversely, within the PDNPA the lack of a will to reach consensus led to the most significant weakening of sustainability content.

Overall, the degree of consensus achieved within deliberative arenas bore little relation to the sustainability content of the outcome.

4.3.6. Conceptualising policy deliberation

This research contributes to what Hajer and Wagenaar describe as the work of sketching out 'the contours of a deliberative policy science' (2003: 23). It suggests that the concept of public involvement is losing its meaning within the plurality of practices of deliberation. The conceptual distinctions maintained between representative, partnership and participative processes have obscured the need for critical approaches which can engage with the different ways in which policy deliberation takes place. This research, working across these divides, challenges a number of established orthodoxies. It points to difficulties inherent in using deliberative approaches to resolve weaknesses in governance or to address the challenges of sustainable development. Rather than concluding that deliberation *per se* is a misguided approach, the conceptual framework developed here enables assessment and judgement in particular situations about the value of engaging stakeholders in different ways, based on traditional or novel approaches to representation, partnership and public involvement.

4.4 Practical lessons

For practitioners working in the context of evolving governance, reference points are needed to support practical judgements about which deliberative approaches could be most effective in particular challenging contexts. In deciding whether to extend deliberation into new arenas, risks need to be balanced against possible benefits. The effective deliberation framework provides a means of foregrounding unavoidable trade-offs made in practice, and supporting the work of mobilising new forms of deliberation *appropriately*.

4.4.1. General practical recommendations

All three components of effective deliberation are essential in constructing a deliberative process and each needs to be carefully planned for, so that:

- the substantive goals of the process are reflected in the range of interests represented (**content sustainability**);

- processes are justifiable according to established norms of legitimacy, and that efforts are made to establish the widest possible acceptability of any new norms underpinning the process (**legitimacy**); and

- stakeholders have sufficient resources to enhance their collective capacity to act (**capacity**).

Trade-offs between these three criteria need to be clearly identified and justified (for example, it may be justifiable to take the risk of reducing legitimacy in order to enhance its capacity to act).

4.4.2. Protected areas

National Park Authorities (NPAs) need to possess more formal powers if they are to act strongly, with more force in partnership situations and more focus in their own policy deliberations. In transport terms this may mean the power to create Local Transport Plans alongside their development and management planning framework.

The critical lesson in the absence of strong powers is that NPAs need to identify clear, independent, strategic positions in relation to core values (here in relation to transport and mobility), and to operate critically and reflexively in strategic partnerships on the basis of these positions. Otherwise the risk of weak outcomes is worsened. Stakeholders and external partnerships cannot be expected to uphold core national park values, and NPAs need to be active in these partnerships to ensure that they do not lose out in the consensus that emerges. Partnership working, however, does not obviate the need to prepare a NPA strategy.

However NPAs need to reflect carefully on their practices of stakeholder engagement, to inform their judgements on the risks and benefits of partnership working and participatory practices. If new deliberative approaches are used, they need to be more fully integrated, so that the benefits of appropriately designed and well managed participative work are not dissipated through weak understanding and lack of organisational support.

4.4.3. Broader lessons (Community Planning)

For local authorities attempting to develop community strategies through Local Strategic Partnerships in line with government guidance (DTLR 2000), effective deliberation requires negotiation of trade-offs in strategy design and management. The details will be context-dependent, but a difficult area is likely to be balancing legitimacy against capacity to act – if public involvement has to be limited to achieve capacity, then the strategy's legitimacy will have to be established in other accepted ways, such as strengthening the role of elected

representatives, and ensuring that participants are accountable to the wider community.

Such trade-offs are difficult to account for within the current environment of performance validation of LSPs, which separates process management (Audit Commission monitoring of delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal Unit core requirements, and in practice Community Strategy planning and monitoring arrangements) from content (Government Office evaluations of the strength of: partnership working, individual NR theme progress and the LSP's improvement plans).

5. Activities

Significant efforts have been made to disseminate the research to academics and research users. Five strands of activity can be identified.

1. Presentation of the conceptual framework in research seminars, including:

- ESRC Mobile Network Seminar, University of Lancaster (2003)

- Danish Mobility Research Network, Aalborg University (2004)

- University of the Witwatersrand (2003 and 2004); University of KwaZulu-Natal (2003 and 2004); and University of Cape Town (2003).

2. Papers presented at academic conferences:

- *Association of European Schools of Planning XVIIIth Congress*, Grenoble, France, July 2004;

- *XI World Congress of Rural Sociology*, Trondheim, Norway, August 2004;

- *Planning Research and Development Conference*, Aberdeen, March 2004;

- keynote paper at *The Boundaries of Community Conference*, hosted by Olivetti Foundation and Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica, Rome, November 2004.

3. Presentations to research users outside the Peak District:

- presentation to the University of Sheffield Public Sector Club (seminar group of CEOs of regional public sector bodies);

- presentation to senior officers from the Development, Planning & Management Department of eThekwini (Durban) Municipality, S Africa.

4. Developing links with academics and research users.

Links with policy makers and other stakeholders in the Peak District National Park were consolidated during the research, and have led to the use of the research results in internal review processes. Alongside these activities, links with researchers have been developed in the UK, Europe and South Africa.

5. The research has been used directly in research training and postgraduate teaching at Sheffield, Aalborg University (Denmark) and the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

6. Outputs

As Section 5 indicates, outputs from the project are already considerable (twelve individual presentations/unpublished papers presented to academic and research user groups). To date, the most important outputs are the two nominated conference papers, which are under revision for submission to refereed journals:

> 'Shaping radical transport policy ideas through deliberation: three stories of traffic restraint in the Peak District National Park'. Presented at *AESOP XVIIIth Congress*. Grenoble, France. July 2004.

This sets out the research methodology and early findings, and begins to locate the wider contribution of the research. After revision this will be submitted to *Transport Policy* journal and will represent a significant contribution to the literature on policy deliberation in relation to sustainable transport.

> 'Legitimacy, deliberative arenas and the new rural governance'. *XI World Congress of Rural Sociology*. Trondheim, Norway. August 2004.

This develops the conceptual framework and will be revised for submission to *Public Administration* as a theoretical paper on legitimacy in policy deliberation. An edited version will appear in L. Cheshire, V. Higgins and G. Lawrence (eds.) (forthcoming 2005) *International Perspectives on Rural Governance: New Power Relations in Rural Economies and Societies*.

Three further papers are being prepared for submission to refereed journals in 2005 developing:

- the contribution to deliberative policy making and planning theory (to *Planning Theory and Practice)*

- the contribution to current debates on the governance of protected areas (to *Rural Studies*)

- the contribution to understanding the links between policy deliberation and sustainable development (to *Environmental Politics*).

The research findings will form the core material for a co-authored book – provisionally entitled *Consensus in Planning* – currently under discussion with Routledge.

A web page (www.shef.ac.uk/trp/research/ESRCstakeholderinvolvement) has been set up for the project. The research results are also being communicated to the Cosmobilities research network (www.cosmobilities.net) and will be a central element of a workshop planned at the University of Sheffield in 2005 to bring together academics carrying out critical research on policy deliberation and sustainability.

The research findings will inform future collaborative work with, *inter alia*, Dr Zarina Patel (University of the Witwatersrand and member of the South African National Parks Board) on deliberation in protected areas, and with Professor Leontine Visser (Wageningen University) and researchers at the Humboldt University of Berlin and the UFZ Centre for Environmental Research (Leipzig-Halle) on legitimacy and rural governance.

Dissemination specifically to professional audiences will be a) through two short articles for *Planning* and *Local Transport Today*; and b) through a report for the PDNPA. This will provide access to its findings for both local policy-makers and those outside the area and working in different institutional settings. The research results will be presented to members and staff at the PDNPA, and the report will be distributed to members of the PPTF and the SF. The findings on the SF are also being incorporated into an evaluation report of the Forum which will be presented to the PDNPA and stakeholders.

7. Impacts

The above sections detail the vigorous dissemination activity related to the conceptual framework and early findings. However the full impact of the research will be achieved once the final results are published, through publication in refereed journals and other planned activities.

The research provides the basis for conclusions about the relationship of stakeholder representation and involvement to sustainable development policy making at a number of levels, and provides a framework for future analysis and planning practice. We expect a corresponding range of impacts:

Firstly, it is intended to improve policy making in the PDNPA through increasing policy makers' understanding of the potential contribution of different forms of stakeholder involvement to planning for transport and sustainable development, and so assisting decision making over which aspects of policy making will benefit from such involvement and where it is inappropriate in the light of the statutory purposes of the Park. (This is particularly timely, since the PDNPA is currently engaged in an internal review of its transport planning activities. The findings of this research are being directly fed into this process through discussions with officers within the authority, and possibly through a formal seminar attended by the review steering group (currently under discussion).

The research results are usable by policy makers in other protected areas and across many areas of policy and governance. In particular they can support the practice of local authorities currently developing Community Strategies.

The research makes a contribution from planning to emerging debates about deliberative governance by focusing on the changing practices of deliberation. This responds to a general need to analyse evolving governance practices, in order to understand the playing out and mediation of conflicts of interest in different policy and planning contexts.

8. Future Research Priorities

The research opens up exciting avenues for research into the changing practices of deliberative governance across policy sectors, and in different contexts. Specifically, this could lead to research pursuing the theoretical propositions identified in Section 4.3 by analysing:

- comparative dimensions of deliberative practices in protected areas in different international contexts

- the theoretical understanding of legitimacy in situations of fragmented governance and 'new' deliberative processes

- empirically, the legitimacy basis for representation of community and other interests in planning

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