

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

THE RE-ORGANISATION OF A SCHOOL SYSTEM : CONSULTATION AND POLICY-MAKING
IN A LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

'The re-organisation of a school system : consultation and policy-making in a local education authority.'

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ABSTRACT

The contribution of consultation among the policy-makers and with their clients to the development of educational policy for the City of Hull is assessed between 1977 and 1985. In the period under review Humberside moved from a gradualist approach to dealing with falling enrolments, which entailed the retention of transfer to secondary education at 13, to a radical re-appraisal of the school system as a whole and a decision to return to transfer at 11 and the establishment of sixth form colleges. The series of consultations which accompanied the development of that policy, within the context of central government advice, is examined, together with the parallel consultations with the Church of England and among the Roman Catholic community.

The principal objectives of the study are to determine the influence of client consultation on the development of policy aims and on the determination of particular policy decisions, in addition to an appraisal of the participants' perceptions of the objectives and the outcomes of the consultations studied. The methodology employed involved a document and literature search, non-participant observation, interviews with a sample of participants, and a questionnaire survey.

The series of consultative episodes is subjected to examination against models of local authority decision-making derived from the literature with the purpose of generating hypotheses about the consultative process and decision-making at local education authority level. From the cases reviewed it is concluded that the role of client consultation can be both strategic and tactical, but that it is principally constrained by the political leadership's assessment of its potential role and the focus they provide for it. In the case of Humberside client consultation contributed to a change in the direction of policy in so far as the politicians used its outcomes to assess the extent of change necessary, but, when strategy had been politically determined, its potential for effecting change became tactical and was limited to modifying the application of that strategy. Consultation also made some contribution to greater public understanding of the Authority's policy and to making that policy more acceptable to those affected by it.

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Abbreviations used in Text

ACC	Association of County Councils
AEC	Association of Education Committees
AMA	Association of Metropolitan Authorities
AMMA	Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association
BEC	Business Education Council
FE	Number of forms of entry to a school each year
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NAS/UWT	National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers
NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NUT	National Union of Teachers
PAT	Professional Association of Teachers
TEC	Technician Education Council
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
HJTCC	Humberside Joint Teachers' Consultative Committee
NALGO	National Association of Local Government Officers
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

PART ITHE CONTEXT AND THE INVESTIGATIONChapter 1 - Scope of the study and methodology

This study attempts to determine the contribution of consultation, between the policy-makers and with their 'clients' in the education service, to the development of educational policy for the City of Hull in the period 1977-1985, during which Humberside LEA adopted several strategies for dealing with the institutional and curricular impact of declining numbers in the schools. The genesis of the study was an inquiry concerning the availability of material for a study of local policy-making and subsequent conversations with senior education officers who indicated the availability of documentary material relating to recent developments. In those conversations some emphasis was placed on a number of consultative exercises conducted by the Authority. Inspection of the papers relating to a review of 16-19 provision revealed something of the Authority's policy-making procedures, while a number of reactions from those who had been consulted indicated concern with that process. Subsequently the Authority focused its attention on coping with falling enrolments and it was decided to follow that developing policy through.

Initially, Humberside adopted a gradualist approach to institutional change, saw the problem of falling enrolments as having most urgent implications for secondary school provision, and sought first, by means of consultation, to establish curricular and general institutional objectives by conducting a countywide review of 16-19 provision (1977-1980), which could later be applied to the schools on a divisional basis. It then, for the Hull Division, sought between 1980 and 1982 to apply those objectives by proposing to retain the existing age of transfer to secondary education at 13, accompanied by selective closures and amalgamations, firstly within a sector of the city where school numbers had fallen most dramatically as a consequence

of the declining birth-rate and population movement, and then to the city as a whole. That phase ended in February 1982, when public consultation revealed that there was insufficient consensus among the policy-makers to proceed on that basis. The Authority then re-assessed the city's school system as a whole and took the radical step of proposing a return to transfer at 11 and a break at 16, and consulted widely on that proposal, which was eventually approved by DES in 1985 for implementation in 1988. In the process the Authority also initiated consultations with the Roman Catholic and Church of England authorities, who in turn consulted their respective communities. Those parallel consultations are also examined and assessed as a part of the present study.

While there was a change in the direction of policy in the period there were also changes in political control. The gradualist approach was initiated by a Conservative administration and was continued and later reversed by a Labour administration, while the decision to proceed with the radical re-structuring of Hull's school system was taken by an Authority in which neither party had overall control, the Conservatives having arrived at an accommodation with the Liberal/SDP Alliance on matters of administration rather than policy. Within the political framework of the non-metropolitan County of Humberside, that new policy was made for, rather than by, the City of Hull. Hence, the lengthy series of consultations by which that policy emerged is considered against the background of the political inter-play between City and County, as well as within the context of previous policy and the resource considerations facing the Authority in the period.

Humberside County consists of four divisions, each with a different school structure and differentially affected by falling enrolments, exhibiting in microcosm several of the patterns of school provision developed nationally. The East Riding Division, with its headquarters in the county town of Beverley, and its system of large 11-18 schools, and the Scunthorpe Division, with its 11-16 schools and a single sixth form college, have been least affected by falling enrolments and no radical changes have been proposed. It is in the

Hull Division, with its 9-13 middle schools and 13-18 senior high schools, and in the Grimsby Division, with mixture of 5-11 primary schools, 8-12 middle schools, and secondary schools with and without sixth forms, that major institutional changes, both involving separate provision for 16-19 year-olds, have been the subject of consultation. In the latter cases the consultations were still continuing at the time of writing.

As the research proceeded it was decided to focus on the re-organisation of Hull's school system, partly because of the incompleteness of the process for Grimsby and because it became apparent that a resolution of the Hull situation was becoming increasingly urgent and problematic for the Authority, and also by virtue of the more radical nature of the Hull proposals which amounted to a total re-casting of the school system for the City. Events in Hull were thus likely to provide data for the major concern of the study, the effects of consultation among a wide and diverse body of interested parties on the development of local education policy.

Within the process of local policy-making this study focuses on the formulation of proposals, with particular reference to the part consultation plays in their development up to the point when they are submitted for DES approval. Specifically, answers have been sought to the following research questions:

1. Did the consultations with the Authority's 'clients' act as a determinant of policy?
2. If client consultation could not be described as having a major influence on the direction of educational policy, then what other effects did it have?
3. Did consultation modify the application of policy otherwise determined and, if so, how did both the policy-makers and clients perceive the importance of those modifications and the role of consultation in bringing them about?
4. Given the range of possible reasons for consulting about a major policy issue, elaborated in the literature relating to organisational management and educational administration, were there any by-products of the Hull consultations which have a bearing on the process of LEA policy-making from both the policy-makers' perspective and that of the clients?

In addition, it was hypothesised that the different parties would have different perspectives on the purposes of the consultations in which they were involved and, thereby, different expectations of their outcomes.

A case study approach has been adopted. The methodology employed consists of a literature and documentary search, non-participant observation of consultative meetings, semi-structured interviews with participants, and a questionnaire. Hence the evidence gathered by means of interviews is essentially qualitative in character, and that relating to the different participants' assessments of the consultations is essentially phenomenological in perspective, though the material gathered by means of the questionnaire is quantifiable and has been subjected to factor analysis.

The documentary evidence on which the study is based consists of DES circulars and administrative memoranda and a wide variety of papers relating to the consultations conducted by the LEA and the voluntary bodies, including Education Committee and sub-committee minutes, working party minutes, formal consultative documents, statutory objections, and LEA correspondence files. A variety of meetings were also observed, including formal consultative meetings between the LEA, teaching staff and school governors, Education Committee meetings, a series of public meetings for parents, other public meetings concerning individual schools, and teachers' union meetings. Semi-structured interviews were held with representatives of key participant groups in the consultations, including education officers, leading politicians and representatives of those potentially affected by the decisions being made. A questionnaire concerning the perceived objectives and outcomes of the consultations was also completed by a larger sample of participants. As a means of analysis, the study concludes with an application of selected decision-making models to the events of the period with the object, not so much of testing the validity of those theories as, paraphrasing James, to use them to generate hypotheses about the process and provide a vocabulary for discussing the impact of consultation on LEA policy-making.¹

In his 1980 review of research into secondary school re-organisation James observes that students of local policy-making fall into two rival camps: those who employ case-study methods and those who prefer the statistical analysis of data concerning large numbers of authorities.² In defending the relevance of case-study to an understanding of policy-making he argues that it has merits as well as associated methodological problems and limitations. Among the merits cited are that it enables the researcher to achieve an understanding of a particular political system by means of close observation of events; that it encourages a more tangible understanding of situations than broad generalisations based on aggregate statistical data would allow, by revealing how situations are understood by those involved in them; and that, in terms of research tools, the method can integrate historical and documentary material, quantitative data, interviews and sample surveys. Among its purported limitations, advanced principally by advocates of a statistical approach, are doubts over whether it can advance theory and prove hypotheses, as opposed to generating hypotheses or merely disproving them by demonstrating that they fail to accord with the 'facts' of a particular case. The extent to which generalisations can be based upon case study is also doubted.

Case study, as James further points out,³ carries risks of perspective in that often change is examined at the expense of instances of non-decision making and policy maintenance, while reliance on interviews as a major data-gathering tool might over-emphasise the roles of individuals and groups in relation to economic and political structural factors. There could also be a tendency to strive to achieve a neatness in the narrative when untidiness was a major feature of the policy-making process, a difficulty in interpreting rival recollections and perceptions of events, and in gaining unfettered access to information. Despite these potential shortcomings, James concludes none the less that case-study, based on a clear research design and related to existing theory, 'is a research tool which despite limitations has clear advantages in the analysis of public policy making'.⁴ Moreover, case study is given a particular role in respect of the advancement of theory in the writings

of Lovell and Lawson,⁵ Stenhouse,⁶ and Glaser and Strauss.⁷ Lovell and Lawson conclude that, while case study does not in itself provide theories which explain events, it might well provide the data from which theories might be elaborated, while Stenhouse proposes that contextualisation is essential to an understanding of educational practice and that general theory at the level of cause and effect must stand the test of the study of cases. In somewhat similar vein, Glaser and Strauss, in their advancement of the notion of 'grounded theory', in contrast to theory logically deduced from a priori assumptions, emphasise the process of discovering the concepts and hypotheses relevant to a particular area of research as the prior basis for the development of theory which is both relevant to and able to explain the behaviour under study.

The 'two camps' referred to by James represent apparently polarised traditions in policy studies, each with an assumed mutually exclusive methodology. The debate over their relative relevance and exclusivity was engaged some time ago by Baron,⁸ Glaser and Strauss,⁹ Hughes,¹⁰ Glatter,¹¹ and Greenfield,¹² and more recently by Griffin,¹³ Hargreaves¹⁴ and Stenhouse,¹⁵ and has been represented by an evaluation of phenomenology versus structural-functionalism and systems theory, a theory versus practice debate, pluralist versus Marxist interpretations of the policy process, and an assessment of qualitative versus quantitative methods. The more recent writings particularly have, in the main, striven to achieve an accommodation between these apparently conflicting schools of thought by arguing their potential as mutually supporting approaches to an understanding of the policy-making process. The nature of that debate is introduced here, not because it is the intention of the present study to engage it in any detail, and still less to resolve it, but to indicate this study's particular perspectives on local policy-making.

At the centre of the debate was Greenfield's exposition of a phenomenological perspective on organisations which, in Baron's assessment, made such an impact in the mid-1970s not so much because it put that perspective forward

as because it represented a 'frontal attack' on systems theory which, with its emphasis on quantification and complex mathematical models, lay at the heart of the received North American orthodoxy of social science research.¹⁶

Greenfield rejected the dualism inherent in structural-functionalism and systems theory which separates people and organisations as if the latter were real and had purposes apart from the people who compose them and, arguing for the inseparability of people and organisations, proposed a reassessment of the claim that there existed a cognate body of theory to guide effective administrative action in organisations. His alternative view saw organisations 'not as structures subject to universal laws but as cultural artefacts dependent upon the specific meaning and intention of people within them.'¹⁷

Structural-functionalism and phenomenology represent apparent polarities resting on different philosophical bases about the nature of reality, between Realism and Idealism. Realism claims that the world is knowable as it really is and that organisations are real entities with lives of their own, while Idealism proposes that people construe the world in different ways and that organisations, in consequence, are 'invented social reality'. Thus polarised, these two schools take radically different views about the role of social science and appropriate methodology. Structural-functionalism looks to discover universal laws of human conduct in society and attempts to abstract reality by quantitative analysis, phenomenology attempts to discover how different people interpret the world and relies heavily on analysing language and meaning and representing reality for the purposes of comparison.

Hargreaves's recent work, however, indicates perhaps that the exclusive espousal of any particular school of thought as a means of explaining and understanding the policy-making process in education should be regarded more as a matter of value choice than of theoretical correctness.¹⁸ In an empirical analysis of the origin of middle schools with particular reference to their development in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the 1960s, Hargreaves sketches what he calls a 'provisional framework'¹⁹ whereby, in this case, pluralism, with its belief in multi-causality and general lack of an integrating theory,

and Marxist economic determinism, with its belief in an over-arching theory whereby educational conflict can be explained by forces generated by capitalism and its preservation, might be brought closer together. Employing the notion of 'administrative convenience' to examine the process of change in different divisions of the West Riding, and the different outcomes, Hargreaves reveals areas of possible compatibility between the two apparently conflicting analyses. He attempts to show that administrative and political complexities, in a decentralised education system, can help to explain why different solutions are administratively convenient in different areas, albeit developed within the broad limits to change set by macro-economic and political factors.

The present study, with its focus on consultation and its role in the development of local policy in response to the national phenomenon of falling enrolments, at a time of financial stringency and within the confines of central government's declared intentions concerning the curriculum and the handling of contraction, can perhaps also reveal both the complexity and multi-causality of local educational decision-making and offer an explanation of why different solutions, at different points in time, were 'administratively convenient'.

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Chapter 1

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- 13 Griffin, C. 'Qualitative Methods and Cultural Analysis : Young Women and the Transition from School to Un/employment' in Burgess, R.G. (Ed) Op. cit. (1985), pp97-115.
- 14 Hargreaves, A. 'The Politics of Administrative Convenience : The Case of Middle Schools' in McNay, I. & Ozga, J. Policy-Making in Education : The Breakdown of Consensus Oxford, Pergamon, 1985, pp65-85.
- 15 Stenhouse, L. 'A Note on Case Study and Educational Practice' in Burgess, R.G. (Ed) Op. cit. (1985), pp263-271.
- 16 Baron, G. Op. cit. p16.
- 17 Greenfield, T.B. Op. cit. p74.
- 18 Hargreaves, A. Op. cit. p80.
- 19 Ibid. p65.

Chapter 2 - The Design of the Study

The study is both descriptive and evaluative and has two major objectives. It aims first to provide a narrative of LEA policy-making over a period of time, as it related to the re-organisation of Hull's school system, based on an examination and appraisal of the documentary evidence and non-participant observation of the accompanying consultations. An account of the several consultative episodes involved, with an appraisal of the contribution of each to policy development in the short and longer term, forms part II of the study. Appraisal of the documentary evidence relating to those consultations and a search of the literature relating to policy-making in LEAs, and to consultation as a part of the process, led to the research questions and hypotheses elaborated in the introduction and to the subsequent construction of the interview schedules and a questionnaire concerning the objectives and outcomes of the consultations as participants perceived them as the major research tools for seeking answers to the study's other major concern, the nature of the consultative process itself and its effects on the development of policy. It was hypothesised that the different parties to the consultations, as policy-makers or as 'clients' of the Authority, would have different perspectives on the consultations which in turn would lead to different expectations and to different assessments of their contribution to policy development. An analysis and commentary upon the responses to the interviews and questionnaires provide major sections of part III of the study.

Those two parts of the study are complementary. The narrative rests essentially on an assessment of the documentary evidence of the contribution of consultation to local policy-making, albeit much of it, depending on its provenance, reflecting both the Authority's and the consultees' understanding of the situation, while the interviews and the questionnaire explore the meanings the different participants attached to those events.

The Interview Schedules and Interviewing Procedures

Semi-structured interviews with representative groups of key participants were chosen as the main mode of probing their understanding of the consultative process because the method provides several advantages for both interviewer and interviewee. It enables the interviewer to ensure that the respondent fully understands the purpose of the interview while the interviewee has an opportunity to ask questions and can reveal the reasoning behind the answers. This was considered important as this aspect of the research was as much concerned with people's perceptions and conceptions of the process adopted by the Authority, and of the events of the period, as with the events themselves.

In an attempt to ensure frankness in the interviewees each was given assurances concerning confidentiality and each was interviewed in familiar surroundings. While a degree of flexibility in the directions already indicated is permitted by the use of a semi-structured interview technique, the schedules posed a series of questions in sequence to each interviewee, each one being worded in the same way, with additional probes, where appropriate, designed to explore further the initial answers. Although brief field notes were made on the schedules during the interviews in all cases, each lasting approximately one hour, the interviews were tape-recorded, with the prior permission of each participant, for later transcription and analysis. This procedure, while time-consuming, has the principal advantages that it avoided the danger of the interviewer either attempting a hasty, and perhaps arbitrary, classification of the answer while at the same time paying attention to what was being said or, on the basis of notes and perhaps fallible recall, attempting to write up the interview immediately afterwards. In recommending the use of tapes, Lovell and Lawson¹ also argue that recordings have the additional advantage of preserving the emotional and vocal character of the replies and avoid the errors that can sometimes be made in written records. Tape-recording also ensures the accuracy of direct quotations.

Separate interview schedules were designed for each of the phases of the Hull re-organisation consultations and for the parallel but separate consultations within the Catholic community, each intended to probe further particular aspects of the consultative and policy-making process revealed by a prior study of the literature, observation of events, and an examination of the documentary evidence. Thus each schedule was concerned with matters of principle, practice and outcome, with adjustments to the focus and number of questions to take account of the details of the exercise in question and with appropriate alterations in wording to account for the position occupied by the subjects as either policy-makers or 'clients'. Only the outline structure of each schedule is given here. The detailed schedules for each exercise appear in Appendices I, II, and III, while a discussion of the objectives of each question is provided in Chapter 10, together with a report of the findings and a commentary upon them.

LEA Consultations Phase I - Interview Schedule

The first three questions on the schedule, which focus in turn on participants' understanding of the concept of consultation, its relationship to participating in policy-making, and on the stage in the process at which they think consultation should take place, are concerned with important matters of principle and, as such, have been reproduced on succeeding schedules. Together they attempt to elucidate participants' aspirations of the consultative process in the context of LEA decision-making. The questions are repeated because later analysis attempts a comparison of these aspects between the consultative exercises.

The majority of the remaining questions, 4 to 14, focus on specific aspects of practice and are designed to reveal participants' satisfaction with the information-providing and information-gathering procedures adopted by the Authority during the consultations and their assessment of their contribution to policy development. As the first consultative exercise failed to resolve the issue, it was judged important to attempt, by means of questions 15 and 16,

to have participants' assessment of the effects of an apparently abortive exercise in terms of policy development.

LEA Consultations Phase II - Interview Schedule

The second phase schedule followed a similar outline pattern, with the following adjustments to take account of differences between the exercises. An additional question on matters of principle was included. Qu.4, which seeks interviewees' criteria for judging the genuineness of consultation, arose from both observation of meetings and an inspection of documentary material, where it was proposed by several parties that the consultations were not meaningful and had little to do with the decisions being made.

Additional aspects of procedure were also examined, hence Qu.8 relates to the limited amount of time the Authority had given to the public consultative phase of the process. Qus. 12, 13, 14, & 19 were included to take account of the greater involvement of parents and pressure groups, while Qus. 16 and 17, which concern respondents' preferred solution and the question whether more than one proposal should have been consulted upon at that stage, also reflect issues which arose during these particular consultations. The schedule again concludes with interviewees' judgment of the effect of the consultations on policy-making by seeking in Qus. 18 and 20 an assessment of the reasons for, and significance of, the changes which were made to the proposals and their satisfaction with the outcomes of the consultations. The interview schedule for the participants in the Roman Catholic consultations had the same structure as that for participants in the LEA consultations, with suitable amendments to the wording of certain questions to account for their particular procedures (see Appendix III).

Piloting of the Interview Schedules

The interview schedules were piloted in order to determine both the potential answerability of the questions in the terms in which they were put and their coverage in regard to the concerns of the study and of the interviewees as participants. The first phase schedule (see Appendix I) was piloted on two of the secondary school heads and a county council elected member, taken to represent possibly divergent approaches to the consultations.

In consequence a number of changes were made, of which the most important were those which gave greater precision to Questions 2 and 3.

In addition to seeking interviewees' understanding of participation by means of consultation and their assessment of what they were in practice able to do, a probe was inserted in Question 2 to determine their aspirations, as this emerged as particularly important to the heads. Hence interviewees were also asked what part they would have wished to play if the ideal and the actuality failed to coincide. With Question 3, while the three posited policy-making stages of initiation, formulation and implementation were understood as labels, the first particularly required a precise definition in order to gain a meaningful response. Hence a definition was added to each label and worded to indicate active interfaces between the three stages. At the initiatory stage emphasis was placed on diagnosis of a problem and the suggestion of possible action, which did not beg the question of who had seen the problem or had suggested the course of action. At the formulation stage emphasis was placed on a detailed plan being in the process of formulation, and at the implementation stage on a decision having been taken and about to be made operative.

Question 8 While the question of the Authority's intentions in reviewing the schools in South West Hull by means of a working party could be answered positively, the answers had two major elements, that it was an unprejudiced investigation of the facts of the situation or that there was some ulterior motive. The original exploratory stem of the question was retained, in order not to prejudice the answers, but, in addition, the probe was added to gain interviewees' relative assessment of those two elements.

Question 12 In response to this question about the Authority's conduct of the consultations it became clear that major reservations centred on who became involved and the timing of their involvement. In consequence these issues were probed in the pilot interviews and Questions 13 and 14 were added to the schedule, particularly as their most common reservation was the late involvement of parents.

The second phase interview schedule (see Appendix II) was piloted on a secondary school head, a middle school head, a county council elected member, and a teachers' union representative, and the following changes were made.

Question 6 The rider 'in the sense in which you have defined participation' was added to give this question greater precision.

Question 9 This question concerning the Authority's intentions in holding public meetings, as originally put, was of a general nature. In consequence interviewees responded in terms of only one or two possibilities which were of immediate importance to them. It was amended to provide a range of possibilities for interviewees to rank in importance after they had responded to the initial stem of the question. By that means the possible motives of providing information, explanation, of persuasion, of testing support, and of gathering views in order to develop the plan could be recorded and analysed more effectively.

Question 13 This question was originally worded, 'Do you think the Authority involved the parents adequately in the consultations?' As respondents tended either to confuse the arrangements with the extent to which parents availed themselves of the opportunities provided, or added comment about 'parental apathy', the question was re-phrased, 'Do you think the Authority made sufficient effort to involve parents in the consultations?', in order to separate the arrangements from the response they received.

Question 18 The original final probe to this question about the significance of changes to the plan was worded 'Do you think those changes will make the plan more workable?' and proved difficult to respond to in those terms. It was amended to 'Do you think the changes will make the proposals more acceptable to those who were consulted?' in order to provide a clearer context in which to answer.

The county councillor made observations on Question 7 'Do you think you were given sufficient information about the Authority's proposals in order for you to come to a conclusion about them?' to the effect that 'sufficiency' of information was contextual in that needs would vary and be related to how much

information about schools and the education system a person already possessed. As determining such differences between respondents was the essential object of the question, that observation was taken as a justification for its inclusion.

The Interviewees

A sample structured to represent the main interest groups among the policy-makers and among those who would be affected by their decisions in both phases of the consultations over the re-structuring of the school system was interviewed. So structured it represents a collection² of viewpoints resembling what Glaser and Strauss would call a 'theoretical sample'³ rather than a statistically rigorous cross-section of opinion. As Burgess has indicated, the flexibility which is a characteristic of many essentially qualitative projects is reflected in sampling strategies where sampling involves considering the principles of selection and possibly modifying them as the research proceeds.⁴ The episodic nature of the policy-making process being studied meant that different people had to be interviewed at different points in the project and different groups of participants also had a claim to inclusion at different stages.

In the first phase of consultations concerning the future of the Senior High Schools (1980-82) the main interest groups were the leading county councillors in the controlling Labour group, including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, and members of the Future School Arrangements Sub-Committee, the latter also including the Conservative shadow chairman who held a watching brief; the three education officers most intimately concerned with advising on the proposals; the head teachers and teachers' union representatives drawn from NUT and NAS/UWT who, with the officers, were members of the South West Hull Curriculum Working Party which had a formative effect on subsequent developments; a selection of secondary school heads chosen to represent the different geographical sectors of the City, mixed and single-sex schools, and schools of different size; and the chairmen of the governing bodies of those schools.

In the second phase of consultations concerning the re-structuring of the city's entire school system (1984) interviews were repeated with those key elected members, with the teachers' union representatives, with several of the secondary heads, and with the project manager, the Deputy Director of Education, with the purpose of determining, among other matters, whether there was any difference in their attitudes towards consultation with the widening of its purposes at that time. Other interviewees were added to account for that widening. In consequence the group of teachers' union representatives was extended to include other members of the NUT local executive and NAHT, who were by then the principal union opponents of the Authority's proposals. The local secretaries of AMMA and PAT, whose associations took a more supportive public stance, were also added.

The major additional groups at this stage were Junior High School heads and members of the different parents' action groups, as neither had played an organised part in the earlier consultations. The sample of Junior High School heads was selected to represent schools in different areas of the city and in different situations as a result of falling enrolments, and included those whose schools would be particularly affected by specific aspects of the proposals. Thus, for example, the heads of the two schools designated as sites for the Sixth Form Colleges in East and West Hull were included. Because the crux of the proposals was the abolition of the Junior High Schools, primary head teachers, being the least potentially adversely affected group among the institutional interests, were excluded.

A particular feature of the second phase of consultations, in contrast with the first, had been the earlier and more vociferous involvement of parents' action groups, either in opposition to the proposals as a whole or to particular aspects of the plan. Hence members of the Parents' Joint Action Committee, a coalition of school groups with the common interest of 'saving' the Junior High Schools, and committee members of the groups formed to defend the individual schools on which much of the controversy had centred, were also interviewed. In addition, leading city councillors, both Labour and Conservative, were interviewed.

A sample of participants in the parallel but separate consultations conducted within the Roman Catholic community was also interviewed. These included the clerical chairman and the head teacher and parents' representatives on the working party formed to advise the Catholic authorities and other head teachers who were not members of the working party. Leading members of the Church Schools Action Committee, formed in opposition to what they saw as lack of consultation in devising the Church of England's response, were also interviewed.

The number of interviewees involved in the LEA consultations was 44 in the first phase and 45 in the second, while 13 participants in the consultations in the voluntary sector were interviewed. The first phase interviews were completed in the period during which the Authority's further action was being devised following the deferral of a decision, from March 1982 into early 1983. The second phase interviews were carried out between May 1984 and February 1985, the period covering the Education Committee's adoption of the re-structuring plan and while the Secretary of State's response was awaited.

The Questionnaire Survey

In addition to the aspects of the consultations explored in the interviews, the project sought to measure the degree of agreement among participants over what they considered ought, as a matter of principle, to be the objectives of consulting about a major policy issue and their assessment of the actual outcomes of the consultations. For these purposes schedules featuring a series of posited objectives were completed by interviewees in both phases of the consultations (see Appendices IV and V).

The two-part schedules first asked respondents to rate the objectives on a 5-point scale from 'essential' to 'unimportant'. The same objectives were then presented as possible outcomes and respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they judged them as having resulted on a 5-point scale from 'completely' to 'not at all'. The eleven items on the first phase schedules were derived from the literature (see Chapter 3) and related to the degree of understanding, information, co-operation and commitment the

consultations had engendered and the extent to which differences had been explored, authority given to the decision-makers, policy aims formulated, a strategy for change provided, confidence in the decision-makers retained, and the extent to which consequences had been able to be foreseen by means of consultation. The schedule for the second phase was an extension of the first. The original items were retained and five others were added in consequence of respondents' reactions to the open item at the end of the schedule. The additions were item 4, to provide information for those affected by possible changes, item 8, to ensure that educational considerations were discussed, item 11, to ensure that possible alternative courses of action were discussed, item 12, to put the policy-makers' ideas to the test of public debate, and item 16, to reveal what those affected thought were the important issues. For the purposes of computer analysis the responses were assigned a numerical value on the following scale:

<u>Objectives</u>	essential	/	important	/	desirable	/	not very important	/	unimportant
<u>Outcomes</u>	completely	/	in most respects	/	to some extent	/	not very much	/	not at all
<u>Numerical Value</u>	5	/	4	/	3	/	2	/	1

For this part of the research the interview sample was extended by means of a postal survey. While those interviewed represented those more actively involved in the consultations, the postal survey in the second phase of the consultations was intended to increase the general representativeness of the sample by adding groups not included in the interview samples and by extending those groups sampled in the second phase interviews. Hence, county primary school heads and the chairmen of the grouped primary and middle school governing bodies were added, while a further sample of the remaining county middle school heads was taken, and the remaining Catholic primary and middle school heads not accounted for in the interviews were also added.

For the larger groups, the primary and middle school head teachers, a 50% sample was taken. In the case of the primary heads this was a random

sample of the 70 primary schools in the City, while for the middle school heads a random sample of those not accounted for by the interviews was taken to achieve a 50% sample overall. With the smaller groups, the governing body chairmen and the Roman Catholics in particular, it was judged to be more realistic to treat the whole group as the base sample. In all 39 schedules were completed by respondents in the first phase consultations and 124 in the second phase. The resulting data was then subjected to three separate analyses; a calculation of the means and variances on the schedule items relating to objectives and outcomes, factor analysis, and a specific comparisons test of selected sub-groups (see Chapter 11).

Piloting of the Schedules

The response schedules relating to objectives were piloted initially on a small sample of head teachers, elected members and education officers, four in each group, with the purpose of comparing the means for the objectives as a whole and for each individually. While the sample was too small for any conclusions to be based on it, or to justify tabulation of the means here, it was hoped that it might provide some indication of differences of approach to the purposes of consulting which might be developed further.

The general means for the objectives taken as a whole did not vary greatly (Heads 4.75; Elected Members 4.02; Education Officers 4.27); however there were some, possibly suggestive, differences when the means for the individual items were inspected. While, for example, there was general agreement among the groups on the items relating to the provision of information, ensuring co-operation, foreseeing consequences, and providing a strategy for change, where the three groups recorded a mean score of 4.00 or more, two items did show considerable variation. The objective of using consultation to explore differences between people was rated as a low priority by the heads, with a mean of 2.75, but as much higher by education officers, with a mean of 4.00. The legitimising purpose of consultation was rated highly by elected members with a mean of 4.50, while it ranked low in the estimation of the heads with a mean of 2.75. This was judged to be sufficiently suggestive for

a larger pilot survey, concerning both objectives and outcomes, to be carried out on a controlled sample of teachers where it was felt that more meaningful data might result.

The Teachers' Survey

A sample of class teachers in senior high schools was surveyed by means of a postal questionnaire. Of the 18 senior high schools in the city 10 were selected by means of a number of readily occurring variables. Schools were chosen to represent the three geographical sectors of the city into which school catchment is essentially divided (North West, South West and East); single-sex and mixed schools were included; the largest and the smallest schools and those of median size were included; and those which could possibly perceive themselves to be either under threat or relatively secure, as revealed by the first phase of consultation and debate (see Table 2:1).

Within each school selected a sample of one third of the full-time teachers on the staff during the period of the consultations, below the level of head and deputy head, was taken by means of random number tables. The population was set at that level on the hypothesis that those staff were unlikely to have been involved in an executive capacity with the consultations. Teachers' union representatives were excluded also from the staff sample on these grounds. A total of 173 schedules were distributed and 101 were returned, an overall response rate of 59.6%. The response rate from individual schools was, with one exception, in excess of 40% and in most was substantially higher (see Table 2:2).

When the teachers are taken as a group (see Table 2:3) only three objectives were rated as being lower than 'important', the second point on the scale; these were item 05 'to produce shared commitment to decisions', item 06 'to explore the differences between people', and item 09 'to provide a strategy for effecting change'. The highest rated objective was that of providing information for the decision-makers (item 03 : mean 4.58). This particular objective also attracted the least variance (0.46). The lowest rated objective, exploring the differences between people, also attracted the most variance (item 06 : variance 1.27).

TABLE 2:1Hull Senior High Schools Teachers' Survey : Structure of Sample

<u>Sector</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>NOR Sept. 1980</u>
South West	A	Single-sex (G)	6FE	543
	B	" (B)	6FE	538
	C	Mixed	11FE	1180
North West	D	Single-sex (B)	8FE	832
	E	" (G)	8FE	861
	F	Mixed	8FE	821
East	G	Mixed	14FE	1648
	H	"	8FE	829
	I	"	8FE	728
	J	"	10FE	1004

TABLE 2:2Hull Senior High Schools Teachers' Survey : Percentage Returns

<u>School</u>	<u>No. returned</u>	<u>%age return</u>	<u>No. of teachers in sample</u>
A	4	36.3	11
B	7	53.2	13
C	16	66.6	24
D	14	81.2	17
E	10	55.0	18
F	8	56.8	14
G	11	40.7	27
H	10	66.6	15
I	12	100.0	12
J	9	40.5	22
	<u>101</u>	<u>59.6</u>	<u>173</u>

Returns by Sector

			<u>No. in sample</u>
South West	-	52%	48
North West	-	64%	49
East	-	62%	76

TABLE 2:3

Hull Senior High Schools Teachers' Survey : Analysis of Responses

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	
				<u>Mean</u>	<u>Variance</u>
01	To ensure that people understand <u>that</u> a decision has to be made.	4.317	0.659	3.684	0.796
02	To ensure that people understand <u>the</u> decisions that have to be made.	4.475	0.472	3.292	1.198
03	To provide information for the decision-makers.	4.584	0.465	3.304	1.027
04	To ensure the co-operation of those affected.	4.277	0.702	2.583	1.277
05	To produce shared commitment to decisions.	3.840	0.762	2.351	1.084
06	To explore the differences between people.	3.340	1.277	2.372	1.204
07	To ensure legitimacy on the part of those implementing decisions.	4.206	0.978	2.935	1.402
08	To formulate the aims of policy.	4.071	0.842	2.925	1.288
09	To provide a strategy for effecting change.	3.980	0.727	2.771	1.336
10	To retain the confidence of those affected by change.	4.416	0.545	2.354	1.684
11	To foresee the consequences of possible changes.	4.400	0.525	2.917	1.046

When the outcomes of the consultations which took place between May 1980 and February 1982 are judged by the teachers, the objective seen to have been most achieved was that of people coming to understand that a decision had to be made. This attracted a mean score of 3.68 (item 01), indicating that the teachers thought, as a result of the consultations, that people were approaching that degree of understanding in most respects. The objectives judged to

have been least achieved were item 10, the retention of confidence (mean 2.35) and item 05, ensuring commitment to decisions (mean 2.35). These were judged not to have been achieved very much, or near to that point on the scale.

Comparing objectives with perceived outcomes there was also a marked increase in the degree of variance recorded, indicating a greater measure of disagreement and uncertainty in the sample on these issues.

The results can also be analysed by sector. While the sectors have a certain geographical identity within them, there were particular schools which could possibly see themselves as being more adversely affected by the possible outcome of the consultations than others. These individual factors related to the size and character of the schools in question. For example, both the South West and the North East sectors contained smaller single-sex schools, which became a focus of public debate during the consultations. The East sector, by contrast, contained no single-sex schools and the schools there were, in the main, generally larger and hence could be seen, or at least could regard themselves, as more able to cope with the impact of reduced enrolments on the curriculum and as less likely candidates for closure or amalgamation. It is therefore possible for there to be different sectoral perceptions of the consultations on the teachers' part, though the teachers would perhaps be likely to take an essentially school-based view, any sectoral differences being a reflection of individual school reactions.

When the sectors are compared there is a substantial measure of agreement over the objectives of the consultative process. As can be seen from Table 2:4 when the percentage of responses in the categories 'essential' and 'important' are added, all of the items (except that referring to exploring differences) accounted for more than 50% of the responses, and in most cases it was much higher. Regarding outcomes, while there were no major sectoral differences in the extent to which it was judged that the consultations had produced an understanding of the need for a decision, in all three 60% or more of respondents judged that objective to have been achieved (see Table 2:5, item 01). They differed in the extent to which they judged that people had

come to understand the nature of the decision called for (item 02) and that information had been provided for the decision-makers (item 03) and more markedly still on other items. Some of the latter will serve as illustrations of major divergences. Regarding the encouragement of co-operation (item 04), 33.3% of teachers in the East sector considered that objective to have been achieved either completely or in most respects in contrast to only 9.3% in the North West sector. The latter sector appears as the most critical of the outcomes in this respect, with 71.9% of the teachers feeling that co-operation had resulted either 'not at all' or 'not very much'.

A similar general picture emerges when the extent of commitment to change is examined (item 05). A very small minority of teachers (3.1%) in the North West sector felt this objective had been achieved in most respects compared with 19.2% holding that view in the South West sector and 23.0% in the East sector who felt that it had resulted either completely or in most respects. In the North West and South West sectors the great majority of teachers would seem sceptical of the extent to which commitment had been ensured, while in the East many more teachers were prepared to concede that it had resulted to some extent.

Important differences between the sectors occur in the teachers' judgment of the legitimising effects of the consultations (item 07). In terms of the largest single category of response, the South West and East sectors considered that it had resulted to some extent while, in the North West sector, a third of all respondents felt that legitimacy had not been established at all. Moreover, this was the one item with which respondents had conceptual difficulties, a feature not revealed by the piloting of the objectives with the smaller groups of heads, elected members and education officers. Approximately 5% of respondents questioned the meaning of legitimacy by written comment on the schedules, while none of the other items attracted any comment. Accordingly this item was re-worded as 'to give more authority to those who have to implement decisions' on subsequent schedules and thereafter attracted no further comment.

TABLE 2:4

Hull Senior High School Teachers' Survey : Responses analysed by SectorThe Objectives of Consultation

Objective	Sector	Responses in Percentages				
		1 essential	2 important	3 desirable	4 not very important	5 unimportant
01 To ensure that people understand that a decision has to be made.	1 (SW)	44.4	18.5	29.6	7.4	
	2 (NW)	50.0	40.6	9.4	0.0	
	3 (E)	57.1	31.0	11.9	0.0	
02 To ensure that people understand the decisions that have to be made.	1	59.3	29.6	7.4	3.7	
	2	46.9	53.1	0.0	0.0	
	3	61.9	28.6	7.1	2.4	
03 To provide information for the decision-makers.	1	81.5	7.4	11.1		
	2	68.7	21.9	9.4		
	3	61.9	26.2	11.9		
04 To ensure the co-operation of those affected.	1	66.7	22.2	11.1		0.0
	2	43.7	37.5	18.7		0.0
	3	42.9	31.0	23.8		2.4
05 To produce shared commitment to decisions.	1	33.3	44.4	14.8	3.7	3.7
	2	22.6	41.9	29.0	6.5	0.0
	3	21.4	33.3	45.2	0.0	0.0
06 To explore the differences between people.	1	25.9	22.2	29.6	7.4	14.8
	2	9.7	32.3	35.5	19.4	3.2
	3	21.4	19.0	35.7	23.8	0.0
07 To ensure legitimacy on the part of those implementing decisions.	1	65.4	11.5	15.4	7.7	0.0
	2	41.9	22.6	29.0	3.2	3.2
	3	50.0	35.0	12.5	0.0	2.5
08 To formulate the aims of policy.	1	36.0	40.0	12.0	8.0	4.0
	2	31.3	50.0	15.6	3.1	0.0
	3	38.1	42.9	14.3	2.4	2.4
09 To provide a strategy for effecting change.	1	50.0	38.5	7.7	0.0	3.8
	2	28.1	34.4	31.3	6.2	0.0
	3	16.7	57.1	23.8	2.4	0.0
10 To retain the confidence of those affected by changes.	1	63.0	33.3	3.7		
	2	50.0	25.0	25.0		
	3	57.1	28.6	14.3		
11 To foresee the consequences of possible changes.	1	70.4	22.2	3.7	3.7	
	2	50.0	34.4	15.6	0.0	
	3	43.9	43.9	12.2	0.0	

TABLE 2:5

Hull Senior High School Teachers' Survey : Responses analysed by SectorThe Outcomes of Consultation

Outcomes	Sector	Responses in Percentages				
		1 completely	2 in most respects	3 to some extent	4 not very much	5 not at all
01 People understood that a decision had to be made.	1 (SW)	15.4	53.8	15.4	11.5	3.8
	2 (NW)	15.6	50.0	28.1	6.2	0.0
	3 (E)	15.0	45.0	32.5	5.0	2.5
02 People understood the decisions that had to be made.	1	28.0	16.0	24.0	20.0	12.0
	2	6.2	31.3	40.6	12.5	9.4
	3	7.7	46.2	30.8	12.8	2.6
03 Information was provided for the decision-makers.	1	13.0	17.4	47.8	17.4	4.3
	2	3.2	35.5	35.5	12.9	12.9
	3	18.4	31.6	42.1	7.9	0.0
04 The co-operation of those affected was ensured.	1	8.0	16.0	24.0	28.0	24.0
	2	3.1	6.2	18.7	50.0	21.9
	3	5.1	28.2	30.8	25.6	10.3
05 There was a shared commitment to the proposals.	1	0.0	19.2	15.4	34.6	30.8
	2	0.0	3.1	18.7	43.7	34.4
	3	5.1	17.9	35.9	33.3	7.7
06 The differences between people were explored.	1	0.0	20.0	16.0	40.0	24.0
	2	6.5	3.2	9.7	45.2	35.5
	3	7.9	10.5	43.2	39.5	7.9
07 Legitimacy on the part of those implementing decisions was ensured.	1	12.5	16.7	45.6	20.8	4.2
	2	0.0	26.7	23.3	16.7	33.3
	3	15.8	21.1	39.5	15.8	7.9
08 The aims of policy were formulated.	1	8.7	17.4	39.1	30.4	4.3
	2	6.5	16.1	32.3	16.1	29.0
	3	12.8	23.1	38.5	23.1	2.6
09 A strategy for effecting changes was provided.	1	12.0	12.0	26.0	24.0	24.0
	2	0.0	12.5	34.4	28.1	25.0
	3	12.8	20.5	46.2	15.4	5.1
10 The confidence of those affected was retained.	1	16.0	4.0	16.0	24.0	40.0
	2	6.2	6.2	6.2	40.6	40.6
	3	10.3	17.9	17.9	38.5	15.4
11 The consequences of possible changes were foreseen.	1	12.0	12.0	32.0	24.0	20.0
	2	3.1	15.6	50.0	25.0	6.2
	3	7.7	20.5	51.3	15.4	5.1

The majority of teachers in each sector considered that the consultations had contributed to the formulation of policy aims (item 08); in excess of 50% of the responses in each case were recorded in the first three categories when summed (South West 65.2%; North West 54.9%; East 74.4%). However, a substantial minority in each sector was inclined to doubt this and it was the North West sector again which provided a contrast, with substantially more teachers there feeling that this particular objective had not resulted at all. Overall it appears that the teachers judged the consultations productive in terms of policy formulation but were less sanguine of outcomes which might have a bearing on the successful implementation of policy. The North West sector generally distinguishes itself as being the least satisfied with the outcomes, while the East is most sanguine and teachers in the South West sector tend to occupy a middle position on most measures. On the basis of the pilot exercise the response schedules were used as a supplement to the interviews as having the potential to reveal differences in respondents' assessment of the contribution of the consultative exercise to policy development.

References

Chapter 2

- 1 Lovell, K. & Lawson, K.S. Understanding Research in Education London University Press, 1970, pp119-120.
- 2 See Stenhouse, L. 'Library Access, Library Use and User Education in Academic Sixth Forms : An Autobiographical Account' in Burgess, R.G. (Ed) The Research Process in Educational Settings : Ten Case Studies Lewes, Falmer Press, 1984, pp220-221.
- 3 Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. The Discovery of Grounded Theory : Strategies for Qualitative Research Chicago, Aldine Publishing Co., 1967.
- 4 Burgess, R.G. 'Autobiographical Accounts and Research Experience' in Burgess, R.G. (Ed) Op. cit. (1984) p262.

Chapter 3 - Consultation: Concept and Process
in the Context of LEA Policy-Making

Consultation with interested parties has now become an accepted part of the process of policy development by LEAs. Winter¹ cites as one of the desirable features of a decentralised framework for the education service the ease with which public consultation can be arranged by LEAs, either on their own initiative or in response to requests. LEAs are now enjoined by DES Circulars to consult in developing their response to falling enrolments in schools while, in deciding whether or not to approve an LEA's proposals, one of the criteria employed by the Secretary of State is the adequacy of prior consultation.

A recurring theme in the Circulars issued between 1977 and 1982 is the Secretary of State's concern with the adequacy of consultation with interested parties prior to the submission of proposals by LEAs and the governors of voluntary schools. Circulars 5/77,² 2/80,³ 2/81⁴ and Administrative Memorandum 4/84⁵ all make explicit reference to consultation, which is presented as having several required features; the stage in the evolution of proposals at which views are sought, their potential influence on the outcome, the number of interested parties involved in consultation, and the timing of consultation in relation to the publication of proposals. Hence Circular 2/80 states:

The Secretary of State regards it as very important that the local education authority should seek the views of local people when planning is still at a formative stage. He therefore expects that appropriate consultations will have taken place with parents, the teaching and other staff and governors of the school or schools concerned and the teacher associations, before proposals are made under Sections 12, 13 or 15. He would also expect such consultations to have taken place within 12 months immediately before publication of proposals.

6

Administrative Memorandum 4/84, in providing guidance on technical matters involved in the publication and subsequent handling of proposals published under sections 12-16 of the 1980 Education Act, reiterates the

Secretary of State's firm commitment to a policy of regarding the adequacy of consultation 'as a material factor in considering proposals which fall to him to decide',⁷ and expressed his firm conviction that local people have a right to sufficient information in order to make a judgment on the need for, and purpose of, proposals and at a stage in policy development when their views could influence the final decision.

DES has thus provided substantial guidance to LEAs and voluntary bodies concerning consultation and at the same time, by implication, it has also provided potential objectors with criteria to appraise the consultative process as they experience it. However, while the guidance indicates, in broad outline, the different groups who should be involved in the formulation of policy, it leaves much to the discretion of the LEA or voluntary body concerned in regard to the actual conduct of the process.

DES Circulars also indicate other criteria which the Secretary of State intends to use in judging the acceptability of proposals, thus providing a general policy framework and certain constraints within which local policy formulation and consequent consultation might take place. Referring to proposals to cease to maintain schools under section 13 of the 1944 Education Act, Circular 5/77 listed both the educational and the economic factors which government would take into account. In the first category are such considerations as the number of children in each age group and future trends, the size of school catchment areas and travelling distances, and the state of the schools involved regarding educational standards and accommodation, while the second category includes unit teaching costs per child and the potential of the premises for educational or other purposes.⁸ Circular 4/82 places on LEAs the responsibility of taking a view 'on the form and pattern of secondary education best suited to local circumstances and the preferences of parents.'⁹ The same Circular also asks LEAs to bear in mind the need to retain what is best and of proven worth in their existing secondary school systems, and that a major, though not exclusive, criterion of worth was the nature of a school's provision for sixth form education and academic performance,¹⁰ while proposals

should also 'have particular regard' to parental preference for single-sex schools.¹¹

Circular 2/81¹² also reminds LEAs with Middle Schools of the serious financial and staffing consequences of attempting to maintain such schools below a certain minimum size by virtue of their need to be larger, at the minimum, than primary schools, in order to provide the greater degree of specialised teaching which is required. Specifically, 8-12 schools with less than two forms of entry and 9-13 schools of less than three forms of entry were regarded as potentially non-viable.

Consultation and LEA Policy-Making

For some LEAs there were constraints on the policy options they felt able to consult upon. Local policy in response to falling rolls has been made within a framework of national trends, specific local circumstances and advice from central government. Two government publications in particular were likely to lead LEAs into a reconsideration of the structure of their schooling systems. The Macfarlane Report of December 1980 advised local authorities to plan their provision for 16-19 year olds in schools and further education as an entity¹³ and urged that they 'should not be bound by past patterns of provision',¹⁴ while the HMI illustrative survey of 9-13 middle schools of 1983¹⁵ served to reinforce the caveats about the potential viability of such schools noted in Circular 2/81.

The Macfarlane Report, following upon a succession of DES consultative papers in 1979¹⁶ regarding aspects of 16-18 education, was likely to be particularly influential, being the outcome of an approach by CLEA to government suggesting that a joint group should consider the problems faced by local education authorities.¹⁷

While stating that two-thirds of all schools then affected by proposals would be involved in co-operative arrangements with other institutions entailing no actual institutional change,¹⁸ it pointed out that increasing attention was being paid to types of organisation involving a break at 16.¹⁹ Although the report accepted that there could be no single solution to the problems of 16-19

education given the variety of local conditions,²⁰ the tone of its conclusion indicated a high degree of approbation for a break at 16. The conclusion states, 'We have considered carefully whether to recommend that education for 16-19s should everywhere be provided in these ways.'²¹ Change on such a scale was, however, seen as impracticable given the realities of existing investment, variable demographic prospects between LEAs, and the success of many all-through schools which, it was affirmed, 'in some areas may very well exist alongside extensive provision in further education.'²² Alongside those two alternatives, partnership arrangements and transfer of pupils from 11 or 12-16 schools into the sixth forms of 11 or 12-18 schools were given only a qualified welcome.

The 9-13 middle school survey, while it acknowledged the schools' many virtues, concluded that the assumptions about stability in educational provision which had been held when they were established in the 1960s had ceased to hold good, and asserted that even then the performance of their intermediate role had been relatively expensive in human and material resources. Their potential future viability in those terms was questioned in comparison with providing for 9-13 year olds in separate primary and secondary schools.²³ HMI concluded that their findings raised again long-standing questions about the age of transfer from primary to secondary education, that, given the likely trend in falling rolls, 9-13 schools would become increasingly expensive to maintain, and that 'in the present economic circumstances, carrying the relatively higher cost of middle schools sharply decreasing in size will have consequences elsewhere in the system.'²⁴

When the report was made public TES described it as a blow to middle schools' hopes of survival,²⁵ coming as it did at the end of a year in which a number of authorities, including Staffordshire in relation to Stoke-on-Trent, Wirral, parts of East Sussex, and Lincolnshire, had announced decisions to close middle schools and when Humberside, in relation to Hull, was actively considering dismantling its 9-13 middle school system. When the proposals to abolish Hull's middle schools were made public in February 1984 those parts

of HMI report relating to size of school, staffing and curriculum viability were used selectively in support of that proposal. The consultative document pointed out that the pupil/teacher ratio for Hull 9-13 schools was 1:19.85 in September 1983,²⁶ which fell below HMI's stricture that, with less than three forms of entry, 9-13 schools would be unlikely to be able to provide the desired range of specialist teaching unless their staffing ratios were considerably better than the average for all such schools, which stood at 1:20 in January 1983.²⁷ The consultative document revealed that 37 of Hull's 51 middle schools had fewer than three full forms of entry on roll in September 1983.²⁸ Given the resource implications of attempting to maintain 9-13 middle schools in the foreseeable future LEAs might not wish to strive to sustain a system of schooling which was then beginning to decline in numbers and, in consequence, might look to restructure both their primary and secondary school provision.

Consultation with the public at large and with particular interest groups must be placed in the more general context of the structure for LEA policy-making. It takes place within a network of the needs, wants and power of the different interest groups who are party to it, within what David²⁹ calls a 'constituency of interests' and Brooksbank³⁰ simply a constituency. That constituency is both wide and diverse and consists of groups of people with both formal and informal roles in the policy-making process, and with varying degrees of access to influence and information.

In broad terms the constituency consists of the elected members and the officers of the LEA who, taken together, are either at or very close to the point where decisions are actually taken, and a variety of other interested parties, for example, the governing bodies of county and voluntary schools, the several teachers' professional organisations, other trade unions, headteachers, the general body of teachers and other school and college staff and, not least, the parents, who are at various degrees of removal from the locus of decisional power. Among the latter groups some will have a machinery through which consultations can be conducted, for example, joint teacher/LEA

consultative committees, while others, the parents particularly, are more likely to be involved on an ad hoc basis and on the Authority's licence.

Consulting that constituency is problematic. As Taylor observes, 'It is obviously easier for me to consult eight Further Education Principals than thirty odd Secondary Heads, and almost impossible to take proper account of the views of 250 Primary Heads - or Youth Leaders.'³¹ That logistic problem, it will be noted, concerns those professionally involved in the day-to-day working of the education service. It could be even more problematic for an LEA to involve also the other members of the constituency and to specify their anticipated contribution to policy. As Beattie³² observes, the function of parents as an interest group in participatory democracy is less easily defined than that of factory workers, for example, while the contribution they can make to the running of the school system, and their qualifications for doing so, are less clear than those of factory workers whose expertise is more overtly relevant to the efficient running of a factory. In addition, the different members of that constituency can have different perspectives on the consultative process which could result in different views about the purposes of consultation and in different expectations of the outcomes.

The literature on institutional organisation and management contains many references to the assumed benefits which consulting members of the organisation about proposed changes brings to it as a whole and to the individuals who compose it. Hence it is proposed that consultation attempts to ensure that those affected will more fully understand the decisions that have to be implemented;³³ that greater co-operation will result by means of the communicating that has taken place during the consultative process;³⁴ that the legitimacy of executive action will be strengthened;³⁵ that the differences between people, particularly in terms of their assumptions and aims, will be explored;³⁶ that it will assist in the formulation of policy aims;³⁷ that it should result in shared commitment to change;³⁸ and provide a more effective strategy for effecting changes which require a re-orientation of beliefs

rather than simply the adoption of different routine practices;³⁹ and ensure that there is adequate preparation for change amid the demands for innovation.⁴⁰ It is also envisaged that consultation should engender or retain staff confidence in the leadership of the institution;⁴¹ that, as far as possible, all the probable consequences of the changes under consideration will be foreseen,⁴² and that it will enable management to draw upon the knowledge, experience and judgment of colleagues while they, in turn, gain a measure of professional satisfaction from being in a position to give advice.⁴³ By consulting those who are likely to be affected by its policies an LEA might look for similar outcomes.

The purposes of consultation would appear to be clearly perceived by education officers. Their perspective relates pre-eminently to the power and responsibility of the LEA to take decisions and to their own professional responsibility to provide advice to the Education Committee. Briault states, 'We must involve people in consultation to the extent that they really participate in decision-making, whilst keeping clear the points at which those decisions are made and who has the responsibility for them.'⁴⁴ Brooksbank observes, more generally, that there is a tendency for what he calls 'improperly conducted consultation'⁴⁵ to become negotiation, the distinction drawn being that consultation is undertaken with one party being in a position to come to a decision, whether or not that decision conforms to the views of those consulted, while negotiation implies that those consulted have a right to influence or be a direct party to a decision. It is evident from this exposition that the LEA does not confer any such power simply by deciding to consult or from being required to do so. Brooksbank is equally categorical in his view that consultation is not a form of referendum whereby those initiating consultations are committed to accept the majority view.⁴⁶ Indeed, the context in which consultation is discussed there is that of communication in which the LEA is the principal intended beneficiary. Consultation, in the context of educational administration, is defined by Brooksbank as 'the process by which those authorised to make a decision convey the nature

of their proposals or the facts underlying those proposals to those affected by them.'⁴⁷

Jennings's study⁴⁸ of teacher/LEA relationships resulting from joint consultation arrangements in six English education authorities reveals the two-way information gathering-cum-communication aspects of consultation to which Brooksbank refers. In that analysis the formal standing consultative arrangements by which representatives of teachers' associations meet with elected members and officers to discuss policy reflects the needs and power of the two parties. The LEA, being dependent on teachers' services, wants teachers' views without loss of control over the policy-making process, while the teachers' associations want access to the Authority's policy-making procedures in order to exert what influence they can. Jennings concluded that such arrangements most generally functioned as an 'information exchange'⁴⁹ in which the Authority retained the initiative. Briault confirms that general assessment in discussing the importance of such standing consultative arrangements in the more specific context of a CEO's accountability to those in the education service and argues that, in the sense that he regards it as his duty to consult those bodies he is accepting a degree of accountability to them, 'at least to the extent of being able to assure them that their point of view has been taken into account by those who have the responsibility for final decisions.'⁵⁰

Several of the CEOs interviewed by Bush and Kogan,⁵¹ when questioned about the influence of pressure groups on policy formulation, referred to the role of both formal and informal consultation with teachers' associations, and again the essential objectives from the LEA's viewpoint would appear to be those of gaining the understanding and co-operation of the profession for particular LEA measures. Aitken referred to Coventry's practice of using established consultative procedures, which usually meant that before a major decision was taken the teaching unions would have a chance to be consulted and comment, and concluded that the dialogues with the unions, in times of financial stringency, had 'produced suggestions which have enabled some

abatement of what otherwise would have to be done.⁵² Adams felt that the teachers' unions were involved in decision-making a great deal in South Glamorgan by means of informal discussions, working parties and the joint advisory committee which met to deliberate on any issue which the unions or the Authority wished to have teachers' opinion, and instanced the production of a redeployment code of practice by an ad hoc group consisting of the teaching unions and the assistant directors.⁵³

From an LEA's perspective the very process of consulting a variety of interested parties could be fraught with dangers and difficulties, problems which relate to how the process is understood by those involved, to the structuring of the consultative exercise concerned, and to the point at which the different interest groups become involved. Brooksbank argues that there are a number of unresolved problems over the way consultation is developing in the education service.⁵⁴ Among those uppermost in his mind are the generation of forces which prevent action, which follow from the fact that opponents of an LEA's proposals are often well organised to resist and usually have the means of doing so protected by statute. In addition he suggests that extensive consultation with the wider constituency could call into question the role of the elected member and leave the representative process in disarray, as the Education Committee could be the last to give formal consideration to a problem; while the respective roles of officers and elected members in carrying out consultation, and the degree of involvement of the latter in presenting proposals, could also be problematic in blurring whose ideas are being put forward.

While Brooksbank refers to unresolved difficulties, Briault and Smith⁵⁵ refer to a 'triangle of tension' in educational affairs, consisting of government, LEAs and teachers, the distribution of powers between the three forming the background and basis of planning for change. Consultation is discussed in the context of the difficulty of maintaining a distinction between the roles of elected authorities on the one hand and the professionals on the other. A definition of roles and a sequence of activities is suggested.

In that analysis, the role of the professionals, the teachers, advisers and administrators, is to provide information and advice, while that of the elected members is to decide policy, which the professionals then implement. In terms of sequence, principles come first, their application to the existing situation in planning for the future comes second, and decisions on actions to be taken, third. In this ideal model professional consensus is reached on the practical application of the principles and policies decided on by the politicians while the politicians content themselves with taking the first and third steps, deciding the principles and taking decisions on action.

Briault and Smith argue that this suggested definition of sequence and roles should not prevent consultation on a wider basis and that authorities may wish to give an opportunity for views to be expressed on certain of the principles before a decision is made, and that governors and parents will need to be consulted before firm plans are put to elected members. They conclude, 'If practical alternatives can be included in such consultations, the all-too-common challenge that minds have already been made up can be met all the better.'⁵⁶

Consultation and Decision-Making

Decision-making within organisations is generally regarded as a process rather than an event. Hence, for example, while Drucker,⁵⁷ Simon,⁵⁸ and Jennings⁵⁹ label variously the different stages in the process, and also differ in the number of stages involved, common elements also appear in their analyses. Decision-making is seen as involving, among other things, the definition of a problem, the identification and development of possible alternative solutions, and the selection of an appropriate course of action.

Drucker presents a five stage model of decision-making which involves management, sequentially, in defining the problem, in analysing it, in developing alternative solutions, in finding the best one, and in endeavouring to make the decision effective. Simon divides the decision-making process

into three large phases which, he asserts, 'are often clearly discernible as the organizational decision process unfolds.'⁶⁰ These he labels intelligence activity (the searching of the environment for conditions which call for a decision); design activity (the development and analysis of possible courses of action); and choice activity (the selection of a particular course of action from those available). Simon's analysis, though having much in common with Drucker's both in the elements it contains and in being sequential in character, departs from Drucker in that while, generally, intelligence activity is seen as preceding design and design as preceding choice, the process is also described as cyclical in practice as each phase, facing new and possible unforeseen problems, calls for intelligence, design and choice activity.⁶¹

Jennings presents a six stage policy process model of decision-making in a local education authority, adapted from two sources on policy-making in government,⁶² which takes account of the essentially political nature of local authority decisions, in which consultation of different kinds, with different interest groups, and with different intentions plays a significant part. The six overlapping stages are initiation (when a problem or dissatisfaction is noted); reformulation of opinion (when opinion is gathered and begins to crystallise around particular issues); the emergence of alternatives (when potential solutions are put forward); discussion and debate (when those potential alternatives are shaped into policy proposals); legitimisation (when one or more of the competing proposals is selected for final consideration and the choice is ratified by those empowered by law to do so); and implementation.

These models present decision-making as a 'managerial' function which is limited, at key points, to a few people having the resources of information and expertise with which to elaborate possible courses of action as a preliminary to the taking of a decision. Indeed, Simon treats decision-making as synonymous with managing.⁶³ At the same time, all the models

accord great significance to the successful implementation of a chosen solution as the ultimate purpose of indulging in an often protracted activity. The importance which Drucker gives to his final stage of making the decision effective rests on motivation and, as he puts it, this requires that any decision has to become 'our decision' to the people who have to convert it into action.⁶⁴

However, Drucker also places limitations on participation by those who have to implement decisions and argues that they should not participate in defining the problem, on the grounds that the manager, at that stage, does not know who should participate until the problem has been defined, as only then will it be clear what impact the decision will have and on whom. Nor does he regard it as necessary for others to participate in information-gathering.⁶⁵ With equal firmness, however, he argues that those who have to carry out a decision should always participate in the work of developing alternatives, in order to reveal points that might have been overlooked, to detect otherwise unseen difficulties and to uncover resources which are available but unused.

Drucker refers explicitly to consultation only in discussing problem analysis⁶⁶ where it is given some prominence in considering the impact a decision is likely to have on other areas or on the business as a whole. If a decision is likely to have such impact then he asserts it should be made in close consultation with the 'managers' of those other affected functions. By implication, however, from his analysis, consultation can also facilitate 'responsible participation' in the crucial third stage of developing alternative solutions.

Essential also to Drucker's model is the notion that the different parties to a decision become involved at different points in the process. If it is valid to attempt to apply a model of decision-making developed in a commercial management context to the operations of an LEA as a complex organisation, then the serial involvement of interested parties could present a difficulty, particularly in as much, as Drucker concedes, the final stage

in decision-making has a psychological aspect.⁶⁷ Hence, the point at which interested parties are consulted, the manner in which those consultations are conducted, and the extent to which they are seen as contributing to the determination of a solution could all assume significance in generating that sense of 'ownership' which Drucker sees as essential to a successful decision.

In Jennings's analysis of his model in action each stage raises process questions for the policy-makers.⁶⁸ The different stages are so arranged to achieve, for the members of the controlling group and the officers, maximum predictability of the outcome of each stage and control of the in-puts from consultation. The first three stages of policy development are the most crucial in determining the general direction of policy and are characterised, from a consultative aspect, by a marked absence of direct in-put from people or organisations outside the formal structure of local government, except perhaps for soundings through the joint consultative committee for teachers, other special advisory committees and school governors. Consultation up to that point is conducted selectively within a strictly limited group, largely involving the Chairman of the Education Committee, the CEO, and selected majority party members, to achieve consensus within the party on the direction to be taken and to avoid controversy and possible resistance.

At the discussion and debate stage, when the process involves the wider public, consultation, in Jennings's analysis, changes its character as the Authority sees its task as one of defending its choice as it clarifies the implications of the policy and looks towards implementation. Consultation, at that point, is no longer designed to seek consensus, nor to elucidate intentions, but appears to have the purpose of either gathering reactions about a particular policy intention or of gathering suggestions about procedure in anticipation of implementing a particular proposal. Jennings observes that seeking support from the public and other organisations does not appear to be a primary objective at this point,⁶⁹ though it does feature as one of the Authority's objectives in the consultations which might take place between advisers, teachers, heads and governors at the implementation stage.

Through consultation those potentially affected by policy can make their reactions and advice available to those with the responsibility for choosing and hence they can participate, at some point and in some way, in the development of a policy, but the extent and nature of that consultation and consequent participation depends on the stage at which opinion is sought and upon who is involved. The selection of the best or most appropriate solution remains a managerial function and rests in the hands of those, whether in commerce or educational administration, who have the responsibility for that decision and who are accountable for it.

Genuine Consultation

Listening to remedial readers, washing paint pots and helping on the outing to the zoo are a far cry from genuine consultation.

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When an LEA puts out a matter for consultation the process can create a variety of expectations among those it consults. The Where editorial quoted above asserts that consultation does not necessarily mean the same thing wherever it takes place and whoever is consulted. The editorial recites several possible meanings, from seeking advice or information to exchanging views and giving expert advice as a professional, and acknowledges that, when parents ask to be consulted, they may mean any or all of these. In addition, given the different degrees of access to influence and information among the wide constituency of interests usually involved, it is perhaps to be anticipated that at least some will approach consultation with a degree of suspicion and look for signs that decisions have already been made. The 'genuineness' of consultation will be important to them.

Arnold Jennings uses two major criteria to determine the genuineness of consultation, the intention of the person or body initiating it and outcomes,⁷¹ while the Where editorial also suggested two criteria, the extent to which the community was democratically represented in the process and whether anything happened as a result. However, Jennings acknowledges that the relationship between consultation and outcome provides a particular problem because it is

difficult to prove, on the one hand, that views have been completely ignored or, on the other, to demonstrate the difference between ignoring views and considering them and then deciding to do something else. The apparent reality, from the perspective of those consulted, could be the same. In the latter case, however, there is at least the possibility that the decision can be influenced and it would appear from this that one major defining characteristic of 'genuine' consultation is the existence of that possibility.

In his study of the policy process in six English LEAs there are several criteria which Robert Jennings applies to consultation to distinguish 'genuine to-and-fro consultation' from other forms it might take.⁷² The key to the distinction lies in determining who is doing what with whom. The essential criteria of genuineness he posits embrace both intentions and outcomes. They are that there is an exchange of ideas and opinions, that a certain level of agreement is achieved, and that the parties to consultation share responsibility and have equality of status, or a defined relationship in respect of the issue to be decided. Those essential characteristics might not be equally present in other forms of consultation commonly found in an LEA. Hence, as Jennings points out, consultation is also used to inform and to acquire information and can amount to an exchange between those who have responsibility and those who might be in a position to support or thwart a proposal, or it might have no other purpose than that of gathering opinions, such as might occur in a public meeting for parents. In the latter case there is a polarity between those who have responsibility and those who do not, while there might be no indication of the amount of consideration which will be given to expressed opinion. However, it should be noted that, while he distinguishes genuine from less than genuine consultation, Jennings does not assert that the latter forms are unimportant in policy formulation.

An LEA could have many intentions and these could vary from one consultative exercise to another. It could choose to consult about the definition of a problem or it could place several possibilities for action before a consultative group with the intention of deciding between them on

the basis of the amount of support revealed for one course of action over others, or it might put forward a detailed plan for public consultation with the intention of detecting where problems might lie in the way of its implementation but be prepared only to amend matters of detail. From the LEA's perspective all these exercises could be equally 'genuine' in that there is both the intention of taking views into account and the opportunity to do so at some point in the development of policy, while in each case this occurs before a particular decision has been made. It would seem necessary, therefore, if a particular consultative exercise is to be understood by those being consulted, that they should be made aware of precisely what part their views are intended to play in the development of policy.

However, such understanding could be difficult to achieve. As consultation takes place inevitably within the context of the expectations, even ambitions, of different interest groups, what is genuine for one party might be seen as a mere formality by another because the latter might seek to play a different role in the process from that which the consultations allow. For example, in the case where the Authority intends consultation to provide an examination of the problems involved in implementing a particular plan some might see consultation as an opportunity to call into question, and revise, the basic principles of that policy. Lack of movement in that direction is then likely to be taken as evidence that the consultations were not genuine. Other criteria of genuineness could be applied such as the stage in the policy-making process at which consultees become involved and the extent of their involvement. If, for example, a working party consists solely of a CEO's nominees, despite the fulfilment of other desiderata, an interest group could consider the consultation to be flawed.

Consultation and Participation

The concern with outcomes indicates that, from being consulted, interested parties are likely to expect to see that they have played some part in the development of policy. Some degree of sharing or participation is likely to be sought.

The International Institute for Educational Planning, reviewing educational reform at the local level, defined three types of involvement in the process of decision-making which it labelled nominal, consultative and responsible participation.⁷³ Nominal participation is defined as the transmission of information to participants and possibly the seeking of their support for an activity already decided upon. Consultative participation involves seeking advice and support from participants, but their ability to shape essential decisions is advisory and their degree of influence on decision-making remains in the control of the formal decision-makers. What is termed responsible participation, however, entails a dialogue in which participants could, and do, influence the basic decisions. I.I.E.P. argues, for effective participation to be guaranteed, it is necessary to have the power to influence decisions.⁷⁴ The relationship between participation and having the power to determine outcomes is also made clear in the writings of Weaver,⁷⁵ Tolley,⁷⁶ and Pateman.⁷⁷

Weaver⁷⁸ describes participation as a 'weasel word' which, while literally meaning sharing or involvement, only takes on real meaning when what he calls the 'quantum of authority' given to a participant group is specified. That quantum of authority might well differ at different stages in policy-making. Weaver argues it is at its strongest if, for example, at the formulation stage the body or person from whom the group derives its powers has no power to act other than on the group's recommendation, and at its weakest where the group can only offer advice when called upon. Hence, participation could have several meanings at different stages in policy-making on a scale from being in a position to determine policy at one end to mere listening or observing at the other, with several intermediate points represented by such words as veto, negotiation, or advice. For Weaver, the word participation has little usefulness unless it is accompanied by some qualifying terms to indicate its strength.

Tolley also sees the danger of confusing consultation, negotiation and participation and sees the latter clearly in the context of the power to

manage. He affirms, 'Participation must have regard to negotiation and consultation, but it belongs to neither, being a part of the process of management. Those who participate carry responsibility for the management of the institution, for its policies and its well-being: those who negotiate and consult do not.'⁷⁹ Pateman⁸⁰ distinguishes between pseudo-participation, partial participation and full participation. Only in the latter, it is argued, does each member of a decision-making group have equal power to determine the outcome. In its partial form those affected can only influence a decision which rests in the hands of management, while pseudo-participation is a process of persuading people to accept decisions already made.

While the relationship between consultation and participation can perhaps be sought most fruitfully in terms of the amount of authority granted to the group in the policy-making process, another dimension is possible and this relates to the feelings engendered in a group or in an individual from being consulted. Conway distinguishes between 'objective' and 'subjective' participation.⁸¹ The latter is psychologically real for the person whose opinion is sought in that he feels involved, despite the fact that the occasion on which that view was sought was informal. That type of involvement in decision-making, provided by consultation, rests on a perception of what is happening and not on any transfer of authority or responsibility from one party to another.

Conversely, the reverse can apparently be the case. Overtly thorough and formal consultative procedures can be perceived as non-consultation by certain parties to them. This was so in Lawrence and Pryke's perspective on the consultations concerning comprehensive re-organisation in the metropolitan Borough of Wirral in 1974/75.⁸² From the parents' perspective the CEO's questionnaire seeking parental views on the future organisation of schooling, and his report on the outcome, was seen as suiting pre-conceived ends, the imposition of a uniform system of combined first and middle schools. The parents' view of the questions put to them was that the Authority was not concerned with consulting or eliciting any response other than the one designed

to give the answers it wanted. Similar perceptions have arisen in consultations between LEAs and parents over the closure of village schools. Roxburgh,⁸³ referring to Cumbria, reported that consultations with local residents were perceived as public relations exercises aimed at selling decisions already made, while Rogers,⁸⁴ reviewing village school closures in Warwickshire, Somerset, Dorset, Hereford and Worcester, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, observed more generally that LEA procedures for consulting parents were generally inadequate, the parents were consulted too late in the day, regarded as a single entity, and the procedures tended to encourage distrust on both sides.

As a conclusion to this exploration of the concept and process of consultation as it bears upon LEA policy-making it is perhaps useful to distinguish decision-making from decision-taking. The former can be regarded as the process whereby those responsible for taking decisions attempt to become aware of the facts, information and views which might have a bearing on a decision, and in that process consultations with interested parties might play a part. Decision-taking can be taken to refer, more specifically, to that point or points in time when those with the authority to take decisions, and who are accountable for them, come together to determine the issue. The two processes are linked in that the expression of views in the decision-making or exploratory stage can have a bearing on the decisions taken later, yet they remain distinct to the extent that those consulted play no direct part in the actual taking of the decision.

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Chapter 3

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Chapter 4 - A Selective Review of Previous Work on Local Policy-Making

The existing literature, much of it in the form of unpublished theses and dissertations, is most substantial where the focus has been the making of local policy concerning comprehensive re-organisation in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of the studies attempt to elucidate the process in terms of the interaction between local political parties and educational administrators against the background of varying attitudes towards comprehensive re-organisation on the part of the national political parties and the government of the day. Within that context, a number of studies have also dealt with the activities of teachers and their professional associations and of other pressure groups, particularly parents. While the process of consultation was not specifically the focus of the studies, assessments of the extent of involvement of the different parties to policy-making at the local level led several to examine the point at which opinion was sought, particularly among the teaching profession and the wider public.

Many of the studies were referred to by both Ribbins and Brown¹ and by James² in their examinations of the process of secondary school re-organisation. Ribbins and Brown observed that, in almost all cases, Chief Education Officers played a vital part in determining the forms of organisation adopted while, apart from elected members, the influence of other groups was far more limited. They concluded, 'Certainly the usual pattern of consultation where it has existed has been for the authority to decide what it is going to do first and to ask for comments afterwards.'³ James's more detailed analysis of the case study literature largely supports those conclusions, though he accords a less forthright role generally to CEOs who he sees as playing a reactive role to initiatives developed within the majority party group, while, within that party power system, education committee chairmen and party leaders were often in a position to initiate, amend or veto policy developments. There was also little in the case studies to support the view that local government was particularly receptive to the demands of pressure groups, especially parents,

over secondary re-organisation.⁴ Teachers, by contrast, were much more involved and consulted. However, as James pointed out, the existence of consultation did not imply corresponding influence and much depended on the significance of their views in the thinking of both CEOs and elected members, while their actual influence appeared to vary in inverse ratio with single party dominance of the LEA.⁵

As far as parents are concerned, many of the individual studies revealed lack of interest, lack of organisation and lack of involvement on their part. White's study of Southampton revealed that the wider community was mainly apathetic and unconcerned, with the exception of the activities of the local CASE group which was in favour of reorganisation.⁶ Similarly, of the four LEAs studied by Parkinson, only in Liverpool did the issue attract public attention,⁷ while in Birmingham Isaac-Henry found that the parents were never effectively organised over the issue.⁸

In a number of studies lack of parental involvement was as much the product of others' views of their role and of their motives as of the degree of interest they displayed. For example, Fearn found little evidence of parental involvement in Sheffield or in Chesterfield, while in the latter case the LEA suspected that vocal parents' groups were unrepresentative of the wider body and paid them little attention.⁹ The study of policy-making in Darlington and Gateshead by Batley, Parris and O'Brien found no evidence of attempts to encourage participation and that information was hard for parents to come by. In Gateshead this followed from the LEA's conviction that information could not be supplied until the plan had been approved by DES.¹⁰ There was a greater degree of involvement in Darlington through a pro-comprehensive Parents' Action Committee. However, it was concluded in both cases that consultation seemed to have been valuable as a 'pill sweetener' and that it was hard to detect any point where the final plans had been modified by the available advice.¹¹

As with parents, several studies have indicated that teachers' influence was also conditioned by administrators' and politicians' attitudes.

Lewin catalogued the variety of arrangements for teacher consultation in the Outer London Boroughs. In Merton, the more detailed of Lewin's case studies, teachers' views were sought well before the decision to re-organise and even before the CEO reported to the schools' sub-committee and considerable unanimity of view resulted.¹² However, as James observed of that particular case, 'This suggests the teachers got the reorganisation in the form they wanted but this may have been no more than the form the authority itself wanted and as such tells us nothing about the power of teachers over this issue.'¹³ Turnbull's study, which focused on the role of teachers' organisations in secondary school reorganisation in Croydon in the 1950s and 1960s, found that the extent of consultation with teachers varied over time and depended, in large measure, on the attitude of the incumbent CEO,¹⁴ while Rigby's study of Crawley shows that both the CEO and the chairman of the education committee did not allow the teachers a role in strategic decision-making.¹⁵

Eccles's study of the process of implementing secondary re-organisation in Tynemouth between 1963 and 1970 shows that the several teachers' organisations were moved from a position of resistance to one of co-operation through the LEA's readiness to consult them through a joint representative working party of teachers and elected members, and teacher-dominated sub-committees.¹⁶ The teachers were effective in exerting influence, but it can be argued that they had been co-opted by the authority to play that part which the authority desired and only after the essential decision had been taken.

The studies reviewed thus far relate to a period in both local and national policy-making when the claims to involvement by client groups were less strident than they were to become in the late 1970s and 1980s. As a succession of Circulars indicated, central government subsequently became more directive in its approach to consultation with such groups as a part of the process of enabling local authorities confront the next major educational and administrative issue - school re-organisation in consequence of falling enrolments. The general literature surrounding that development detected

greater centralisation and politicisation of decision-making at local level paralleled by an increasingly interventionist approach by central government, greater concern for accountability and 'consumerism' in the development of policy, and a lack of the consensus which had generally characterised the approach to local and national policy-making in earlier years. These concerns are represented by Ahier and Flude,¹⁷ McNay and Ozga,¹⁸ Salter and Tapper,¹⁹ Shipman,²⁰ Kogan,²¹ and Lello.²²

Jennings's studies of local policy-making²³ and Cooke and Gosden's²⁴ study of the rise and demise of the Association of Education Committees and of the increasing problems facing the local government of the education service span most of these developments. Jennings revealed new and potent forces at work in the larger, reorganised post-1974 authorities, characterised by the emergence of new power relationships in local government featuring the Chief Executive and an inner group of senior local councillors which resulted in the centralisation of local decision-making for education in a few influential hands. In Gosden's analysis,²⁵ local government re-organisation, coupled with the creation of AMA and ACC and the application of corporate management to local government, polarised and politicised schooling issues, dealt a final blow to a consensus attitude towards secondary schooling, and made it increasingly difficult for statutory education committees to sustain, through the AEC, their customary a-political position. Cooke²⁶ traces the 'march of centralism' and interventionism on the part of central government in its relationships with local authorities and the erosion of the 'education partnership' over the past decade by its use of financial 'levers' and the administration of resources for training by bodies other than DES.

Fowler²⁷ also adduced financial constraint as a more potent force in readjusting the partnership in the 1970s than the emergence of new claimants to a share in policy-making, on the part of reformed governing bodies for example, and spoke of a 'leakage of power' at central government level to ministers and officials who were not previously a part of what Manzer²⁸ had dubbed the 'education sub-government' and, at local level, by non-educational

officers and elected members who, through the application of corporate management procedures, increasingly intervened in the allocation of resources to education.

In the name of consumerism, participation and accountability, among new claimants to a share in decision-making, at local level in particular, are parents' groups. Beattie's comparative study of the objectives and achievements of parental participation in France, Italy, West Germany and England and Wales²⁹ has described how parents moved from a passive position to one of legally guaranteed involvement in school government, in which there was an observed gap between the rhetoric and the reality of parental participation which raised questions about authorities' motives in instituting participatory structures. Beattie concluded that each of his case studies revealed stark political and economic limitations on parent power, and argued that education systems, enjoying better community support, would be more easily achieved by all parties aiming first for better communication than by aiming too early and directly for 'participation as deciding'.³⁰

In the slightly different but related context of the exercise of consumer preference under the 1980 Education Act, Dennison³¹ has described the task of balancing parental preferences for schools with rational planning as an attempt on the part of LEAs to reconcile the irreconcilable. Apparently cost-effective schemes for reducing pupil numbers could be unsustainable if they failed to account for the local political dimension and community hostility when planning can be represented as an insensitive attack on cherished schools and parents' rights. Local policy to deal with contraction has been developed against this general backdrop of aspirations, constrained by structural and economic factors.

In particular regard to local authority school re-organisation as a consequence of falling enrolments, Briault and Smith's DES-funded research³² between 1977 and 1979 into the way in which twenty selected secondary schools were coping with the problem of declining numbers aimed to illuminate the policy issues involved. While not being a controlled sample of schools or

LEAs it provided an illustrative survey of the situation in widely different parts of the country. While the major part of the analysis focused on internal management problems in the schools, consideration of some of their fortunes within their respective schooling systems led to an appraisal of the strategies for wider institutional re-organisation in certain of the anonymously featured LEAs, providing illustrations of the extent to which cost factors and the size of the schools to be retained were considered in the process. The three longer accounts all featured change in metropolitan boroughs with average to well below average secondary school pupil/teacher ratios.

Jayton's planning and consultative strategy, which culminated in successful proposals for the establishment of a Sixth Form Centre serving the whole area, was commended by Briault as embodying important procedural principles.³³ (Jayton's procedures are explained in more detail and compared with Humberside's consultative strategy for Hull in the concluding analysis in Chapter 12.) By contrast, in Geeton the search for an institutional solution was bedevilled by rivalry among the political parties, none of whom had overall control and each of whom espoused different plans, by the complication of having to incorporate well-supported voluntary schools into the plans, and by well-organised parental opposition; with the result that the future of the secondary schools in the City remained uncertain at the time the research project was concluded.³⁴

Seeton, a small and largely urban and industrial authority, with a system composed entirely of 11-18 schools was taking a gradualist approach and sought ways of reducing the number of schools. At the Authority's instigation the teaching profession was asked to establish working groups to formulate recommendations concerning long-term provision of primary and secondary schools, parallel to the Education Committee's own review. The outcome of that process was the enunciation of a number of planning principles, among which the most significant was agreement that six forms of entry was the minimum viable size for continuing schools, and the general

conclusion that attempting to retain the existing number of 11-18 schools would run counter to those principles. In consequence from 1979 the Authority began to move towards a re-grouping of units, generally by means of amalgamations.³⁵

The report ends with the Director's discussion of the findings, in his personal capacity, and a series of recommendations for DES and LEA consideration, several relating to the consultative process. Briault urged wide consultation, especially with governors and parents, the reflection of parental preferences in the choice of schools to be retained, and the development of proposals on the basis of principles clearly established by the LEA concerned by a combination of officers, advisers and teachers.³⁶

The process by which Manchester moved towards its proposals for an evolving tertiary system between 1979 and 1981 has been described and analysed in published case studies by Tomlinson,³⁷ Fiske,³⁸ and Whitworth,³⁹ and its wider implications discussed by Edwards⁴⁰ and Hunter.⁴¹ Manchester, together with Knowsley, was signalled in the Macfarlane Report⁴² as an extreme case of decline in pupil numbers, the fifteen-year-old population being forecast to decline, between 1978 and 1992, by between 45% and 50%.⁴³

The process of policy-making for Manchester illustrates the many factors involved in making a decision, within the context of local politics, against the background of DES Circulars and the requirements of the 1980 Education Act⁴⁴ concerning parental preferences and the determination of plans produced locally in which extensive public consultation was a major feature, but whose outcomes had to be balanced against the administration's requirements concerning curriculum viability in its schools and cost-effective use of teachers and available physical resources. The major features of interest in that process, given the focus of the present study, are the manner in which the Authority presented the alternatives to interested parties, the extent to which resource considerations acted as a constraint on choice while the consultative process was underway, and the extent to which the details of those proposals were amended in response to public consultation.

In October 1979 the Authority published a major consultative document outlining several alternative forms of possible re-organisation without, in Tomlinson's analysis,⁴⁵ any attempt to prejudice the decision. A series of public meetings followed with a wide constituency of teachers, parents' groups, the professional associations and the diocesan authorities and written submissions were encouraged. While those responses were being analysed it became clearer to the Authority that financial considerations would be a major determinant of their policy. When the administration reported on the consultations to the Policy and Estimates sub-committee in April, 1980, while no specific recommendation was made, the accompanying statistical information began to point in the direction of a break at 16. By July 1980 the CEO's report proposed a re-organised system consisting of 11-16 schools and three Sixth Form colleges, linked in consortia with existing Further Education colleges with a target implementation date of September 1982.

The teachers' associations, which had been initially divided over 11-16 schools, had all arrived at a position of declared support for the plan by the autumn of 1980.⁴⁶ Two alternative plans were published in October 1980 which varied only in the number of proposed 11-16 schools. Considerable public opposition to the 'decapitation' of the 11-18 schools followed, particularly from parents who formed a pressure group to retain the three 11-18 schools in the south of the city where the larger 6th forms were concentrated, and in doing so claimed to represent the views of parents in all the schools.⁴⁷ While the essence of the proposals was not changed as a result, adjustments were made to the size and location of the 11-16 schools proposed which represented some departure from the Authority's norm of 6 forms of entry.

Pressure for single-sex provision was reflected in there being three girls' and three boys' 11-16 schools in the final proposals, while popular demand for a school to serve the local community in Moss Side resulted in the proposal to establish a 5FE boys' school in the premises of the mixed school then serving the area. In addition, extensive public support for a 3FE school in the east of the city with an expressive arts bias led to the

proposal for a 6FE school in that area in which that bias would be retained by means of a mixture of local and city-wide catchment.

The final scheme was submitted to DES in April 1981 and was rejected in November on the grounds that the Secretary of State was not on balance satisfied that the potential advantages the Authority claimed the proposals would bring to the majority of pupils were sufficiently certain to justify the damage which would be done to some schools which had proved their worth under existing arrangements.⁴⁸ The letter of rejection specifically identified the three schools in the south of the city on which the parents' campaign had centred in that context. In consequence the Authority submitted new proposals for 11-16 schools and three 6th Form colleges which omitted the three schools named by the Secretary of State, which remain 11-18 schools in the re-organised system.⁴⁹

In relation to policy-making within Humberside LEA the studies by Medlin⁵⁰ and Halford⁵¹ chart the extent to which consultation with the teaching profession influenced initial comprehensive re-organisation in Hull in 1969 and the Authority's choice of 9-13 middle schools as the means of doing so. Together they confirm the preponderant influence of NUT during the early formative stages by means of an ad hoc working party which reviewed the educational implications of the several options available in persuading the Authority, with the support of the CEO, to accept middle schools after the NUT had conducted a partial feasibility study in West Hull. Halford refers to the close relationship between the CEO and the teachers and to the mutual respect that existed between him and the President of the Hull Teachers' Association in particular.⁵² The apparent role of the City Council, through the Colleges and Schools Sub-Committee, was limited to expressing a preference for one of the schemes devised by a joint advisory committee of officers and teachers' representatives.⁵³

A later study by Gorwood⁵⁴ considered the issue of transfer and curriculum continuity in Hull middle schools by monitoring the progress of a group of pupils on transfer in two of the middle school/senior high school

'pyramids'. In relation to the debate on 9-13 middle schools then developing Gorwood's study revealed a lack of positive and systematic curricular liaison between the schools, and curricular discontinuities which rendered pre-transfer experiences a weak basis for future work, although the study's general conclusion, in terms of achievement, was that senior high school experiences rapidly overrode pre-transfer circumstances.

In the context of developing an institutional policy to cope with falling enrolments, McGraw⁵⁵ has revealed Humberside's consultative strategy and its contribution to policy-making for secondary schools in Grimsby between 1980 and 1982, when the Secretary of State rejected the Authority's proposals for a 'federated tertiary college' using the premises of the largest of the 12-18 schools and the College of Technology. In McGraw's analysis the existing pattern of provision was divisive by its very nature, while participants' reactions to the Authority's consultative procedures brought those inherent divisions into the open. Considerable parental opposition coalesced around those schools whose 6th forms were threatened and the major political parties took opposing stances.

The Authority's consultative document issued in July 1981 was seen by many as a 'fait accompli' in that only two alternatives were put forward for public discussion; to establish sixth forms in all the schools or the tertiary college proposal. McGraw comments, 'Many thought that the discussion document so denigrated the first alternative as to make the second alternative seem inevitable.'⁵⁶ Vested interests were aroused and polarised by the political parties. The Conservative opposition declared support for those schools with 6th forms while the Labour party firmly espoused the tertiary solution. Those schools with 6th forms sought to retain them, while those without wished to acquire them, and if they could not, they were prepared to support a plan to dismantle all 6th forms. McGraw saw parallels in that situation and the controversy over the Barnstaple tertiary college scheme in 1968, reported by King, where 'the animosity of the pro-grammar school group to the 'decapitation' of their school was matched by the modern school heads'

determination to get the sentence carried out.⁵⁷

In Grimsby the controversy continued up to and beyond the point in December 1981 when the Education Committee approved the tertiary college plan. It was rejected in December 1982, on grounds very similar to those on which Manchester's scheme had been turned down, that the proposals did not represent a wise use of educational resources and that they did not appear to meet the preferences of the majority of parents of secondary age children.⁵⁸

Developments in Hull in the period of falling rolls have hitherto been studied only in part. Waterson⁵⁹ provides a general examination of the internal curricular implications of separate provision for 16 to 19 year-olds in sixth form colleges as compared with school-based sixth forms, considers the ramifications of a break at 16 for pastoral care and the roles of teachers and students, and attempts a comparison of the local authorities' rationale for change in Nottingham, whose sixth form college system is long-established, and Hull. On the basis of a small-scale survey of secondary school teachers' attitudes in Hull and elsewhere in the county to a break at 16, Waterson also attempted to anticipate difficulties in implementing the Hull scheme.

Waterson found parallels in both authorities' principal reasons for change, which centred on the cost-effective use of existing accommodation, efficient staff deployment, and the range of educational opportunities provided when the school and further education sectors were considered as a continuum. The survey of teachers' attitudes revealed polarities. Sixth form college staff sang the praises of separate provision, particularly in terms of subject choices; while the staff of the two 13-18 Hull schools in the survey generally criticised discontinuities in pastoral care and teaching. The latter, however, were prepared to acknowledge, in principle, the desirability of separate provision in terms of teaching group size and curricular choice but showed a preference for joint sixth forms as a solution, pointing perhaps at best to a reluctant acceptance of the changes proposed.

Two studies of national policy making within contracting resources have particular relevance to local policy decisions. Price⁶⁰ considers planning and policy making along a continuum from a 'technocratic' to a 'political' mode of decision-making and also as a cyclical process of policy formulation, adoption and implementation and applies his derived planning/policy-making paradigm to the problem of contracting resources in England and Australia between 1970 and 1980 and includes a case study of ILEA.⁶¹ He considers that the evidence for greater centralisation of governance under contraction is ambivalent, while there was limited evidence to support the hypothesis of a three-stage reaction to declining enrolments: initial avoidance of recognition of the problem, followed by a spirited defence of vested interests and then a planned response aimed to minimise threat and use the opportunities provided.

The case study of ILEA refers to the process of local policy making under the guidance of Briault and Newsam in turn, which in the opinion of one commentator represented 'an outstanding and quite unprecedented exercise in open consultation.'⁶² ILEA's primary school review between 1971 and 1975 concluded that a limited number of amalgamations rather than closures would suffice and no large scale re-organisation was proposed. In Price's analysis the policy-making mode was 'technocratic' in that the Authority defined the problem and provided the planners with detailed objectives and only a limited range of options was considered. The planning procedure caused little political controversy and there was little evidence of interaction between planners, policy-makers and interest groups. Price comments that because the 1975 Report recommended a continuation of existing policy wide consultation was considered unnecessary.⁶³

By contrast Price assesses ILEA's policy-making mode for secondary education as mainly 'political'. While it resulted in a variety of solutions in the different Divisions of ILEA, consultation with school staff, governing bodies, and the wider public was a major feature of the evolution of policy within the confines of the controlling Labour group's determination to retain

school-based sixth forms. In that process no papers were put to the Education Committee before such consultation had taken place, several options were proposed for consideration in each Division, while the Education Officer was, in his corporate capacity, in a relatively exposed position as he alone was formally responsible for the proposals at the consultation stage, albeit working within the confines of known policy.⁶⁴ Price concludes overall that policy making to deal with the effects of declining enrolments tends to be 'political' rather than 'technocratic' and that solutions would require close collaboration between planner and policy-maker at most stages in the formulation and adoption of policy.⁶⁵

Concerning the choice of pattern of secondary school provision open to LEAs, Wadsworth⁶⁶ has modelled the costs of different systems of 16-19 provision over a planning horizon from 1976/77 to 1986/87 with the purpose of providing a planning mechanism to enable LEAs to gain more information about relative costs. Seven different systems, with varying combinations of schools for different age-ranges, sixth form colleges, tertiary colleges and colleges of further education, were costed firstly as static models for one year. Wadsworth concluded that, when considered for a single year only, schools provided the least expensive kind of sixth form provision, while 'single-stratum' institutions operating under FE regulations were the most costly on all measures except the cost of teaching staff, which was seen to be comparable across the range of institutions examined.⁶⁷ When the static models were converted to dynamic LEA models applying over a period of time it was found that a system involving tertiary colleges with associated further education colleges and 11-16 schools was significantly less expensive than other systems for the planning horizon as it applied to the LEA district examined⁶⁸ in a large shire county which was operating a 'hybrid' system consisting of a sixth form college, 11-14, 11-16, and 11-18 schools and two associated colleges of further education.

In broader terms Wadsworth claims to provide a methodology for comparing different policy options which can be applied to any LEA in order for it to

determine the least cost alternative or to compare a proposed system with an existing one over the planning period. However, Wadsworth acknowledges that choice of pattern is not purely a matter of economic viability and that the 'triangle of tension' has, as its other vertices, questions of educational feasibility and political acceptability, and that 16-19 provision is subject to the interaction of all three constraints.⁶⁹

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Chapter 4

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PART IICONSULTATION AND THE MAKING OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY FOR THE CITY OF HULLChapter 5 - Humberside's 16-19 Review: consultation and the determination of policy objectives (1977-1980)

The preliminary to the series of consultations concerning the pattern of schooling in Hull was a county-wide review of educational provision for 16-19 year olds undertaken by Humberside Education Committee between June 1977 and September 1978.¹ The Education Committee intended that the review should formulate a general policy on the range of opportunities which should be made available which could then be used as the basis for later institutional decisions.² The documentary evidence on which this analysis is based includes the minutes of the specially constituted working party and the documents issued by it, and the files of the Assistant Director for Forward Planning (ADFP), who was charged with co-ordinating the exercise.

At that point in the development of the Authority's policy falling rolls in secondary schools provided a backdrop to the debate rather than an over-riding concern. The initial discussion document which was issued by the working party of officers, advisers, and representative staff of schools and colleges, meeting under the chairmanship of the Director of Education, was primarily concerned with the changing nature of the sixth form and with the academic, vocational and social needs of 16-19 year olds within the context of national developments in 16-19 education. However, that document did ask respondents to bear in mind that decline in the birth-rate would have the effect of reducing the size of the age group in the last year of compulsory attendance in Humberside schools from a projected peak of around 15,000 in 1979/80 to around 11,000 by 1990.³

The LEA's consultative strategy was outlined in the document. While the focus of the first stage of the review was the activities of the working party itself, it was insisted that it had not been formed to formulate

recommendations unaided.⁴ The views of all concerned parties would be sought in order to produce a set of recommendations focused on the aims and rationale of 16-19 provision, while institutional decisions would be reserved to a second consultative stage.⁵ The initial document, which was widely distributed to schools and colleges and among others concerned with the age group, posed a series of questions for consideration and invited written comments by a specified date. The working party then produced an interim report⁶ in the light of those comments and sought further reactions, on which basis it produced a final report⁷ for the Education Committee, the whole process being monitored by a sub-committee of elected members. The working party also held meetings with representatives from industry, commerce and district councils in the area and with other groups, including a group of secondary heads and heads of sixth forms, a parents' consultative association, HMI, officers of the careers service, representatives of the Catholic Church, and the staff and sixth form pupils of a number of schools.

The discussion document put fourteen questions to potential respondents. In addition to asking them to consider the possible consequences of falling enrolments, it sought views on the kind of courses which should be made available and on the policies which should determine access to them, and asked whether they considered it important to provide a choice between types of institution in addition to choice between courses. The question of continuity between compulsory and post-compulsory education was raised and how to ensure that prospective students had information concerning the opportunities available. In the context of vocational education and youth employment, respondents were asked to consider the possible impact of the increasing involvement of TEC, BEC, and MSC. The need for flexibility of provision in relation to the developing needs of students was posited. They were also asked to consider the question of co-ordinating the work of different institutions working to similar ends so that a coherent system operated without waste of resources. Other questions concerned staffing, the size of teaching groups and schools, and the needs of the handicapped.⁸

Over 90 written submissions resulted and an analysis of their source was provided in the interim report,⁹ while the latter, in its turn, called forth over 40 further submissions.¹⁰ While most respondents were content to confine their comments to the issues put to them in the discussion document, several commented also on the consultative process itself and on the composition of the working party, revealing both expectations and fears.

The impression conveyed by the initial discussion document was one of 'open' policy-making in that all interested parties were being urged to contribute to policy which was then in the making,¹¹ while the interim report declared its purpose to be that of presenting the general principles considered up to that time and of giving further opportunity for comment.¹² This asserted openness was greeted with a degree of cynicism by some respondents. The head of a large 11-18 school on the South Bank declared, 'Some people approach the 16-19 Document with suspicion and cynicism, others react to it with resignation and despair. The attitude is both a defensive and a protective one. The die is already cast! Discussion and consultation are a pretence, a contrived precursor of an inevitable imposition by politicians and administrators of a preconceived educational provision for the 16-19 year olds.'¹³ While insisting that this was not his own view he asserted he had heard it expressed among his own staff and at other meetings and concluded that the working party would have to strive to discredit that attitude if it was to serve a worthwhile purpose.

Employers also tended to be sceptical about the nature of the exercise. One indicated his displeasure with what he detected as a feeling, in the interim report, that employers were seen as competitors and had no real right to say what was required.¹⁴ Senior managers in a large manufacturing concern also submitted their comments. One declared that the concern for 16-19 year olds was no more than 'crocodile tears' motivated by the prospect of falling rolls. Another asked who would advise the policy-makers and protect students against the temptation to provide courses in line with available facilities rather than with their needs.¹⁵

Analysis of Responses to Discussion Document

Careers Service	2
Chambers of Commerce	2
District Councils	4
Further and Higher Education Colleges	5
Individuals:-	
Further Education	1
Heads of Schools	7
Higher Education	3
School Teachers	8
Special Education	3
Youth Service	1
Industry	5
Parents:-	
Association	1
Individuals	2
Pupil Groups	4
Staff Groups	26
Teachers' Associations:-	
Schools	8
Further Education	1
Miscellaneous	8

Source: Humberside Education Committee.
Towards a Policy on 16-19 Provision. An Interim Report
 February 1978. Appendix A.

The composition of the working party was a major target for criticism, both its membership and method of appointment being assailed. The general tenor of comment was that it was insufficiently representative of the interests involved. In addition to officers and teachers, many of whom were heads or principals, it was urged that it should include representatives of the careers service, of adult education, the trades unions, the Manpower Services Commission, and of employers. Representatives of Catholic schools pleaded for a presence on the grounds that change would bring pressure to bear on denominational provision,¹⁶ while the staff of the Sixth Form College felt it should have a voice as the sole representative of that type of institution in the county.¹⁷

Commerce and industry were in the forefront of criticism of the working party's membership. The divisional training manager of a large manufacturing concern submitted the comments of his directors and senior managers. One declared, 'The Working Party, being made up of teachers and staff of the authority, has small chance of meeting its declared aims of securing the views of all those concerned with the education of the 16-19 age group, whilst excluding all but the 'educationalists' from the Working Party.' Another wished to assert the pre-eminence of industry and, observing the lack of industrial representation, stated, 'In my opinion, two-thirds of this Panel should consist of people from productive industry and not from Local Authorities. The people who are discussing education are, as usual, the cause of the problem and are not responsible for the end product.'¹⁸ What was described as a summary of the current management opinion of a nationalised industry stated, 'We note that the composition of the Working Party is purely educational and in effect unbalanced if the intention to consult is sincere. It would be more genuinely participative if wider representation could be included at the outset so that views could be expressed by all Working Party members and not confined to the educational sphere with others having to wait until comment was invited on actual recommendations which by then may be already hardening into decisions.'¹⁹

The staff of one school raised a matter of general principle regarding the procedure by which the working party had been appointed. They pointed out that, instead of being selected by the Director of Education, it would have been more widely representative had its members been nominated by the various interest groups such as teaching unions, head teachers, heads of sixth forms, heads of further education colleges, employers and trade unions.²⁰

This reaction to the working party's composition illustrates an LEA's dilemma when initiating consultation; the need to balance efficiency of operation, which might indicate the desirability of a relatively small group of people doing the initial thinking, with the need to ensure breadth of consultation. The wide range of interests was acknowledged in the discussion document,²¹ but

it was only partially reflected on the working party itself.

The discussion document elicited responses from all of the types of educational institution in the County. While many of these discussed the broader issues, opportunity was taken to introduce more specific institutional arguments. Fifty-five responses included some institutional comment, the bulk coming from the institutions themselves. Many of these were defensive in tone and several amounted to special pleading in view of their interpretation of the needs of 16-19 year-olds. Many saw the school-based sixth form under threat and took the opportunity to mount an early defence. Some saw the exercise as a preliminary to the imposition of a 'tertiary solution' on the whole County, while some short-course comprehensives argued a case for all schools having sixth forms.

In general, the all-through schools presented arguments for curricular and pastoral continuity and argued the case for the retention of the school-based sixth form. The head of an 11-18 split-site school, for example, while accepting the need for flexibility and variety of provision, and acknowledging that a well-organised tertiary system could provide all that was needed, asserted the all-through school's role alongside other patterns and concluded, 'While it would be administratively tidy to have a unified system, we hope administrative tidiness is not a dimension of need for anyone (including administrators!)'²²

The 13-18 Senior High Schools in Hull were the most consistently represented type of school responding to the discussion document. Fourteen of the seventeen schools made a return and all made reference to their desired form of future provision. Most declared themselves against the imposition of a uniform pattern of 16-19 education on the county as a whole, argued the pastoral and academic benefits of continuity of staffing between the main school and the sixth form, and were not sanguine about allowing unrestricted choice of institution. Many pointed to the operation of joint sixth forms with neighbouring schools as evidence of the viability of their sixth form provision. However, that view was not unanimous and the deputy heads and

sixth form tutors of one of the schools admitted to divided feelings. Some clung firmly to the belief that every school should have a sixth form regardless of resource considerations while others saw the need for rationalisation and envisaged amalgamations.²³

The Sixth Form College elaborated the arguments against uneconomic sixth form groups but, at the same time, indicated dislike of the large 16-19 institution, arguing that a high degree of flexibility in organisation was required to provide for Advanced Level studies which, the staff submitted, would not be possible in too large an institution. In resisting the notion of a tertiary college, the staff, effectively, proposed a sixth form college of about their own current size as a model.²⁴ The replies from further and higher education colleges reflected a general air of confidence. As a group they argued for the availability of a wide range of courses, for unrestricted choice of institution and for flexibility and co-ordination of provision but not necessarily for co-operation between the school and further education sectors. One college response stated bluntly that the decline in enrolments indicated that 'the need for concentration outstrips the possibilities of co-operation and indicates the tertiary college as the most efficient answer.'²⁵

Submissions were also received from the county and district branches of AMMA, NAS/UWT, NUT and NATFHE. The response of the professional associations also contained references to the future pattern of institutions, though they were, on the whole, more generalised than the comments from the institutions themselves. All assented to the notion of flexibility and to the need for co-operation and co-ordination. The unions in the school sector did, however, indicate general support for the school-based sixth form. The Hull and District Association of NAS/UWT declared, 'Schools could conceivably develop schemes for pooling resources, especially for certain minority subjects, with each school retaining a basic core of sixth form courses. In this way, educationally and economically viable sixth forms could be created in each of the senior secondary schools desiring such provision.'²⁶ AMMA was more strident. The Humberside County Local Committee stated that it supported

the majority view of the constituent associations that the retention of sixth form education in the school system was in the best interests of the students and staff concerned.²⁷ The Hull Teachers' Association (NUT) asserted that the choice between continuing at school or transferring to another institution should be the student's and should not be limited by the structure of provision, but declared itself against the single-sex high schools as limiting the flexibility asked for in the document,²⁸ while the Humberside division of the same union looked for co-operation between schools and FE institutions by means of link courses in under-resourced curriculum areas and instanced the single-sex school as a case in point.²⁹ NATFHE observed that an obstacle to flexibility between institutions was their organisation under different regulations and urged that co-ordination would better result within one post-16 system rather than two.³⁰

The submission from the North Humberside Parents' Consultative association, an informal group, was the only collective response from parents and is of some interest in retrospect in the context of later developments in Hull. This group stated that they found it difficult to answer the specific questions put to them without first commenting that they were unhappy with the level of children's attainments, particularly in Hull, and that the association felt that the problem started in the younger age groups and, specifically, with the age of transfer from junior to senior schools. They then went on to declare support for all-through schools on the principal grounds that they valued continuity of contact between teachers and pupils and that a sixth form college would attract better qualified teachers away from other schools.³¹ It would seem that while the members of the working party could attempt to separate matters of educational principle from the question of the future role of particular institutions at that early stage of policy development, those involved most directly in and with the institutions themselves, while engaging matters of principle, felt they had also to signal their more particular concerns at that stage.

Inspection of the working party's minutes reveals that its members were engaged both in gathering further information and in assessing reactions to the questions posed for discussion. At its first meeting on 12th July, 1977, having approved the draft of the discussion document, it sought up-to-date population forecasts throughout the County and information on the distribution of ability gained from current testing in the schools. It was recorded, 'After some discussion it was agreed that members of the Working Party would have to be particularly active in publicising the review and in seeking the views of all concerned. Those working in institutions were asked to give consideration to the specific groups of students and pupils that they might be able to organise meetings with.'³² They also decided to involve the County Careers Service and HMI in the discussions and that formal invitations should be sent to the local CBI and Trades Council.³⁸

Of more significance, however, in attempting to assess the part expressed opinion played in the development of the working party's recommendations is the procedure it adopted in considering the responses to the discussion document. At a series of meetings from December 1977 it considered working papers prepared by the Assistant Director for Forward Planning under the headings of groups of questions, in addition to points raised at meetings between members of the working party and different groups.

The working papers catalogued the responses, attempted a summary of opinion on each question, and posed resulting issues for working party consideration. For example, at its meeting on 1st December 1977, the working party considered the responses relating to access to courses, choice of institution, and the question of the economic and educational viability of courses. The working paper pointed out that, on the question of access, the overwhelming response from institutions was that access should be determined by individual counselling while, in contrast, employers indicated that some policy was necessary. The working paper concluded on this point,

'In the light of this apparent divergence of opinions Members of the Working Party may wish to consider the following points:-

- (i) If responsibility for controlling access to courses is to remain largely with Heads and Principals, what means of accountability are necessary to satisfy others that students are not being allowed to enter inappropriate courses?
- (ii) What general guidelines should the Working Party recommend?
- (iii) Should there be more flexibility where strict prerequisites are specified, and if so should the suggestion (No83) that there should be close monitoring of exceptions be adopted?'

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The question of viability brought replies from most respondents but they raised more questions for the working party than they answered, introducing several, possibly conflicting, criteria, among which were ideas on the range of choice needed, on the sixth form in the context of the whole school, on the value of larger units, and on the relevance of geographical factors. The Assistant Director for Forward Planning added that, in considering the whole question, DES pronouncements on viability would have to be taken into account by them and that, while the mathematics of such an exercise was straightforward, the difficulty lay in establishing assumptions in terms of the number of courses to be offered, on staffing ratios and other factors. He concluded that the consideration of the Working Party might be best focused on the opportunities a head should make available, on the resources he should be allocated to provide those opportunities, and on the management structure necessary to co-ordinate such provision.³⁵

Some of the meetings which members of the working party held with particular interest groups raised institutional decisions which they wished to reserve until later but which they felt they had to consider as matters of principle at that point. Such issues were raised at two meetings held in Grimsby on 8th December 1977.³⁶

A meeting with representatives of South Humberside Catholics touched on the question of parity of esteem between 12-16 and 12-18 schools. The assistant director's note of the meeting recorded that the working party would need to consider whether the argument for continuing Catholic education beyond 16 in a wholly Catholic environment was sufficiently strong to justify a break in the established pattern of provision, as would be the case in

Scunthorpe where feeder schools sent their pupils to a sixth form college, and in Grimsby where it would mean the creation of sixth form teaching in a very small school. Both, he declared, were second stage concerns but were also general principles which must be considered in the working party's report.³⁷

At the other meeting, of head teachers, the head of a school without a sixth form elaborated on the staffing and curricular problems consequent upon having a school with a sixth form as a near neighbour. It is recorded that he pointed out in the discussion that he would be as happy to see a sixth form college system for Grimsby as that all schools should be given sixth forms as a means of ensuring equality. The assistant director noted, for working party consideration, that while they need not be concerned about the specific problems of the two schools in question, there was a certain urgency in the need to resolve the general issues and summarised the main questions as whether, as a general principle, it was acceptable to operate schools with sixth forms next to those without, and whether the difference between urban and rural areas was as important as some had indicated, making it acceptable practice in the former but not in the latter.³⁸

Hence there is evidence from the way in which the working party went about its business that it was attempting to keep to its brief of considering principles first. However, it is also clear that if certain principles became accepted as a basis for future policy as a result of the review, they would pre-condition later decisions. It might not prove entirely feasible to separate the two parts of the policy making and consultative processes as clearly as was originally intended.

Both the interim and the final report, in making recommendations on the questions posed in the initial discussion document, contain references to the opinions expressed in the written submissions and at meetings and indicate the extent to which the recommendations were shaped as a result.

In the interim report this is made clear particularly with regard to the types of courses which should be made available, the policies which were

to determine access to courses, the question of choice between types of institution, careers education, staffing provision, the educational and economic viability of teaching groups and organisational units, and on the question of co-ordination of provision. For example, regarding courses and examinations, the working party declared itself impressed by the views of respondents in favour of the Certificate of Extended Education but was aware that it did not carry the support of employers in general and urged the schools to explain their courses to local employers and seek their support and understanding.³⁹ Regarding access to courses, the working party took the view, which it acknowledged had been put forward by most respondents, that it was for individual schools and colleges to determine which students are able to undertake which courses, and merely reminded them of their responsibility to ensure that those marginally qualified were aware of the implications of attempting certain courses.⁴⁰

On the issue of choice between types of institution the working party gave primary importance to ensuring that the range of choice of courses was sufficiently broad but, while it acknowledged the point put forward by a number of respondents that advantages accrue when a choice between types of institution is available, it suggested, as a general principle, that duplication of opportunities should not occur for the sake of such a choice. In particular it did not accept the suggestion that there was justification for separate institutional provision to meet the denominational needs of some students,⁴¹ a reference to the meeting with the group of South Humberside Catholics.

The working party also explicitly acknowledged the weight of opinion favouring school-based sixth forms, and the views expressed about the problems caused in urban areas where some schools without sixth forms co-existed with all-through schools and expressed the hope that the latter arrangements would cease to exist in due course. Despite the views of several respondents in the Scunthorpe Division that fears regarding the problems of schools without sixth forms were unfounded in their experience, it concluded, 'Whilst the

question of how provision is to be organised will come at a later stage in the review, the Working Party would certainly advise against the creation of schools dealing only with the 13-16 age range.⁴²

In respect of the issue of the viable size of teaching groups and organisational units the working party declared, 'In considering the question of the educational needs of young people the Working Party had available a number of comments that indicated that there are both lower and upper limits on the sizes of teaching groups if the most effective learning is to occur. Inevitably some very small teaching groups will continue to exist.... However, the Working Party does not consider it desirable that a number of small teaching groups in the same, or substantially the same subject should exist in close proximity, and suggests that efforts should be made to bring those students together in a single group.'⁴³ It then went on to specify that, normally, Advanced Level groups should exceed five students and those at a lower level should exceed nine. The working party concluded its recommendations on this issue by stating, 'It is clear, however, that the larger the organisational unit the greater the opportunities for arranging satisfactory teaching groups. Various strategies can be adopted to increase the size of the organisational unit without necessarily having all students in a single institution....'⁴⁴

On the question of the need to co-ordinate provision the working party declared, 'Many respondents to the Discussion Document indicated that the work of institutions in providing 16-19 opportunities must be co-ordinated. This is welcomed by the Working Party whose Members seek a comprehensive post-16 system offering a wide range of courses to all young people whilst at the same time retaining as much institutional autonomy as possible.'⁴⁵

Perhaps the area of concern in which the working party's responses to opinion was greatest and most explicit was that of careers education and the need to liaise more closely with industry and commerce concerning educational opportunities. The interim report stated, 'In their meeting with employers, Members of the Working Party realised the extent of the gulf between education

and industry/commerce. Urgent steps must be taken to bridge this gulf and it is recommended that the Authority establish a structure whereby contacts are developed and nurtured at all levels. There is as much need for teachers in every school to be in contact with local firms as there is need for senior representatives of the Authority to meet regularly with senior managers and trade unionists.⁴⁶ The working party went on to indicate that, among the recommendations in a separate report it had submitted on careers education, was that each secondary head and college principal should report on a regular basis to the governing body on the current arrangements and future development of careers education and liaison with industry and commerce, and that a pupils' handbook indicating their choice of courses at 16 should be published by the Authority and distributed to all fifth year pupils.

The final report to the Education Committee in September 1978 reiterated and expanded the points made in the interim report and was principally concerned to provide a means of ensuring that the major policy objectives could be achieved. The principal recommendation, as a means of bringing into effect many of the more specific recommendations, was the proposal to establish a set of 16-19 Co-ordinating Panels.

The panels were to consist of the heads of institutions directly involved in 16-19 education in a particular area, together with representative heads of schools whose age range extended only to 16. Their major role would be to seek agreement on the provision of courses in the different institutions in order to ensure that a full range of opportunities was available in each area.⁴⁷ The panels would also be required to consult formally with the Adult Education Service and the Careers Service, and in general ensure that students made a considered choice of course and that there was continuity in their educational experience. The panels would also implement a curriculum strategy which placed courses leading to Advanced Level in three categories; subjects which must be available in any reasonable combination in every arrangement where A-level courses were offered, those which must be available to all potential students but not necessarily in every arrangement, and those

that could be offered in addition where resources permitted.⁴⁸ In the first category were placed English, Geography, History, a modern language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, and in the second, Economics, the Creative Arts, additional mathematics options, other modern languages, Music and Classics.⁴⁹

The final report also announced a policy decision regarding careers education, based on the recommendations in the interim report. It declared, 'Careers education is of paramount importance in the preparation of young people for their decision at 16, and, as a result of the deliberations of the Working Party, a report has been submitted to the Education Committee on this aspect of the service.'⁵⁰ Reiterating the points about the gulf between education and industry in the interim report, the final report confirmed that the recommendations concerning the heads' responsibility to report to governing bodies on careers education and the publication of a pupils' handbook had been approved by the Education Committee, and that a further report would be submitted when the financial estimates for 1979/80 were under consideration giving priority to careers education and the careers service.

The final report, despite its clear insistence that the Working Party's terms of reference excluded giving detailed consideration to the future of any particular school or college did establish certain strategic principles relating to future institutional provision. It followed the interim report in rejecting the plea for separate post-16 provision to meet specific denominational needs and laid on the Co-ordinating Panels the responsibility to consider denominational interests in each area and advise on appropriate measures.⁵¹ For curricular and economic reasons it shared doubts with the interim report about the viability of 13-16 schools and declared the principle that no such schools should be created⁵² and in addition enunciated the general principle that very small organisational units were to be avoided on the same grounds.⁵³ With regard to the co-existence of schools with and without sixth forms it laid down a further principle in suggesting that, 'when this "co-existence" occurs in urban areas plans be developed to put all the schools on an equal

footing,⁵⁴ which, taken at face value, left several options open to the Authority.

The concluding section of the Final Report set the whole consultative exercise and the recommendations which followed it in context from the Authority's viewpoint. It was affirmed that the report was not a detailed plan of action, as the future was regarded as too uncertain, and the education service too complex, for such a county-wide plan to have any value.⁵⁵ What the working party had done was consider the general principles and criteria that should be applied to the future development of 16-19 education.⁵⁶ The main contribution of the report was seen as indicating the range of oppor-⁵⁷tunities which should be available and an identification of major deficiencies.

The report concluded, 'On its own, the publication of this report can have little immediate effect. The extent, both in breadth and depth, of the discussions throughout the County must have been valuable in developing understanding of the various issues. The real impact of the work will come, however, during the second stage of the review when the general principles that are accepted by the Education Committee will provide guidelines to assist local discussions. The "WHAT" and "WHY" of stage one should guide the "HOW" of stage two.'⁵⁸

ReferencesChapter 5

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Chapter 6 - Hull re-organisation: stage I (1980-1982)

The Authority's initial gradualist approach is illustrated by its strategy of treating the middle schools and senior high schools independently. Within the 9-13 age-range for example attention focused on selected parts of the city¹ and much attention was paid to the Orchard Park Estate in the North West sector where it was proposed to close two of the four junior high schools serving the area, none of which could currently accommodate the desired four forms of entry which the Education Committee had determined should form the basis of future plans wherever possible and whose projected intake for 1985/86 was 2FE in each case.² It was also decided to treat the future of the junior high schools there separately from those serving the neighbouring North Hull Estate.³ The Authority focused its attention first on the senior high schools and initially on the four schools in South West Hull where the problem of falling numbers was regarded as particularly acute and open to an expeditious solution to some extent independent of the remaining senior high schools in the city. That consultative phase lasted from May 1980 until February 1982 when, unable to achieve consensus on the substantive changes it proposed for the senior high schools, the Education Committee determined on a thorough review of schooling for all ages in the city as a single exercise.

The earlier 16-19 review was linked with that process to the extent that, while the review had deliberately eschewed considering particular schools, it had arrived at a generally accepted set of principles concerning post-compulsory education which was intended to inform future institutional decisions. There were also similarities in both the manner and the means of consultation in both cases in the issuing of consultative documents with a request for responses from interested parties by a specified date, in the holding of consultative meetings, and in the formation of a working party to report on specific aspects of the problem.

The first consultative meeting regarding the senior high schools was held on 6th May 1980, and was attended by a city-wide representation which

included senior high school head teachers, the chairmen of the governing bodies and the parent governors of each of the schools, representatives of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the teaching and non-teaching unions, elected member representatives from the city council and the county council, and members of a sub-committee of the Education Committee under whose auspices the consultations were conducted.

The consultative document prepared and circulated before the meeting indicated that the problem of falling enrolments was particularly acute for the Hull senior high schools because of three interacting factors; the decline in the birth rate, a significant level of out-migration from the city, and a shift in the distribution of the population within the city towards the North East, associated with new housing and clearance programmes. The net result was that there would not only be too many senior high school places in the period of falling rolls but also the distribution of sites would not match the distribution of the school-age population.⁴ The problem was described as being most significant in South West Hull because there all three demographic factors had operated and it was calculated that, from September 1981, and thereafter, there would be insufficient applications to sustain the accepted minimum of 8FE at the four schools.⁵ A general decline of approximately 33% in the level of entry to all the senior high schools between September 1979 and September 1989 was forecast, which meant a decline from the present average level of entry from approximately 9.4 FE to approximately 6.2 FE. Population movement had led to an excess of senior high school places in three sectors, in the South West, the South East and the North West, when these were viewed separately, but considerable under-provision in the North East of the city had meant that children were bussed from there to schools in the North West and South East. Only the South West sector was unaffected by that daily movement of pupils.

The alternatives before the Authority were posed as either to allow some schools to become substantially less than 8FE and to provide the necessary enhancement of staffing to support the curriculum in the main school

and sixth form, or to reduce the number of senior high schools.⁷ The document then presented the following proposals 'as a basis for consultation only'⁸ and urged those attending to send their comments to the Director of Education for consideration by the sub-committee by 23rd May;⁹ that during falling rolls 13-18 schools should retain as far as possible at least 8FE which should be achieved by a limited programme of closure and amalgamation phased to meet the decline in enrolments and by the use of planned admission levels to schools, and that in pursuing such a policy the Education Committee might take particular note of areas of the city where demographic changes had produced the most significant reduction in demand;¹⁰ that school-based sixth form arrangements should be strengthened by establishing formal co-operative links between groups of two or three schools which would form the basis of co-ordinating panels involving the further education sector and special educational provision;¹¹ and that the Education Committee should consider what priority could be given to increasing the availability of senior high school provision in the North East sector.¹²

Thus, the Authority opened the consultations by proposing a positive strategy which accepted the need to adjust within the confines of the existing system, though the consultative document did allude, in passing, to the possibility of changing the age of transfer but took the view, at that time, that the decline in the senior high school population would be insufficient to free enough accommodation to do so until the late 1980s.¹³ The Authority was seeking a solution within a much shorter time scale, indeed, it sought a solution for South West Hull which could begin to be implemented from September 1981.¹⁴

As a result of that first consultative meeting the Authority decided to focus the consultations initially on the South West sector and to treat it as an independent entity and, to that end, issued two further consultative documents for meetings on 19th June and 19th November respectively and a working party was formed, consisting of the heads and a teacher representative of the four schools in question and representatives of the teachers' joint

consultative committee, chaired by the Assistant Director for Forward Planning, to investigate and report on certain unresolved issues which had emerged in discussion at the first of the consultative meetings. The four schools in question were two single sex schools for boys and girls with accommodation for 8FE and two mixed schools with accommodation for 8FE and 14FE respectively; the single sex schools having suffered most markedly from declining enrolments to the point of being just at or below 6FE.

The consultative document circulated for the meeting on 19th June pointed out that in September 1981 there would be insufficient applications for places to sustain 8FE at the four schools, and suggested that the nature and degree of co-operation between schools for the 16-19 group would be dependent to a large extent on the size and staffing resources available, and that 16-19 provision would be more buoyant if each institution could itself support a viable range of 16 plus courses as its contribution to a total package.¹⁵ The crucial problem to be resolved therefore was the effect of declining enrolment on the main school.

Two alternative strategies were put forward, with the proviso that the level of provision at the single sex schools should be kept approximately in balance; that of maintaining the present number of schools and using planned admission limits to produce an enrolment pattern which would prevent any one school becoming substantially smaller than the rest, and the amalgamation of two of the schools and seeking an alternative use for the freed site.¹⁶ The document explored both possibilities and suggested possible schemes, against the background of the projected requirement of 24FE to serve the needs of the sector by 1989/90, which resulted in equality of size for all the schools in the long term at either 6FE, if all schools were retained, or 8FE if one building was taken out of use. Regarding the latter alternative, two possibilities were put forward, either the single sex schools would amalgamate on a site to be determined, or the two mixed schools would do so on the site of the larger one.¹⁷

The central issue identified at the consultative meeting on 19th June was the effect of falling rolls on the range of educational opportunities offered by the senior high schools, while, when possible strategies were considered, other issues such as alternative uses for school accommodation, the distribution of the sites in relation to the population and patterns of parental choice also became important.¹⁸ One issue in particular was seen as needing further clarification and consideration, the effect on the main school curriculum of reducing the pupil intake to substantially less than 240 pupils. In order to resolve that issue the working party was formed and given terms of reference 'to consider the curriculum issues and the accommodation and staffing implications in relation to the size of intake to senior high schools in Hull with particular reference to the effects of declining from eight to six forms of entry.'¹⁹

The working party focused its attention on South West Hull but was aware of the city-wide implications of its work and hence it informed others of its brief and produced an interim report²⁰ and invited written contributions from other senior high schools and teachers' associations and produced a final report²¹ for consideration by the consultative meeting on 19th November, where it appeared as an appendix to the consultative document.

The working party examined in detail the curriculum, pupil grouping and deployment of teaching staff in the senior high schools at that time and considered the consequences of a reduction in intake to 160 pupils for the schools in South West Hull and developed a general statement about the curriculum, pupil grouping and staffing of such a school. Its main conclusions were that a decline to 6FE would result in a reduction in the breadth of the curriculum, which would be seen most markedly in the number of subjects available as options in the fourth and fifth years, and in a reduction in the number of teaching groups, with a commensurately wider spread of ability in each group.²² It also took the view that if a 6FE school were staffed according to the Authority's current policy there would be very significant differences in the educational opportunities offered, and that an addition of

four staff would be needed to enhance the curriculum in the main school and in the sixth form to make it comparable to what was currently available in 8FE schools.²³ The working party also asserted that, while co-operative arrangements might reduce the need for additional staffing, group sizes in the sixth form would remain small, and it was apprehensive about the problems of staffing and timetabling joint sixth forms in schools of that size.²⁴

Specifically in terms of staffing, a reduction to 6FE would almost certainly reduce the number of deputy head and senior teacher posts and affect other promoted posts, with possibly serious implications for the management, academic and pastoral structure of the school, and might make it more difficult to recruit experienced staff.²⁵ However, while the working party opted for 8FE as the minimum desirable size of a senior high school it did assert that single sex 6FE schools would be marginally more viable than co-educational schools of the same size.²⁶

For the purposes of the meeting on 19th November the consultative document encapsulated both the curriculum findings of the working party and the further investigations into the distribution and possible alternative use of school sites carried out in consequence of the first consultative meeting for the South West sector as issues to be considered in determining the future pattern of provision in the sector. Perhaps the most important was the proposition that, on balance, it might be better to favour strategies which kept schools as large as possible within present accommodation levels.²⁷ It was also pointed out that, if the strategy were to reduce the number of sites, the situation of the single sex schools at about the middle of the sector and the other two to the west, the implications for the travelling arrangements for pupils living in the east of the sector would need to be carefully considered.²⁸ In addition, an evaluation of the suitability of each of the schools for possible use by further education had revealed that the largest of the schools, in the west of the sector, was considered unsuitable, as was the boys' school in the middle, thus leaving the girls' school and the other mixed school as possible candidates.²⁹

The strategies formally proposed remained the same as those indicated at the first meeting on 19th June but certain additional considerations, taken together, rendered it less likely that the retention of all four schools would be acceptable to the Authority or to the schools themselves. The consultative document asked whether the Education Committee could reasonably sustain admission limits to the largest of the schools when more than half its accommodation would be unused. Additional difficulties were also envisaged because a reduction in intake of such magnitude would require the approval of the Secretary of State, after publication of public notices and a period to allow for objections, while the admission levels would need to be rigidly sustained from September 1981 until possibly the mid 1990s.³⁰ To these problems were added the need to enhance resource provision at all four schools if the level of curriculum provision envisaged by the working party was to be maintained, while about half of all the senior high school accommodation in the sector would be unused.³¹

Within the alternative strategy of reducing the number of schools to three, the document indicated what it described as two realistic possibilities for consideration, both of which would release a building for alternative use in the mid 1980s, while it would also be possible to maintain an average of about 8FE to the schools at the lowest level of intake, give some margin for the expected longer term partial recovery in numbers on roll, and which would not be so vulnerable to higher than expected levels of future out-migration. The options put were to continue to maintain the two single sex schools and have a co-educational school on the largest of the sites in the west of the sector, with no associated capital building costs; or to amalgamate the single sex schools on one or other of the existing sites, with capital costs associated with re-modelling specialist and toilet accommodation.³²

This initial series of consultative meetings, in itself, provided no immediate resolution of the clearly diagnosed problems in South West Hull's secondary schools. However, from that point in time, the debate was widened to a purposive consideration of the problem in a city-wide context.

The Assistant Director for Forward Planning wrote to all those who had attended the first city-wide meeting in May 1980 enclosing the curriculum working party's final report, indicating that the meeting on 19th November considered the issues it raised of major importance and relevant to the whole of Hull and that it should be considered in that context.

By the end of 1980 the consultations had served to publicise to a wide and representative constituency the nature of the problems facing the Authority and the schools, while the activities of the curriculum working party had achieved a degree of consensus regarding the desirable minimum size of the schools in any future pattern. Possibilities for action had also been explored and these provided the background for the further consultations during 1981 and into early 1982 when the Authority put forward a series of proposals to reduce the number of senior high schools in the city as a whole by three or four; the resolution of the situation in South West Hull becoming part of a larger strategy.

The County Council elections in May 1981 resulted in a change of political control and the Labour-controlled Education Committee took over the initiatives begun by the Conservatives. The new Education Committee at its meeting on 24th June³⁴ adopted a strategy of retaining the ages of transfer at 9 and 13, and retained school-based sixth forms, and determined that consultations should begin as soon as possible about a reduction of 3 or 4 in the number of senior high schools and instructed the Future School Arrangements Sub-Committee to formulate proposals for consultation.

The sub-committee's proposals were accepted as a basis for consultation by the Education Committee on 16th September³⁵ and, in the form of a consultative document,³⁶ were considered at consultative meetings on 18th November 1981 and 27th January 1982, the intervening period between meetings allowing for written submissions from the consultative group on the details of the proposals.

By way of introduction,³⁷ the consultative document³⁷ asserted that the previous consultations and submissions had indicated general support for a policy of reducing the number of senior high schools in order to retain a

"robust Senior High School system" with a minimum entry to each remaining school of 8FE, and that the Education Committee had incorporated that view into a general policy.³⁸ It was also stated³⁹ that the Education Committee had recognised the need, expressed by representatives of the schools in the South West sector, to take an early decision and it was reported that the County Council had determined to amalgamate the two single-sex schools on the boys' school site in September 1983. What was presented for consultation therefore were proposals concerning reducing the number of secondary schools in the other problematic areas of the city, the North East and North West sectors. The former had occupied the main attention of the sub-committee, which judged that there was such an imbalance between provision and demand for places that there was a case for building a new senior high school there to accommodate 10 forms of entry as soon as that could be accomplished,⁴⁰ with the consequence that, if the schools elsewhere were to be in a position to maintain 8 forms of entry, there was a need to reduce the number of county senior high schools by three, in addition to the already determined amalgamation in South West Hull.⁴¹

It was proposed that the senior high school with the least adequate building on the eastern boundary of the city, and to which children journeyed daily from the north east, should be taken out of use,⁴² and that, because of the geographical grouping of the sites of existing schools in the north west, one of a pair of schools in the northern part of that sector be taken out of use, and that, of the three schools closely grouped in the centre of the sector, either the two single-sex schools should amalgamate on the boys' school site, or the adjacent mixed school should be taken out of use.⁴³ The sub-committee judged that its proposals would produce a better distribution of senior high schools in relation to local demand for places than currently was the case, with the additional potential benefits that schools could develop closer identification with local communities and also strengthen links with junior high schools to provide greater curriculum and pastoral continuity, and also provide a good distribution of sites for further education use.⁴⁴ The possible

suggested date for implementing the proposals was September 1983, with the publication of the appropriate notices in the Spring Term, 1982.

For the meeting on 27th January 1982, the consultative group was augmented by the addition of parent governors and the chairmen of governing bodies of junior high schools and, on the basis of a further discussion of the proposals, the decision was taken to hold a public meeting for parents in order to explain the proposals to them and gain their reactions. Up to that point the consultative process had not involved public meetings as such and all the wider consultation had been conducted with those having a defined formal function of some kind relating to the education service. That public meeting was held in the City Hall on 10th February, supported by a parents' leaflet⁴⁵ distributed through the junior and senior high schools and at the meeting itself, which outlined the current position in the senior high schools, the Authority's proposals and its reasons for making them. The leaflet summarised the position in the following terms:

If the City has senior high schools they must be strong enough to do their job if the pupils are to get a fair deal.

A reduction in the number of schools will keep the others strong even with the large fall in the numbers of pupils that is coming.

The losses:- Schools for which people have a high regard and which enjoy the loyalty of the community they serve.

The gains:- Senior high schools strong enough to do the job and a much wider range of training opportunities for young people in the City.

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Generally the City Hall meeting showed hostility towards the substantive changes proposed. The Education Committee met to determine the issue on 17th February. The Director of Education's report⁴⁷ reviewed the proposals and their emergence since the committee meeting on 24th June 1981, and presented them to the Education Committee for decision, together with schedules of the submissions from the various groups received as a result of the meetings of the consultative group, many of which had been circulated with the committee papers prior to the meeting, including notice of a petition running to 500 sheets of signatures in support of the retention of the single sex schools in

the North West sector in their present form.⁴⁸ Other submissions received more recently were also tabled.

In speaking to his report, the Director also reported verbally on the meeting at the City Hall to the effect that the mood of the meeting had been against change, that there was much support for single sex schools, and for many of the individual schools proposed for closure or amalgamation. It was then proposed from the Labour benches that the decision be deferred and the committee resolved⁴⁹ that a report on educational opportunities throughout all phases in the city should be prepared by a special sub-committee of members.

Consultation and Client Input to Policy-Making

1. The response to the Curriculum Working Party's Interim Report, November 1980.

Submissions in response to the circulation of the Interim Report were received from the heads and staff of the four schools in South West Hull, from the two single sex schools in the North West sector and from two of the mixed schools serving the East and North East areas of the city. Official responses came also from the Kingston upon Hull Head Teachers' Association (NAHT), from both the city and county associations of NUT, and from the staff representatives of AMMA, NAS/UWT, and NUT at the largest of the schools in South West Hull.

These revealed a large amount of consensus, among those who chose to respond, over the working party's basic proposition that 8 forms of entry was the minimum desirable size for a senior high school, only the girls' school in North West Hull declared itself 'both dismayed and unconvinced by the bleak picture which is painted of the opportunities that could be offered by a six-form entry senior high school'.⁵⁰ The latter argued that sixth form links between schools need not impose undue constraints on the time-table at other levels, and asserted that, by comparison, the school's substantial use of part-time teachers imposed far more, and more serious, constraints than their current link with the nearby boys' school. The boys' school head, however,

while also declaring the sixth form link to be essentially unproblematic, tended to favour the 8 forms of entry norm proposed.⁵¹ Indeed, one school favoured a higher norm. The head and staff of the East Hull school declared that to produce a viable sixth form with economic groups from a base of 8 forms of entry was very difficult in their experience and submitted that the ideal size for an economic school-based sixth form was 10 forms of entry.⁵²

The official union reaction was also supportive of the working party's curricular propositions. The Hull Teachers' Association (NUT) declared that it had discussed and analysed the report very thoroughly and stated that there would be an unacceptable reduction in both the variety and choice of subjects in a 6FE school, especially in the fourth year and above,⁵³ and affirmed its policy that a minimum 8 forms of entry should be maintained to ensure full coverage of all examination syllabuses up to and including the sixth form. Their submission concluded with the statement, 'The Interim Report, far from inducing us to change our thinking, has only made us more convinced that our approach is the right one for serving the best interests of the children of South West Hull.' The Humberside Division of NUT⁵⁴ and the Hull Head Teachers' Association⁵⁵ wrote in similar vein.

The submission from the several union representatives at the South West Hull school passed from general support for the working party's recommendations to a consideration of a possible policy option and declared that the introduction of 6FE would result in a very serious decline in educational provision throughout Hull which would compare very unfavourably with other divisions in the county and concluded that, 'Such a move would be ill-conceived and its execution would be to wantonly destroy the painstaking work and achievements of members of the above organisations to establish in South West Hull an excellence of education befitting the pupils in that area.'⁵⁶

In total the responses provided some guidance to the Authority, in general terms, concerning what would be acceptable policy following from the general agreement that 6FE senior schools were unviable, though specific references to possible action were far less frequent than more general reactions

to the report's curricular recommendations. The likelihood that some schools would be closed or amalgamated with others seems to have been generally recognised as a consequence of accepting a minimum of 8 forms of entry. With the exception of the group of school representatives, the professional associations chose not to engage this issue directly, while the Head Teachers' Association issued what was effectively a warning to the Authority that a solution for one part of the city could not necessarily be replicated elsewhere, and declared, 'There is considerable variety of needs and problems within the city of Hull and the selection of South West Hull as a guinea pig for consideration because the problem of falling rolls is most acute in that area of the city and the presentation of a solution for South West Hull, does not mean that the same formula can be applied to every other area of the city.'⁵⁷

Two of the head teachers were more forthcoming about possible action. The head of the East Hull senior high school, not immediately under threat, observed that a policy of closure or amalgamation appeared preferable and more logical than a run-down of all schools to the same level.⁵⁸ The head of the boys' school in North West Hull rehearsed the options open to the Authority and entered a plea for equitable treatment.⁵⁹ He felt that a 6FE organisation would be unsatisfactory in maintaining the standards achieved by the schools currently, but declared that, if the Authority decided on that course of action, it could only be supported if all senior schools remaining open were to reduce uniformly to that size. However, such a move he felt would be 'educational nonsense' particularly when a school had grappled successfully with the problems resulting from 8FE, and rather than a uniform reduction to 6FE, closure should be considered to enable the remaining schools to retain a viable intake.

2. The Response to the Sub-Committee's Consultative Document

The response to the sub-committee's consultative paper outlining proposals to reduce the number of senior high schools serving the East and North West areas of the city, discussed at the two meetings of the consultative body in November 1981 and January 1982 revealed substantial opposition to most

of the substantive proposals and provided the background to the stormy parents' meeting in the City Hall on 10th February.⁶⁰

While many respondents accepted that closures or amalgamations were inevitable they generally balked at the sub-committee's selection, and several submissions contained suggested alternative approaches. The controversy centred on the fate of the three schools in the centre of the North West sector and on the two threatened single-sex schools particularly, many feeling that the latter should be retained as an option on a city-wide basis. The proposed new school to serve the North East area was also challenged as an unnecessary expense when the closure of other relatively new and purpose-built schools was being contemplated, while the sub-committee's essential rationale also came under attack. Many submissions deplored the implied neighbourhood school policy which apparently followed from the expressed desire to match the distribution of schools to the distribution of the population. This was seen as an assault on the policy of balanced entry to secondary schools which had been policy since comprehensive re-organisation in 1969, and pleas were entered that the Education Committee should ignore what were seen as artificial sectoral divisions and treat the city as an entity for the purposes of re-organisation.

Among the professional associations, submissions were received from the local branches of NUT and NAS/UWT. In respect of individual schools, resolutions were submitted from the governing bodies and papers were received from various combinations of head teachers, staff, parents' and old students' associations of all those whose future was in question, and from some of those whose future was apparently more assured.

The submission from the local NUT reaffirmed its opposition to all school closures, asserting its view that falling pupil rolls was an opportunity to reduce the size of classes, and called for a moratorium of three months in order to ensure the fullest debate, especially with the trade union movement and the local community, on the future of comprehensive education in the city.⁶¹ However, the main burden of the submission was concerned to protect members'

interests. The union sought to establish certain conditions for the closure or amalgamation of schools which would ensure satisfactory career opportunities by the simultaneous establishment of new schools as existing ones were phased out and the creation of staffing pyramids for the new schools rather than individual redeployment, and warned that, if these conditions were not met, it would ballot its members with a view to a campaign of industrial action.⁶² NUT's only comment on the substantive proposals before it concerned the new school in North East Hull which was dealt with in the context of staff deployment. It asserted that, if the proposal was accepted, teacher morale and expertise would be protected more strongly and equitably by the amalgamation of the two schools it was primarily intended to replace in order to form the new school than by their closure and the separate establishment of the new school.⁶³

NAS/UWT made no comment on the specific proposals, adopted an apparently neutral stance and urged that the decision to re-organise should be arrived at as quickly as possible.⁶⁴ The only other contribution from a professional association came from the NUT branch of the threatened school on the edge of the North West sector and amounted to a defence of the school's practice and ethos in attempting to put the comprehensive principle into practice despite the effects of parental choice in providing the school with a far from balanced intake.⁶⁵ The union's members at that school unanimously declared themselves let down by the controlling Labour group who they had hoped would understand and identify with their predicament rather than opt to close them down.⁶⁶

The resolutions from governing bodies⁶⁷ contained only one unequivocal acceptance of a substantive item of proposed policy: the envisaged closure of the school in South East Hull occupying what the LEA judged to be the least satisfactory buildings for continued use and whose intake came largely from the North East sector where the new school was proposed. The governors resolved that, in view of the number of pupils and the distribution of the population, the need for the school to close be accepted reluctantly.⁶⁸

The submission from the school's Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association indicated general concurrence with that view, declaring that it was unfortunate that the school was sited in the South East sector while a high proportion of its pupils had to travel from the North East sector and suggested that, if the new school were to be built, the ideal solution would be for the staff and pupils to transfer to it.⁶⁹ The remaining governing body resolutions made pleas for the retention in their present form of those schools under threat, and, in the case of two of the schools in South East Hull which were not threatened, sought to maintain their intake at a minimum of 10 forms of entry or an extension to that level in the future.

Several of the submissions concerning individual schools contained suggested alternative solutions. The head of the larger of the two neighbouring mixed schools on the northern edge of the North West sector suggested a more radical approach and pointed out that his school had the staff and the facilities to provide for pupils of 12 years of age or even younger and that he and the staff believed there would be advantages in earlier transfer to secondary education.⁷⁰

The single sex schools at the centre of the North West sector and one of their associated junior high schools proved a fertile source of alternative solutions, whose essential features were schemes to ensure that the two single sex schools and their neighbouring mixed school together should continue to serve the neighbourhood, while other areas might also benefit from a reduction in the number of closures.

The parents' association, old pupils' association, and the staff of the boys' school jointly presented their alternative strategy which, while accepting the amalgamation of the two single sex schools in South West Hull, sought to retain the remaining 14 schools by limiting future enrolments in all of them to a maximum of 10FE, with the proviso that schools should reach that level only where absolutely necessary, and by allowing some of the schools to fall to 7FE in 1989, the projected worst year, by adjusting the calculation for forms of entry to use units of 26 or 27 rather than 30 pupils

but to retain staff at the 30 pupil level.⁷¹

The proposed alternative from the parents' association of the neighbouring girls' high school, while accepting the sub-committee's principle that no school should have less than 8 forms of entry in the future pattern, shared common ground with the boys' school in opposing zoning and the building of a new school and in suggesting a redefinition of a form of entry in the period of lowest enrolments but accepted a larger number of closures in total. They accepted the closure of the mixed schools whose intake would largely have gone to the new school but argued that, if their principles were accepted, there would be no need for any further closures or amalgamations, thus, effectively reducing the number of proposed closures by one and leaving provision in the central part of the North West sector intact.⁷²

The City Hall Meeting - 10th February, 1982.

The meeting in the City Hall, addressed by both the Chairman of the Education Committee and the Director of Education, and relayed verbatim on local radio, was, in the event, a protest meeting.⁷³ The chairman's introduction placed the meeting in the context of the formal consultative procedures of the past two years and he explained that, when the formal body had met in November 1981, it had become clear to many of them that insufficient opportunity had been provided for parents to be informed of what was being suggested and that the widening of the formal representation in January 1982 to include parent governors had been done in haste and had not proved entirely satisfactory. The City Hall meeting was the direct consequence of representations by the parent governors at the January consultative meeting that the general body of parents should have an opportunity to express their views on the proposals.

The Director of Education was then called upon to explain the Authority's concern to maintain schools of viable size in relation to the curriculum judged desirable and, as background to the meeting, spoke of the discussions

with teachers and the county's advisory staff which had concluded that the minimum viable entry for junior high schools in that context was 3 forms of entry and for senior high schools 8 forms of entry, if the schools were to do their job efficiently, and that the Authority would be failing in its duty if it allowed the schools to decline below that level for want of action. The larger the school the stronger it became, with the saving grace, in the Hull situation, that as senior high schools took only three year groups to 16 the schools could be of viable size without being over-large in comparison with the 11-18 secondary schools in other parts of the Authority.

The chairman then spoke to the main points in the pamphlet provided for the parents and explained the rationale for the proposals to take particular schools out of use against the background provided by the Director of Education, and explained the Authority's criteria for selecting those particular schools: the need to take out of use those buildings which were regarded as least satisfactory, their desire to achieve as sensible a distribution of schools as possible in relation to demand, the wish to have closer liaison between each school and its community and closer liaison and continuity between the junior high schools and senior high schools, and the need for a new secondary school in the North East sector to reduce the amount of daily bussing from that area. If the proposals were approved by the Education Committee the City would have 12 strong senior high schools, three in each geographical sector, providing parental choice from among at least those schools in each sector. The question of the way in which surplus buildings could be used for other educational purposes was presented not as one of the reasons for the proposals but as one of their consequences.

The most frequently expressed parental objection was the effective abolition of single-sex education if one of the options for North West Hull was decided upon in conjunction with the decision to amalgamate the single-sex schools in South West Hull, linked with their concern that such a move would reduce parental choice when combined with the nascent neighbourhood

policy in the proposals. Second only to those two concerns were specific objections that the individual schools selected for closure or amalgamation were most, in their different ways, "good" or "successful" and parents wished to see them retained. The parents found it difficult to see why all the senior high schools could not continue to function as smaller schools and saw a reduction in their size as an educational advantage rather than a threat to the curriculum provided. None of the participants in the debate favoured the building of a new school on the estate in the North East sector, which they saw as restricting parental choice and as a denial of the opportunity for pupils to move off the estate and widen their educational horizons; while at several points in the discussion the charge was laid that the meeting was not truly consultative and that the decision had already been made.

The submissions in response to the sub-committee's proposals for East and North West Hull, and the vociferous parental reaction at the meeting in the City Hall, fractured the substantial measure of consensus among the teaching profession for a policy of amalgamations apparently achieved earlier when the Authority had focused attention on South West Hull alone. Generally the school submissions contained, in addition to a spirited defence of those under threat, resistance to major elements of the Authority's strategy for re-organisation and the principles on which it was based; while the official union position was at best neutral and at worst critical when attention passed from matters of principle to specific action. Several submissions also asserted that consultation had been inadequate, particularly with parents of children currently in primary and junior high schools and over the question of single sex education, while others felt that the Authority should consult on the future provision of educational opportunities at all levels and regretted that schools had been named for closure before a strategy for the protection of the career prospects of the teachers had been examined and urged the consultative body to delay any decision until those matters had been resolved.

ReferencesChapter 6

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- 4 Humberside County Council. Senior High School and 16-19 Provision in Hull: A Consultative Document May 1980, para. 1.3.
- 5 Ibid. para. 1.4.
- 6 Ibid. para. 3.3.
- 7 Ibid. para. 4.2.
- 8 Ibid. para. 5.1.
- 9 Ibid. para. 5.9.
- 10 Ibid. para. 5.2.
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- 16 Ibid. para. 3.
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Chapter 7 - Devising the Hull re-structuring plan:
February 1982 - February 1984

The plan to re-organise Hull's school system by means of a return to transfer to secondary schools at 11 plus and the creation of two sixth form colleges for post-compulsory education was the product of a lengthy period of review and planning by two specially constituted working groups. The first, created under Minute 3938 of the Education Committee on 17th February 1982, was charged with re-examining current arrangements and their effectiveness in serving the needs of the city. This group produced a report entitled 'Educational Opportunities in Hull', formally presented to the Education Committee on 24th September 1982,¹ which, in addition to an appraisal of the progress made under current arrangements and an assessment of their potential for further development, also considered the implications of systems with transfer at 8, 12 & 16, and 11 & 16. That exploratory stage completed, a second working group created under Minute 4184 of 24th September was given the task of recommending a re-organisation proposal which was presented to the Education Committee in February 1984, and formed the basis of the subsequent wider consultations with governing bodies, the teaching profession and the public.²

Consultation at both the exploratory and formative stage of this new policy was restricted in the main to leading members of the controlling Labour administration, advised by senior officers. Both working groups contained a substantial majority of Labour councillors, several of whom served on both groups, including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee. The Conservative Shadow Chairman was, however, a member of both groups, as were two teachers' union representatives from the Education Committee. None the less, the relative narrowness of the membership of both these groups contrasted with the amount of professional input provided by serving heads and teachers' representatives on earlier working parties.

Current arrangements reviewed

The report of the first working group presented an overtly dispassionate and open-minded review of both the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, outlined alternative patterns, and spoke of the task facing the Authority as one of assessing whether there was anything inherent in the Hull situation which demanded a change or whether current arrangements could be supported and developed in such a way that opportunities could be provided which would ensure children a start in life at least equal to anything they could expect elsewhere.³ The introduction to the report also placed the review in the context of the present and likely future resources available to the Authority and declared, 'It is important to include in the consideration not only the amount of money that might be applied but also what the money might secure. If a sound system has been established which will generally support the work of staff, the provision of additional resources is likely to be more productive than applying the same amount of money to a system which is struggling to meet its obligations.'⁴

In reviewing existing arrangements and the possibility of their continuance the group did not start with a blank sheet of paper. It had the advantage of the reports of the earlier working parties concerning the junior high schools on the Orchard Park Estate and on the viability of the senior high schools in South West Hull, both of whose key conclusions were incorporated. Several strengths of the 5-9 schools were noted, particularly their ability to meet the needs of children from deprived backgrounds and with a wide range of ability on entry. Their particular strengths were seen as allowing more time for children to acquire and develop basic skills and strong relationships in comparison with 5-7 and 5-8 schools,⁵ in addition to it being easier for the schools to meet all the individual child's needs by means of class teaching arrangements than it would be in a school taking children to 11 or 12 where the support of colleagues with specialist skills and knowledge was more critical.⁶ The schools' ability to provide flexibility in curriculum planning and organisation for the whole age-range, without a division into

infants and juniors, was also regarded as one of their strengths.⁷ Regarding the primary schools, the report concluded that, while much remained to be done to continue the development of the concept of the 5-9 school, with class sizes now down to 30 and with an expansion of in-service opportunities, 'the time is appropriate to develop and strengthen the gains of the past few years.'⁸

While it was stated of the junior high schools that a common philosophy about the nature of 9-13 middle school education was clearly discernible, and that a successful middle school could organise a smooth transition from the primary to the secondary experience,⁹ a note of caution was sounded about their future in the observation that there was increasing evidence that some, because of their size, were insufficiently staffed to provide the necessary range and quality of skills, which had led to the Authority's policy that, wherever possible, the schools should have a minimum intake of 90 pupils.¹⁰ It was concluded that continued development of educational opportunities in junior high schools could only be achieved by a continued programme of school amalgamations.¹¹

The report's consideration of the existing senior high school arrangements consisted entirely of factors which called their unchanged continued existence into question. It was pointed out that three pairs of county schools had resorted to joint sixth forms in order to make better use of specialist staff, provide more viable teaching groups, and safeguard minority subjects; while the two Catholic schools also had joint arrangements for certain minority subjects only.¹² The report supported the re-affirmation by the South West Hull Working Party of the long-established policy of attempting to maintain a minimum SFE to the senior high schools in order to sustain an appropriate range of educational opportunities and provide desirable teaching and pastoral arrangements, underlined the latter's recognition of the need to co-ordinate post-16 provision between schools and colleges, and itself affirmed that that could be done with greater confidence by schools with a significant sixth form.¹³ The continuance of the existing system of senior high schools was conditional upon a reduction in their number, else the average

intake would fall from over 270 pupils in 1982 to just over 180 pupils in 1989 and thereafter, that average only being sustainable by applying a planned admission limit of 180 pupils to all of the schools which would require formal approval by the Secretary of State.¹⁴

Consideration of transition between phases in the three-tier system revealed another area, exacerbated by population movement, where practice had fallen short of the expectations of the 1969 comprehensive re-organisation; that children should attend primary, middle and secondary schools within a broad geographical area, taking account also of parental wishes and the Authority's desire to produce a balanced ability entry to senior high schools. Liaison between the tiers had proved increasingly difficult to maintain given the large number of junior high schools feeding particular senior high schools. An analysis of the transfer arrangements in 1981 was included with the report as an appendix. This revealed that while the normal number of 'main' feeder schools was 4, 5 or 6, accounting for nine of the fifteen senior high schools, others had as many as 9, 10 or 12 and one, a single sex girls' school, had 15; while the total number of feeders was likely to be far in excess of that number. With the exception of the two single sex schools in North West Hull, the two large schools in North Hull and the two south of the Holderness Road in East Hull were the most adversely affected in this respect having between 9 and 12 'main' feeders and between 24 and 28 in total.¹⁵ On this point, the report concluded that, of the three main factors accounting for the large number of feeder schools, geographical imbalance of accommodation and demand, parental choice, and population movement, the Authority could take steps to reduce the first while the third factor was likely to be less severe than in the past.¹⁶

On these points the main report concluded that large housing developments had receded in importance in favour of clearance and infilling and that it could be anticipated that a greater degree of stability between broad areas could be expected in the future, although individual movement was likely to continue, and also that the continuing movement, coupled with the location of

schools, made a neighbourhood system with a defined pyramid of primary and junior high schools feeding each senior high school impractical.¹⁷ It was therefore suggested that an approach planned along the originally envisaged lines of broad geographical areas should be adopted, having the following features; the number of schools receiving pupils from, or transferring them to, any single school should be sufficiently small to allow for the development of close curriculum and pastoral arrangements, that the number of such broad pyramids should also be sufficiently small for the Authority to play a co-ordinating role, in addition to the retention of balanced social and academic entry to secondary schools and the preservation of parental choice.¹⁸

In discussing developing Hull's education system, and the need to review it, the report argued that serious challenges remained, despite the existence of a sound infrastructure. Objective evidence, where it existed, showed that levels of attainment at various ages were significantly lower than national norms, while there was also too much evidence of disaffection among students in the last years of compulsory schooling when attendance figures showed a significant decline.¹⁹ Accordingly, the working group urged, as soon as the overall structure of the education system was confirmed, whatever the age ranges, that urgent reviews should be conducted of the achievements and needs of the primary schools on the one hand and of the secondary schools on the other. If the senior high schools were to continue, their role in post-16 education in particular required clearer definition, especially as it related to courses other than those at G.C.E. Advanced Level, the extension of evening institute work, youth club facilities, and general community use.²⁰ Concluding its review of the existing arrangements the report declared, 'The current system is ready for development; any alternative would take at least half a decade to create before it reached a similar position for consolidation and growth'.²¹

The Alternatives

The working group then turned its attention to an appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of alternative systems, presented falling enrolments

as an opportunity to change the pattern of schooling, and considered the effects of the process of change, according to different patterns, in terms of the time-scale envisaged for bringing about change, the use of existing buildings, and other resource requirements.

The advantages and disadvantages of different ages of transfer in both the primary and secondary phases were considered in comparison with existing arrangements and certain conclusions were drawn about the consequences of particular changes. The possibility of transfer at 7 and 8 was reviewed. The argument that 8 plus transfer would reduce the risk that some children were not sufficiently 'stretched' by the methods of the first school was presented, alongside the assertion that the 5-9 schools had for some time addressed themselves to that problem and had consciously responded to the needs of the more able, older pupils. It was also observed that, while some teachers were not strongly opposed to 8 plus transfer, there was very little support for a shift to 7 plus in the context of education in the city.²²

The possibility of delaying transfer to secondary education until 14 was quickly dismissed on the grounds that there were no pressures on Humberside to consider a change in that direction, while, practically, it would raise problems about the level of specialist provision in the middle schools. It was also felt that it would exacerbate the problem of preparing for public examinations, in view of the claim of some that rather less than three years between entry to the senior high school and sitting public examinations was already too short.²³

Transfer at 12 plus was presented as having a number of attractions. It would provide an extra year for examination preparation, and would also remove the need to close or amalgamate many of the middle schools, as 8-12 schools would require a minimum roll of only 240 pupils for curriculum viability. However, it was asserted that the major disadvantage of such a move was that it would then be impossible to maintain the minimum 8 forms of entry requirement 'which has been a long-established and recently reasserted criterion for an effective senior high school.'²⁴ On those grounds

the report concluded, 'With this in mind there is an awareness that it would probably be advisable to remove the sixth forms into sixth form or tertiary colleges, in which case there is a strongly held view in some quarters that it would be better to consider changing right back to entry at 11.'²⁵

The review of possible alternatives ended with a defence of the 13-18 senior high school in its potential role of accommodating recent changes in the employment patterns of school leavers at 16 and later and the need to provide pre-vocational preparation in school from 14 upwards.²⁶

The remaining sections of the report focused on the likely practical consequences of a decision to reorganise with ages of transfer at 8, 12 and 16, and 11 and 16. It was estimated, in view of the planning, consultative and statutory requirements involved, that if a change to transfers at 8, 12 and 16 was decided upon by the end of 1982, and no particular difficulties presented themselves, it might just be possible to have the proposals determined by the Secretary of State in time for admission arrangements in September 1984 to be modified to enable a change to take place in September 1986. It was considered unlikely, in view of the additional work necessary to prepare a proposal, that that timetable was achievable for a change to transfer at 11 and 16.²⁷

A suggested major implication of any reduction in the age of transfer was the inevitability of separate institutions for post-16 education, which followed from the amount of accommodation available in the senior high schools. Eight of the fifteen could accommodate no more than 720 pupils plus a sixth form (240 p.a.). If the transfer age were lowered to 12, these could admit only 180 pupils each year, and only 150 p.a. if the transfer age was 11. The report regarded it as unrealistic to believe that reducing the size of year groups would have no effect on the ability of the schools to provide post-16 courses efficiently and effectively.²⁸

Separate provision would involve the use of certain existing senior high school premises and it was calculated, in order to provide reasonable geographical distribution and enough accommodation for those presently in

sixth forms, that at least three sites, in the South West, North West and South East sectors, would need to be converted to college use, with possibly a fourth in order to provide some margin for a growth in staying-on rates.²⁹

A further concomitant of lowering the age of transfer was that the additional age groups in the secondary schools would further increase the short-fall in secondary places in the North East sector, so strengthening the argument for a new school there.³⁰ This need had been envisaged, and planned for, by the Authority for some time, independently of proposals to change the character of the school system.

The principal consequences of transfer at 12 and 11 were then assessed in terms of the future use of existing accommodation and the size and number of the schools remaining. With 12 plus transfer it was envisaged that the middle schools would not change significantly in size or in numbers. In order to avoid difficulties experienced elsewhere in recruiting specialist staff in languages and science a minimum intake of 60 pupils was regarded as essential. That option would involve fewer amalgamations than retaining 9-13 schools as it was calculated that only about 8 schools would fall substantially below that target.³¹ In addition, the loss of a complete year group in the primary school would increase the amount of spare accommodation, which would be particularly valuable for the development of nursery provision and enable substandard accommodation to be taken out of use. Also, as the schools needed to be as close as possible to their communities, there would be few reasons to consider reducing their number.³²

With transfer at 11 the remaining primary schools would cater for 5-11 year olds, it being generally felt that a break at 7 would be undesirable, and it was envisaged that this could cause some difficulties at the extremes. The small primaries would have to reduce their intake to absorb an extra two age groups, which could lead to a number of mixed age classes, while at the upper end of the size range, the use of existing primary and junior high schools located in single buildings as 5-11 schools could lead to them becoming over-large.³³

The Report's overall conclusions³⁴ were that the structure of an education system was relatively unimportant if the essential conditions that had to be met to ensure its viability were recognised and achieved. For each of the possible systems these were that transfer at 9 and 13 required junior high schools to take at least 90 pupils each year and senior high schools 240, with strong co-ordination between phases and between the senior high schools and further education over post-16 provision. With transfer at 11 or 12 it was seen as necessary to consider seriously whether school sixth forms could be sustained. While the degree of co-ordination in these systems was not as crucial in curricular terms it was still seen to be important in pastoral terms. In addition it was observed that 8-12 middle schools differed significantly from 9-13 schools and the process of change had not to be underestimated, while, if transfer at 11 was decided on, there was a strong case for making all primary schools serve the 5-11 age range.

The group's final comment was that there were no easy options. Changing the ages of transfer would lead to every school in the city being affected and would require the support of the governors of the voluntary schools, of parents and teachers if it was to be managed successfully.

Planning the 11 plus Transfer Proposals

The second working group focused its attention first on the practical details of changing the age of transfer to 12 plus, which had been dealt with in the educational opportunities report only in outline illustrative fashion as it might apply in the North West sector of the city, and at its meeting on 24th November 1982 requested a report from the Director of Education on the implications of such a move, coupled with the request that the post-16 alternatives should also be indicated.³⁵

However, by the time that interim report, containing details of the size and siting of schools, the suitability of buildings and staffing implications, was presented on 27th January 1983, the Chairman of the Education Committee had authorised, in addition, a feasibility study on 11 plus transfer

which would feature in the final report. While, at that time, no irrevocable decisions had been taken within the group, its attention thereafter focused essentially on transfer at 11 plus, coupled with the possibility of separate 16-19 colleges. Its thinking had developed sufficiently by March 1983 for the Chairman to issue a press statement, sent also to all the schools in the Hull division on 11th March to that effect, indicating that arrangements would be made for consultation as soon as all the details were available.³⁶

The minutes of the group's subsequent meetings reveal the serial manner in which the formal proposals emerged. Those held in April, May and June were concerned with further examination of the feasibility of 11 plus transfer on the basis of a series of interim reports on particular aspects of the proposals presented by the Director of Education; while those which took place between September 1983 and February 1984 were concerned essentially with detailed consideration of catchment areas, the siting of the sixth form colleges and the consultative arrangements.

In terms of the decision to propose 11 plus transfer the meeting of 16th June 1983 was the watershed. The minutes recorded that the Director of Education submitted a document entitled "Related Issues Concerned with the Proposals",³⁷ whereupon the Conservative Shadow Chairman indicated that if the proposals were not approved before the County Council elections in 1985, the Conservative party, if in power, would withdraw them and also indicated that they favoured transfer at ages 8 and 12. It was also decided then that discussions should be held with the Church authorities regarding the voluntary schools, preferably before the end of the summer term.³⁸

By September 8th the group had turned to considering draft suggestions for possible catchment areas for the 5-11 schools, received a report on the working of current arrangements for balanced entry to the senior high schools, and agreed to hold confidential consultations on the catchment areas with the head teachers.³⁹ A sub-group of four Labour members was then empowered to represent the Authority at meetings with the Church authorities.⁴⁰

In October⁴¹ the formal decision was taken to recommend college-based provision for post-16 education and a report was received on the recommended modifications to the catchment areas for the 5-11 schools following the discussions which had been held with head teachers in the interim. It then turned to considering possible sites for the sixth form colleges in West and East Hull at its meetings in November and January.

At its final meeting before the presentation of the proposals to the Education Committee and the public, held on 3rd February 1984, the group finalised the schedules of 5-11 and 11-16 schools and its final choice of sites for the sixth form colleges, approved the dates for the series of consultative meetings in March, and agreed that certain outstanding aspects of the proposals should be discussed at those meetings.⁴² The latter all bore on the implementation of the plan and concerned possible amendments to several of the catchment areas, the discussions which would be necessary with the Church of England regarding its wishes concerning individual middle and primary schools to enable it to play an integral part in the re-organisation, and the discussions which would be necessary with teachers' union representatives about the possible transitional arrangements and their effect on individual pupils.

ReferencesChapter 7

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Chapter 8 - Hull re-organisation: stage II (1984-1985)

Humberside Education Committee made public its plans for changing the age of transfer in Hull schools at its meeting on 15th February 1984. The proposal to return to transfer at 11 plus and to make separate provision for 16-18 year olds did not come on an entirely unprepared public, at least in so far as the teachers and professional associations were concerned, as on 11th March 1983 the Director of Education had sent a circular letter to the heads of all schools in the Hull division indicating the LEA's intentions and a possible timetable for the implementation of the change,¹ though there was no specific communication with parents at that time. This announced that a detailed discussion paper was in preparation, that the County Council's ruling Labour group had decided that it would examine the feasibility of such a change, and that a programme of consultations with parents, governors, unions and staff would be undertaken, accompanied by a detailed written plan which would be given wide circulation. The projected time-table indicated that a draft scheme would be completed by the officials during the summer of 1983, that consultations beginning in the autumn should be completed by March to April 1984, and the public notices issued in May with a projected implementation date, if the proposals were approved by DES, of 1986-88. In the event the working group responsible for the detailed plan did not complete its work until early February 1984, while the public and other consultative meetings took place in March.

This chapter analyses the consultative process from the perspective of both the LEA and that of the other parties involved from the documentary and other written evidence and observation of meetings of the Education Committee and public meetings. Chapters 10 and 11 consider the other data relating to the Hull consultations gathered from the interviews with key participants and the results of the questionnaires concerning the participants' perspectives on the objectives and outcomes of the exercise.

While 15th February marked the formal unveiling of the LEA's proposals, a summary in leaflet form (see Appendix VI) was sent on 14th February to head teachers with the request that they inform their staffs. The same leaflet was distributed to the parents through the children after the half-term (on 27th February). The leaflet outlined the proposals and the arrangements for public consultation and was a summary in graphic form of the detailed consultative document presented to the Education Committee.²

The essence of the proposals entailed the abolition of the 9-13 middle schools, or junior high schools as they are known in Hull, and the use of existing primary school (5-9) and junior high school premises as 5-11 schools, allowing for excess accommodation of both types to be taken out of use. The existing 13-18 senior high schools would, in the main, be designated as 11-16 secondary schools and two sixth form colleges, one to be accommodated in the premises of a former junior high school in the west of the city and another which would occupy the premises of a former senior high school in the east, would provide for post-compulsory education. It was also proposed to build a new 11-16 secondary school in the north east sector of the city which for many years had been under-supplied with secondary school places, entailing the daily bussing of substantial numbers of pupils to other parts of the city.

Integral to the proposals was the abandonment of a policy of balanced entry to secondary schools which had been the practice since comprehensive re-organisation in 1969, in favour of a policy of neighbourhood primary and secondary schools, with primary schools designated as "feeders" to a specific secondary school or schools in an area. On transfer to senior high schools at 13 pupils had been graded on the basis of tests and school reports into five categories (A-E) and the LEA had attempted an equitable distribution of ability among the city's comprehensive schools, while, in addition, parents had also been allowed to indicate a series of choices. The LEA each year had attempted to reconcile these sometimes conflicting criteria in allocating pupils to secondary schools.

The consultative arrangements allowed for two types of meeting and for information centres, commonly known as "education shops". Two formal meetings, with chairmen and other members of governing bodies, head teachers, representatives of the teachers' associations and other unions, and representatives of the voluntary schools, were held on 1st and 2nd March at which the consultative document, previously circulated to those present, was discussed. These meetings were followed by four evening public meetings, intended primarily for parents, in the north east, north west, south east and south west sectors of the city. In parallel, from 6th March to 6th April, the "education shops", located mainly in schools in different parts of the city, were open variously during the day and in the evening to enable parents to find out more details about the areas served by the schools and how to submit comments.

The proposals amounted to a recasting of the City's school system and involved significant changes in role for the 82 primary schools, 51 junior high schools, and 18 senior high schools and had career and educational implications for some 2,550 teachers and 46,000 pupils.³ Only one school, a voluntary aided nautical school, with a specialised secondary curriculum and substantial non-local intake, would remain unaffected by the changes proposed.⁴ The magnitude of the proposed changes in the state sector can be seen from the projected use of the school buildings. Of the 15 controlled senior high schools it was proposed that two should be removed from use for compulsory education and a further two should be significantly changed in character; one being the designated site of the proposed sixth form college for East Hull and the other to become a new Church of England controlled school with both a neighbourhood and a denominational intake.⁵ Of the existing 45 controlled junior high schools and 69 primary schools, the building resource base for the proposed 5-11 primary system, it was envisaged that the buildings of 18 junior high schools and 58 primary schools would be required to provide the 70 5-11 schools needed.⁶

The consultations, with additional meetings in a number of individual schools, mostly at the governors' request, lasted until 9th May 1984, when a special meeting of the Education Committee accepted the plan with certain modifications. This was followed by the County Council's formal approval of the plan on 16th May. Alongside that series of meetings there was much other activity and several protest meetings in reaction to the proposals. Prominent among these was NUT's (Hull Teachers' Association) official opposition to the plans, which culminated in a special protest meeting at the City Hall and a half-day strike on 8th March. The union had declared its outright opposition to the proposals in general, and the closure of middle schools in particular, before the meeting of the Education Committee on 15th February.⁷ Several parents' action groups were formed, and these coalesced into a joint action committee whose principal objective was to save the junior high schools; while a separate campaign was fought by the governors and PTA to retain East Park Senior High School, earmarked for conversion into a sixth form college, as an 11-16 neighbourhood school.

The document containing the proposals for consultation, and the parents' leaflet which contained certain of its features in summary form, were the principal documents intended to explain the rationale of the proposed changes to concerned parties. During the public consultations both were subject to criticism, principally from those who were concerned to resist the changes. The major criticism of the yellow document, coming mainly from junior high school teachers and the NUT, was that it contained no educational justification for the changes and, more particularly, that it did not demonstrate that the middle schools had "failed". This principal consultative document was a substantial booklet which dealt with the origins of the Hull system, the present position and the problems affecting the present system; it explained the aims and objectives of the new proposals and detailed the proposals for each age group; it outlined the consultative arrangements and the projected timetable for implementing the changes and explained the transitional arrangements which would be necessary. It dealt also with staffing

matters, the voluntary schools and with the financial implications of the changes.

An examination of the different sections of the booklet reveals the LEA's priorities and the reasoning behind the proposal to recast the schooling system. The Authority declared it sought to improve educational opportunities by creating a system which could combat the effects of falling rolls, especially as they related to the problems of sustaining the curriculum in the smaller middle schools; it sought to minimise the problems of liaison between the different stages and to create strong post-16 provision to meet the education and training needs of the students, and a further expansion of nursery provision as a foundation of the schooling system, while the three-tier system, with transfer at 9 and 13, was presented as a barrier to progress.⁸

In commenting upon the position in the 82 primary schools in the city in 1984, attention was drawn to the considerable age of the buildings in which the majority operated and to the difficulties experienced in ensuring curricular progression and continuity from the redeployment of teachers and consequent loss of staff expertise which reduced numbers had presented, and an increase in the number of mixed-age classes in the smaller schools.⁹

The problems affecting the existing system of schools were presented as being of such a kind as to call into question the continued viability of the junior high schools,¹⁰ and school-based sixth forms.¹¹ Regarding the junior high schools it was revealed that 37 out of 51 had fallen below 3 forms of entry in September 1983 and that in order to provide curricular protection the teaching in those schools had been "subsidised". The LEA concluded that this need would become greater as rolls continued to fall.¹²

As for the senior high schools, it was pointed out that the planned minimum entry of 240 pupils (8FE), which had been a feature of the 1969 re-organisation, in order to maintain a good range of opportunities in the main school and in the sixth form, had been difficult to sustain as rolls had fallen and that it would become increasingly so.¹³ The proposed change in the age of transfer to secondary education was presented as an opportunity to

consider whether pupils' interests were best served by a system based on co-ordinated provision in school sixth forms and the College of Further Education or by all pupils transferring to colleges for post-compulsory education.¹⁴

Changes in the nature of the sixth form were indicated, particularly the decline in the numbers of traditional 'A' level candidates in comparison with an increase in the numbers of students committed to pre-vocational studies,¹⁵ and the government's commitment to expanding pre-vocational education and training through YTS and CPVE which the Authority felt it had to be in a position to accommodate.¹⁶ The system of co-ordinating panels which currently linked the work of the schools with the Hull College of Further Education was presented as a qualified success only in that new jointly taught courses had been launched successfully but the aim of co-ordinating 'A' level and other courses had proved difficult with small sixth forms.¹⁷ In September 1983 only one school had a sixth form of more than 150 students, while 13 of the 18 schools had sixth forms of fewer than 100 students. The latter had difficulty in sustaining an acceptable range of 'A' level subjects and one year courses, and found it difficult to respond to the demand for new courses requiring significant new resources, such as technology and computer studies.

The retention of school sixth forms was presented as entailing disadvantages in both curriculum breadth and in the use of buildings and staff resources which co-ordination arrangements could alleviate but not eradicate. The LEA calculated that the establishment of 11-18 schools would require the retention of more of the sites currently used by the 13-18 high schools, while the average sixth form size could be expected to decline from 95 to about 60 and that such sixth forms could sustain a minimum of only 8 'A' levels and a one year vocational preparation course. While it was conceded that some improvement in the efficiency with which resources were used could be achieved by joint time-table arrangements between neighbouring schools, that device could not, in the LEA's estimation, preserve the current range of curriculum

provision across the city and an additional ten to twelve 'A' level subjects would need to be provided by some means.¹⁸

The LEA declared its assumption that any future arrangements would need to be co-ordinated by panels of heads and principals concerned with joint academic planning, a common admissions procedure and the co-ordinated use of resources,¹⁹ but that a school-based system as opposed to a college-based one, would represent the commitment of a disproportionately large amount of administrative time on the heads' part to co-ordinating a relatively small section of secondary school provision. A college-based system would, in contrast, use staff and buildings more efficiently and also provide a comprehensive range of academic, vocational and pre-vocational courses for 16-19 year olds in addition to providing for adult continuing education.²⁰ The proposal to establish sixth form colleges was presented, on the basis of the considerations elaborated, as offering a guarantee that traditional academic, and recently established pre-vocational programmes, would be developed from their present state while not restricting the opportunity for the further education system in Hull to develop alongside the sixth form college to provide a wide range of opportunities reflecting changing and growing needs.²¹

The Authority paid some attention in the document to the financial implications of the proposals but conceded, at that point in time, that the figures presented were indicative rather than conclusive and accepted that considerable work remained to be done to produce more accurate financial information, and also that individual assessments would need to be made regarding the suitability of the accommodation at the schools remaining in use.²² The proposals required some new buildings and the remodelling and extension of others, while a large number would also be taken out of use. The financial estimates were divided into capital and revenue costs, the latter consisting largely of debt charges and running costs other than staffing, though staffing costs were included for new projects. In general it was assumed that staffing costs would reduce rather than increase as a consequence of the change.

Post-compulsory provision required the remodelling of existing buildings for use as sixth form colleges at a total estimated capital cost of £1,750,000, though an existing capital project at the senior high school would be varied to ensure that the facilities were compatible with the requirements of a sixth form college. Minor works at the two former senior high schools to be used for further education accounted for a further £250,000 in capital expenditure.

The secondary school proposals entailed the greatest capital expenditure in the building of a new 11-16 school in the North East sector at an estimated capital cost of £4,500,000, though it was pointed out²³ that the school would be required in any event to avoid the need to transport some 1,500 pupils daily to schools elsewhere in the city.

Primary education was estimated to be far less costly in capital terms as it required, in the main, only minor improvements to many of the existing primary schools to make them suitable for use by 5-11 year olds, though more substantial work would be needed at some of the junior high school buildings remaining in use. The total capital cost of such changes was estimated at £1,560,000. It was calculated that providing nursery accommodation at the proposed primary schools where no such provision already existed would involve establishing 31 additional units. It was assumed that 8 units would be provided out of the current yearly programmes to 1988, thus leaving 23 units to be provided as resources permitted at an estimated capital cost of £740,000.²⁴

In summary the total capital cost of the additional provision required was estimated at £9,250,000 and the associated revenue cost was put at £1,757,000. However, it was asserted that there would be offsetting capital savings arising from avoiding part of the alternative costs of new accommodation for further education, from the sale of the present further education annexes, and from the disposal of surplus school sites where possible; while there would be revenue savings in avoiding the cost of maintaining the present further education annexes and surplus schools, from avoiding the additional

staffing costs of maintaining the curriculum in the junior high schools, and a saving of the cost of transporting the pupils daily from the North East sector of the city.

The events of the consultative period

1. The public meetings

The Education Committee meeting on 15th February 1984, at which members accepted the plan as a basis for consultation after considerable debate and declared opposition from both the Conservative Shadow Chairman and the principal NUT member of the Committee, opened the formal public consultative phase of policy development. Observation of the series of public meetings which followed provides another source of evidence for appraisal in relation to the written evidence and the subsequent interviews with key participants.

The formal consultative meeting for East Hull, held on 2nd March, was observed in addition to the four public meetings held between 5th and 15th March. These revealed both the Authority's approach to the consultations and the initial reactions of interested parties to both the consultative process and the proposals themselves. The meeting on 2nd March fell into two parts, as did the later public meetings; an exposition of the proposals from the Chairman of the Education Committee and the Director of Education acting in concert, and a period of questioning and comment from the floor.

Both the Chairman's opening remarks, and those of the Director when he was invited to explain the plan, provided a clear statement of the purpose of the meeting from the Authority's perspective. This was expressed primarily in terms of giving information to those present and answering questions about details in the proposals. It was for the panel to listen but they did not propose to respond to comment. The Director added that it was not the purpose of the meeting to argue the pros and cons of the proposals. It had been called to enable what he described as "the partners in the education service" to hear what the plan was in order to understand it, be in a position to discuss it, reflect on it, consult in turn with their constituents and, ultimately, come to a conclusion. While comment would not necessarily be responded to at the

meeting it was made clear that written comments would be welcomed.

While it cannot be assumed from any analysis of those who spoke that they necessarily represented a consensus view, in the event the several different interests represented at this meeting were either unable or unwilling to accept such a passive role and while a number of questions on matters of detail were put these were often a means of debating the merits of the proposals. There was thus an apparent lack of congruence between the panel and those present over what the meeting ought to have been about. Some contributors simply sought clarification regarding the size of the nursery units planned, the projected intakes of particular schools, and the amount of bussing still involved, but most contributions from the floor amounted to an assault on the principles underlying the proposals.

By far the most common contribution, from junior high school heads, parent and teacher-governors and chairmen of governing bodies, was a defence of the 3-tier system, on educational and developmental grounds, and a denial of the need to change a system which they claimed suited Hull well. The proposed neighbourhood secondary schools also came under attack from the same source as being over-large, unduly restrictive of parental choice, and as likely to increase the educational effects of social disadvantage in many parts of the city.

NUT officers, while seeking clarification on the proposed availability of specialist teaching in the 5-11 primary schools and asking for long-term commitment of resources to the neighbourhood schools in deprived areas, asserted that the Authority had not provided evidence of the assumed superiority of sixth form colleges over school-based sixth forms and laid the charge that its proposed solution was expedient rather than based on sound educational arguments. The Secretary of the Head Teachers' Association entered a plea for the retention of the 13-18 senior high schools as catering for a homogeneous group and regretted that the debate had become polarised between the acceptance or rejection of two possible approaches, the former one of retaining the present system but accepting closures and amalgamations and the radical

proposal now before them, and argued that aspects of each should ideally be brought together.

Other comments concerned the consultations themselves, particularly the time-table for public consultation, and pleas were made for an extension to at least the end of the academic year in order to have adequate opportunity to obtain parents' views; while the plans for the new school in the North East sector, which were already well advanced, were cited as evidence that, as that decision had been made, they were not engaged in a meaningful consultative exercise. In addition, several speakers also wished to be presented in equal detail with the former plan together with the present proposal and took the Authority's presentation of only one developed plan as an indication that the decision had already been taken and that the consultations would, in consequence, have little real influence on the outcome.

There was also a marked degree of resentment, coming from those city councillors attending in their capacity as governing body chairmen, at the fact that the plan had been developed by people who, in the main, did not represent Hull and who, they claimed, had insufficient knowledge of Hull's particular social and educational problems. Only one contributor, a governor of the College of Further Education, was openly supportive of the Authority's proposals.

Opposition to the choice of East Park Senior High School as the site for the proposed sixth form college in East Hull was also voiced at this meeting by two of the parent-governors present and was the only reference to an individual school. The view advanced was that parental reaction and possible co-operation had already been vitiated by that particular proposal which was opposed on the grounds that it would deprive the area of a neighbourhood school and result in there being no senior school north of the Holderness Road, and would involve many pupils in a lengthy journey to the secondary school in the southern part of the designated neighbourhood.

The four subsequent public meetings, intended primarily for parents, followed the same general format as the one just described although the

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Chairman of the Education Committee, in declaring the objectives of those meetings, placed greater emphasis on providing information so that parents could understand what would happen to their children if it was adopted and on welcoming comments on possible adjustments to the details within it.

At the beginning of each meeting, between them, the Chairman and the Director of Education attempted to explain the LEA's process of thinking about the problem, and highlighted factors which were significant to the Authority, such as the problems experienced in operating the procedures for ensuring balanced entry to secondary schools at 13 and problems of liaison between junior and senior high schools. It was explained that, during the review period, the working party had considered transfer at 12 plus but had seen it as involving too great a disturbance for minimal benefit, while the Education Committee had set itself against allowing a system to develop where some senior schools would be without sixth forms while others retained them. The possible approach of adjusting the existing system was referred to, but they were reminded that it had been considered previously and the Authority's proposals had then been found unacceptable to a large number of people. More specifically it was asserted, in that context, that reorganising the junior high schools in order to take some twenty or more schools out of use would also entail considerable disruption.

During the meetings most of the questions and comments came from those who identified themselves as parents, though teachers also played a major part, while others stated their concerns as parents and teachers or as parent-governors. Contributions also came from other school governors, head teachers, and city councillors. Certain pressure groups were also identifiable, or identified themselves, and these attempted to take a major part in the meetings and reiterated their grievances at most of them. Prominent among them was a group of NUT officers and staff representatives who sought repeatedly to challenge the Authority's calculations of the number of places required in order to discredit the policy of neighbourhood schools; a group of parents and teachers whose principal objective was to save East Park Senior High School

for compulsory education, and a similarly constituted group which deplored the proposed closure of Burnside Junior High School, also in East Hull, and the demise of middle schools in general. The panel at these meetings consisted of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, the Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee and the Director of Education, augmented in most cases by varying numbers of county councillors. Other members of the administration attended and notes were taken at each meeting.

The questions and comments from the floor were logged as part of the observation of the meetings, not in order to make any judgment about the degree of general public support the proposals attracted but as a means of recording the concerns of those who attended. With the exception of the more general arguments put forward by the school-based pressure groups, the majority of points raised were very specific and concerned particular aspects of the proposed changes. Generally, a greater degree of concern was declared over the possible effects of the changes on 5-11 year olds than those in secondary schools or in post-compulsory education; while comment, when it could be separated from questioning, tended to be critical rather than supportive, though at each meeting a small number of parents declared their support for the changes, principally on the grounds that earlier transfer to secondary education would provide a longer period of preparation for public examinations, and also that the neighbourhood policy would remove anxieties about which secondary school their children would attend.

Although most of the substantive questions and comment, taken individually, were piecemeal, they represented clusters of concerns. Prominent among these were the extent and character of the catchment areas for the schools, allied to reservations about the amount of bussing it would involve for 11 year olds and the location of the sixth form colleges for access for 16 year olds; criticism of the neighbourhood school notion as likely to produce "ghetto schools" in certain parts of the city, and as a restriction on parental choice and a denial of their rights under the 1980 Education Act; and criticism of the break at 16 plus as a hiatus in educational continuity.

The most frequently expressed view of a general nature was in favour of retaining the middle schools. This was commonly expressed in terms of retaining more intimate units providing close personal and pastoral care and freedom from examination pressures in contrast to the feared greatly-enlarged size and anonymity of the proposed 11-16 schools. Second only to that as an oft-repeated general comment was fear of the consequences for the children's education of the disruption the changes would bring in the period of transition to the new system.

There were also pleas at each meeting for an extension of the period for public consultation and the request for either a referendum of the people of Hull, or a show of hands at the meeting, in order to settle the matter. The Chairman had to remind those present that the meeting was consultative and that the final decision, when it was made, rested with the County Council.

2. Analysis of written responses to the Authority's proposals

The Authority encouraged interested parties to submit their observations on the proposals, indeed those who attended the 'education shops' could collect headed sheets and envelopes for that purpose. The responses were collated and sent to members of the Education Committee prior to the special meeting on 9th May 1984 and were presented in four categories; responses from head teachers and staff; from governing bodies; from individuals; and from the teachers' unions.²⁵ The nature of those reactions is examined here under the same headings.

The reactions of heads and teaching staff

In the event only a minority chose to respond, the LEA receiving submissions from as few as 10 of the 82 primary schools, from 8 of the 51 junior high schools, and from 6 of the 17 senior high schools. In summary, the primary school staffs gave qualified support to the proposals, only one declaring categorically against the plan; the junior high schools were almost unanimously opposed to it; while the senior high school staff provided a mixture of reactions from whole-hearted support to outright opposition.

A closer analysis reveals the particular pre-occupations of staff in the different categories of school.

While the primary school staffs were either generally supportive, or at worst took a neutral stance, they expressed reservations on a number of matters of detail. For example, the staff at one objected to the planned increase in the numbers on roll with its change to a 5-11 school, and felt that an intake of 600, an increase of 200 on existing numbers, would present an impossible teaching task in a deprived area. Another, while declaring support for the plan, had reservations concerning the projected size of the new 11-16 schools, while others questioned the calculations which had provided them with their planned catchment areas and numbers.

Another point of contention, which had occupied the minds of many parents and teachers at the public meetings, was the proposal to run certain single-site primary and junior high schools as separate 5-11 schools rather than as single larger schools. The staffs of two such existing combinations objected on the grounds that the establishment of two schools would split the local community and make for inequality of specialist teaching resources between the schools. Indeed, in one case, the planned provision had the effect of designating the schools as 'feeders' to different 11-16 schools in the area.

Two schools gave unqualified support to the proposals. The head of one indicated that her staff were ready and able to rise to the challenge and observed in her letter;

I hope that those of us representing primary education, at the Consultation Meeting, did not appear complacent and uninvolved. Problems of extending to include the needs of pupils in the 9-11 year group may seem less spectacular but I feel that they create a great challenge and a revision of our policies, curriculum and attitudes. I also believe that the proposals for future educational needs in Hull are a great credit to Humberside.

The other was at pains to point out that, while the grouped governing body had declared in favour of retaining the present system, such a view did not fully represent staff opinion in the school and that they would wish to be associated with promoting the system proposed by the County Council.

All but one of the junior high school staff submissions declared unequivocal opposition, while the one exception pointed out that its statement of the desirability of having one large new 5-11 school on the site implied neither acceptance nor rejection of the proposals. Most pleaded for the Authority to retain the three-tier system and to deal with the problem of falling rolls by means of closing or amalgamating unviable units. Among the junior high school staffs there was considerable unanimity of view and indeed close similarity in the arguments presented. Common elements were the challenge that the Authority had not produced any 'convincing' educational arguments to demonstrate that the middle schools had 'failed', that the Authority was giving undue priority to financial rather than educational considerations, that middle schools were necessary in order to provide an educational and emotional transition from the small primary to the larger senior school, and that, while accepting that some reorganisation was inevitable, change within the present structure would prove less disruptive to the children's education.

It is perhaps more difficult for the LEA to assess the responses from the secondary schools in terms of indicating the acceptability of proposed policy, and in providing guidance concerning modifications, than with the primary and junior high schools in that all the letters amounted to special pleading of their own cases and concerns, except in so far as special pleading can be recognised and accounted for. It is interesting to note that all of the senior high schools which responded at this time had been the subject of controversy in the first consultative phase in 1982. Between then and the situation in 1984, the possible fortunes of these secondary schools, and the personal futures of the staff, had varied.

All of the schools were in the South West and North West sectors of the city where over-provision of places had long been seen as more severe, as far as the secondary schools were concerned, in comparison with the other sectors, and they included the two pairs of boys' and girls' single-sex schools in each sector on which a great deal of controversy had centred earlier.

The reversal in fortunes was the most dramatic in the South West sector, where the two single-sex schools could respectively regard themselves as 'winners' or 'losers' at different points in time. Whereas, in 1982, the boys' school had been proposed as the base for a new mixed 13-18 school the girls' school was now proposed as the base for a new mixed 11-16 school.

In response to the current consultations the head of the girls' school, in welcoming the choice, revealed the results of a questionnaire to which three-quarters of the staff had responded which indicated unanimous support for the change in the age of transfer on the grounds that it would provide broader experience in all areas of the curriculum than middle schools and enable pupils to settle into secondary education before the onset of adolescence and provide an easier transition from class-based to specialist teaching. Two-thirds of the respondents were also in favour of the sixth form college proposals, though with reservations about the actual siting of the college in that sector. The staff were generally supportive of the neighbourhood school policy but had reservations about the social make-up of the school's feeder primaries on the grounds that the intake would be too uniform in terms of the number of children coming from socially disadvantaged homes, and pleaded for extra staffing and resources to offset this if no adjustment took place.

The latter point was the basis of the case made out by the staff of the boys' school for a redistribution of the feeder primaries in the sector with a view to arguing that it too had a rôle as an 11-16 school alongside the girls' school in order to provide a more balanced system for the whole of South West Hull. It is to be noted that both schools were prepared to accept and argue within two major parameters of the proposed policy; transfer at 11 plus and the neighbourhood secondary school.

In the North West sector the 1982 proposals had envisaged either the amalgamation of the two single-sex schools as a 13-18 mixed school or the closure of the nearby mixed school as an alternative and also the taking out of use of one of the mixed schools on the northern fringe of the sector. The 1984 plan 'reprieved' the first three to the extent that they were all to

be retained as 11-16 neighbourhood schools, while the last school remained scheduled for closure and alternative use for further education. All four schools made submissions.

The cases presented by the staff of the two single-sex schools ran closely parallel in substance and argued that no educational case had been made for abandoning the three-tier system, pointed to the inequalities in educational opportunity likely to arise from the neighbourhood policy, and argued for the retention of the school-based sixth form and for co-operative arrangements between neighbouring schools in increasing its viability, a practice in which the schools had been successful over a number of years. Their solution was to adjust rather than abandon the existing system. However, the head and staff of the boys' school did put forward transfer at 12 plus as a possible alternative if there must be change, citing as benefits that it would give the senior school an extra year and provide less disruption than the LEA's proposals. A separate letter from the head of the boys' school concluded that 12 plus transfer would mean that senior high schools would closely follow the accommodation available, that consequent staff changes would be minimal, and that as 8-12 schools would be deemed primary there would be less specialisation required of staff and they could be run as smaller units than 9-13 schools, it following from this that many of the present junior high schools now considered too small could be retained as 8-12 schools.

A meeting of the staff, parents and governors of the nearby mixed school agreed a statement to the effect that while recognising in principle that some change might be necessary, and while admitting the advantages to the senior school of 11 plus rather than 13 plus transfer, there was concern that the proposed reorganisation was apparently based on financial rather than educational criteria. The meeting expressed general concern over the lack of evidence in any of the documents provided by the LEA that the present system had failed and that the proposed system would be an improvement. More specifically, the submission criticised the neighbourhood policy as one likely to lead to "ghetto" schools and lack of effective parental choice and pleaded

for joint or federated sixth forms rather than the introduction of sixth form colleges.

The remaining school on the northern fringe of the sector, while regretting its loss to compulsory schooling and pointing out that it already had better basic facilities as a possible base for a sixth form college than the designated middle school in the centre of the sector, made the most dispassionate of the submissions and contented itself with making observations on a number of points in the policy without any attempt at an order of priority. The staff asserted that they saw no educational objections to 11 plus transfer, despite being habituated to accepting children at 13 plus, but would regard 11-18 schools as the most desirable system for both teachers and pupils. It was further observed that they preferred tertiary colleges to sixth form colleges as a means of avoiding a feared internal division in the latter into A-level and sub-A-level students, and specifically criticised the locating of the planned colleges in middle-class areas of the city as a deterrent to the continuing education of the working-class student, while they shared with other respondents fears about the effects of the neighbourhood policy on the social mix of a number of the schools.

3. Responses from governing bodies

The LEA received submissions from 17 of the grouped governing bodies for primary and junior high schools and, without exception, they expressed opposition to the proposals and looked for adjustments to the three-tier system by means of closures or amalgamations to deal with the impact of falling enrolments. Only the Board of Management of the voluntary-aided school run by the Sailors' Children's Society indicated its wish to comply with the proposals and to provide the extra accommodation needed in their case.

Having declared their basic position, a number of the governing bodies then looked towards particular adjustments if the LEA's plans were adopted, indicating such matters as the extra resources needed if certain primaries were to remain on their present sites, the need for craft and science

provision to be provided in all future 5-11 schools equal to the best available in existing 9-13 schools, objected that the calculated available accommodation in the primaries designated as 5-11 schools in their group had been overstated, and looked to the LEA to instigate immediate discussions with schools and staff on staffing levels and curricular safeguards in the change-over period.

Nine of the governing bodies of the senior high schools submitted their resolutions and comments. In general it is clear that they were, as a group, more supportive of major elements of the proposals than had been the staff in the same schools, though a number expressed reservations about particular aspects while giving a general, if at times guarded, welcome to the plan. Five of the governing bodies were responsible for the schools whose staff submissions have already been examined, though it is notable that in only two cases were the governors' conclusions a repetition of the case made out by the staff, that is the girls' high school in the South West sector which approved of the plan, and the boys' high school in the North West sector which was thoroughly opposed to it. Only two of the nine governing bodies pleaded specifically for the retention of the existing system, while the governors of East Park Senior High School had a particular point to make. The latter sought a special meeting with members of the Education Committee to consult the wishes of the governors, parents and staff and indicated total opposition to the intention to convert the school into a sixth form college.

Generally most of the governing bodies declared themselves in favour of transfer at 11, the abolition of the three-tier system, and the neighbourhood policy. They were more ambivalent regarding the sixth form colleges. While only two directly expressed or implied opposition the remainder either gave their approval, expressed themselves as being equally divided over the issue, declared their position as one of "guarded interest", or simply did not mention them specifically.

Another, very specific and limited aspect of the LEA's proposals gained the governors' support in East Hull where a senior high school, scheduled for

closure in 1982, was now proposed as a Church of England 11-16 school. The chairman of the governors wrote that the chairman of the Education Committee had asked him to ascertain the wishes of the governors on the questions whether they considered it desirable to have a Church of England senior school in East Hull and whether they would support their school being designated as such. It was reported that the governors voted unanimously in favour on both questions.

From a consideration of the responses from those secondary school governing bodies who chose to make a submission it could perhaps be concluded by the LEA that most would not be active in opposition to their plans, and in one particular case the expressed opposition was sufficiently specific that it could possibly be allayed by some compromise future proposal. Primary and junior high school governors would protest but perhaps comply with reluctance.

It should also be noted that a number of governing bodies were already looking beyond the immediate matters of principle to the practicalities of implementing the proposals and were concerned to know more about the transitional arrangements, to be assured that there would be adequate resources and staffing to maintain the curriculum of a school scheduled for closure, and to know more about the safeguarding of staff when the new schools came into being.

4. Responses from individuals

The LEA received 411 letters from individuals, most of whom (369) identified themselves unequivocally as parents, the remainder declaring themselves to be teachers, parents and teachers, school governors, representatives of interest groups (mostly secretaries of parent-teacher associations) or pupils. A small minority did not declare their interest.

The letters provide some indication of the nature of client concern over the proposals from those who chose to respond, though they inevitably fall short of a detailed assessment of the plan in that they reveal reactions only to those aspects of the proposals which the respondents chose to comment

on, while they also remain an expression of opinion from only a tiny minority of those who would be affected by the changes. However, short of a detailed survey by questionnaire of parental opinion, or some form of referendum, in conjunction with their assessment of the opinions expressed at the public meetings, and soundings taken by ward councillors, these responses remain the means by which the officers and elected members could judge public reaction to the proposals. In broad terms the letters dealt with matters of principle as well as detail.

The responses fall into three categories. The largest group (300) declared themselves against the plan and most, but not all, gave their reasons; another group (60) had specific points of reservation to make but expressed no general opinion about the acceptability of the proposals as a whole; while the third group (51) declared themselves in support of the LEA's policy and all of these gave their reasons.

Of those who declared themselves in opposition the majority (204) pleaded for the retention of the three-tier system and most of these indicated that a rationalisation of the existing system to take account of falling enrolments by means of closures or the amalgamation of schools was preferred. This had been the LEA's general attempted approach to the problem in the first consultative phase. Many of the letters in this category also indicated opposition to the creation of neighbourhood schools on the grounds that they were a denial of parental choice and, given the nature of the housing in Hull, would amount to "ghetto schools" in a number of cases, with all that might imply for educational opportunities. Other points of reservation were the projected size of the 11-16 schools in the plan and their fears that mixing 11 year olds and 16 year olds would provide bad examples of behaviour for the younger pupils which the middle schools were seen as insulating them from until they were mature enough to cope with "teenage values". The inevitable disruption of their children's education in the course of the change-over was another major cause for concern.

Many respondents also elaborated the developmental and curricular arguments in support of middle schools as an essential transitional stage in their children's education and deplored the loss of two years of specialist teaching, particularly in French and Science, which the extension of the junior school to 11 plus would entail. Pleas were also made for the school-based sixth form. These points are reported in the order of frequency in which they appeared in respondents' letters.

These points were also made by those who expressed no clear opinion on the plan as a whole, but more particularly this group was concerned to protest about the closure or change in character of particular schools or record reservations about the projected catchment areas of the new senior schools, largely on the basis of the travelling involved for their children or on the social make-up of the schools in question. Additional concerns were the places provided in the plan for single-sex education and, to a lesser extent, the number of places available in voluntary schools.

Those who declared themselves in favour of the plan were most attracted by the earlier age of transfer to secondary education as providing only one break in continuity and as a means of providing a longer run-up to public examinations, and supported the concept of the neighbourhood school elaborated in the plan on the grounds that it would remove the current uncertainty over which secondary school their children would attend and on the basis that the current policy of balanced entry to secondary schools meant that there was, in effect, no true parental choice. It is interesting, however, to note that nearly half of this group, despite their general approval of the plans and support for the notion of neighbourhood schools, expressed reservations over the designated catchment areas for the secondary schools, a reservation they shared with the other two groups.

Pari passu with the general debate, individual campaigns were being fought at the time these letters were sent in to "save" certain schools, and two in particular were significant for the LEA's general strategy for change. These concerned East Park Senior High School and Burnside Junior High School.

Pleas to retain the senior high school as an 11-16 neighbourhood school for that part of the city were made by all three groups, while several of those in favour proposed as an alternative that Burnside Junior High School should have a new role as the base for the sixth form college.

5. The reactions of the teachers' associations

The teaching profession, as represented by the officially declared positions of the different professional organisations, was divided over the proposals. In summary, the National Union of Teachers made a very early, and unequivocal, declaration of opposition to the proposed abolition of the junior high schools and the establishment of sixth form colleges before the formal period for public consultation began. This declaration in favour of retaining the existing system was echoed by the Hull Headteachers' Association (National Association of Headteachers). The remaining teachers' organisations, the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, and the Professional Association of Teachers were more circumspect in their reactions and, at one point or another in the period allowed for public consultation, indicated that they would not oppose reorganisation and focused on specific details in the plan on which they had reservations and on the particular point of safeguarding teaching posts in the process of change. The two non-teaching unions who responded, NALGO and NUPE, confined their comments almost entirely to safeguarding and redeployment procedures.

National Union of Teachers

At the Education Committee meeting on 15th February a leading member of the NUT and one of the teachers' representatives on the committee, who had also been one of the two NUT members of the working group which had produced the plan, was the first to respond after the Director of Education had explained the objectives of the plan and the chairman had spoken initially of its virtues. His opposition was made clear in his charge that the LEA had let slip the opportunity provided by falling numbers to improve the quality of the middle schools and warned that the NUT and he would judge the plan on three grounds; the educational reasoning and arguments behind it, the disturbance it would cause to the profession and to parents, and its cost and use of

resources. However, the substance of his charge was that the plan would not improve the quality of education, which the former policy would do equally well in his opinion; that the change in the age of transfer would not in itself facilitate the provision of more nursery school places, which was a part of the total package presented; and that, in effect, the total plan was biased towards the claimed needs of post-16 year olds.

To some extent the NUT's reaction had been pre-empted by their earlier policy decisions and an earlier union publication, A Handbook on the Proposed Re-organisation of Hull Schools, distributed on 7th February, prepared by the Hull Schools Defence Committee, a sub-committee of the Executive of the Hull Teachers' Association. This declared local NUT policy as one of opposition to any reorganisation, closure or merger, except on sound educational grounds and put forward as official policy support for the present age of transfer and the Middle School System.²⁶ The remainder of the handbook assailed the proposals on the basis of the promoted posts which would be lost to teachers in the new 5-11 schools as compared with 9-13 schools, presented the arguments, based on the physical and intellectual development of children, to support separate provision for 9-13 year olds in middle schools, and affirmed that the size of middle schools was advantageous in a transitional stage of development as compared with large secondary schools with less close personal knowledge of individuals. In addition, the union entered a plea for the retention of the school-based sixth form and asserted that a school could not be regarded as fully comprehensive without one,²⁷ that the all-through school provided greater continuity of care,²⁸ and that sixth form colleges elsewhere in the country had not shown themselves as successful as all-through schools in dealing with the less academic pupil²⁹ who, in consequence, failed to transfer to further education and was lost to the education system. While the union acknowledged that some areas of the country seemed satisfied with an 11-16/16-18 system it claimed that 'these areas undertook this system as their own choice as the result of long discussion in the process of comprehensive re-organisation. Reorganisation in Hull now, with the identity of the new

comprehensive schools having become established, would undoubtedly undermine comprehensive education in the city.³⁰

Several previous resolutions of Hull Teachers' Association, reproduced in the handbook as appendices, help to explain both the position taken up by the union and its particular action at this time. A resolution of 20th October 1983³¹ stated the union's total opposition to any change in the existing school structure and proposed the setting up of a Hull Schools Defence Committee to preserve and improve that structure. Another resolution of 28th November 1983 declared, 'Where any area is faced with a plan for reorganisation which is opposed by the Association(s) of the union within that area, Division (Humberside Division NUT) will seek the support of the National Action Committee for the Association(s) who so wish to hold a half-day protest meeting in school time to express their opposition to the proposed alterations.'³²

Hull Teachers' Association held such a protest meeting in the City Hall on 8th March 1984 which was addressed, in addition to the leading officers of the union, by the chairman of the Parents' Action Group which was actively pursuing a "Save Our Schools" campaign and by a Labour City Councillor, and member of several primary and middle school governing bodies, who was an outspoken critic of the LEA's plan, and who had been one of the principal architects of the three-tier system in the city in 1969. At the meeting the platform received messages of support from the Hull branch of the TUC and from the East Hull and Holderness branches of the Labour Party. The Hull Teachers' Association was alone among the professional associations in allying itself clearly and openly with other protest groups.

Hull Teachers' Association's formal response was dated 16th April 1984.³³ The nine-page document expressed opposition to the proposals both in principle and in detail and argued that the plan had been produced by and for people who predominantly neither worked nor lived in Hull, and that prejudices had been developed into myths which were laid down in the proposals and developed in the consultative meetings. The document then listed 25 such "myths", which

were, in effect, the substantive proposals and arguments elaborated in the LEA's consultative document. It is sufficient to note here that NUT challenged the notion that 5-11 schools would provide a significantly better start to a Hull child's education, that the decline in middle school systems nationally provided a poor base from which to recruit able and experienced staff, that the new arrangements would provide better liaison between schools, that neighbourhood schools would improve educational continuity and that the introduction of sixth form colleges would improve staying-on rates and provide more examination success for Hull children. Perhaps the most important "myth" HTA wished to challenge was that listed as number 15 in their document, that once the system had been reorganised it would lead to a period of stability for which short-term disruption was a small price to pay.

Hull Headteachers' Association (NAHT)

The headteachers' response was dated 9th April 1984 and ran broadly parallel with that of NUT in its major points of criticism but was less strident in tone. It re-affirmed the association's long-standing policy of support for the three-tier system and observed that earlier the LEA had supported rationalisation within the existing system and regretted lack of evidence in the proposals to justify what was described as 'this sudden change of policy.'³⁴ The headteachers made comments on most of the sections of the LEA's consultative document. Their most potent comment was on the section concerning the aims and objectives of the new proposals,³⁵ which asserted that the LEA sought an improvement in educational opportunities by means of developing an organisation to combat the effects of falling rolls, especially as they had influenced the curriculum of the smaller middle schools; a system which minimises the problems of liaison between stages in schooling; strong post-16 provision to meet the students' educational and training needs; and an expansion of nursery education as a foundation for the city's education system.

The headteachers replied that these aims were achievable within the present system. Their statement that, 'Problems of falling rolls can be

tackled by amalgamations, those of liaison and continuity by establishing an improved feeder system within the present structure, and those of post-16 education by collaboration between institutions,³⁶ attacked at a stroke major elements in the LEA's plan; the 11-16 school, the sixth form colleges and the overall policy of neighbourhood secondary schools. They concluded that, while acknowledging the Authority was facing difficulties, they did not accept that other alternatives had been adequately investigated and urged that any changes should involve the minimum of disturbance.

The Assistant Masters' and Mistresses' Association

AMMA's formal response, which was received on 30th April 1984, accepted the need for considerable changes and declared the proposals to be 'a possible way of achieving such changes,³⁷ and, as far as post-compulsory schooling was concerned, effectively gave its blessing to the sixth form college proposals in its acknowledgement that they could offer a wider choice of courses for both academic and non-academic pupils than would be possible in school-based sixth forms, where it was acknowledged that falling rolls had already made 'several sixth-forms both uneconomical in staffing and very restricted with regard to the courses that can be offered.'³⁸

In effect AMMA accepted the staffing and curricular arguments for sixth form colleges which had been presented by the LEA, while acknowledging that a majority of its members had previously indicated their belief that most 16 plus pupils were "better off" in sixth forms in their own schools.³⁹ The association's major concern and reservation on this aspect of the plan was that proposals for safe-guarding the education of those pupils in the middle of two-year courses at the changeover in 1988 had not been published with the other proposals and it urged early consultation with the teachers' associations on this particular point.

The submission opened with the general proposition that any reorganisation should result in a greater efficiency of the service, with minimal effects on the pupils in the system, and that classroom teachers should be able to adapt to the changes quickly and effectively without personal disadvantage or misgivings.

Despite the tone of general support AMMA indicated serious misgivings over the location of catchment areas, and the proposed size of the secondary schools which called for considerable adjustment to the details of the proposals. The neighbourhood schools in the plan were regarded as acting as a potentially serious limitation of some children's educational experiences in that certain schools would receive their pupils almost entirely from deprived areas of the city, while others would have a majority from middle-class homes. The Association declared, 'We reaffirm our belief in comprehensive education but remind the Authority that Hull's housing estates are comprehensive neither in balance of their children's ability nor in social mix.'⁴⁰ AMMA proposed a 'quartering' of the city which would allow parental choice of secondary school in each sector.

National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers

NAS/UWT was the last of the major unions to make its formal submission as a general letter to all county councillors, under the name of the Secretary of the Hull and District Association, dated 14th May 1984. This was two days before the County Council met to consider the proposals agreed by the Education Committee on 9th May. The association's response, in contrast to those of the other major unions, did not enter into any discussion or appraisal of the details of the proposals nor did it seek to question the principles underlying the proposed re-organisation, or to propose any alternative solutions. In effect it was a declaration of neutrality, the points made in the letter focusing on what the association regarded as the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of whatever decision was in fact taken by the County Council.

The letter observed that the proposals had created a great deal of discussion and argument among teachers and that much of it 'has led to a variety of responses from colleagues as to the best system of education for pupils in Hull in the coming years.'⁴¹ The secretary's declared purpose was to raise certain particular issues which members hoped the County Council would bear in mind as it reached a decision.

The association showed particular concern over the transitional arrangements and pointed out that, for such major issues, the County Council had 'certain well-tested avenues of communication, consultation and negotiation',⁴² with the recognised teachers' associations (namely HJTCC) and that it was their expressed wish that those avenues would be used to the full so that the transitional arrangements and the problems likely to arise could be dealt with 'in an intelligent and sensitive manner.'⁴³ The association also pointed out that it was essential that sufficient management resources were available to carry out a re-organisation of such magnitude in the most effective and efficient way possible and at the same time allow the remainder of the education service to function at an acceptable level,⁴⁴ and cast some doubt upon that likelihood in view of the many pressures and responsibilities borne by the 'administration'.

It was also felt to be axiomatic that the next few years would be ones of stress and concern for all teachers in Hull, whatever the decision, as they strove to ensure that children's education would not be disrupted more than was absolutely unavoidable, while working towards a different pattern of schooling when 'every teacher's own personal and professional future will be uncertain.'⁴⁵ The association looked in the future for an acknowledgment of, and responsive attitude to, those pressures on the part of the Education Committee and its officers.

6. Changes in the proposals in the consultation period

The proposals for the re-organisation of the county schools in Hull, with certain modifications to details, but with no changes in the key strategic elements in the plan, were accepted by the Education Committee at a special meeting on 9th May 1984 and endorsed by the County Council on 16th May,⁴⁶ while the public notices were published on 20th June. The Director of Education's Report to the Education Committee⁴⁷ drew attention to the nature of the submissions received as a result of the public consultations and encapsulated the issues which had emerged.

The submissions were presented as falling into three categories: those opposing or supporting the plan in general on the issues of age of transfer and sixth form colleges; those commenting on more specific aspects of the proposals affecting a particular school or catchment area; and other general issues such as statistical forecasts and travel.⁴⁸ The main issues selected for the Committee's attention mainly concerned the second category of public comment and involved certain transitional problems relating to three schools in particular to which governors and staff representatives had drawn attention;⁴⁹ the substantial parental opposition concerning three pairs of schools to having two new primary schools to serve the same area established in former shared-site primary and junior high schools rather than a single much larger school in each case,⁵⁰ and the equally strongly expressed parental anxiety over the proposed conversion of East Park Senior High School into a sixth form college and the consequent size of schools envisaged in the draft proposals, especially the remaining secondary schools in East Hull and the possible travelling difficulties children would experience from certain of the proposed "feeder" primaries in that part of the city.⁵¹

The transitional problems highlighted first in the Director's report concerned the new mixed 11-16 school to be established in the premises of the former girls' senior high school in South West Hull; the new 11-16 school to be built in the North East part of the city; and the problems involved in running the junior high school in West Hull which had been designated as the site of a sixth form college while conversion work was in progress. It was pointed out that the working group responsible for the proposals had had consultations with the governors and staff representatives of the schools and these had revealed certain anxieties unless certain adjustments to procedure were made. The South West Hull secondary school would have to accommodate two changes simultaneously in 1988, a mixed intake and an altered age range; the new North East Hull school would open for the first time in 1988 with 1,200 pupils; while the junior high school would have to attempt to cater for the full age range amid a major building programme. The upshot was the

Director's recommendation⁵² that the South West Hull school should admit a mixed intake aged 13 plus in 1986 and admit pupils aged 11 plus from 1988 in common with the other schools; that the school to be built in North East Hull should first be established temporarily, from September 1986, in the premises of a secondary school scheduled for closure on the edge of the sector, with similar phased admission arrangements, and transfer its pupils to the new building in 1988; and that the junior high school should admit its last intake in September 1985 in preparation for the changes required to establish a sixth form college on the site in 1988 so that in 1987-88 only two age groups would require accommodation. These proposals were accepted by the Education Committee and were recommended to the County Council and were procedural changes and not matters of substance.

The remaining matters to which the Director had called the Committee's attention were matters of substance and his report drew attention to certain decisions that needed to be made and indicated, in relation to the future of East Park Senior High School, that Burnside Junior High School, which was surplus to requirements and scheduled for closure, which was open to the same treatment as that in the west of the city designated as a sixth form college site.⁵³

The Education Committee decided to recommend to the County Council that the list of proposed primary schools should be amended to provide for one larger school to serve the areas in question rather than two smaller schools as originally proposed; that East Park Senior High School should be added to the list of 11-16 schools serving the South East area, with appropriate adjustments to catchment areas and feeder school arrangements; and that Burnside Junior High School should be designated as the site of the sixth form college to be established in that area.⁵⁴

The Director of Education's report to that meeting also contained a comparison of the financial implications of rationalising the existing school system with those of implementing the Authority's proposals.⁵⁵ The appraisal revealed that in capital terms, while the building work and land purchase

considerations were not widely divergent, £M 9.53 to rationalise the existing system as compared with £M 8.63 for re-organisation, when fees and receipts were taken into account, the proposed plan would be considerably more economical, costing £M 3.94 as compared with £M 6.08. In terms of annual revenue consequences the debt charges under the proposals were also somewhat lower at £M 0.42 compared with £M 0.65, although in the medium term the cost of the necessary in-service training in order to implement the proposals would be £M 1 as compared with £32,000 for in-service training in order to sustain the existing system.

7. Statutory objections

It can be posited that the changes made to the plan during the consultative phase would be aimed, at least in part, at reducing subsequent opposition, and therefore that those who submitted statutory objections represented the remaining core of opposition. Hence an analysis of the source and substance of the objections might provide some indication of what consultation had achieved in that respect. The LEA made available a list of the statutory objections,⁵⁶ while copies of the actual submissions were supplied by most objectors who could be positively identified.

Twenty-four objections were lodged and attracted over five thousand signatures, though numbers alone are likely to be an unreliable indicator of the extent of opposition in that some objections came from professional associations and action groups and had been signed by the minimum of ten electors or by the committee concerned on behalf of the larger body, while other objections had taken the form of widely canvassed petitions, with all the attendant difficulties of assessing the true weight of support they attracted.

The objections fall into two main categories; those from groups (14), which were general in their criticism, and those which were concerned essentially with the fortunes of individual schools (10), which tended in the main to be more specific. The points raised can also be classified into two main categories; reservations about the consultations and criticism of

particular aspects of the proposals. Among the groups, objections came from two of the parents' action groups, from two of the professional associations, from a civic society in East Hull, from a group of supporters of middle schools, and from the Humberside County Council Conservative Group, while seven general objections were signed by electors in the city and county. The objections from individual schools concerned primary, middle and secondary schools and most of them could regard themselves as likely to be more markedly affected by the proposed changes than the general body of such schools. For example, three secondary schools featured; East Park Senior High School and the two single sex schools for boys and girls in the North West sector. All had been the centre of controversy earlier and claimed they had viable sixth forms of "proven worth". Among the middle schools, objections came from the parents and staff of the Burnside Junior High School and from the girls' junior high school on the North Hull estate, whose objection was detailed, both general and specific, but which centred on opposition to the loss to the neighbourhood of a school of that particular ethos.

Some of the objectors, for example, the parents' action groups, the NUT and the Hull Head Teachers' Association, had declared outright opposition to the proposals at an early stage and it is perhaps unlikely that the consultations themselves could be expected to modify their views. Of all the schools affected actual objections came from very few, and each had a particular remaining grievance.

The secondary schools were divided in their opposition. While all three were critical of the post-16 arrangements, East Park, having won its earlier campaign to be retained as a neighbourhood school, now pleaded for the retention of a sixth form,⁵⁷ while the single-sex schools were more general in their opposition.⁵⁸ Indeed, a feature of the earlier debate had been that those secondary schools which declared their opposition had tended to fight individual campaigns, while the case for the junior high schools had been put mainly by the parents' action groups and the NUT.

Of the professional associations only the NUT and the Hull Head Teachers' Association were moved to lodge statutory objections, the NUT's being the most wide-ranging. The actual document was a repetition of that submitted earlier to the LEA.⁵⁹ The other professional associations, despite their earlier expressed reservations about particular aspects of the plan, did not formally object, thus reinforcing the division of opinion among the unions which had been a feature of the consultations. The only identifiable political group to object was the County Council Conservative Group.⁶⁰ It is perhaps surprising that the Hull City Council Labour Group did not do so in view of their declared opposition to the proposals, though it is probable that several of the councillors signed the more general petitions as electors.

A major issue in several of the objections was the consultative process itself. The submissions from the NUT, the Hull Joint Parents' Action Committee, the County Council Conservative Group, and from many of the schools, objected to the general manner, the means, and the timing of the consultations, while the PTA of the East Park Senior High School claimed, in addition, that the consultations had been conducted in such a way as to contravene the requirements of the 1980 Education Act.⁶¹

A criticism which appeared in most of these objections was that the period of time allowed by the LEA for public consultation was too short for alternative suggestions to be fully examined and that the period between the consultations and the final proposals was so short as to indicate that opinion expressed at public meetings was not properly taken into account. The Parents' Action Committee declared roundly that the most radical proposal so far made by the LEA had been marked by the shortest period for consultation and that barely three months was an inadequate amount of time for people to comment;⁶² while the County Council Conservative Group judged that the announcement of the proposals on the eve of the half-term in February and the formal publication of notices on 20th June, requiring replies by 20th August, had severely restricted the opportunity for consultation and response by interested parties.⁶³

The Parents' Action Committee provided the most comprehensive criticism of the consultations, objecting, in addition to the time allowed, to the means adopted and to the attitudes they ascribed to the Authority.⁶⁴ Regarding the means adopted, they argued that the press coverage was relatively limited and that the parents' leaflet issued by the Authority was short and difficult to follow. They complained that, while it contained tables on school sizes and diagrams of catchment areas, there was little discussion of the educational reasons for the change, nor did it discuss how the changes would affect specific age groups. They also complained that the public meetings were large and claimed that they were frequently inaccessible, while the "education shops" they regarded as staffed by officers who had little knowledge of the plans. Their summary judgment of the means adopted to consult the public was that none of them was designed to reach the citizens of Hull and explain the plans and the possible alternatives.⁶⁵

They also asserted that, in the public meetings, the leading Labour members of the Education Committee, and the officers, took the view that it was a defensive exercise and in consequence while willing to listen to comments about details they were reluctant to accept any criticisms of the major assumptions underlying the plan, and that critics who did so 'were castigated as either ignorant, troublemakers, or self-interested teachers.'⁶⁶

A further objection relating to the consultative process was the view they took of the changes in certain details which took place during that period and which were confirmed at the County Council meeting on 16th May and in the public notices. They castigated these as "private deals" and took the view that, in total, they constituted a new plan over which a fresh round of consultations should have been organised.

The action committee's overall judgement and complaint⁶⁷ was that the Education Authority's main objective in the period of consultation had been to neutralise opposition by depriving opponents of time and information, that they had tried to create a sense of powerlessness amongst the citizens and had succeeded to the extent that many opponents had felt it was a waste of time voicing opposition.

The view that they had not been properly consulted was also taken by NUT, by a group of supporters of middle schools,⁶⁸ and by the head and staff of the girls' junior high school on the North Hull estate.⁶⁹ NUT specifically rejected the notion that it had been properly consulted and took the view that the presence of two of its officers on the sub-committees which had devised the plan fell short of "real" consultation as the teacher representatives were rarely allowed to reveal what had been discussed.⁷⁰ One of the many "myths" which the union was keen to dispel was that adequate consultation had taken place.⁷¹ NUT's expressed belief was that, while the LEA may well have kept within the guidelines of Circular 2/81, Section 20 in law in consulting with those most concerned, the spirit of consultation had not been adhered to in respect of Circular 2/80. The union's case was that the LEA had at no time approached either the public at large or NUT during the period immediately preceding the publication of the proposals. The 1984 consultations were compared particularly unfavourably in the respect of seeking NUT's views with those which had preceded comprehensive re-organisation in the city in 1969.

The group of middle school supporters⁷² objected that the manner of consultation with parents, teachers, electors and others had been such that there was no reasonable possibility of persuading the Authority to change its fundamental proposals regarding changes in the ages of transfer, while the unanimous view of the head and staff of the girls' junior high school⁷³ was also that there had been no meaningful consultation with the profession.

The objection from the PTA of the East Park Senior High School was both technical and practical. It claimed that the proposals relating to post-compulsory education failed to comply with Section 12 of the 1980 Education Act and that they should therefore be rejected.⁷⁴ Their case was that detailed proposals regarding the voluntary schools had not appeared in the original consultative document and that those proposals, then incomplete, only appeared in the public notices and not in the consultative stage. In consequence it could not be clear to parents and other interested parties whether the proposed voluntary controlled Church of England secondary school would have its own

sixth form and therefore, with important details then unresolved, parents had not been able to voice an opinion.

While the consultations were a matter of contention, the major grievances, which had been equally prominent in the earlier written submissions to the Authority, centred on particular aspects of the proposals. Equally prominent in most of the objections were a denial of the need to dismantle the existing system and specific opposition to the abolition of the junior high schools and to the sixth form college proposals; opposition to the proposed neighbourhood school policy and disquiet over the disruption the changes would produce in the short term. The reduction in single-sex provision was also cited and inherent in a number of objections, and specifically contained in those from the Parents' Action Committee and NUT was the charge that the Authority had provided no explicit educational justification for the changes.

The essence of the case presented for the retention of the existing system, presented by the Hull Head Teachers' Association, the Parents' Action Committee, the group of middle school supporters, the parents and staff of Burnside Junior High School, and the head and staff of the North Hull girls' junior high school, the avoidance of disruption apart, was that the Authority was proposing to remove the middle tier before it had been given a chance to develop its full potential for subject specialisation and close pastoral care which was felt to be of great social benefit to urban pupils, and that the Authority had failed to take the necessary remedial action to ensure the efficient operation of the existing system.

Opposition to the sixth form colleges was mounted on several grounds, which represented an amalgam of familiar arguments in support of school-based sixth forms and more specific criticisms of aspects of the Authority's proposals. Those objections which came from the schools with relatively large joint sixth forms⁷⁵ claimed that separate provision would have deleterious effects on the staffing of the 11-16 schools which would not attract well-qualified specialist teachers and would in consequence have an

impoverished curriculum in contrast with pupils in the 11-18 schools in the county areas surrounding the city; that there would be lack of continuity in pastoral care and in knowledge of pupils for careers counselling; that the influence of the sixth-formers in the main school would be lost while the sixth-formers would lose important leadership roles in the schools, and that the break at 16 would be a disincentive to continuing education for many pupils. It was also claimed that the actual location of the sixth form colleges would put transport difficulties in the way of pupils continuing their education beyond 16 in certain parts of the city.

More particularly the joint sixth form arrangements currently adopted in several of the secondary schools were presented as already responding to current issues in post-16 education in providing vocationally orientated courses and CPVE in conjunction with other schools and the CFE and as increasing efficiency in the use of resources to the extent of rendering the massive changes envisaged by the proposals as unnecessary in order to achieve that end.⁷⁶ Criticism of the break at 16 was allied to the disruption which would inevitably occur in the change-over to the new system in conspiring to undermine the successful introduction of new public examinations, particularly GCSE.

The PTA of East Park Senior High School, in addition to putting forward the more familiar arguments relating to pastoral and curricular continuity in all-through schools, deplored the lack of a consistent approach to post-16 education in that the proposed Catholic mixed secondary school would retain its sixth form and the Church of England also had declared its intention to fight for similar treatment regarding the proposed controlled secondary school in East Hull. As the latter would have a community catchment as well as a denominational one, the net result would be that all-through education would be available in some areas but denied to the majority of pupils.⁷⁷

Opposition to neighbourhood schools appeared in many objections, both from groups and individual schools. The proposal was seen as a denial of parental choice and thus contrary to the spirit of the 1980 Education Act,

and as an affront to the principle of equality of opportunity which balanced entry had sought to promote.

Objection to the disruption to children's education which the transitional arrangements would entail was equally widespread, the consensus being that the Hull system had only achieved stability in the past ten years and that the price of the change would be a lost generation of children for uncertain benefits. As the Parents' Action Committee objection stated;

Large scale reorganisation involves high transitional costs. Many of these costs are concealed or absorbed by children and teachers in the educational service. This does not make these costs any less real. The Education Committee has minimised these costs and suggested with careful planning they can be absorbed. However, as with many large scale changes the transitional costs are guaranteed whereas the future benefits are not.

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The submission from the Parents' Action Committee contained the most wide-ranging criticism of the Authority's proposals and took the form of a lengthy and closely documented commentary. In addition to assailing the consultative process it criticised the transitional arrangements and focused on the educational implications of the plan under three headings - the size of the proposed schools, the school allocation proposals, and the arguments advanced for and against junior high schools and sixth form colleges.⁷⁹

Regarding the Authority's proposed neighbourhood policy the Committee concluded that, while the current system presented some problems at the senior high school level, it did allow for considerable parental choice at all levels, and that the Authority's insistence on place of residence as the main criterion would not improve on existing arrangements and would relegate the children's ability and parental choice to a very subordinate position.⁸¹

In reviewing the case against middle schools the Committee, using the same HMI Report as the LEA document had done,⁸² came to the opposite conclusion; that the case against them was not proven. While acknowledging that HMI had been critical of some aspects of middle schools they contended that HMI had not intended the report to be read as a wholesale condemnation of the schools and that it was inappropriate for the Authority to use it in that way and as their main source of evidence for a return to transfer at 11 plus.⁸³

The Committee's judgment was that while HMI had suggested that with falling rolls middle schools became increasingly more expensive to run it made no judgment about whether it would be more economic and effective to return to earlier transfer to secondary education. The Committee concluded with equal firmness that the case for sixth form colleges as against school-based sixth forms was also unproven.⁸⁴ The submission ended with a plea for the Secretary of State to call a public inquiry.

8. DES approval, 1985

Before the Secretary of State pronounced on the Authority's proposals the County Council elections in May 1985 which resulted in the balance of power being held by four Liberal/SDP Alliance councillors, as against Labour's 36 seats and the Conservatives' 35, threatened the withdrawal of the Hull school plan. It was reported in the local press that attitudes towards it were one of the major bargaining points in the negotiations to form an administration which took place between the Alliance and the two major parties in the period preceding the first meeting of the new Council on 22nd May.⁸⁵

The Alliance's power-sharing proposals, which it put to both major parties, included withdrawal of the plan, the retention of the existing ages of transfer, and further public consultation.⁸⁶ Those negotiations resulted in an accommodation between the Alliance and the Conservatives on administration but not on policies, whose main features were that the Conservatives would hold the chairmanship of all committees which would consist of equal numbers of councillors from the major parties with the balance of power being held by Alliance members.⁸⁷ This lack of agreement over policy left the question of the retention or withdrawal of the plan to be resolved at the first meeting of the new Council.

The upshot of that meeting was that the Liberals, having had their own suggestions defeated, abstained and thereby enabled Labour to defeat the Conservative move to withdraw the plan by one vote.⁸⁸ Hence the newly-forged Conservative/Alliance administration found itself in the position of having to espouse a plan which it had previously opposed.

The Secretary of State's letter indicating the intention to approve the Authority's proposals, with one minor outstanding modification, dated 29th May, was released to the press the following day.⁸⁹ The modification which the Secretary of State was prepared to consider concerned an old West Hull primary school which, in the public notice, the Authority had proposed closing in August 1988 as part of the major re-organisation but which it had deemed subsequently, after consultations with parents, governors and staff, to be unnecessarily costly to maintain in a fair state of repair for that length of time. It was therefore proposed to advance the date of closure to August 1985.

The Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee did not accept the lost vote on the 22nd May or the Secretary of State's declaration of intent on 29th May as the end of the matter and was reported as saying, 'The Secretary of State is only considering giving approval. I do not think that all is lost. I shall be making further representations to him.'⁹⁰ Those further representations, as revealed publicly at the Education Committee meeting on 19th June which formally considered the Secretary of State's letter, amounted to a proposal, with Alliance support, to modify the plan further by retaining some school-based sixth form provision in the form of a combined sixth form at the two single-sex schools in North West Hull, thereby making them 11-18 schools.

By the time of the committee meeting DES had observed on that proposed modification, in a letter to the Director of Education dated 17th June, that legal opinion considered that the Secretary of State would be exceeding his powers of modification under the 1980 Education Act on the grounds that he would be effecting a significant change of age range without giving local people the right to object, as provided under Section 12(3) of the Act. It made no difference that the proposed modification might command the support of the Authority as that particular section of the Act was concerned with the rights and wishes of local people.⁹¹

On 19th June the Education Committee received the Director of Education's account of the consultations previously held concerning the early closure of

the West Hull primary school as requested in the Secretary of State's letter, resolved to note the legal position on the proposed modification concerning a joint sixth form in North West Hull, and decided nem. con. to proceed with the re-organisation plan. The letter containing the Secretary of State's formal approval of the re-organisation plan, together with the modification relating to the West Hull primary school, was received on 31st July 1985.⁹²

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Chapter 8

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Chapter 9 - The Voluntary Sector and Hull Re-organisationa) The Church of England

In the three-tier system Church of England provision consisted of 6 schools, four primary schools and two junior high schools, only one of which, a primary school, was voluntary controlled. The proposals for the Church schools, as published on 27th March 1984¹ by the York Diocesan Council of Education, following discussions with the LEA, envisaged four 5-11 primary schools and the establishment of an 11-16 secondary school. These proposals involved the transfer to the Authority of one of the Church's voluntary aided primary schools as a replacement for a county primary school with much inferior buildings in the vicinity. The LEA's offer of a Church secondary school was a partial quid pro quo for this transfer and it was proposed to house the school on the eastern boundary of the city in a former senior high school which was surplus to LEA requirements. At that stage in the negotiations the LEA had proposed controlled status, while the Church wished to consider the possibility of aided status for the new school.

The absence of meaningful consultation, in the widely expressed view of many interested parties, was a major feature of the controversy surrounding the emergence of these proposals which were negotiated with the LEA by a group of four people on behalf of the Diocesan Council. This group consisted of the Bishop of Hull, the Archdeacon of the East Riding, the head teacher of one of the junior high schools, and the recently appointed Diocesan Director of Education.

The statutory objection to the published proposals submitted by the Church Schools Action Group, formed on 22 June 1984, elaborated at length eight grounds of objection and closely documented events from February to July.² In essence the objectors asserted that there had been a lack of consultation with legitimate interest groups both prior to the negotiations and after the proposals were revealed by the working party; that information had been withheld, with the effect that the true significance of the emerging proposals

reported by the working party was not made clear; that an unrepresentative body did not in fact negotiate in the Church's interest but had essentially capitulated to the Authority; and that there were certain irregularities in the actual process of obtaining the signatures to the public notices of certain of the governing body chairmen.

References to consultation in five of the eight grounds for objection reveal what the Action Group understood by consultation and what they would have hoped to achieve by means of being consulted. Their first, and fundamental, objection was the limited membership of the working party which, they felt, inadequately reflected the different views and interests of the various bodies concerned with Church schools, there being no representation of parents, of governors, with the exception of the Bishop, of parish laity, or school staff.³ Their basic contention was that had a 'properly representative committee'⁴ negotiated with the LEA the opposition, of which the Church Schools Action Group was the principal manifestation, would never have reached the proportions it did.

A further objection was that, with the exception of some informal meetings chaired by the head teacher who was later to become a member of the working party and at a very early stage in the proceedings, no systematic attempt was made to ascertain the views of interested parties in Hull prior to the negotiations with the LEA.⁵ The objectors' summary view was that, given the LEA's public announcement of its general intentions in March 1983,⁶ there had been adequate time for the Church authorities to take such steps. Their failure to do so was described as 'a deliberate denial of fundamental rights' and as entirely contrary to the spirit informing the 1980 Education Act.⁷ Further, this lack of pre-negotiation consultation was contrasted with the wide-ranging consultation arrangements originated by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Middlesbrough.

The time available to parents and others to make representations to the working party when the proposals were made public was also assailed as inadequate and in contrast with that available to those concerned with County

and Catholic schools.⁸ Detailed proposals for the latter were published on 15th February, while those for CE schools appeared on 27th March. The upshot was, given the LEA's declared intention of reaching a decision by May, that Church of England objectors had only one month in which to make representations compared with nearly three months, in all, allowed to the others. The objectors pointed out⁹ that the incidence of the Easter holiday had further increased their difficulties, the schools being closed from 12th-30th April. This holiday had been allowed for by the LEA and Roman Catholic authorities who had arranged for the completion of their public consultative arrangements by that time. In addition, because of the disparity in the publication of the different proposals, those with a concern for Church of England schools could not have their questions answered at the public meetings arranged by the LEA between 5th and 15th March, since the Church's proposals were not then known.¹⁰

Perhaps the most fundamental objection to the consultative process as they had experienced it were the arrangements subsequent to the publication of the Church's proposals, which constituted their fifth ground of objection.¹¹ In this section the objectors defined "consultation" and "consultative" in the sense of 'meetings of various kinds which carried the potentiality of influencing the proposals as originally presented,'¹² and concluded that the arrangements were 'woefully inadequate'¹³ in that, at such meetings as were held, it became clear that the members of the working party were concerned only to explain and defend the proposals, while 'the idea of consultation in the sense that altered proposals might emerge was clearly unacceptable.'¹⁴ Also the Bishop failed to meet them until almost four months after the proposals were first issued, by which time amendment had become impossible.

The eighth ground of objection asserted, among other things, that undue pressure had been brought to bear on some chairmen of governors to sign the public notices. It was explained that one, as chairman of three governing bodies, had refused to sign, with the full support of his governors, on the grounds that there had been no consultation on matters which concerned them

and, particularly, on what they saw as the very important question of the working party's acceptance of controlled status for the proposed senior school.¹⁵

The documents which appear as appendices both to the Action Group's Statutory Objection and to the submission made by a deputation to DES by the same group on 30th January 1985,¹⁶ reveal the manner in which the Church of England proposals were negotiated, the quality and extent of the information made available to interested parties at various points in the process, and the consultative arrangements provided by the Church authorities. These documents consist essentially of formal information supplied by the Diocesan Council and of other correspondence between members of the action group and the Church authorities.

The LEA announced its plan on 15th February 1984. The proposals for Church of England schools were developed by the working party in negotiation with the LEA in the period from early February to late March 1984. An information leaflet for parents issued by the Diocesan Council on 5th March announced that heads would be informing them about open meetings which would be held 'when more detailed proposals as they are likely to affect particular schools are known' and that the heads would receive any written views parents might wish to put forward for consideration by 'the working party being set up'.¹⁷ The leaflet went on to explain that the LEA had been reviewing the organisation of Hull schools for some time, but that many details remained to be settled which, it claimed, helped to explain why no scheme had yet been published for Church schools, but now that public and consultative meetings were under way, the Education Committee should soon be able to prepare more precise proposals for consideration by the Diocesan authorities and governors of Church schools.

However, essential elements in a strategy for Church schools were declared at this point. The LEA was anxious for Church schools to play a part in the catchment area system and the leaflet stated that the Diocesan Council, while wishing Church schools to be able to reserve a percentage of

places for other children from church-going families, shared that hope. The Church also declared its strong desire to be involved in schooling across the whole 5-16 age-range and accepted that whatever was to happen in any one area of Hull had to be judged as part of a plan for the city as a whole.

The Diocesan Director of Education's reply to a later inquiry from a member of the action group reveals more of the course of events in this period.¹⁸ The letter reported that, at an executive sub-committee extraordinary meeting of the Diocesan Council on 27th March, the clash of opinion with the LEA over the proposed Church high school was fully reported and that the Diocese's representatives were 'expressly empowered to negotiate the best terms possible.' It was confirmed also that the LEA first named the primary school it wished to purchase on 7th February and offered the site of the senior high school to the Church on 12th March, but that 'the effective date, in terms of commitment on either side, was 27th March, when the agreed statement was drawn up'.

Two other letters from the same source, one to chairmen of governors, heads and school staff of 2nd April¹⁹ and another to parents dated 4th April²⁰ further reveal the position at this time and the Church's approach to the negotiations. The first, which provided a copy of the agreed statement of 27th March, expressed confidence in governors' and staffs' acceptance of the need for confidentiality during the early negotiations between the LEA and the Diocese's representatives and explained that the leaflet to parents of 5th March was prompted by the realisation that anxiety would be increased if no explanation of what was happening was given to them. The letter went on to 'complete the summary of recent events' and added that the Diocesan Council of Education had 'endorsed the position achieved by the Diocese's representatives and recognised that the best possible terms had been obtained'.²¹ Referring to the LEA's wish to purchase the premises of the Church primary school in East Hull as part of a re-drawing of catchment areas the letter stated that the Diocese had acknowledged the logic behind the planning and stated its 'reluctant agreement to the request'. The letter further explained

that the Authority had recognised the value placed by the Diocese on the school to be surrendered by offering the secondary school as a Church co-educational 11-16 school with controlled status, but added that the LEA was in no doubt over the Diocese's commitment to securing aided status for the school.

The letter to parents of 4th April outlining the proposals began by stating that reports in the local press and on local radio had served to publicise the main details of the consultative proposals for the re-organisation of the six Church schools and that contacts with the schools had doubtless resulted. It then contained the following statement, 'The leaflet distributed to parents on 5th March was intended to give a re-assurance that the church schools' future was not being regarded lightly by the diocesan authorities. I ought to stress now that the Diocese has insisted throughout on waiting until the Authority had stated its full proposals, and only then making a submission; otherwise it would have laid itself open to the charge that it was seeking to dictate what was to happen. Now, with head in control of heart, it has confirmed its support for the scheme negotiated with the Authority by the working party and outlined below.'²²

The letter concluded that in such a massive re-organisation there were bound to be disappointments but that there would also be opportunities. The Diocesan Director ended by saying, 'I join the other members of the working party in asking parents to support what has been proposed, in the belief that the best possible terms have been obtained.'²³

Further evidence of the Church negotiators' view of the place of consultation in the policy process is provided by a verbatim transcript of a discussion between the Bishop of Hull and the chairman of the Action Group on Radio Humberside on 1st July which was included as an appendix to the statutory objection.²⁴ This took place after the public notices had been issued (20th June) and when the controversy was at its height. The Bishop, asked about the extent to which parents, teachers and governors had been consulted over the changes, replied, 'Well you can't - you've got to make decisions -

that's what responsibility is all about. Consultation follows after the initial plan has been agreed. Part of the problem in this situation was that the negotiations in fact are still proceeding, and the final plan has not yet been fully agreed.²⁵ The Bishop then instanced the status of the Church senior school which he said was probably going to be a controlled school but they were hoping to build into the agreement 'some special arrangements whereby the Church's presence can be considerably strengthened.'²⁶

It would appear from the evidence of the formal written contacts between the York Diocesan Council of Education and other interested parties, and from the broadcast, that the objectors' contention that effective pre-negotiation consultation did not take place is substantiated, nor did any take place during the negotiating stage itself. Moreover it is also apparent, at the point at which the proposals were made public, from the language used in the official communications with parents and others, that what are described in the agreed statement of 27th March as proposals for consultation were more of the nature of decisions from which the church negotiators would be unable to retreat. The only substantive item apparently remaining open to further negotiation, and possible wider consultation, being the special arrangements to which the Bishop referred in the broadcast on 1st July and of which no details were then available.

Heads and governors' representatives were formally informed of the proposals on 28th March, and school staff on the following day, while the governing body of the primary school scheduled for transference to the LEA met members of the working party on 4th April, followed by a parents' meeting in the school. The Diocesan Director's letter reached the parents, through the pupils, on 5th April. The organisation of a parental response through the heads, as intended in the Director's letter of 5th March, was impeded by the Easter holiday and there were, in fact, no open meetings, as promised in the letter, until after the issuing of the public notices. While, therefore, in principle a period of time was available for consultation with interest groups it was not used by the Church authorities as a means of seeking possible

amendments to the proposals prior to the publication of the notices. Such meetings ultimately took place in July and were then of an explanatory rather than a consultative nature.²⁷

The publication of the notices was a spur to action for the objectors who, having failed to secure a meeting with the working party in the interim, met in one of the schools on 22nd June and formed an action group with the principal objective of composing a statutory objection to the proposals.

The opponents of the proposals referred in their statutory objection to the Bishop's marked reluctance to discuss the matter.²⁸ The issue was raised at an East Hull Deanery Day Meeting on June 19th, but the Bishop ruled that that was not the right place to discuss it.²⁹ The formation of the Action Group at the joint meeting of parents, teachers and others on 22nd June was largely a reaction to the negotiators' refusal to meet them. The negotiating team was in fact holding a meeting in another part of the school but failed to respond to the request, in the form of a message signed by the chairman of the meeting and passed unanimously,³⁰ for the team to join them. It was on that evening that the Action Group was formed and it passed a unanimous resolution containing alternative proposals, whose main features were the retention of all the existing schools, the insistence on aided status for all Church schools and the proposal of a more centrally situated site for the new Church senior school.³¹

The long-awaited meetings with the negotiators eventually took place in July,³² but they took the form of a series of meetings for the interest groups separately; for heads and governing body chairmen, for teachers, and for parents respectively. The Diocesan Director's letter outlining the arrangements for the parents' meeting on 24th July invited up to six parents' representatives from each school and asked the heads to make the appropriate contacts. These arrangements fell far short of the more open and widely representative public meetings sought by the Action Group.

The Diocesan Director sent another letter, dated 23rd July,³³ to parents, which explained that the Diocese's representatives in the negotiations

had intended to wait until a full statement detailing the resolution of outstanding points could be issued, but had accepted the strongly expressed opinion of the meeting of the Hull Deanery Synod on 19th July that parental anxiety would be increased if no further information had been provided until the next term. Inter alia, in clarifying certain aspects of the public notices, this referred to the continuing negotiations, again without apparent wider consultation, over a special arrangement for the controlled secondary school which would give the governing body greater powers over the general direction and management of the school than would otherwise be the case in respect of the appointment of the head and senior staff, the composition of the governing body, the curriculum, religious education and worship. A further letter to parents, dated 5th October, provided details of these special arrangements which, in the Director's submission, approximated to those for an aided school.³⁴ Nine items were listed, of which those relating to the governing body's composition and appointments to headship were the most important in terms of control of the school's affairs. The proposals provided for nine foundation governors in a total membership of 27, which the Director pointed out was a much more favourable position than the minimum of one fifth foundation governors for a controlled school required by the 1980 Education Act. The head teacher would be appointed by a joint committee consisting of six LEA representatives and six governors (the Chairman and Vice-Chairman ex officio and four foundation governors) while the Chairman would not have a casting vote.

In regard to religious education it was noted that the LEA's Agreed Syllabus would be followed, the usual arrangement for a controlled school, but it was pointed out that Humberside's 1981 syllabus allowed much flexibility. With regard to the school's ethos, it was stated that the governors had the right to apply for a trust deed which could incorporate references to worship, and stated that, 'The school would seek to develop a distinctive ethos for a school characterised by concern for Christian nurture and by respect for the disciplines of secular education, exercised in such a way that non-Christians also would be able to feel full members of the school community.'³⁵

Continuing dissatisfaction with both the proposals themselves and with the consultative process they had experienced resulted in a deputation from the Action Group to DES on 30th January 1985, which was supported by a written submission, whose purpose was to provide a further gloss on their statutory objection and present additional documents in support of their case.³⁶

The deputation reiterated that they had been excluded from consultation and treated in a manner which they described as 'at once cavalier and unfair',³⁷ and pointed out that the Action Group had been formed only after the Bishop's refusal to meet interested parties on 22nd June. They declared, 'It had by then become all too clear that the Church Negotiators had not consulted with anyone at all, that they had set their faces against any amendment of the proposals, and regarded the developing opposition as a surprising and irritating irrelevance.'³⁸ In support of this contention they drew attention to the requirements of Administrative Memorandum 4/84 paragraphs 9 and 10.³⁹ With respect to paragraph 9, requiring consultation with local people at a stage when their views could influence the final decision, they contended that their statutory objection had already furnished abundant evidence of 'the almost complete lack of consultation with parents, staff and governors',⁴⁰ while paragraph 10, which referred specifically to consultation with the governors of voluntary schools, they argued, had also been ignored by the Church authorities. They stated that the governors of existing Church schools in Hull were not consulted and that, in particular, those of the surrendered Church primary school had no knowledge of the proposal and first heard of it on April 4th at a hastily convened meeting on the first practicable date after the proposals had been issued on 27th March.⁴¹ The submission also detailed the opposition of the governors of four of the six church schools⁴² and assailed the special arrangements for the Church controlled senior school,⁴³ which were not clear at the time they had submitted their statutory objection. Their position was, special arrangements notwithstanding, that the underlying controlled status was unacceptable.

Recent difficulties over the appointment of a deputy head at the voluntary controlled primary school were cited as an illustration of the problems involved in controlled status. This took the form of a statement, signed by the chairman and another member of the governing body and by the head teacher, to the effect that the short-list drawn up by the chairman and the head had been changed at the instigation of an LEA adviser without reference back to the governors, with the effect that they were unable to interview applicants whom they considered suitable. In the end a Roman Catholic had been appointed.⁴⁴

Considering this lengthy and complex series of events, the question arises whether, had the consultative process been different and conducted in a manner acceptable to the objectors, a series of proposals would have emerged which would have been equally acceptable to both the Church and the LEA. The objectors' opposition, based on both their feeling of exclusion from policy-making and on the actual arrangements negotiated on their behalf, implied throughout that they would have attempted to secure a better deal than the working party had achieved. The Action Group's alternative proposals, approved unanimously as a resolution at their meeting on 22nd June⁴⁵ envisaged the retention of the primary school scheduled for transfer to the LEA, aided status for all the new 5-11 primary schools, which were also to act as "feeder" schools to an aided Church senior school with an integral sixth form. For the latter they proposed the premises of East Park Senior High School, which by tradition had had links with the Church over many years, but had ceased to be a grammar school in the 1969 comprehensive reorganisation. This particular school had been originally designated by the LEA as one of the proposed sixth form colleges but had, as described earlier, reverted to an 11-16 neighbourhood school in the LEA's revised proposals. The Action Group were thus, at one and the same time, challenging the application of a neighbourhood policy to Church schools in both the primary and secondary sectors and were also attempting to reverse decisions which had been taken, after consultation, in the interests of another body of interested parties, mainly parents. In short, they were

attempting to modify certain aspects of the LEA's general strategy and were also seeking parity with the Roman Catholics who had negotiated parish schools as "feeders" to a new co-educational 11-18 secondary school.

A major constraint on the negotiations is confirmed in a letter from the Chairman of the Education Committee to the local M.P., dated 6 April, a copy of which was supplied by the latter to the objectors.⁴⁶ Referring to the Church of England proposals, the Chairman states, 'The features of the agreement are that we have made a bargain which seems to be advantageous for different reasons to both sides.' He then outlined the arrangements for the new Church of England secondary school which would have as feeders two county primary schools and one Church primary school, and added, 'We have not yet been able to agree the status of this school, the Church wants it to be voluntary aided, which means that they have effective control over all important matters but we are insisting that it should be voluntary controlled, which means that we have significant control but the Church has a considerable influence. At the end of the day I anticipate that if we hold out it will be possible to agree on the controlled status.'⁴⁷ The Chairman added that, as far as parental choice was concerned, the agreement with the Church in respect of all their schools was based on the catchment area principle with the first claim to a place going to those in the catchment area or attending feeder schools, those with a Church connection from outside the area would be a third priority, taking up such places as might be left after medical cases and those with brothers and sisters at the school had been accommodated.

The Church's acute awareness of the LEA's insistence on controlled status at an early stage in the proceedings is confirmed by the Diocesan Director's letter to parents on 23rd July which pointed out that the public notices had classified the secondary school as voluntary controlled although assurances had been given earlier that the Diocese would do its utmost to gain aided status. They honoured that commitment but, as he explained, 'eventually had to recognise that a secondary school was not going to be achieved on those terms: the Authority's opposition was unyielding, born of its experience

elsewhere in the County and of the knowledge of difficulties in other parts of the country, because a few aided schools had hindered LEA attempts to implement overall strategies.⁴⁸ The general picture he presents is one in which the Church had little room for manoeuvre, as the negotiators saw the situation, and, referring to the surrender of the Church primary school, the Director asserted that, had there been scope for manoeuvre, a transfer to the Authority would not have been conceded. The letter concluded with an example of the pressures under which the Church negotiators had worked by stating that, when the Authority was completing arrangements for the publication of its notices, it took the decision that the secondary school would be listed as a county school unless the Diocesan Council's proposal could appear simultaneously and concluded, 'that fact affords a particularly good illustration of the pressures on the Diocese's representatives.'⁴⁹

Closer consultation with the objectors might have made the Church authorities more aware of the value church-going people placed on aided status and on the retention of the surrendered primary school in preference to the Church junior high school which the church proposed to retain as a new 5-11 school. The Church's determination on these matters might have been strengthened. It would, almost certainly, have meant that the Church would have made more positive proposals rather than waiting for the LEA to declare its hand and thus certain details in the plan might have changed, and even the retention of all the Church schools might have been possible. However, it remains doubtful whether the Church would have gained aided status for the secondary school, although the Chairman's reference, in his letter, to "holding out" for controlled status perhaps did not indicate complete confidence.

The heat of the controversy notwithstanding, it is important to note that the Action Group, in contrast with the consultations concerning county schools, and in common with the Catholic Church, did not challenge the most fundamental element of the LEA's plan; transfer at 11 plus and the abolition of the middle schools. Its basic quarrel was with the Church authorities, not with the LEA. A governor of two of the Church schools whose chairman

had refused to sign the public notices wrote to the Secretary of State shortly before the deputation explaining that, in other circumstances, they would have wished to co-operate fully with the LEA 'in introducing a reorganisation of schools which, both economically and educationally, would be of greatest benefit to the community... Our position, as you know, is that we understand the need for re-organisation and believe that the age break at 11 is best for both children and staff, and in line with many LEA authority areas elsewhere in the country. Our concern is with the nature and location of the Church schools in the future pattern.'⁵⁰

The Secretary of State's letter to the Education Authority of 29th May 1985⁵¹ indicated his intention also to approve the Diocese's proposals, with a modification intended to overcome the refusal of the governors of the two church primary schools in North Hull to publish Section 13 proposals for transitional arrangements. It was proposed to bring forward the date of implementing the change by one year, to 1st September 1987, in order to bring the two schools into line with the transitional arrangements for the other Church of England schools. With that modification those two 5-9 schools would retain an extra year and no pupils would transfer to the middle schools in 1987.

Formal final approval of these arrangements was contained in the Secretary of State's letter of 30th July 1985⁵² to both the Education Authority and the Diocesan Director of Education, which further directed that the new co-educational secondary school in East Hull would have controlled status, while the status of the remaining Church of England schools was unchanged. In sum, the objectors' demands had not been met and the one modification proposed by the Secretary of State had the effect of circumventing the barrier which they had posed to the effective implementation of the proposals.

b) The Catholic Church

The process by which the proposals for Catholic schools emerged, and the subsequent public consultative arrangements, contrast markedly with the

procedures adopted by the Church of England and, perhaps in consequence, such controversy as there was in the Catholic community occurred before and not after the publication of the notices.

In the three-tier system Catholic provision consisted of eight primary schools, four junior high schools, and two single-sex senior high schools. The primary and middle schools were located, more or less strategically, to serve particular parishes and the major geographical sub-divisions of the city, north, east, west and central. The proposals, as contained in the public notices, reduced the number of schools to seven 5-11 primaries and one 11-18 co-educational secondary school, to be established on the site of the girls' senior high school.

The Catholic proposals were developed by a representative working party which met from early May 1983 to late April 1984. The working party was elected at a meeting of representatives from every Catholic school and parish in Hull and district, which met under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Middlesbrough on 21st April 1983,⁵³ and represented a careful balancing of interests. It consisted of equal numbers of parish priests, parents' representatives, governors, head teachers, and school staff respectively, under the chairmanship of a senior canon, who acted as the bishop's commissioner in the consultations. Those groups intimately concerned with the day-to-day running of the schools, the governors, heads, and teaching staff, were also carefully balanced in having a member for primary, junior high, and senior schools in each case. This initial sixteen member group was later joined, at their invitation, by representatives of the two religious orders which had established secondary education in the city and by a senior officer of the LEA.⁵⁴

The process by which the proposals emerged in the working party, and its response to the subsequent public consultations, is revealed in its minutes. The working party met for the first time on 4th May 1983 and concerned itself with issues of general principle and strategy. The chairman reminded the meeting of the confidentiality of the proceedings,⁵⁵ and proposed that they should have a report ready for presentation to the larger consultative group

by the autumn,⁵⁶ and that their investigations should be wide and could result in more than one set of proposals.⁵⁷ A fundamental strategic matter was decided at this point. While it was recognised that voluntary schools could be re-organised differently from county schools 'it was generally realised that they would be the same.'⁵⁸ The working party then turned its attention to ascertaining the views of parents and informing them of the proposed changes and concluded that head teachers and parish priests were the best agencies for this.⁵⁹ Preliminary arrangements were then made to gather information regarding actual and projected numbers, school facilities and transport requirements, and a parish survey of baptismal numbers was called for.⁶⁰

The next two meetings, on 15th June and 7th July, were primarily concerned with post-compulsory provision, when the pros and cons of school-based sixth forms as against the sixth form colleges proposed for the state sector were debated. Fears were expressed concerning the curricular consequences for the main school of the loss of a sixth form, and over the vulnerability of 16 year olds in a secular post-16 institution,⁶¹ while the governors' representatives from the junior and senior high schools observed that if the LEA adopted sixth form colleges and the Catholic schools retained their sixth forms Catholic parents would have great difficulty in containing their 16 year olds in the Catholic system when the state system might appear more attractive.⁶²

The lines of enquiry regarding Catholic secondary education would appear to have been established early and focused on whether or not to parallel the state sector in opting for a break at 16, and the consequent loss of 16 year olds to Catholic education. On July 7th the senior school teacher member presented a paper in support of retaining sixth forms and this led to a discussion of the possibility of having some kind of sixth form provision and of co-education.⁶³ The meeting was also informed, by the head of the boys' secondary school, that amalgamation of the two single-sex schools had been discussed since 1976 and that a decision to do so would have been made

if the present proposed re-organisation had not occurred.⁶⁴

The meeting agreed to restrict discussion at that point to matters of principle, leaving the possible problems of split-sites and the utilisation of buildings to a later stage when strategy had been agreed,⁶⁵ and turned to producing "models" of possible forms of future arrangements for working party consideration. Four models were to be considered: to have one large co-educational school; to have two small co-educational schools; to have two single-sex schools; to have a split-site co-educational school.⁶⁶

Inter alia, the working party returned to secondary provision on November 3rd when the models were discussed and it was decided to make proposals regarding the site of the secondary school 'entirely on educational grounds' and it was determined, in order to avoid a split-site school, that an 11-18 co-educational school should be established on the girls' school site,⁶⁷ which had room for possible future extensions, and generally more modern buildings. At its penultimate meeting on 12th April 1984, subsequent to the public consultations, the working party confirmed that the avoidance of a split-site school and the provision of a sixth form within the secondary school were both essential.⁶⁸

The proposals for the primary sector produced more debate within the group, and proved more controversial during its wider consultations with interested groups, than did those for the secondary school. The working party turned its major attention to primary schools at its meeting on 21st September 1983 when it received an account of a meeting at County Hall between the LEA and Church Authorities, attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, the Director of Education, the Bishop of Middlesbrough, and the Chairman of the Working Party, informing them of the LEA's intention of changing the age of transfer to 11 plus, and of the County Council's hope that the Catholic Authorities would work alongside the LEA.⁶⁹

The working party also received an account from the junior high school head teacher member of a recent meeting of middle school heads and senior officers, the relevant points for the working party being the LEA's proposed

minimum enrolment for the new 5-11 schools of 200 pupils and the intention of having a nursery unit attached to each.⁷⁰ The group concluded that few Catholic primary schools could meet that target and that their schools should be similarly enhanced because nurseries tended to attract numbers to primary schools.⁷¹ Hence they determined to examine Catholic primary school provision closely in the light of that information and decided to meet teachers from the different phases of education to discuss the changes.⁷²

The working party met again on 20th October to discuss the proposals which would constitute their draft consultation paper. Regarding nursery provision, they made the decision to request equal rights and facilities with the LEA for state nurseries.⁷³ They then proceeded to deal with the city by geographical sector.

For West Hull it was reported that the chairman had met the primary and middle school heads in that area to discuss the proposal the heads had made to close St. Patrick's Primary School, which currently occupied leased and unsuitable premises, and transfer the staff and pupils to the St. Jerome's Junior High School site in preparation for the change-over to a 5-11 school in 1988.⁷⁴ This proposal was accepted. In the North East sector it was proposed to amalgamate the existing primary and middle schools as one 5-11 school, using the closely adjacent premises of both.⁷⁵

The arrangements for East Hull generally proved the most problematic for the working party in view of the competing priorities which their soundings had revealed. Here the incidence of falling rolls and population movements in relation to the parochial network had been most dramatic. The area was served by two primary schools and one junior high school. It was, apparently, relatively easy for them to propose the closure of one of the primary schools which was poorly subscribed,⁷⁶ but difficulties arose over which of the two remaining schools should form the base for a new 5-11 school. The strengths of the primary school lay in its long-established tradition of service to the community and in the fact that it was truly a parish school; those of the junior high school in its far superior building and facilities

and in its somewhat greater esteem among parents, although its location represented a substantial travelling distance for younger children. It was decided that parental interests in the three parishes involved should be further ascertained. While the working party did consider offering a choice, the general view was that they should be definite in their proposals and, in order to gain the feeling of the meeting, a vote was taken which resulted in six votes for the retention of the primary school and seven in favour of the junior high school. This was considered too close for a proposal acceptance and it was agreed that more information be sought about the schools, and area and parish information obtained.⁷⁷ Two members undertook to seek this out in a confidential manner and report back. Shortness of time precluded discussion of the schools in Central and North Hull.

The meeting on November 3rd returned to these matters and received the school and parish information requested. On that basis they opted to retain the East Hull primary school as the base for the 5-11 school in the sector,⁷⁸ and also decided to retain the existing primary schools in Central and North Hull.⁷⁹ It was also decided to publish their proposals at the same time as the LEA.

The working party did not meet again until 8th February 1984, after a formal meeting at County Hall when the proposals were presented by the working party's chairman and the Bishop and LEA plans were outlined in return. The group agreed to keep the same embargo date (15th February) for their proposals as had been decided by the LEA.⁸⁰ The main work of the remainder of this meeting, and of a subsequent one on 29th February, was consideration of the arrangements for the public consultations. These paralleled LEA procedures in providing an information leaflet for parents, which outlined the proposals and informed them of the location and dates of the public meetings, and the provision of a "consultation room" in one of the schools to which parents could take their questions. On February 29th the working party discussed what should be the nature of their replies to questions and agreed not to comment specifically on staffing matters but simply to refer to the County Council

agreement on that issue.⁸¹ There was also a suggestion that the chairman should meet the teachers en masse to discuss the proposals but the majority advised against this, though the chairman did agree to meet the staffs of individual schools if they made a request.⁸²

Five public meetings were held between 6th and 20th March in schools in the different sectors of the city, while the consultation room operated on three occasions in a central Hull school. The information leaflet indicated that written comments could also be sent to either the Chairman or the Secretary of the working party. The working party held two meetings to consider the proposals in the light of these public consultations, on the 12th and 30th April.

Two important revisions of the proposals resulted from these public discussions. The most significant concerned East Hull where great opposition to the closure of the junior high school had become apparent at the public meeting held in the school on 12th March. The working party noted this at its meeting on 12th April, discussed it at length, and decided to make a final recommendation at the next meeting.⁸³ The working party finally determined, at its last meeting, to bow to this pressure and proposed the retention of the junior high school as the base for the new 5-11 school for East Hull. The minutes recorded that the decision was not unanimous but had been influenced by very strong local opinion and the condition of the site and buildings of the primary school which they had proposed to retain.⁸⁴

The other revision, accepted on 12th April,⁸⁵ concerned the transfer of pupils from the leased primary school in West Hull (St. Patrick's) to the well-equipped middle school in the sector (St. Jerome's) earlier than the working party had originally envisaged. The primary head had presented a lengthy and eloquent document to the working party⁸⁶ which argued that, unless such links were established early, and the parents and children habituated to the transfer, the risk was that, in the transitional period, the Church might lose not one but two Catholic schools in West Hull for lack of parental support, in view of the not inconsiderable travelling involved for younger

children.⁸⁷ Catholic parents might opt for county schools in West Hull, given the location of the Catholic schools, thus reducing their viability further. The working party agreed to propose that the transfer of pupils and staff to the junior high school site should take effect from September 1985 with a projected intake of 224 pupils and the prospect that it would grow quickly thereafter.⁸⁸ The head's surveys and the working party's own investigations had indicated both parental and parochial support for the move.⁸⁹

Other strongly expressed views, however, were rejected by the working party in framing its final proposals. Its confirmation of the initial proposal to retain the existing primary school provision in North Hull involved closure of a purpose-built and well-equipped middle school and this had been strongly resisted by a vocal lobby at the public meeting at the boys' secondary school on March 8th, who proposed that the middle school premises should be retained as the basis for a large 5-11 school. The working party considered that proposal⁹⁰ but rejected it on two grounds. The junior high school building, though large and well-equipped, had all the non-specialist classrooms on the first floor and was considered unsuitable for 5-11 year olds, while the size of the building meant that, if efficient use were to be made of it, its retention would entail the closure of two of the three primary schools in that part of the city, without any guarantee that parents would want their children bussed to the outskirts of the city to attend the one remaining.⁹¹

The LEA's role in the working party's deliberations was both advisory and informative. The Deputy Director of Education (Schools) was co-opted and attended three of the key meetings when the Catholic proposals were in their formative stages and was thus in a position to advise on their feasibility and on the stage to which the Authority's own thinking had developed. That contribution is recorded in the working party's minutes. On 7th July 1983 the Deputy Director began the discussion by reminding the working party that, as yet, no irrevocable decision had been made by the County Council.⁹² However, the meeting felt it was in a position to make proposals assuming the change in the age of transfer would be at 11. The Deputy Director also

supplied the working party with statistics to aid them with their projections for future school organisation,⁹³ with guidance concerning the viable size of schools,⁹⁴ and with information concerning the position of denominational teaching in state post-compulsory provision.⁹⁵ Hence a representative of the local administration was able to keep the CEO and the Chairman of the Education Committee informed of the thinking in a sector whose decision-making and consultative processes they could not dictate but only hope to influence.

On completion of the public consultations the Catholic Church's proposals were published in tandem with those of the local authority on 20th June 1984. The Secretary of State's decision was, however, slightly longer in the making than that for the County Schools and the Church of England. The letter of 29th May to the local authority indicated that the Secretary of State had yet to reach a decision and that details of proposed capital expenditure were required before he could do so.⁹⁶ However, the formal letter of approval was sent to the Bishop of Middlesbrough on the same date, 30th July 1985, as those relating to the local authority and the Church of England, and contained no suggested modifications. It was noted only that the promoters of one of the primary schools wished to change its character by adding a nursery unit. This could not be considered by the Secretary of State as the change had not been included in the notice published on 20th June and it was pointed out that it would be necessary to publish a further Section 13 proposal should they wish to carry that matter further.⁹⁷

Interviews with members of the working party amplified the succinct record of developments contained in the minutes, and revealed their concerns regarding the public meetings, their understanding of the Catholic Church's position within the wider decisions being made for the city's school system, and the extent to which the proposals were eventually shaped as a consequence of expressed opinion. (See also Chapter 10, Section D.) Some of the difficulties encountered at the public meetings followed from a lack of understanding, or a refusal to accept, the nature of the exercise on the part of some of those present. As the Chairman of the working party remarked, the

difficulty at several of the meetings, was the presence of a middle-school vested interest among many of the teachers who sought to argue the principle of the return to transfer at 11, which had not been put out to consultation. In addition, while the working party itself was representative in its membership, those attending the meetings did not necessarily represent a cross-section of views on the proposals. This provided the working party with two problems: firstly, that of focusing attention in the meetings on the proposals themselves and, secondly, of assessing the extent to which expressed opinion was shared by those who had not spoken or who had not attended.

All those interviewed confirmed their appreciation of the severe constraints within which a Catholic response could in practice be formulated. There was, in short, as they saw it, no viable alternative to working in tandem with the Authority. As the head of the boys' secondary school put it, 'I think there is a fundamental difference between the position in the State sector and that in the Catholic sector. There are alternative solutions in the State sector but the Catholic sector, because of falling rolls, could no longer sustain the geographical spread of its junior schools. The State could easily reduce the number of junior high schools and still maintain reasonable provision throughout the city. If the Catholics did that it would inevitably leave one geographical sector without a junior high school.' Transfer at 11 was seen as the only means of sustaining Catholic education. With falling numbers in Catholic schools, and the inevitability that some schools would have to close, the option considered earlier by the LEA, of retaining the existing system by reducing the number of units, was seen as a threat to the continuance of Catholic education by virtue of the size of the Catholic population and the distribution of the schools. As the head of St. Jerome's put it, there was simply no other Catholic junior high school with which his school could amalgamate.

All interviewees also saw the major modification to the proposals for East Hull as a direct result of the wider consultations and took that as evidence that they had been both open and meaningful. As the head of

St. Patrick's put it, 'I think it's healthy that there was any change. I worry when people go in and they have already made up their minds.' Regarding East Hull, the working party had opted for location and community tradition as against superior buildings and general facilities. In the event, parental support for the primary school they proposed to retain was less strong than their initial soundings had indicated and it became clear to the working party that the primary school would not become the strongly supported parish school they had envisaged. All working party members interviewed concluded that they would not have recognised the intensity of parental feeling regarding the schools in East Hull but for the public consultations, and that was the major factor in causing them to revise their decision. While being sceptical about the quality of the advice which came from the public meetings, taken separately, the Secretary, a central Hull primary head, asserted that when the working party met to assess them, she felt they had a clear idea of what people wanted and that, reservations about individual schools apart, there was clear public acceptance of the need for the change in the age of transfer.

Perhaps that acceptance was partly attributable to a difference in the task confronting the Catholic working party in comparison with that faced by the local authority. That difference lay, as one working party member explained, in the fact that the Catholic proposals were not complicated by party political factors, and were being presented and explained to a community which was essentially positive and supportive. The proposals could thus be seen in educational terms and as a way forward for the schooling of Catholic youngsters.

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Chapter 9

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PART IIIREVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS AND ITS OUTCOMESChapter 10 - The participants and the consultative process - interviews

The structure of the interview schedules and sampling procedures have been explained in Chapter 2. This chapter reports the results of the interview survey under groups of issues around which the schedules were structured. The main purpose of the interviews (see Appendices I, II, & III) was to determine if there was any patterning to the answers from members of the different constituent groups (see Table 10:1) concerning how they regarded consultation over a major policy issue, both as a matter of principle and how they saw the process in practice in these exercises. Hence the procedure adopted in reporting the findings is to indicate if any such patterning became apparent, rather than attempt to tabulate for each question the number of responses from each group, except where such tabulation can be regarded as a meaningful way of analysing the data. As certain matters of principle were common to both schedules concerning the local authority's consultations, the findings on those items have been reported together.

A. Common Matters of Principle

Both interview schedules began with three questions concerning matters of principle. Question 1 sought to determine whether respondents made any distinction between being consulted about policy and participating in the making of policy decisions; Question 2 attempted to gain a more explicit statement of what respondents meant by participation; while Question 3 asked at what point in policy-making they wished to become involved.

In response to Question 1 all the interviewees, whether as supporters or opponents of the Authority's proposals, and in both phases of the Hull consultations, distinguished between interested parties being consulted over policy and participating in making policy decisions. A distinction was most consistently made in terms of who holds the power to take a decision, allied

to accountability for it. Consultation was most often described as a process whereby views are sought on a proposal while others, the Education Committee and the County Council in this case, decide. As one secondary school head put it, 'In consultation my views are sought but I have no right to assume that they will be taken into account. Others are empowered to take decisions.'

TABLE 10:1

Interviewees : Local Authority Consultations

A. Hull Re-Organisation, Phase I

Senior High School Head Teachers	14
Chairmen of Senior School Governing Bodies	12
Senior High School Parent-Governors	6
Elected Members (County Council)	5
Teachers' Union Leaders	4
Education Officers	4

B. Hull Re-Organisation, Phase II

Senior High School Head Teachers	5
Junior High School Head Teachers	11
Elected Members	10
Teachers' Union Leaders	7
Leaders of Parents' Action Groups	11
LEA Project Officer	1

That distinction was expressed most consistently by elected members. For example, a member of the controlling Labour group said of the first consultative phase, 'There has to be a difference. As we have a party policy there is a need to consult on how to implement policy. People have to be quite clear where we stand. If we have a policy, particularly if we have been elected on it, then we must ensure that it is carried out even though a particular school or a group of parents don't like it.' A city council opponent of the plan to change the age of transfer said, 'The difference is based in my trade union background where the management always reserve the right to manage but intandem at all times consult with employees. Ultimately management will make the decision.'

However, despite the unanimity and the apparent clarity with which respondents made a distinction between these notions, many wanted to see a clear connection between them and wished to be able to perceive a continuum from consultation to policy decision. This was seen as a problem inherent in the consultative process by one of the officers involved in both consultative exercises who commented, 'A major disadvantage is that it raises people's expectations. Having been asked for their views they feel that there is a greater chance that their views will be accepted, sometimes feeling that it is a quasi-referendum in which views are assessed and counted.'

Being consulted, it would appear, can also give rise to a degree of ambivalence. While, in the first phase of consultations, governing body chairmen, both lay and elected members, unanimously distinguished between the two concepts in the terms already described, one admitted, 'When I'm an interested party I always want to take part in the policy-making. But when I'm making the policy I can certainly see the other side of it.'

The raising of aspirations as a consequence of being consulted is generally confirmed by interviewees' responses to Question 2, which presented them with possible definitions of participation on a five-point continuum from playing a direct part in the determination of policy to listening and observing, and were asked which most closely accorded with their definition of participation in policy-making as an ideal. Using the same scale they were then asked what part in practice the consultations had enabled them to play, and what part they wished to play.

Respondents define participation as either playing a direct part in the determination of policy or being able to negotiate a solution, with a preponderance of answers in the ratio of approximately 2:1 in favour of the first definition. However, with only one exception, interviewees did not aspire to play such a direct part, most hoping that they would be able to enter into some form of negotiation. The exception was a Labour city councillor, and an architect of the 1969 re-organisation, who aspired to join the county councillors 'round the table' to determine the pattern of schooling for the city in the second phase of consultations.

In practice the great preponderance of interviewees felt that their part had been to give advice, or simply to listen and observe. The officers and county elected members firmly placed other interested parties in an advisory role during both phases, with the exception of the teachers' union leaders whom they saw as occupying a negotiating position. For the clients, identity between their desired role and the actual position achieved during the consultations occurred in only a minority of cases, but was more evident in the first phase than in the second.

In the first phase, the four secondary heads and the two teachers' union representatives on the South West Hull Working Party, and the other teachers' union leaders, all achieved their desired goal of either advising on or negotiating a solution with the Authority. Only a small minority of other head teachers, three in number, perhaps significantly from the larger and apparently more secure secondary schools, felt that they had been able to advise the Authority, while the chairman of governors of one of those schools and those of the two girls' schools involved also felt that the consultations had enabled them to achieve their desired role of advising or of negotiating.

There was a greater shortfall between perceived reality and aspirations in the second consultative phase, when only four interviewees detected correspondence between what they desired and what they felt they had achieved. This applied to two members of the action group formed to save East Park Senior High School as a neighbourhood school, who wished to veto the proposals to designate it as a sixth form college and felt that the consultations had enabled them to do so; to the County Secretary of AMMA who wished to advise the Authority on their proposals and felt that he had been able to do that; and to the head of the girls' school in South West Hull, proposed as the basis for the new mixed school in that area, who similarly wished to advise.

Perhaps the most deprived group of clients, when the two phases of the consultations are compared, were the teachers' union leaders who, having achieved their desired position in the first felt predominantly that the second round had only enabled them to give advice when in fact they wished to negotiate

the solution. This was particularly apparent in the case of the NUT and NAHT leaders interviewed. The most deprived groups in the first phase were the chairmen of secondary school governing bodies and the generality of secondary heads, who wished to achieve a negotiating position while, in the second phase, the Joint Parents' Action Group, which sought to retain the three-tier system, wished also to negotiate and felt preponderantly that they had been mere observers, a view which was shared in the main by the junior high school heads.

Question 3 presented interviewees with three stages in policy-making and asked at which stage they wished first to be consulted by the Authority and to give their reasons. The stages presented were worded to represent the interfaces between readily recognisable stages in policy development, viz. when a problem is seen and possible action is suggested (initiation); when a detailed plan is being made (formulation); and when decisions are ready to be put into operation (implementation). County councillors and the officers were asked which stage they felt it important to consult other interested parties, whether they distinguished between the different interest groups in this respect, and similarly to give their reasons.

Overwhelmingly interested parties wished to be consulted well before the third stage on the grounds that it was then far too late for them to influence either the decision itself or the details of a proposal. Indeed only one interviewee in either of the consultative phases, the chairman of a secondary school governing body, wished to restrict his involvement to the third stage. There was, however, a distinct difference in the pattern of responses when the two phases are compared, there being an almost equal balance between the desire to be consulted at the first or second stage in the first phase consultations, while in the second phase there was a markedly greater desire to be involved at the earliest point. This difference is perhaps a reflection of the wider-ranging nature of the proposals in the second stage.

The principal reasons given for wishing to be consulted at the first stage were that they wished to assist the Authority in defining both the problem and the possible solutions. The major reason given for wishing to be first involved at the second stage was to be able to share in the development of the solution. Indeed, several respondents saw the first stage as ideal but impractical and remarked that they wished to be involved early in the plan-making at a point when the options had not been foreclosed.

However, there was a clear contrast in this regard in the responses of the county councillors. Elected members consistently restricted the role of interested parties to the later part of policy formulation when a positive and detailed plan of action had been developed, while many saw the purpose of wider consultation at that stage as to detect problems of implementation rather than as an opportunity to make radical changes.

The chairman of the Education Committee, for example, who held office for most of the period under review, took the view that the more complex the problem, and the more politically charged the issue, then the later in the process consultation with affected groups should occur, and contrasted the Authority's experience of consulting over the closure of village schools with the Hull re-organisation proposals in this respect. When the matter at issue was the future of an individual village school he felt that the initiation and formulation stages could be brought together and public consultation could become a part of that process and an open debate encouraged. With a complex issue affecting many schools he felt the Authority had a duty to put forward a plan which would stand examination and, only after it had been formulated in some detail should consultation occur which might result in amendments being made. Another Labour councillor, and a member of the working group which devised the plan for changing the age of transfer, commented, 'I think you must get right in your mind as to what you are consulting about. Therefore plans must be before you. The consultation takes place not about whether that decision is correct or not because the mandate is already there to do it. The consultation is about the way in which it is done.' This interviewee, while

conceding that certain problems could be identified by members of the public, regarded the initiatory stage as essentially one of member and officer participation, the second as the stage at which school governors and teachers' unions and those with a more formal role in the school system should become involved, while parents and the general public he would restrict to offering advice on how best to implement a proposal.

B. The Hull Senior High School Consultations: 1980-1982

Awareness of a possible institutional solution

The major purposes of Question 4 were to judge the degree of awareness of the problems facing the City's senior schools when the consultations began in May 1980, the extent to which interviewees envisaged a solution, and any effects they claimed the consultations themselves had upon their views.

With the exception of the parents' representatives and a very small minority of the governing body chairmen, most claimed a general awareness that the schools were experiencing problems associated with falling rolls and the majority, approximately 75%, had a generalised idea of how the issue might be tackled. Most of these also claimed that the consultations, as a whole, had the effect of confirming the views they had held at that time. Several possible solutions had been in respondents' minds at the time, of which change within the existing ages of transfer by means of closures or amalgamations was by far the most common, though which schools should close and the extent of the action necessary was not clearly seen. Other possibilities contemplated at the time were boundary changes to redistribute enrolments to counteract the capricious effects of falling rolls, a return to an earlier age of transfer, and the abolition of the single-sex schools.

Views varied between the sub-groups within the sample. The most 'open-minded' would seem to have been the principal education officers involved. While the Senior Education Officer (Schools) clearly saw the solution in terms of closures, the two officers with a more particular planning role at that time were more inclined to envisage a variety of possibilities. As one observed,

'There were a number of possible solutions and perhaps the number of possible solutions that were perceived then and perceived now hasn't changed. It was not too difficult to see what the solutions might be, given the logistics of the situation. What's important is that there was no preference expressed between those options, or indeed, whether it would be advantageous to the service to actually execute any of them. There was always the possibility of the status quo.' The other also could only talk in terms of a broad outline solution. 'You've always got an idea of what the choices are going to be in terms of providing additional staff, not providing additional staff and retaining smaller schools, or reducing the number of schools. But we had not thought out in any detail what the right thing to do was if one was to reduce the number of schools.'

The senior high school heads were the most positive group. Twelve of the thirteen heads interviewed, including the four heads on the South West Hull Working Party, claimed to have had a clear idea of what to do at the time. All but one envisaged closures. The overall claimed effect of the subsequent consultations was to confirm the views of that majority and to change the view of the one who had initially favoured reducing the numbers on roll in favour of closures. In a broadly similar way ten of the thirteen governing body chairmen had envisaged closures as a solution in May 1980, and the remainder admitted to having come round to that view during the consultations. The teachers' union representatives were about evenly divided between closures and reducing the numbers on roll in each school, but the latter came round to favouring closures as the consultations proceeded. The parents' representatives among the interviewees were the least aware and least positive group. Only one of the six involved with the senior schools which were to become controversial as the consultations proceeded claimed to be aware of the problem of falling rolls at that stage, and none had had any clear idea of what might be done at the time. All later became involved in the consultations and four of them also came round to the view that closures would be necessary.

Taken as a whole, the least clear-minded group were the county council elected members among the interviewees. That was, however, probably in part an effect of the point at which the interviews were conducted, that is, they considered retrospectively the events of the first consultative phase during which there had been a change in political control. Both the Chairman and Shadow Chairman of Education were interviewed, in addition to key members of the Labour Administration from May 1981. All had an awareness of the problems of falling rolls. The Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee to May 1981 was firmly of the view that closures were necessary, particularly in South West Hull where he saw the problems as being most acute, though that view was not as fully shared by his deputy. The Labour Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee between 1981 and 1985 were inevitably more detached from the situation in May 1980 and admitted to having only a generalised idea of what might be done, while their two colleagues on the Schools Sub-Committee throughout the period had more positive views at that earlier point, one favoured maintaining schools of reduced size, the other a change in the age of transfer, which had been a long-held view.

With hindsight it is interesting, in view of the ultimate outcome of the second phase of consultations, that a minority of respondents had earlier considered a change in the age of transfer as a possible solution. In addition to the elected member noted above, it was noted in the range of possibilities considered by some of the head teachers, one of the governing body chairmen who was a leading Labour politician, and had been considered but rejected by one of the NAS representatives, who had also been a member of the South West Hull Working Party. The latter took the view that while it might be desirable for the secondary schools to have an extended age-range, it would have been unwise to change the City's education system as a whole in order to achieve it in view of the inevitable disruption it would cause. The subsequent consultations reinforced that view, 'The costs to people's futures and to education were so great that they (such ideas) had to be put to one side.'

Open Policy-Making (Question 5)

The document presented at the first formal consultative meeting on 6th May 1980 concerned with the possible future of the four senior high schools in South West Hull referred to the possible courses of action it contained as a 'basis for consultation only'. The possibilities outlined envisaged a reduction in the number of schools in that sector by means of amalgamations. Subsequent consultative documents put forward the emerging proposals for senior high schools on a City-wide basis as 'options'. This presentation prompted the exploration of interviewees' perceptions of the extent to which possible decisions could be described as 'open' at the point when the Authority's thinking was publicly revealed and therefore potentially subject to what the consultations themselves brought forward or, given the scepticism about an Authority's motives in consulting which, according to much of the literature, customarily surrounds such exercises, whether the Authority was seen to be seeking to legitimate a previously determined plan.

The range of possible solutions open to the Authority had already been constrained by its decision to seek a solution within the confines of the existing system, and that effectively limited the proposal of a possible solution to a decision to retain all the existing schools in the sector or to reduce their number. The question then was, from the different perspectives from which interviewees could view the situation, whether the Authority in outlining the arguments for amalgamations, was seeking to open up a wider debate on the question of what to do, without any more than a generalised idea of what might be feasible; whether closures were then seen as essential but which schools to close remained as yet undetermined; or whether there was a 'hidden agenda' to favour larger schools over smaller ones, or mixed schools as against single-sex schools.

Respondents were almost evenly divided on this matter. Twenty-three (23) took the view that the issue was 'open' in the sense that the details of a plan had not been predetermined apart from a predisposition to favour closures as a strategy, a solution which a majority of respondents had also

contemplated, 21 voiced reservations of the 'hidden agenda' variety, and one, the chairman of governors of an East Hull secondary school, could offer no opinion. Of the different groups of interested parties among the interviewees, the head teachers, teachers' union representatives, and the leading politicians of both parties were the more inclined to see the situation as an 'open' one in the terms already described, while the parents' representatives and the governing body chairmen inclined far more markedly in the other direction.

The consultative meetings and their contribution to policy development

Apart from the City Hall meeting in February 1982, which was called essentially to involve the general body of parents, "public" consultation from May 1980 centred on a series of consultative meetings to which representatives of well-defined 'constituencies' were invited, involving, among others, head teachers, teaching staff representatives, teachers' union representatives, the chairmen of secondary school governing bodies and parent-governors. Question 6 sought respondents' views of the Authority's objectives in calling that series of meetings., while Question 7 sought their views on their contribution to the development of the plan.

By far the commonest initial response, from potentially affected parties, was that the Authority called them in order to be seen to have consulted and to have involved a number of different groups, commonly referred to, though not always in a cynical manner, as conducting an exercise in public relations in order to allay anxiety, or as fulfilling statutory requirements. In addition, and on a more purposive level, the consultative meetings were seen by many as intended to achieve a combination of other objectives, of which prominence was given to explaining the Authority's problems and informing those involved of the Authority's thinking; an attempt to achieve consensus by means of persuasion that a reduction in the number of schools, and the closure of particular schools, was the best way forward; and, allied to that, to test reactions to the Authority's proposals. Only in a small minority of cases did those who would be affected see the process as one by which views were being actively exchanged and appraised by the Authority in order to construct its plan.

What emerges from the interviews is a clear polarisation of outlook between those officers who had a specific planning role and interested parties on the question of exchange of views. The officers concerned took a more sequential view of the outcome of the meetings and saw them as raising issues to which the Authority had to react.

One stated that the Authority's purpose was, as he conceived it, at the first of those meetings, 'to define what we felt were the issues', make others aware of things they had already seen and gain a response. 'At that point we became aware of things like attitudes towards age of transfer, attitudes to size of school, particularly the importance of 8FE, to preserving 6th forms, etc.' He argued that, at the end of that initial meeting the Authority had to consider a 'net of issues' somewhat larger than the net they had started with and hence the decision to look at a group of schools in order to work through the implications of those issues for the four schools in South West Hull and see whether they could generalise from that for the whole of Hull. In consequence it became clear that crucial issues which had not been fully considered were those associated with the curriculum and staffing of schools at or below six forms of entry.

The other officer involved characterised the meetings as 'a two-way educational process' by which the members and officers had things they wanted people to hear and understand and seek a response. In terms of different emerging issues having a bearing on the Authority's plans he instanced the eventual proposal to amalgamate the single-sex schools in South West Hull on the site of the less well resourced boys' school.

The differences in judgment about the purposive nature of the exercise is perhaps a product of perspective, in that interested parties, apart from the officers and the sponsoring elected members, tended to take a piecemeal view of the contribution of the meetings to policy development and focused on the more negative outcomes, on the inevitable divergences of view contained within such a large and diverse consultative group. Hence, while several head teachers and others could detect a greater awareness of the need for action

on the part of those consulted, and a general acceptance of the major principle of the Authority's policy, reduction of the number of schools remaining in the system, their abiding impression of the meetings was the extent to which particular vocal interests dominated the debate. Most commonly instanced in this regard was the presentation of the case for retaining single-sex schools, and the mobilisation of support for that lobby, which had the overall effect of narrowing the debate. In consequence, the meetings were not generally judged to have been very productive.

As one of the head teachers who had been a member of the South West Hull Working Party saw the situation, the officers had a clear view of what action was needed at the level of principle. The meetings were called to 'take people with them and to convert them to the need for action'. His summary of the outcomes was that the meetings had some value in moving people in the desired direction but, at the same time, they tended, in his words, 'to detach themselves from the possible solutions and were willing to embrace the solution as long as they were not a part of it.'

The overall assessment of the NUT representatives was that the meetings had gradually moved the profession towards a reluctant acceptance of both the principle and the details of the proposals prior to the City Hall meeting and deplored the effect the meetings had in providing a platform for other interest groups to oppose the plans and sow seeds of doubt in the minds of elected members, both county and city.

The Labour Chairman of the Education Committee from May 1981, like the officers, took a sequential view of the issues raised by that protracted series of consultative meetings. In his assessment different issues gained prominence at different points. One which developed rapidly was the question of the use of surplus accommodation for post-16 needs, which was pointed up by the questions people asked about the alternative use of accommodation. The question of the retention of single-sex schools also became an important factor over which views polarised early. This led him to the view, despite a predilection for mixed schools within the controlling group, that the retention

of some single-sex provision would be essential to the plan's acceptability with both the local community and DES.

However, the issue which, in his judgment, became increasingly important as the consultations proceeded was transfer to secondary education at 13 and its manifold educational implications. In his view that issue would not have arisen but for the consultations which provided an opportunity for it to be raised. In this sense, in terms of the ultimate decision to defer the plan, the consultations were crucial. In the Chairman's judgment had the Authority not chosen to consult at such length and gone for a decision to close selected schools earlier the plan would have gained political acceptance.

The South West Hull Working Party as an Element in Policy-Making

(Questions 8, 9, 10 & 11)

As an important part of this consultative exercise was the work of a specially constituted working party a series of questions focused on that particular aspect of the consultations dealing with its membership, functions, and its contribution to policy development.

The documents which emanated from the South West Hull Working Party, which was formed subsequent to the consultative meeting on 6th May 1980, and the consultative documents which referred to its findings, presented its objectives as exploratory and value-free. Question 8 sought to determine if that was perceived to be the case both on the part of those who were direct parties to its proceedings and those who were interested observers of events at that time. While the initial question sought respondents' descriptions of the working party's objectives as they saw them, the answers were recorded, with the confirmation of the interviewees in each case, under two headings: A, that it was an open-ended inquiry concerning the viability of 6FE schools arising from genuine doubt and B, that its purpose was to demonstrate that 6FE senior high schools were undesirable in curricular terms.

Of the 44 respondents, 20 opted for A, 10 for B, while 13 said they had been unaware of the working party's activities at the time, and one was aware that it existed but could offer no view of its purposes. With the exception

of one County Councillor, the group lacking in awareness consisted of the majority of governing body chairmen and most of the parent-governors. While the governing body chairmen interviewed did not hold that position in 1980, due to the change in political control of the County in 1981, they and the parent-governors had all been members of their respective governing bodies at the time of the working party's review.

The conclusions of members of the different sub-groups are of some interest. The members of the working party were not unanimous in their judgment of its objectives, being split 5:3 in favour of position A, though it is perhaps significant that those who saw its purpose as one of demonstrating the unviability of 6FE schools were all head teachers. As one of their number put it, 'The purpose was to study the curriculum effects of a reduction to 6FE, but what the Officers wanted was to prove that 6FE was unviable.'

The explanations provided by the two officers on the working party were somewhat different. One observed, 'Clearly there was a predisposition to believe that 6FE was not really viable, but it wasn't a PR exercise. We did not sit down to prove a case, but we had a hunch that there would be a difficulty. But it was a genuine attempt to think that through.' The other explained, 'There were two problems, the viability of the 6th form and that of the main school and the two are interconnected but in some ways quite separate. The 6th forms from 8FE schools are relatively small and because of the 16-19 policy we knew something about their viability. They were too small even on 8FE. What we did not have an answer to was the effect of 6FE on the main school.'

All but one of the non-working party Head Teachers inclined to the view that it was an open inquiry, as did the teachers' union representatives on the working party, while those teachers' union representatives who were not direct parties to its work inclined in the opposite direction, one declaring that its purpose was simply to 'legitimise' the previous aims of policy to ensure 8FE senior schools. As there is often scepticism about its motives when an LEA consults, there was no imputation of a 'conspiracy' in picturing interviewees'

conclusions as B, the confirmation of a prior conclusion by means of a professionally constituted group, but merely that respondents might see it in that way.

While Question 8 revealed some lack of awareness of the working party's activities, Question 9 asked non-working party interviewees whether they felt sufficiently informed of its activities, it being hypothesised that dissemination of information would have a bearing on the success of consultation in generating understanding and commitment. Perhaps inevitably, in view of what has already been said, it was to be expected that the governing body chairmen and parent-governors would feel most deprived in this respect. Only one governing body chairman claimed to be in possession of some knowledge of the working party's activities at the time, which had been gained through informal constituency contacts rather than in a formal way, though he was a governor of one of the schools at the centre of the debate. Similarly, only one of the parent-governors of the four senior schools concerned claimed to possess some knowledge of the working party and that had been gained from talking to the Head. The restricted focus of that early part of these consultations would seem to have acted as a filter for information and would also appear to have encouraged selective attention.

By contrast, the heads of the non-affected senior schools all felt adequately informed, either through the reports circulated by the working party, or from attending the monthly meetings of the Hull Head Teachers' Association, to which the four working party heads reported. The non-working party teachers' union representatives also felt adequately informed through the Joint Consultative Committee meetings, to which the teachers' union members of the working party reported; while the elected members who had been in opposition at the time felt adequately informed through the reports submitted to the Education Committee and felt they could not expect to be in possession of any more information than that when in opposition. Access to information at that early stage would thus appear to have been determined by the prior existence of formal channels of communication, available in the main

to the 'professionals', the head teachers and the union representatives, rather than to the wider constituency.

As the membership of an advisory group can often be a contentious matter, as had proved the case in the earlier 16-19 Review, Question 10 was designed to probe further interviewees' opinions about the representativeness of the group's composition. Of the 44 interviewees who responded to this item, 42 said they felt that the membership, consisting of the four senior high school heads and their deputies, education officers, advisers and teachers' union representatives, was adequately representative of the interests involved. The two exceptions were a leading Labour member of the Education Committee and one of the governing body chairmen and Hull city councillor.

The head teachers, working party members, teachers' union representatives and the officers were all agreed that the membership represented adequately the essential interest groups and on the same grounds, that the curriculum was a professional concern. The inclusion of other groups would not have increased its collective expertise, while an increase in its numbers would have made its deliberations less efficient.

Where possible extensions were suggested they were, in the main, put forward as refinements of the professional groups involved. Hence, it was suggested that it would possibly have been an advantage to have representatives from further education, the junior high schools, and class teachers from the four schools on the working party, and an increase in the number of teachers' union representatives. All these possibilities were, however, put forward as tentative rather than essential extensions by those who were satisfied with its basic composition. In addition, two of the governing body chairmen would have liked to see the chairmen of the governing bodies of the four schools included as observers, but they similarly expressed themselves as being essentially satisfied.

The lack of political representation in the group was noted by a minority of interviewees, but, on the whole, it was regarded as a valid exclusion given the nature of the group's work. The two major exceptions

have already been noted. The county councillor felt strongly that the absence of elected members flawed the working party's approach to the issues. He would have preferred to see a 'fairly big contingent' involved and used the analogy of a tailor making a suit for a client to depict what he saw as the relationship between the teaching profession and elected representatives of the people in educational matters. 'The tailor stitches the suit but you decide the style you want. The education officers and the teachers can determine how it should be put together but the members decide the style of education.' He was, however, at odds with the other elected members in that opinion.

The governing body chairman who felt similarly that governors and parents should have been represented, despite the essentially curricular concerns, was also at odds with the majority of governing body chairmen, who were content to leave that part of the process to the 'professionals'. He felt strongly as a Hull city politician that he also had a valid view on the curriculum. It is perhaps not without significance that the two 'dissident' politicians were later to take a leading part within the Labour group in ensuring that the proposals for reducing the number of senior high schools in Hull should be deferred pending a thorough review of the school system as a whole.

Question 11 sought interviewees' conclusions about the outcomes and significance of the Working Party's activities which, overtly, were focused solely on the four senior high schools in that sector. The great majority of interviewees concluded that its report had the effect, in terms of possible future policy, of confirming 8FE as the minimum desirable size for a senior high school on a city-wide or even wider basis. The SEO (Schools) described the report unequivocally as a seminal document. That view was shared by all the members of the working party interviewed, by the senior high school heads, the officers, and several of the elected members. In addition, the officers, several of the heads, and two of the teachers' union leaders, saw its activities as a major contribution to building professional consensus on the issue as a basis for future decisions.

The comments of two working party members illustrate that measure of agreement. The officer responsible for forward planning at the time declared, 'Its ultimate achievement was professional consensus that a 13-18 school in Hull should have not less than 240 pupils each year and ideally should have 300. I felt it was a very successful exercise in terms of the relationships between the people who were involved and in terms of a channel of communication back to the staff room.' More succinctly, a representative of the teachers' joint consultative committee said, 'It elicited positive support for 8FE schools in the profession.'

Satisfaction with the consultative procedures (Question 12)

It was hypothesised that interested parties might express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the process of consultation independently of its outcomes. Question 12 attempted to determine the extent to which the interview sample was satisfied with the consultative procedures adopted by the Authority. Taken as a whole the sample expressed essential satisfaction in a ratio of approximately 3:1; however, while within each sub-group a majority expressed satisfaction, there was also, with the exception of the Education Officers, a dissatisfied minority in each. The most satisfied groups would appear to be the governing body chairmen and secondary school heads, while the least satisfied were the teachers' union representatives and the parent-governors. Of the eight members of the initial South West Hull Working Party in the sample, only one, a secondary head, expressed dissatisfaction with the remainder of the process, on the grounds that there should have been additional meetings of all secondary school heads as a preliminary to the larger general consultative meetings held to discuss the proposals. However, all working party members expressed satisfaction with the working party itself, and that view was shared by most of the head teachers. Those teachers' union representatives who expressed dissatisfaction with the general procedure were not members of the working party. The general grounds on which satisfaction was expressed were that they saw it as an honest attempt to consult and that they could propose no other way of going about it given the practical problem of attempting to involve so many people.

Those who expressed dissatisfaction were mainly, though not exclusively, concerned that their particular interest group should have been formally and separately consulted at an earlier point in the process. Hence, for example, the dissatisfied heads looked for separate meetings between heads, including those from the junior high schools, officers and elected members, as a preliminary to the larger meetings. Similar proposals were made by the dissatisfied teachers' union representatives in respect of direct talks with the Authority, the governing body chairmen and the parent-governors. In addition, several felt that smaller area meetings would have been a better way of handling the more public phase of the process. A more radical approach was proposed by one of the governing body chairmen, a city councillor, who felt that a working party of heads, governors, parents' representatives, union leaders and others should have been formed to advise the Authority.

The difficulty of involving so many interest groups in a satisfactory way was revealed by the Education Committee Chairman's response to this question. 'I would not suggest any major improvements in the general procedure, but you have to think that through according to what the issues are in each consultation. I think in terms of the points at which we went to meetings and the things we put to them, and the time we allowed for a response - I was satisfied with that. What was unsatisfactory was the breadth of representation. The fact that the Junior High Schools weren't represented at first, and the parents, particularly those who would be there after the change.'

Most respondents were apparently able to separate the process from the outcomes to the extent that they made no comment on the latter in answer to the question. However, two of the head teachers, one satisfied and the other dissatisfied, felt they could not do so. One, whose school had been 'reprieved' by the deferral of a decision in February 1982 felt that he had to be satisfied at that point in the proceedings and commented, 'If you win you accept the consultative process, if you don't you don't accept it.' The other, regretting the fact that a decision had not been made, felt that the machinery for consultation had got out of hand and in consequence the central issue of falling

enrolments had been lost, and commented, 'They introduced what was really intended to be a structure of explanation which they described as a structure of consultation, and this took on a life of its own, and became a political battle which prevented any decision-making at all, because the decision-makers then became split amongst themselves.'

While interviewees were thus able to make a general assessment in answer to this question they also perceived blemishes. The question of whether the right groups of people were consulted at an appropriate point in respondents' eyes was probed by Question 13.

Were the right groups of people consulted at the right time? (Question 13)

Many of those who had expressed general satisfaction in response to the previous question had reservations on this score, while those who were dissatisfied had stated what they saw as the omission of certain groups from effective consultation, and the timing of their involvement, as major grounds for dissatisfaction. Indeed, only six interviewees declared themselves satisfied that the procedures were adequate and also that the right groups of people had been involved at the right point in the process. By far the most common reservation shared by interviewees, and represented in the replies of members of each sub-group, was the late and piecemeal involvement of parents' representatives, which was noted by 31 of the 43 interviewees. The late, or inadequate, involvement of other groups as separately identifiable entities, such as the generality of head teachers, governors, teachers' unions and school staff, was also noted as important.

The observations of the Education Committee Chairman on the inadequate involvement of parents have already been noted. It would also appear to be a major strategic concern for education officers and all three mentioned it as a problematic issue. One confessed to being 'a little bemused' as to how best to involve parents on an issue as large as the re-organisation of a school system. The possible strategy of issuing a simple questionnaire was seen as problematic in that the activities of pressure groups could generate opposition to particular aspects of a proposal which would have the effect of making the

process of consultation different from the discussions which would be possible with groups with a more organised structure and greater ease of accessibility, such as head teachers, teachers' unions and governing bodies. Another observed, 'The great weakness in any consultation process is the link with parents. It is the one area where it is very difficult to manage the communication links between a representative with his constituency.'

The potential contribution of parents to policy decisions (Question 14)

The substantial conviction in response to the previous question that parents should have been formally involved at a much earlier point in the consultations was matched by an even greater conviction that their potential contribution to policy-making of this order is of a very limited and specific kind. Without exception interviewees referred to the limited nature of the information and advice that parents are able to give - limitations which were seen as following from the narrowness of their perspective on school issues, from their degree of understanding of broader educational issues, particularly those relating to resources and finance, from the amount of information at their command, and from the transient and changing nature of their concerns, parents being generally perceived as concerned most particularly with their own children and a particular school or schools rather than with schooling in general. Though limited, the parental viewpoint was, however, regarded as valuable and important.

Parents' specific potential contribution was seen as essentially school-based, as evaluators of individual schools within the system, in terms of their serving the needs of the local community, and as means of diagnosing the practical difficulties involved in particular changes. Many respondents referred to the guidance parents could provide concerning daily travelling, their preferences for particular schools, their views on single-sex education, and the desirability of neighbourhood schools. Most interviewees felt it was important for the decision-makers to be aware of such 'consumer reaction', as several of them described it. More particularly, several of the elected members and officers felt that the parents could make them aware of their

particular difficulties which their concentration on the larger issues might lead them to overlook. In addition, several head teachers, particularly those in single-sex schools, noted that parents could be supportive in adversity, as the recent controversy had shown.

There was no divergence from this general view in the replies of the parents' representatives in the sample, who, from the limited evidence from that particular group, would appear to perceive with equal clarity their limited potential impact on policy decisions. One parent-governor saw parents as a 'vested interest' concerned with what they think should happen to their children who perhaps ought to seek more involvement in policy-making at their particular school, while another said, 'When it comes to improving a decision they can make very little contribution.' The remaining parents' representatives described parents' contribution to policy-making as reminding the elected members of the practicalities of their policy regarding individual schools.

Parents would appear to be seen as an important source of decisional information whose impact would, however, be limited, in the main, to decisions regarding particular schools, to the details of a plan and its implementation, rather than broader strategic considerations.

The motives for involving parents early, as reflected in the answers of several interviewees, were not limited to improving the quality of policy decisions. In the responses from education officers, governing body chairmen and elected members there was considerable emphasis on the opportunity to explain and justify policy and even a hint that early consultation could be politic. The following responses serve as illustrations:-

Education Officers

'At the information end they can add factors which are not really obvious to the officers. We can attempt to explain to them what the issues are - that's where difficulties come.'

'I've never felt that professionals have a monopoly of knowledge. You get a community echoing what it wants, even if it's only to tell you that it prefers a school in a particular neighbourhood. But on a macro education system level that is a very difficult one. They must have a part to play, but they're only one of the partners - but I would be interested in what they're saying. But you know that the parents don't speak with full knowledge, just in the same way that we don't always act with full knowledge.'

Governing Body Chairmen

'Obviously they are thinking of their own child and it can be very cloudy. I am doubtful of the benefit to the LEA of that opinion as they would not wish their school to close. I don't think you would get the right answers from parents. But at least you have consulted them, to avoid a backlash if you didn't.'

'You can get sense out of them one-by-one but not in a meeting. You must take into account their feelings and fears. The most valuable part of the consultation process is to explain things to parents, why changes are necessary.'

Elected Members

'Parents can express their genuine and legitimate concerns about some part of the present system that you are not aware of till you go to those meetings. They give an individual aspect to the issue which is very difficult to see when you take an overview. It is important to take that into account, but an awful lot get no further than to say, "We like our school, please leave us alone."'

'When you consider all the other groups - officers, elected members, etc. - we're all professionals, and I consider that the parents are the lay people, and I think you've got to remember that the parents always want the best for their child, and I think they're going to tell us what they think is the best for their child. We've got to take that into consideration. We must be aware of what they want, though that does not mean we must always do as they want.'

A decision deferred and the outcomes of the consultative exercise

(Questions 15 and 16)

One purpose of the research as a whole was to determine the relationship between consultation and policy decisions. Of particular interest therefore was the decision in February 1982 to defer implementing the proposals to re-organise the senior high schools in isolation from the remainder of the school system, pending a review of the system as a whole. The overwhelming consensus of respondents was that the public exposure of the emerging plans for individual high schools provided the opportunity for opponents to organise and articulate their resistance and form alliances while, late in the day, and partly in consequence of that public debate, sufficient dissension was revealed within the controlling group to lead to a lack of consensus there and a consequent inability to carry the plan forward.

While respondents differed in the weight they attached to the different elements in that opposition, the deferral was seen as a political response to expressed parental and public opposition. Within the political equation two elements were perceived by representatives of all the sub-groups in the sample;

the judgment on the part of the sponsors of the proposals that the degree of expressed public opposition would have made the implementation of closures and amalgamations difficult and controversial, and a split within the party itself regarding the essential desirability of retaining the current age of transfer. The consultations had fuelled an undertow of long-standing dissatisfaction among some of the Labour group with the late age of transfer to secondary school, and its alleged effects on attainments and examination performance. All the County Council elected members and most of the Teachers' Union leaders placed the major emphasis on the political dimensions which the consultations had revealed, and that view was shared by many of the secondary school governing body chairmen, many of whom were City councillors and party to group discussions. Only the parents' representatives gave primacy to organised parental opposition, though most of them also conceded the political context in which the deferral took place. Expressed parental opposition would appear to have been the catalyst for the deferral, in fuelling the alarm of those politicians not wedded to the proposals, rather than its underlying cause.

The dissension within the Labour group was acknowledged both by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, while among the elected members interviewed were some who openly acknowledged their opposition to retention of the existing system. The Vice-Chairman pictured the decision to defer in the following terms, 'During the consultation people had got at their own elected representatives who were reporting back to the Education Committee the disquiet that they found. If the group had agreed the plan would have gone forward, but because of the parents' dissent that fuelled the opposition within the group.'

The Chairman attributed deferral to a combination of views which were coming through in the group and explained that, while many were supportive, there had always been a minority who favoured 11 plus transfer, while others were coming round to that view during the consultations. At the group meeting before the Education Committee meeting on 17th February 1982 the proposals and the alternative of 11 plus transfer were debated, and, while a proposal to

consider 11 plus transfer was defeated, an amendment to defer a decision pending a wide-ranging report on educational opportunities in the city's schools was carried. The Chairman was first interviewed while that review was being conducted and his remarks provided further confirmation of the situation in February 1982. 'We are back to formulation rather than consultation. Normally that sort of formulation process takes place entirely behind the scenes. The Chairman with one or two colleagues is always involved, one way or another, with formulating a plan with the officers. What we've done is to bring it onto a slightly larger forum there in order, if possible, to ensure that the various interest groups that defeated the original plan are brought in early enough to see that the plan that's developed this time is likely to command support.'

The following extract from the interview with one of the self-confessed 'dissidents' confirms the Chairman's assessment.

'Did the consultations cause members of the Party to think differently about the school system in Hull?'

'Yes. I for one. I was certainly alarmed about it and I did something that I had never done before. I started to go around and talk to people and I was amazed at the difference in view of members of the Education Committee and I said to various members of the group that we have to harness it. And when we threw the gauntlet down and the challenge for this to go back into the melting-pot strangely enough we took half the members of the Education Committee with us.'

As the first phase consultations had proved apparently abortive, in that they had not led directly to a decision on the closure of senior high schools, respondents were questioned about the outcomes of the public debate and their opinion was also sought on the value of the exercise as a whole. In broad summary, the majority were able to detect both 'positive' and 'negative' outcomes; only a very small minority took the view that the exercise had been entirely unproductive.

By far the most unsatisfactory aspect, in the majority view, was the lack of a positive decision at that point. The other undesirable aspects noted were the dissension between the different interest groups revealed during the consultations and the lowering of teachers' morale. However, the consultations would also appear to have made some contribution, in the view of most

of the respondents, to several of the objectives of consulting as they perceived them. It was generally agreed that the debate had produced a greater general understanding of the issues and of the need for some change, and increased awareness of the problems facing the city's school system; particularly was this seen to be so on the part of the teaching profession and among elected members at city and county level. The consultations had also indicated the range of possible solutions to the problem within the curricular constraints elaborated by the Senior High School Working Party.

While the majority of respondents deplored the lack of action, a small minority commended the deferral on the grounds that they opposed either the closure of particular schools or the general strategy of working within the confines of the existing ages of transfer and saw the deferral as a welcome outcome. The most 'optimistic' of the respondents were among the teachers' union leaders and the officers, in addition to the Chairman, who saw the outcomes of the consultations as, if not a springboard for a satisfactory solution, at least as increments which could lead in that direction.

C. Hull Schools Re-Organisation, Phase II : 1984 Consultations

Genuine Consultation (Question 4)

Interviewees were asked to state their criteria for judging the genuineness of consultation and then to come to a judgment about the Hull re-organisation consultative exercise in 1984 using those criteria. This was an open question intended to reveal the criteria which most readily came to mind, with the object of determining how much common ground there was in this respect.

Three major groups of criteria can be isolated from the responses: the conducting of the consultative process; the stage in decision-making at which people became involved; and who was consulted at any particular point. Most frequently items relating to the Authority's consultative procedures were the first to be mentioned. With only three exceptions interviewees looked for some changes to regard the consultations as genuine in intent, while some

evidence that the Authority was listening to comment and responding to it was also sought by a substantial majority, several mentioning in addition that they wished to feel that a dialogue was taking place.

In addition to that cluster of criteria a substantial minority (15 respondents), mainly parents' groups and middle school heads, required the Authority to present alternative solutions for debate as evidence that the essential decision had not been made before the consultations with the wider public began.

Second only to the conduct of the consultations came the requirement that the Authority should consult the interest groups at an early stage in the decision-making process and well before any major decision of principle had been taken. This was stated by approximately 75% of interviewees. Many also looked to see who was involved at an early stage in order to make their judgment. This requirement was important to many of the teachers' union leaders, city councillors and the parents' action groups, but was most consistently a feature of the answers of the middle school head teachers, many of whom sought pre-public discussions with the Authority.

When asked to make a judgment about the genuineness of this exercise on the basis of the criteria they had adduced, 19 respondents felt it had been genuine, 25 felt it had not and 4 were equivocal. A closer examination of these replies reveals a clear division among the sub-groups in the interview sample. Those who judged the consultations to have been genuine were the County Council elected members, both Labour and Conservative, all but one of the teachers' union leaders, all the representatives of the pressure group formed to "save" East Park Secondary School and the Deputy Director of Education, while the senior high school heads were evenly divided in their judgment, and only one middle school head judged the consultations genuine. Firmly of the belief that they were not genuine were all the representatives of the parents' action groups formed to defend the middle schools, the generality of middle school heads and the city councillors. This pattern of responses takes on further interest when it is compared with the answers to Questions 15 and 16

on the schedule which asked interviewees if they favoured the two major features of the Authority's re-organisation plan, the return to 11 plus transfer and the establishment of sixth form colleges, and what their preferred solution was.

Sharing/Limitations (Questions 5 & 6)

Question 2 had shown that the majority of respondents' concept of participation centred round the notion of direct involvement in the determination of policy. Question 5, the feasibility of that notion notwithstanding, sought to determine the extent to which the different groups felt involved in the development of the Authority's policy during these consultations, while the policy-makers were asked if they felt that the consultations had enabled others to share in policy development. Predominantly the County Council elected members, both Labour and Conservative, felt that the other interested parties were effectively sharing only in determining the finer details of the plan, whilst those interested parties were generally less clear that they had had a positive role.

The polarities can be illustrated by the comments of a key Labour elected member of the working group which had devised the strategy and the Secretary of the Joint Parents' Action Committee. The first said, 'The general public were sharing to the extent that they were feeding back their reaction to the scheme as placed before them. They were shaping the finer details, the content, the location, and that's how I see consultation and what we intend to come out of it'. The latter declared, 'What I felt happened was that they were putting the plans before us and every objection was being pushed aside. I felt it was "them" and "us".'

There were, however, divergences of view among the different interest groups. The group whose objective was to "save" East Park Secondary School were firmly of the view that they had shared in the development of the plan and cited the holding of a special meeting at the school and the locating of an "education shop" there, both resulting from direct representations to the Authority, as evidence. The committee members of the Joint Parents' Action

Committee were of the opposite view and cited the countering of their objections at the public meetings and their overall view that decisions had already been made in support of their conclusions. The head teachers of junior and senior high schools, and city councillors, were essentially of the same opinion and on the same grounds. Only two junior high school heads felt they had shared in the making of the plan to a small degree through the submissions of the Hull Head Teachers' Association, and the heads of Ellen Wilkinson School (Girls') in West Hull, and of East Park, felt they had been able to advise the authority about the possible implementation of the plan. The latter felt a sense of sharing equal to his aspirations. 'I felt I was sharing in it, but I felt that the parents were sharing in it much more and I thought that was right'.

The teachers' union leaders were divided. NUT and NAHT recorded no sense of involvement; AMMA and NAS/UWT felt a measure of involvement in being able to offer advice to the Authority on the possible implementation of the plan at private meetings of union officers and representatives of the Authority; while PAT felt, on the basis of soundings among the membership, that it was not possible to formulate an official union position.

Question 6 probed further the limitations which those respondents who could be classified as the "clients" of the Authority saw in the way of their participating in the making of policy, both as they had defined participation ideally in answer to Question 2, and in terms of the part they wished to play. The earlier reporting of responses to Question 3 had shown that, without exception, respondents acknowledged that, not being formally empowered to take decisions they could not be there at the point at which such decisions were determined and generally they accepted that as both inevitable and proper. The majority of the "clients" as can be seen from Table 10:2 wished, in practice, to play a part in negotiating the solution.

TABLE 10:2 Clients' desired part in policy-making by means of consultation
- Phase 2

	A	B	C	D	E	
<u>Definition of Participation</u>	Determination of policy	Right of veto	Negotiation	Advice	Listening/ Observing	
	30	0	12	0	0	<u>42</u>
<u>Desired position</u>	1	2	34	5	0	<u>42</u>

The principal impediment to achieving a negotiating position noted by most respondents was access to the relevant information in order to be in a position to propose and defend an alternative approach. The shadow Chairman of the Education Committee saw access to information as the principal inhibitor, both for him and for other interested parties, and saw the provision of information on several levels. As he saw it, on one level the controlling group has greater access to information because it has to be presented to them, while the Opposition might have to seek out that information. At the next level both sides politically, as members of the Education Committee, would have more knowledge generally, and on a specific issue, than those who are consulted. While on another level his view was that the Education Department decides what to them is the picture and thereby sets the limits of relevant information.

The second most important limitation noted was procedural. Junior high school head teachers felt particularly that the general arrangements for public consultation, and the discussions with the teachers' associations, had been conducted in such a way that the case for middle schools could not be fully represented. A number of heads saw additional limitations following from their position as individuals and as employees. On an individual level, as head of a particular school, the quality and potential impact of such advice as it would be possible to give would be limited by a certain narrowness of perspective, while, as an employee, it was difficult for them to judge the extent to which it would be legitimate to join with other groups, the teachers in the school and the parents particularly, in voicing approval or opposition. Several heads also pointed out that, consultative procedures apart, the likelihood of a lack of consensus among head teachers representing different levels of schooling would mean that, even if it were possible to involve all of them directly, the final decision would inevitably have to rest in other hands.

It is perhaps instructive to note that both the project director and the controlling elected members saw only the formal limitations of responsibility and accountability as important. They saw no major impediments to the other groups' ability to participate, to the extent that they thought it legitimate

for them to do so. Regarding a definition of participation, the Chairman of the Education Committee had observed that only playing a direct part in policy determination was participation while the remaining possible definitions presented had a part to play in the process of policy development. As chairman he had to steer the whole process which brought about a decision and ensure that the "right people" had the "right input" at the "right time". Interested parties are all in an advisory position, but during the consultative process certain groups, teachers' associations in particular, might come to occupy a negotiating role. Such negotiation, however, would concern detail once the broad policy decisions had been taken.

Information (Question 7)

Question 7 asked if interviewees felt they had been given sufficient information about the proposals in order to come to a conclusion about them, and, if not, what measures might have overcome that deficiency; while the project director and the controlling elected members were asked if they felt they had provided sufficient information for interested parties.

The only group to record substantial dissatisfaction were the parents who, with the exception of the East Park group, felt deprived on that score, their principal complaints being the limited distribution of the proposals and the lack of detail regarding catchment areas in the leaflet distributed to parents. Their main suggestion for improvement was an area-by-area document containing more specific details of school pyramids and the numbers in the particular catchment areas. They felt that this more detailed document should also have appeared in the local press.

All the other groups felt sufficiently informed about the nature of the proposals, whether or not they approved of them, with certain reservations about the costing of the proposals and questions of implementation and staffing which were of particular interest to the head teachers.

The elected members and the project officer were satisfied that sufficient information had been provided, though the Chairman freely acknowledged that detailed financial information was lacking for the reason that it

was not then available to the Authority. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were in accord that they had made public all the information they possessed on which the Authority had to make a decision. The Chairman argued further that the costing of the change was not in itself a major consideration for the Authority and, therefore, was not essential to the decision. His reservation regarding information was whether the Authority had succeeded in putting across an explanation to the public at large, and his conclusion was that the Authority had presented all the essential decisional information.

More time (Question 8)

During the public consultations a plea was entered for an extension of the time during which meetings would be held by a further six months, which the Authority refused. Responses to Question 8 which sought views about the desirability of such an extension fell broadly into line with attitudes of support or opposition to the proposals as a whole; those supporting the plan feeling that sufficient time had been allowed, those opposing it feeling that more time was needed.

Of those in open opposition to the plan, the Parents' Joint Action Committee and NUT, were the most consistent in supporting the plea, while the junior high school heads as a group were more divided, a minority feeling that, despite their broad opposition, enough time had been allowed for people to come to terms with the proposals.

The expressed motives of those who sought more time were mixed. They were often expressed in terms of enabling parents to consider the plan in more detail and becoming better informed, while it was admitted that an extension would have been helpful to the Parents' Action Committee and NUT in organising more effective resistance which would also delay the taking of an unwanted decision.

While an extension might have been seen to advantage particular groups in these respects, the potential disadvantages of delay were also apparent to most respondents. A substantial majority acknowledged the difficulties which an extension would have posed for the Authority in getting its plans approved

for implementation within its period of office, while the local leaders of NAS/UWT, NAHT, AMMA and PAT, the sponsoring elected members, and several of the senior and junior high school heads felt that any undue delay would have the undesirable effect in adding further to the low morale of the teachers and increase their anxieties about their future career prospects. The Secretary of the Joint Parents' Action Committee was ambivalent about an extension, a view not shared by the other members of the committee, feeling that, while more time would have enabled the group to digest the information and see the proposals' implications, it could also have reduced the sense of urgency they had engendered among the general body of parents and lead to apathy and loss of interest.

Interviewees' perceptions of the Authority's purposes in holding public meetings (Question 9)

All interviewees had attended one or more of the sectoral public meetings. Question 9 probed their perceptions of the Authority's purposes in holding such meetings. The question was posed first as an open one and then followed up with five proposed objectives which respondents were asked to rate as high, medium or low priorities for the Authority, as they saw it. For the purposes of analysis their responses were then assigned a numerical value: high (5); medium (3); low (1). The five posited possibilities were, to provide further information; to explain the proposals; to persuade people to accept the plan; to test the degree of support for the plan; and to gather views in order to develop the plan.

The majority of interviewees' initial responses fell into one or more of the posited categories and were rated accordingly and confirmed when their answers were probed further. One initial response not provided for in the schedule, and rated as high by all those who mentioned it, was the need to be seen to satisfy the requirements to consult as indicated in government circulars, often referred to as "satisfying the law". Seventeen (17) respondents mentioned this as a prime purpose in holding public meetings of whom the largest group were active in the parents' action groups. It was

given prominence by four of the seven teachers' union leaders in the sample, and was also stated by a minority of the head teachers and by one of the controlling group of elected members. The following analysis concerns the five posited objectives.

When the means for the five objectives are inspected the results indicate that the public meetings were viewed essentially as explanatory exercises, with strong associated elements of persuasion, information provision, and of attempting to test support (see Table 10:3). However, when the means of the five items are considered by separate groups, differences become apparent on several of the items, and it is possible to offer an explanation for those differences in terms of the different reactions to the proposals which the previous review of the events of the period and supporting documentary evidence has revealed. The standard deviations are, however, generally wide when the population is considered as a whole and when the sub-groups are considered. It is possible to regard the latter outcome as indicating a substantial lack of agreement, and perhaps uncertainty, about the Authority's objectives. The width of the standard deviations would, however, also indicate that the results, and any observations based upon them, should be treated as suggestive rather than conclusive.

Deviations in the means for the individual items are most marked when the sub-groups are considered in relation to the objectives of testing support and gathering views in order to develop the plan (see Table 10:3, Responses 4 & 5). The notion of testing support provided an interesting gradation of response. The project officer, elected members as a whole, and the teachers' union leaders, saw the exercise strongly in that light. Head teachers rated it more as a medium level priority, while the leaders of the parents' action groups tended to rate it lower still. The latter result could perhaps be a reflection of the view, consistently expressed in interviews with them, that the Authority was not really interested in their views.

The question whether the Authority was actively seeking people's views in order to develop the plan attracted the widest divergences of all.

TABLE 10:3Respondents' views concerning the LEA's objectives in holding public meetingsA Analysis of responses from total population of interviewees N-50

	<u>Response</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
1	To inform	3.52	1.26
2	To explain	4.32	1.11
3	To persuade	3.60	1.72
4	To test support	3.52	1.70
5	To gather views	2.56	1.58

B Analysis of responses by group

Group 1 : Project Officer & Sponsoring
Elected Members

Group 2 : Other Elected Members

Group 3 : Head Teachers

Group 4 : Parents' Action Group Leaders

Group 5 : Teachers' Union Leaders

Response 1 (to inform)

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
1	3.80	1.09
2	3.33	.81
3	3.25	1.61
4	4.00	1.03
5	3.00	1.15

Response 2 (to explain)

1	4.60	.89
2	4.66	.81
3	4.25	1.00
4	4.12	1.45
5	4.42	.97

Response 3 (to persuade)

1	3.00	2.00
2	3.66	2.06
3	3.62	1.74
4	3.50	1.71
5	4.14	1.57

Response 4 (to test support)

1	4.20	1.78
2	4.33	1.63
3	3.50	1.71
4	2.62	1.50
5	4.42	1.51

Response 5 (to seek views)

1	4.20	1.09
2	2.00	1.67
3	3.00	1.63
4	1.62	1.20
5	3.00	1.15

It was claimed to be a high priority by the project officer and sponsoring elected members (Group 1), but seen far less strongly in that light by the other groups; the parents' action groups again being most strongly of the opinion that views were not being actively sought.

The explanatory aspects of the public meetings were perceived to be the most important single element by all the sub-groups (see Table 10:3, Response 2). The means for this item showed the greatest consistency across groups. As for information provision (Table 10:3, Response 1), while having the same cumulative mean for the population as a whole as testing support (Table 10:3, Response 4), there was a somewhat greater consistency in the direction of the responses, being rated as a medium to high priority for the Authority by all groups. The leaders of the parents' action groups rated it the highest of all the groups and were closest to the project officer and sponsoring group in viewing it in this light than were the other groups.

Bearing in mind the caveat concerning the standard deviations, while all respondents accorded an element of persuasion to the public meetings, it is perhaps significant that the teachers' union leaders saw them most positively in that way, while the sponsoring group accorded persuasion a lower priority. The teachers' union group included representatives of NUT and NAHT who, as the review of events and documentary evidence have shown, were opposed to the essentials of the proposals and were therefore, perhaps, more likely to see that part of the consultations in that way.

Getting their views across (Questions 10 & 11)

One important part of the consultative process appears to have been very successful. All the groups represented were satisfied that the Authority had been made aware of their views by one or other of the means available to them. While many had reservations about the way in which the public meetings were conducted from the platform, and were concerned about the amount of time allowed for people to make their points, most were able to say that they had the opportunity to make important points, or that others had expressed a view that they shared.

The other means of expressing a view were a number of additional meetings for individual schools, the written comments which the Authority encouraged people to submit, the petitions which were organised, and the statements of view formally submitted by the teachers' unions. Only two respondents failed to cite more than one means they felt had been effective in this respect, although those who were opposed to the plan as a whole remained sceptical about the weight the Authority would attach to their expressed opposition.

Satisfaction with the public consultative arrangements (Question 12)

Question 12 asked respondents whether they were satisfied with the Authority's arrangements for public consultation. Here there was not as close a relationship between the responses and the degree of support declared for the proposals. The elected members from the controlling group, the project officer, and the East Park Parents' Group expressed themselves satisfied; the head teachers and teachers' union leaders were more divided; while the other elected members and the committee members of the Parents' Joint Action Committee were essentially dissatisfied.

While several of these groupings can be explained in terms of support or opposition, the mixed responses are interesting. While the heads as a whole, and the junior high school heads in particular, were essentially opposed to the proposals, half of them were prepared to concede that the LEA had done all that was feasible to consult the public within the time allowed and were apparently able to separate their appraisal of that part of the process from their hopes regarding its outcomes. This was also conceded by a minority of the parents' action committee members and the Secretary of NAHT, despite their opposition. The remaining teachers' union leaders divided in line with support or opposition; the NUT representatives expressing dissatisfaction, the NAS/UWT, AMMA and PAT being essentially satisfied.

The question specified "public" consultation, and that limitation perhaps explains the responses of the head teachers and teachers' union leaders. Most of these sought a degree of special treatment as informed

professionals and sought separate pre-public consultation meetings with the Authority. Of the 16 heads, 13 suggested such meetings with the heads as a defined group as a possible improvement to procedure; while of the 7 teachers' union leaders 4 sought such meetings with the union. The latter response corresponded directly with expressed support or opposition as the 4 concerned represented NUT/NAHT.

Other improvements suggested, which did not necessarily correspond with opposition or support, were the holding of public meetings in two distinct phases to allow for greater digestion of the import of the proposals and for a measured response, and smaller area meetings within more clearly defined secondary school catchment areas as proposed in the plan.

Parental Involvement (Question 13)

Compared with the first phase consultations, in the 1984 consultations the Authority provided for parental involvement earlier and more extensively by means of sectoral public meetings, meetings arranged at individual schools between parents and representatives of the Authority, the information centres, commonly known as "education shops", and the distribution of a parents' information leaflet.

Question 13 asked if respondents considered the Authority had made adequate attempts to involve the general body of parents in the consultations. A majority was prepared to give the Authority credit for an honest effort to involve the parents.

Prima facie it could have been anticipated that the representatives of the different parents' action groups would have been the most critical in this respect. While they were, they were not universally of that view and no more so than the non-controlling elected members interviewed, who were also divided on this issue; nor were those of the parents who expressed satisfaction confined to those who had successfully campaigned to retain East Park Secondary School for their neighbourhood. The head teachers were generally satisfied that adequate measures had been taken in a ratio of 2:1. As one secondary school head observed of the public meetings, 'I think they (the Authority)

genuinely tried but the turn-out was very disappointing, and their participation (the parents') was disappointing, but that was the fault of the politicians and the teachers who spoke too much and too early.'

Among the teachers' union representatives only NUT was consistently of the view that the parents had been inadequately involved by the Authority, though, as one NUT representative confessed, 'Involving parents is so hard. As a very disparate group it's almost impossible to get a parental consensus. The Education Shops were a good idea but I believe the response was disappointing, which is something we should have thought about as a pressure group and we perhaps should have organised something. There was apathy but I do not accept that apathy means consent.' There was unanimity in only one group, sponsoring County Council elected members, who felt that the Authority had done all it could in the time available, and that it was adequate, a view shared also by the project officer.

On the question of parents' potential contribution to decisions of such magnitude (Question 14), respondents' answers were similar to those to the same question posed of the first phase consultations, the general consensus being that parents could only contribute information of a very specific nature relating, in general terms, to the sort of schools they want for their children and the type of education they wish to see provided. Such information was generally regarded as of value in refining the details of policy rather than of strategic importance. Among the specifics noted were parents' views about the importance of the size of schools and their facilities, their location and the amount of daily travelling involved, their views about the importance of mixed or single-sex education, their children's attainments and their views about examination success. Only one of the specifics noted, parents' views about the importance of continuity in education, would seem to have wider strategic implications for the shape of the school system in terms of the plan under consideration.

Head teachers and elected members as a body saw the advice parents could potentially provide, though important in terms of their being aware of parents'

feelings, as limited by their narrow and particular perspective on the education system. The parents themselves, while conceding that narrower perspective, generally wished more overt account to be taken of it by the Authority. As the Secretary of the Parents' Action Committee remarked, 'Parents are concerned initially with their own children. They can see the damage it's going to do. As a County Council they are a body who see things as a whole, which is not a bad thing. But they tend to overlook the individual problems and there's always the possibility that parents can come up with a solution that the Authority has not thought about.'

Attitudes towards the Authority's plan and preferred solutions

(Questions 15 & 16)

Question 15 asked whether respondents were in favour of the Authority's proposal to change the age of transfer to 11 plus and also establish sixth form colleges and the extent to which the consultations had influenced those views, while Question 16 asked them to give their preferred solution to the problem of falling rolls in Hull schools.

With four exceptions respondents were able to answer for or against unequivocally. Those who were equivocal favoured 11 plus transfer but wished to see school-based sixth forms retained. In addition, the county secretary of NAS/UWT declared an official stand of neutrality over the details of the plan; the union's concern being with the welfare and future career prospects of its members whatever solution was adopted. Excluding the Deputy Director and the elected members responsible for the plan for the purposes of this comparison, of those who judged the consultations to have been genuine (Question 4) only three were opposed to the substance of the proposals; two of the teachers' union leaders, representing NUT and NAHT, and one of the middle school head teachers. Perhaps more significantly, the 25 interviewees who judged that the consultations had not been genuine according to the criteria they had adduced in response to Question 1 were unanimously opposed to the substance of the proposals.

The consultations themselves appear to have played either only a minor or a negative part in the development of views about the proposals, serving either to confirm long-held views in most cases or, as was the case with members of the Parents' Action Committee, to harden their opposition as they saw the consultations as a confrontation rather than an exchange of views. Very few respondents conceded that what they had heard in the period of public consultation had led them to change or modify their views.

Perhaps the most significant of those who did concede a changed outlook was the Chairman of the Education Committee himself who (the fact that the decision to review Hull's system was taken by the party group notwithstanding) attributed his conversion from firm support for the retention of the three-tier system, with selective closures and amalgamations, to equally firm advocacy of the revised plan to what he had learned about the operation of the system in both the interim planning and review period and from the public response during the second phase of consultations. Among others who conceded that their views had been modified were one of the leaders of NUT, a middle school head teacher, who now admitted to doubts about the viability of retaining 13 plus transfer despite a preference for that solution and another middle school head teacher who also admitted that the magnitude of the closures needed in order to retain viable middle schools had only become fully apparent during the consultations. Also one member of the parents' committee formed to defend Burnside Junior High School admitted he could see why the plan had been proposed but held to his original position that a good junior high school system was possible given the right numbers in the schools.

More than One Plan (Question 17)

One of the criteria for assessing the genuineness of a consultative exercise posited by a number of interviewees in response to Question 4 was the presentation by the Authority of possible alternative courses of action. The lack of a publicly presented alternative to transfer at 11 had been a frequently voiced complaint at the public meetings.

The responses to Question 17 concerning the desirability of putting more than one plan to the public fell into two distinct groups; those who were opposed to the proposals who, without exception, would have preferred to be presented with at least one alternative, and those who supported the plan, who were satisfied that one plan was a sufficient basis on which to consult. The reason most frequently given by those who wanted at least two plans debated was that it would demonstrate that the Authority had in fact examined possible alternatives. Those who supported the proposals argued that it would have been impractical to put forward more than one fully developed plan at a time, and that to have done so would have impeded the decision-making process by further reinforcing the divisions which had become apparent, while it would also have complicated the issues to a point which the general public, and the parents in particular, would have found it difficult to understand.

The Chairman of the Education Committee took the view that, practically, there was only one realistic plan available for consultation as retention of the existing system had been the basis of the earlier consultations and had been withdrawn as a result of significant opposition. As those with the responsibility for deciding could not convince themselves of the rightness of that approach it could not be represented at a later stage as a possibility which would command political support. Similarly, transfer at 12 had been considered by the working group in the planning stage and had been rejected as too large an upheaval for minimal benefit. The possible alternative of transfer at 11 in tandem with the retention of school-based sixth forms would have entailed very large 11-18 schools and, given the existing secondary school accommodation, would also have meant split-site schools. The latter feature was also unacceptable to the political leadership. The Vice-Chairman was equally firmly of the opinion that there were not two or three equally viable alternatives which could be presented to the public and the teaching profession.

The importance of modifications to the plan (Question 18)

The different participants' attitudes towards the plan appears to have coloured their assessment of the significance of the modifications which were made and of the extent to which they could attribute them to the views expressed during the consultative period. Question 18 asked interviewees to say which changes they thought were important, why they thought the Authority made them, and whether they judged that those changes would make the proposals more publicly acceptable; as the single most important criterion which interviewees had isolated as an index of the "genuineness" of the consultations was willingness on the Authority's part to make changes.

The principal changes concerned East Hull where, at the Education Committee meeting on May 9th 1984, East Park was retained as an 11-16 school and, in consequence, Burnside Junior High School was designated as the site for the East Hull Sixth Form College. Other changes of significance were the decision, in three instances in West and North Hull, to combine former separate primary and junior high schools on the same site as new larger 5-11 schools rather than run them as separate but smaller primary schools as the Authority had originally proposed, and the transfer to the Church of England of Grange Park Senior High School in East Hull as a controlled school in consequence of the decision to build a new 11-16 school to serve the needs of the North Bransholme estate.

Interviewees appraised the importance of the changes in two ways, the consequences of the separate modifications for the futures of particular schools remaining in the system, and as indices of the Authority's readiness to react to public opinion. Most respondents were at pains to point out, however, that none of the changes altered the Authority's overall strategy. That being so, several described the changes as "cosmetic" or predictable, and a minority suggested that the East Park proposal had been put forward as an element in the plan which would be open to ready withdrawal if opposition proved substantial. Its withdrawal could thus be used tactically by the Authority to demonstrate that it had modified the plan in response to public

consultation. Such a view was expressed most often by members of the Parents' Action Committee and by city councillors. That suggestion apart, almost without exception interviewees judged the East Park / Burnside decision to be the most crucial on a variety of grounds. The retention of East Park was seen as providing a better distribution of secondary schools in the sector, as avoiding over-large secondary schools, and excessive daily travelling outside the immediate neighbourhood to which many parents had objected. That decision would also, as several people pointed out, affect the neighbourhood intakes of the other secondary schools serving East Hull, particularly the school in the southern part of the sector which would otherwise have received its pupils from a wider social spectrum, and would now continue to be disadvantaged. However, the majority of respondents attributed that change, and the decision regarding the primary schools in West and North Hull, to public pressure and representation during the consultative period. The majority of respondents also conceded that the changes had moved the plan towards greater public acceptability and saw the decision regarding the primary schools in West and North Hull as a sensible and realistic adjustment by the Authority to expressed concern on the part of parents and teachers in those areas. The Parents' Action Committee, middle school head teachers and the city councillors remained convinced that the changes were of minimal importance.

The elected members of the controlling group all saw the changes as important 'within the area of possible manoeuvre', the detailed application of the plan to particular parts of the City while leaving the major principles intact. The Education Committee Chairman provided his explanation of the reasoning behind the changes made by the Authority. The Education Committee could accede to local pressure for larger primary schools in West and North Hull because there had emerged during the consultations no significant opposition to those local demands from those areas and, in addition, it was not a significant matter of principle whether each site accommodated one or two schools. The proposals for the siting of the two sixth form colleges were, as he explained, longer in the making in the review period preceding

the public consultations and more complex in their general implications. It had been the working group's intention that they should have some prestige and hence, after lengthy debate, the initial plan had been to locate them in highly regarded secondary schools centrally located in West and East Hull, in Tudor House School and East Park respectively. On further examination the proposal to use Tudor House School in West Hull was abandoned and was never publicly debated, as the only alternative mixed secondary school for the 11-16 age range was located on the northern fringe of the sector and would in consequence have obliged many parents to send their children to the two single-sex schools in the sector in order to avoid the travelling involved. In consequence West Park Junior High School was substituted as the site for the sixth form college in West Hull, while the initial proposal concerning East Hull was put out to consultation in the knowledge that there might be parental opposition to the re-drawing of the catchment areas in East Hull.

In the event the proposal to use East Park School as a sixth form college became the single most contentious item in the plan. In the Chairman's words, 'What we could see was a body of opinion on a particular issue which was strong enough to put the whole plan at risk, and we decided it wasn't worth that. In those circumstances there was a perfectly good option. Having made the substitution in the West it wasn't very difficult to do it in the East.'

The aspirations and expectations of parental pressure groups (Question 19)

Perceptions of the genuineness of the public consultations could also be related to people's aspirations and to their expectations of the consultations, to their judgment of the situation in which they found themselves. Question 19 was directed specifically to the several parental pressure groups and sought to determine what they hoped would be the outcome of the consultations and also what they thought at the time would be the most likely result.

The Parents' Action Committee as a whole, and the group within it which sought to defend Burnside Junior High School, looked for nothing short of an abandonment of the plan as a whole, while the group formed to "save" East Park Secondary School had the more limited immediate objective of ensuring its

retention as a neighbourhood secondary school. Hence the latter group mounted their campaign independently of the first and fought it on a much narrower front.

All the committee members of the Parents' Action Committee took the view that the Authority was unlikely to change its proposals concerning the abolition of the middle schools and took a long-term view of the campaign in which the major thrust of their objections would be directed at DES in the period allowed for statutory objections. The East Park group on the other hand explained their strategy of opposition as one of working within acceptance of certain major dimensions of the plan, the neighbourhood school principle and 11 plus transfer, in order to seek a specific modification, the retention of East Park School as an 11-16 neighbourhood school. Their strategy was thus not to oppose the plan as such but rather to use the neighbourhood principle within it in order to protect the school, an attempt within a very limited compass to hoist the Authority with its own petard.

Satisfaction with Outcomes (Question 20)

Interviewees' expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the consultations at the point when the Education Committee approved the proposals on 9th May 1984 corresponded very closely with their aspirations and formerly declared positions. Those who had taken a stand on retention of the existing system, the junior high school heads, the Joint Parents' Action Committee, NUT and NAHT, and the majority of non-controlling elected members, were dissatisfied that the consultations had failed to bring about a reversal of the proposal to change the age of transfer.

Those who expressed essential satisfaction with the outcome had sought less fundamental changes. Hence the head teachers of the girls' senior high school in South West Hull and of East Park School were satisfied in that, not being averse in principle to a change in the age of transfer to 11, the consultations had resulted in the use of the girls' school site for a new mixed school, in the first case, and in the retention of the other, originally designated as the site for a sixth form college, as an 11-16 school.

The parents' group formed to "save" the latter school, whose members were not generally opposed to transfer at 11 or who were prepared to accept it as a means of protecting the school, were also satisfied with that particular outcome and were the only organised parents' group to gain their immediate objective. Similarly, the leaders of NAS/UWT, AMMA, and PAT, not having opposed the substantive planks in the LEA's proposals, felt that the consultations had resulted in a package which was acceptable to their membership.

The sponsoring group of County Council elected members and the project officer were essentially satisfied with the outcome in that the consultations had raised issues which had enabled them to make modifications which would ease implementation of the plan and go some way towards meeting specific objections to detail. As the Education Committee Chairman remarked, 'One thing is that you have to stand up in public and make a case. We were able to deal with all those issues of detail and to satisfy people about them, and I think that was very important. But at the end of the day the important thing is to establish that there is a case, however much they can find fault in it.'

D. A Comparison of Participants' Views of the Catholic Consultations with the LEA Consultations

The sample of participants in the Catholic Church's consultations were asked similar questions about principles, process and outcomes, with adjustments in the number of questions and appropriate rewording to account for differences in detail between the two exercises (see Appendix III). The intention was to compare the two. However, direct comparisons are necessarily limited by the difference in size between the two sectors and the restriction of Catholic interviewees to members of the Working Party and a sample of head teachers.

On matters of principle there was broad agreement. There were similarities in the criteria used to judge the genuineness of the exercise, in concepts of consultation and participation and in the part participants hoped to play in making policy in the respective exercises. Differences occur in the extent to which ambitions were fulfilled.

In both exercises the prime criterion for the genuineness of a consultative exercise, on which Catholic respondents were unanimous, was that consultation had to occur before a decision was made, while changes to proposals as evidence that views had been taken into account, and the number and variety of people consulted, were judged to be equally important by both groups. The major contrast is that all the Catholic respondents felt that their exercise was genuine according to their criteria. Only one respondent, a primary school head who was not a member of the working party, had any reservations, saying, 'They satisfied the moderate side of my temperament, but they did not satisfy all my criteria. The Catholic sector in Hull is so small that I saw no reason for not including every Head on the Working Party.'

In common also with most interviewees in the LEA consultations, all the Catholics made a clear distinction between being consulted and participating in making policy decisions, and on similarly expressed grounds; that consultation implies that opinion is sought, while participating in making a decision implies the power to take it which consultation alone cannot supply. The Secretary of the Working Party put it thus, 'Consultation is listening to ideas but it is only a small part in decision-making. I don't think our Working Party saw itself as the decision-making body at all. We were there to hammer out the pros and cons of several different systems of re-organisation and then someone else was to make that decision.'

Despite that distinction, there were also similarities in the two exercises in that the preponderant desire was to achieve an effective negotiating position by means of the consultations. All but one Catholic interviewee took this view and he, while wishing merely to advise as a non-working-party head, felt that his advice had been taken and in consequence he had negotiated the solution with the working party. All the working party members felt that they, despite their formal advisory role, had been in a position to negotiate the solution with the Church authorities and that the other interested parties were similarly negotiating with them by means of the advice they offered. As the interviewees were confined in the main to working party members, it is not

possible to assess generally how common the latter view was among non-working-party participants, although two of the three heads who were not members supported it.

Another contrast with the LEA exercise was the far greater sense of participation which the Catholic consultations had apparently engendered. All interviewees felt that the procedure adopted had enabled them to share in the development of policy either because, as members of the working party, they could place their advice at the disposal of the Church authorities, or, as non-members, because they could see a relationship between the views they had expressed at public meetings and elsewhere and the changes made to the final proposal. A realisation that the success of their proposals would depend on the goodwill of the Catholic community was a commonly recurring comment in interviews with working party members. A difference in the two situations was highlighted by a middle school head on the working party who commented, 'Of course the systems are not really comparable. The LEA has got a hierarchy of paid officers and officials whose job it is to review situations and evolve proposals and that stratum does not exist in the Catholic Church. The individual head in the LEA system could never, I think, have been a policy formulator that I was able to be in the Catholic system.'

Hence, despite its formal advisory position in relation to the larger consultative body for the Catholic Church and the Church authorities themselves, the working party was fulfilling a similar role to that of the LEA's working group of members and, in response to Question 3, took the same view about the stage in policy development at which others should be consulted. Consultation with others was regarded by them as most appropriate when facts had been gathered, collated and assessed and a positive plan of action could be proposed.

In common with the majority of their LEA counterparts, two of the three non-working-party heads sought earlier involvement and wished to be consulted before the options became public in order to have some prior influence upon them. It would appear that despite the difference in scale between the two systems, and the more widely representative nature of the group formulating

the proposals, the Catholic Working Party ran the same risk as their LEA counterparts that the nature of the exercise as the proposers envisaged it would be misunderstood.

There are several similarities when the Catholic Working Party's stated objectives in holding public meetings are compared with those of the leading members of the LEA's planning group. The opportunity to provide further explanation of the proposals was rated as high by both and was seen by both groups as a first priority. Equally high in the estimation of the Catholic group were testing the degree of support for their proposals and gathering views in order to develop the plan. These latter were seen by the LEA group as important but slightly less so, while providing further information was an objective of medium importance in both cases. There was more divergence over persuasion as a legitimate objective. While it was the lowest priority in both cases, it was rated as very low by more of the Catholic group. When the priorities of the respective Chairmen are compared both rated explanation, testing support, gathering views and providing further information as high equally. They differed only in the degree of importance they attached to persuasion. The Catholic Chairman rated it as very low, while the Chairman of the Education Committee regarded it as of medium importance and said it was a 'reasonable objective' for a public meeting.

There were, however, great differences in the way the two groups appraised the value of the public meetings in the development of their respective proposals. While both accorded them a high importance in principle in providing interested parties with an opportunity for comment and the expression of views and as an opportunity for the planners to present their proposals, they differed greatly in the practical value they attached to them. All the members of the Catholic working party, despite their reservations about the level of public response, regarded their public meetings as useful and productive in providing advice which enabled them to develop their proposals in a more generally acceptable way, while the LEA planners felt that their meetings had little value or effect in gaining greater acceptance for their

proposals, while the quality of the advice forthcoming was generally only marginal in importance, although certain detailed changes were made in consequence. These differences are possibly attributable to the more limited and less complicated task which faced the Catholic group as compared with that facing the LEA.

When the remaining items relating to the process and outcomes of the Catholic consultations are considered, differences also become apparent. All Catholic interviewees, for example, were in agreement that people had been provided with enough information in order to arrive at a judgment about the plan, reservations being expressed only about the omission to acquaint people generally with the working group's thinking while it formulated its proposal.

Several features of the context in which the Catholic consultations took place made them qualitatively different from the LEA consultations. Perhaps the most important was the general acceptance by the Catholic community, albeit resisted by some of the middle school teachers at public meetings, that the way forward was to work within the general confines of LEA policy regarding 11 plus transfer. The exercise then effectively resolved itself, during the public consultative phase, into one of deciding which schools to retain in order to maintain as strong a Catholic presence as possible. The Catholic consultations were not bedevilled by the activities of organised parental pressure groups which challenged the rationale of the re-organisation by seeking to retain the middle schools, nor was there a request to extend the period for consultation, or any statutory objections lodged by members of the Catholic community when the notices were published.

Perhaps in consequence there was greater expressed satisfaction with the process and outcomes of the consultations. The changes to the proposals were not described as 'tactical', 'cosmetic' or 'predictable', as several interviewees had assailed the modifications to the Authority's plan, but were regarded as a direct outcome of the consultative meetings, and as a response to expressed parental opinion, which made the plan as a whole more acceptable to the Catholic community. All the Catholic interviewees pin-pointed the retention

of St. Thomas Aquinas Junior High School in preference to All Saints Primary School as the most significant change in this respect in East Hull, while all the working party members interviewed felt that the consultations had resolved a finely balanced issue which they had debated at length within the group.

Chapter 11 - The participants and the consultative
process - the questionnaire survey

The general structure of the questionnaire survey, details of the schedules and the sampling principles used, have been explained in Chapter 2. This chapter provides an account and analysis of the findings of the surveys relating to both phases of the Hull re-organisation consultations.

I. The proposed re-organisation of the Hull Senior High Schools:
1980-1982 consultations

Being confined to those interviewees who returned the schedules, the sample relating to the first phase consultations was too small for any statistically significant conclusions to be drawn from the data or for elaborate analyses to be applied. However, from an inspection of the means of the items in the schedule, the data is suggestive, while certain potentially interesting divergences become apparent when the means for the different posited objectives are compared with those for perceived outcomes when the responses are broken down by sub-groups within the sample.

The identifiable sub-groups are senior high school head teachers, teachers' union leaders, secondary school governing body chairmen, elected members, education officers and parent-governors. While it is likely, in a matter of practical policy such as this, that an individual could be, simultaneously, for example, both an elected member and the parent of a school-age child, the position from which each individual was asked to respond was stated at the beginning of each interview and before the completion of the schedules.

It will be noted from Table 11:1 that the standard deviations are relatively wide for the means on the objectives and wider still for the outcomes. This could be a product of the relatively small size of the sample, while it could also be taken to indicate a measure of disagreement among interviewees, particularly over the outcomes of these consultations. In view of this it was decided to regard the data about the first phase consultations as a pilot for factor analysis for the second and more extensive consultative

phase, and also to widen the sample for the latter by means of a postal survey. It was also hoped that more elaborate statistical techniques might yield more meaningful results. With these cautions the following description is offered.

Table 11:1, which shows the cumulative means and standard deviations for the population of 39 respondents on each of the eleven posited objectives, indicates that all were valued, being rated as at least "desirable". The most valued objectives, each with a greater cumulative mean than 4.00 and therefore seen as being close to essential, were those relating to understanding, the providing of information for the decision-makers, the encouragement of co-operation, the retention of confidence in the decision-makers, and foreseeing the consequences of possible changes. These highly valued objectives can, for the sake of preliminary analysis, be described as a mixture of the "cognitive" and "affective" aspects of the consultative process, "cognitive" being defined as being concerned primarily with knowledge and understanding and "affective" as being essentially of relevance to how respondents felt about the process they had experienced, the engendering of co-operation and confidence being in the latter category.

As a means of analysing the perceived outcomes of the consultations the means for these, on the same measures, were related to respondents' valuation of the objectives. The final column of Table 11:1 indicates that, overall, these fell short of the valuations of the objectives, as desiderata, but in varying degrees. The differences can be regarded as a measure of the extent to which the consultations achieved those objectives as those involved perceived they ought to be. The objective which respondents as a whole felt had been least achieved was retention of confidence in the decision-makers. It was, moreover, one of the more highly rated objectives with a cumulative mean of 4.30, though, as an outcome, it attracted a significantly wider standard deviation than it did as an objective (1.12 as compared with 0.69).

The objective judged to have been most achieved was the exploration of differences between people (Table 11:1, item 05), although it was also the

TABLE 11:1

Hull Consultations: 1st Phase (1980-1982): respondents' views concerning objectives and outcomes

N-39

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Objective in relation to Outcome (Col. 2 minus Col. 5)</u>
01 (Understand <u>that</u>)	4.64	0.66	(Understood <u>that</u>)	3.87	0.76	0.77
02 (Understand <u>the</u>)	4.64	0.62	(Understood <u>the</u>)	3.38	1.09	1.26
03 (Information for d-makers)	4.33	0.83	(Information provided)	3.79	0.80	0.54
04 (Ensure co-operation)	4.23	0.90	(Co-operation ensured)	2.76	1.03	1.47
05 (Ensure commitment)	3.76	0.77	(Commitment ensured)	2.76	1.06	1.00
06 (Explore differences)	3.23	0.90	(Differences explored)	3.05	1.07	0.18
07 (Give authority)	3.79	1.32	(Authority given)	3.38	1.13	0.41
08 (Formulate policy aims)	3.71	1.09	(Policy aims formulated)	3.48	0.96	0.23
09 (Provide strategy)	3.76	0.98	(Strategy provided)	3.25	1.09	0.51
10 (Retain confidence)	4.30	0.69	(Confidence retained)	2.51	1.12	1.79
11 (Foresee consequences)	4.30	0.69	(Consequences foreseen)	3.20	0.97	1.10

least highly rated of all the posited objectives. The other objectives which were judged to have been most achieved, each with a difference of less than one point on comparing the means for objectives and outcomes, were the formulation of policy aims, giving more authority to those responsible for implementing decisions, providing a strategy for change and providing information for the decision-makers. Again, however, all but one of these were among the less highly rated objectives. While, from inspection of the means,

the sample as a whole judged that most of the desiderata had resulted at least to some extent and in that limited way the consultative exercise can be described as successful, the degree of difference between the means for objectives and outcomes also indicates that a substantial number of the more highly valued objectives were judged at the same time to be among those least achieved. In that respect the consultations were only a qualified success.

As hypothesised, there were differences between the sub-groups in their rating of the objectives and their assessment of the outcomes, indicating that the different groups were more, or less, satisfied with different aspects of the consultative process. What is clear from inspecting the differences between the means in Table 11:2 is that rarely were sub-groups in equilibrium on the items investigated when their valuation of an objective is compared with their judgment of the outcome. The exceptions were governing body chairmen in relation to providing information for the decision-makers (Table 11:2, Obj. 03, Group 3); education officers in respect of exploring differences (Table 11:2, Obj. 06, Group 5); and the parent-governors in respect of providing a strategy for change (Table 11:2, Obj. 09, Group 6).

On a small number of items the perceived outcome of the consultations was greater than respondents' valuation of them as desiderata. This was the case with the head teachers in relation to exploring the differences between people and formulating policy aims (Table 11:2, Objs 06 & 08, Group 1), for parent governors also in respect of the latter objective and for giving more authority to those who have to implement decisions (Table 11:2, Objs 07 & 08, Group 6), and for the education officers in respect of providing a strategy for change (Table 11:2, Obj. 09, Group 5). Rarely, however, were those objectives very highly rated by the respondents concerned.

The differential responses of the sub-groups within the sample concerning the outcomes of the consultations can be illustrated by focusing on those items which revealed the least and most variation between groups when the means for objectives and outcomes are compared. The item which showed least variation was that relating to people coming to understand that a decision was

TABLE 11:2Hull Consultations: 1st Phase (1980-1982): Group analysis of respondents' views concerning objectives and outcomes

<u>Groups</u>	1 Senior High School Heads
	2 Teachers' Union Leaders
	3 Governing Body Chairmen
	4 Elected Members
	5 Education Officers
	6 Parent Governors

Objective 01 (to understand that a decision has to be made)

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Outcome</u>		<u>Difference</u> (Col. 1 minus Col. 3)
			<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	
1	4.69	.75	4.00	.91	0.69
2	4.83	.40	4.00	.89	0.83
3	4.22	.83	3.55	.72	0.67
4	4.50	.57	3.75	.95	0.75
5	5.00	.00	4.00	.00	1.00
6	5.00	.00	4.00	.00	1.00

Objective 02 (to understand the decisions that have to be made)

1	4.69	.63	3.30	1.18	1.39
2	4.33	.81	3.66	.81	0.67
3	4.77	.66	3.00	1.00	1.77
4	4.75	.50	3.75	.95	1.00
5	4.66	.57	3.33	.57	1.33
6	4.50	.57	3.75	1.89	0.75

Objective 03 (to provide information for the decision-makers)

1	4.07	.75	3.53	.66	0.54
2	4.50	.54	3.83	.75	0.67
3	4.11	1.26	4.11	.78	0.00
4	4.50	.57	3.50	1.29	1.00
5	5.00	.00	4.33	.57	0.77
6	4.75	.50	3.75	.95	1.00

Objective 04 (to ensure the co-operation of those who have to implement changes)

1	4.23	.83	2.38	1.04	1.85
2	4.50	.54	3.16	.98	1.34
3	4.22	1.39	2.77	.83	1.45
4	3.75	.50	2.75	.95	1.00
5	4.66	.57	3.00	1.00	1.66
6	4.00	.81	3.25	1.70	0.75

Objective 05 (to ensure the commitment of those affected by changes)

1	3.76	.59	2.53	1.12	1.23
2	3.83	.40	3.33	1.03	0.50
3	3.88	1.36	2.77	.83	1.11
4	3.50	.57	2.25	.95	1.25
5	3.66	.57	2.66	1.15	1.00
6	3.75	.50	3.25	1.50	0.50

(continued)

TABLE 11:2
(continued)

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Outcome</u>		<u>Difference</u> (Col. 1 minus Col. 3)
			<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	
<u>Objective 06</u> (to explore the differences between people)					
1	2.84	.55	3.00	.57	*0.16
2	3.83	.75	3.50	1.04	0.33
3	3.00	1.00	2.77	1.39	0.33
4	3.00	1.41	2.75	1.50	0.25
5	4.00	.00	4.00	.00	0.00
6	3.75	.95	2.75	1.50	1.00
<u>Objective 07</u> (to give more authority to those who have to implement decisions)					
1	3.07	1.32	3.00	1.08	0.07
2	3.66	.51	3.16	1.47	0.50
3	4.11	1.76	3.11	.92	1.00
4	5.00	.00	4.50	1.00	0.50
5	5.00	.00	3.66	.57	1.34
6	3.50	.57	4.25	.95	*0.75
<u>Objective 08</u> (to formulate the aims of policy)					
1	3.23	1.23	3.30	.85	*0.07
2	4.50	.54	3.66	1.03	0.84
3	3.55	1.23	3.11	.78	0.44
4	3.75	1.25	3.50	1.91	0.25
5	4.33	.57	4.00	.00	0.33
6	4.00	.00	4.25	.50	*0.25
<u>Objective 09</u> (to provide a strategy for change)					
1	3.76	1.09	2.92	.95	0.84
2	4.33	.51	3.66	1.21	0.67
3	3.77	1.09	3.11	1.05	0.66
4	3.50	1.00	3.00	1.41	0.50
5	3.33	1.52	4.33	.57	*1.00
6	3.50	.57	3.50	1.29	0.00
<u>Objective 10</u> (to retain the confidence of those affected by changes)					
1	4.15	.68	2.46	1.05	1.69
2	4.33	.81	3.16	.98	1.17
3	4.44	.72	2.11	.92	2.33
4	3.75	.50	2.25	.95	1.50
5	4.66	.57	2.66	1.15	2.00
6	4.75	.50	2.75	2.06	2.00
<u>Objective 11</u> (to foresee the consequences of possible changes)					
1	3.76	.59	3.30	.75	0.46
2	4.66	.51	3.33	1.21	1.33
3	4.77	.44	2.77	.97	2.00
4	4.50	.57	3.50	.57	1.00
5	4.33	.57	3.66	.57	0.67
6	4.25	.95	3.00	1.82	1.25

necessary (Table 11:2, Obj. 01). While still substantial, the difference ranged between 0.67 in the case of the governing body chairmen to 1.00 in the case of the education officers and parent-governors. The item which attracted most variation in response was the one relating to giving more authority to those who have to implement decisions, the extent of the shortfall ranging from 0.07 in the case of the head teachers (indicating a substantial measure of achievement) to 1.34 in the case of the education officers, while the parent-governors recorded a positive score for this item. From this there would appear to be considerable disagreement among respondents about the legitimising effects of these consultations (Table 11:2, Obj. 07).

The item over which all the groups agreed the consultations had been widest of the mark was the retention of confidence (Table 11:2, Obj. 10). All groups recorded a deficit greater than one point, though again there was substantial disagreement about the degree of the shortfall, the teachers' union leaders recording the least in this respect and the governing body chairmen the most. The items all groups judged closest to achievement, with a shortfall of less than one point and a plus value in some cases, were those relating to the formulation of policy aims and formulating a strategy for change, though again there are observable differences between the groups (Table 11:2, Obj. 08 & 09).

While the size of the sub-groups, given the size of the total population of respondents, was too small from which to draw any firm conclusions or detect trends, the parent-governors for example, other groups within this population could be regarded as more representative. In the latter category can be placed the head teachers and governing body chairmen who represented the majority of the schools involved, while the teachers' union leaders and the key education officers are inevitably restricted in number. Within these limitations the results of this small survey were sufficiently encouraging to lead to a similar but more extensive survey of the reactions of different groups of participants in the second phase of consultations.

II. The proposals to change the age of transfer in Hull schools :
1984 consultations

As was indicated in Chapter 2, for this part of the research the interview sample was extended by means of a postal survey. The sample of respondents for the interviews was a structured one, intended to reflect possible key perspectives on the consultations. While that sample could be taken to be representative of those more actively involved, the postal survey was intended to increase the representativeness of the sample. Tables 11:3, 11:4 and 11:5 provide details of the sub-groups involved in both phases of the consultations and of the postal survey.

The first stage of analysis was a calculation of the means and variances of the total number of respondents on each of the 16 items relating to both objectives and outcomes (see Appendices IV and V), and Table 11:6 shows the results of that analysis.

TABLE 11:3 Hull Consultations: 1st Phase (1980-1982): Source of responses

<u>Group</u>	<u>Completed Schedules</u>
Senior High School Heads	13
Teachers' Union Representatives	6 (NUT; NAS; NAHT)
Governing Body Chairmen	9
Elected Members	4
Education Officers	3
Parent-Governors	<u>4</u>
	39

TABLE 11:4 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984): Source of responses

<u>Group</u>	<u>Completed Schedules</u>
LEA Primary School Heads	26
LEA Middle School Heads	21
LEA Senior High School Heads	9
Elected Members	9
Teachers' Union Leaders	7
Education Officers	3
Parents' Action Group Leaders	13
Chairmen of Primary & Middle School Gov. Bodies	16
Chairmen of Senior High School Gov. Bodies	5
Roman Catholic Primary School Heads	6
Roman Catholic Middle School Heads	4
Roman Catholic Working Party	<u>5</u>
	124

TABLE 11:5 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984): Postal survey

<u>Group</u>	<u>No. in Sample</u>	<u>Sample</u>	<u>Number returned</u>	<u>Response rate</u>
LEA Primary Heads	35	50%	26	72.8%
LEA Middle School Heads	24	50%	21	86.1%
Primary & Middle School Gov. Bd. Chairmen	24	100%	16	66.6%
Roman Catholic Primary School Heads	8	100%	6	75.0%
Roman Catholic Middle School Heads	4	100%	4	100.0%

TABLE 11:6 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984): Means and Variances on Objectives and Outcomes
Total sample: 124 cases

<u>Item</u>	<u>OBJECTIVES</u>		<u>OUTCOMES</u>		<u>Col.5 Difference (Col.1 - Col.3)</u>
	<u>Col.1 Mean</u>	<u>Col.2 Var.</u>	<u>Col.3 Mean</u>	<u>Col.4 Var.</u>	
1 Understanding 1	4.79	0.23	3.54	0.78	1.25
2 Understanding 2	4.64	0.31	3.12	0.75	1.52
3 Information 1	4.50	0.54	3.50	0.87	1.00
4 Information 2	4.59	0.40	3.29	1.02	1.30
5 Co-operation	3.97	0.83	2.49	0.96	1.48
6 Commitment	3.82	0.78	2.28	0.93	1.74
7 Exploring differences	3.60	1.20	2.68	1.12	0.92
8 Discussion of educational considerations	4.65	0.42	3.07	0.89	1.58
9 Authority	3.11	1.56	2.51	1.35	0.60
10 Formulating policy aims	4.00	1.15	2.75	1.50	1.25
11 Awareness of alternatives	4.44	0.59	3.06	1.47	1.38
12 Test of public debate	4.16	0.80	3.33	1.16	0.83
13 Strategy for change	4.04	1.14	2.87	1.14	1.17
14 Retention of confidence	4.36	0.55	2.25	0.95	2.11
15 Foreseeing consequences	4.45	0.47	2.92	1.02	1.53
16 What affected think are important issues	4.34	0.47	3.34	0.89	1.00

A number of points are worthy of note. From the mean scores in the first column it can be seen that respondents judged all of the posited objectives to be at least desirable and many of them were given a much higher degree of importance. Those which were judged to be of the highest importance, with a mean of 4.50 or higher, were those items which related to generating understanding and ensuring a two-way flow of information, and the discussion of educational considerations (items 1, 2, 3, 4 & 8). Generally these items as a group also attracted the lowest variances, indicating a substantial measure of agreement among respondents as a whole.

When outcomes are inspected, columns 3 and 4, the means for each item are consistently lower, and substantially so when the differences between the means for objectives and outcomes are calculated (column 5). However, respondents as a totality, judged several of the objectives to have been achieved during the consultations, at least to some extent, with a mean score of 3.00 or higher. It is interesting that among these were those objectives on which the highest values were placed. Hence respondents felt that the consultations had generated a measure of understanding of both the need to make a decision and of the nature of the decisions that had to be made, that they had contributed in some measure to ensuring that the decision-makers had more information on which to base their decisions, while those affected gained more information, and that educational considerations had been discussed in the process (items 1, 2, 3, 4, & 8). In addition, other considerations which respondents judged to be important had also been achieved at least to some extent. The decision-makers had been made aware of alternative courses of action (item 11), the policy-makers' ideas had been put to the test of public debate (item 12), and the consultations had revealed what those affected thought were the important issues (item 16).

The variances, indicating the degree of spread of responses on each item, were on the whole greater for outcomes than for objectives. There were, however, some exceptions to this general trend. The legitimising effect of consultation (item 9) was not highly valued, nor was it judged to have been

achieved to any great extent. While there was considerable variance in the responses when it was considered as an objective, there was somewhat less variance, though still a substantial amount, when it was perceived as an outcome. A very similar picture emerges in the case of exploring differences between people by means of consultation (item 7).

The objective which was achieved least was the retention of confidence in the decision-makers (item 14). While it was regarded as important, with a mean of 4.36, it was rated as having been achieved the least of all the items on the schedule (mean 2.25), followed closely in terms of achievement by shared commitment to the decision (item 6). The retention of confidence was also the item displaying the greatest difference between the means for objectives and outcomes (2.11).

Factor Analysis

The foregoing inspection of the mean scores and variances, while broadly indicative of the extent to which respondents valued the objectives and perceived their attainment, fails to reveal any patterns among the variables. The detection of any such patterning of responses is a necessary further step if more positive conclusions are to be drawn concerning how the different participants viewed the consultations. For this purpose the data was subjected to factor analysis, which provides a technique for detecting and quantifying patterns among many variables by revealing correlations between them which are difficult to detect and assess merely by inspection.¹ The resulting factors are combinations of the variables rather than single elements and can be analysed into their principal components as a basis for interpreting the patterning observed. For the purposes of analysis resulting loadings on a variable of 0.50 are taken to define a factor, while those over 0.30 can be used to add detail.² While the input data was coded by groups of respondents within the sample, it was subjected to factor analysis without reference to the component sub-groups with the objective of detecting if any major factors became apparent concerning objectives and outcomes in turn for the group as a whole.

Factor analysis of the responses concerning objectives revealed one major factor which accounted for 66.3% of the total variance, with three further minor ones accounting for the remainder. As the technique is a conservative one only the major factor was taken to be sufficiently significant for further examination. Table 11:7 shows that the components of the major factor, Factor 1, were focused on five of the sixteen variables, all with a loading of 0.40 or higher, with the remainder having a loading of 0.20 or below. The principal components of the factor were the four items related to understanding and information and to the exploration of differences by means of consultation. Of these, the defining variables, each with a loading of over 0.50, are understanding that a decision had to be made (variable 1), providing information for the decision-makers (variable 3), and providing information for all those affected by possible changes (variable 4). These defining variables would appear to be essentially cognitive in character, while those excluded from this factor, which played a more significant part in the minor factors detected, could perhaps be regarded as affective. This would seem to indicate that, for the majority of respondents, consultation is regarded, in principle, as an essentially rational approach to decision-taking with the purpose of arriving at better informed decisions.

Similarly, analysis of responses regarding outcomes revealed only one major factor (factor 1) which accounted for even more of the total variance (79.0%), though it had many more components. Six variables define the factor and a further six add detail. The defining variables (see Table 11:8) relate to providing information for those affected (variable 4), ensuring the co-operation of those affected (variable 5), producing shared commitment to decisions (variable 6), exploring the differences between people (variable 7), ensuring that educational considerations are discussed (variable 8), and retaining the confidence of those affected by change (variable 14). The last component revealed by far the highest loading at 0.73. The somewhat less significant components were the two aspects of understanding (variables 1 & 2), giving more authority to those who have to put changes into effect (variable 9),

TABLE 11:7Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984): Factor analysis of objectives

Total sample: 124 cases

Factor	%age of variance	cumulative %age
1	66.3	66.3
2	13.1	79.3
3	10.6	89.9
4	10.1	100.0

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>
1 Understanding 1	0.62	0.19	0.03	-0.00
2 Understanding 2	0.41	0.10	0.08	0.18
3 Information 1	0.52	0.28	0.35	0.07
4 Information 2	0.64	-0.05	0.25	0.12
5 Co-operation	0.20	0.06	0.69	0.18
6 Commitment	0.10	0.18	0.66	0.35
7 Exploring differences	0.41	0.22	0.61	0.09
8 Educational considerations	0.12	0.20	0.15	0.35
9 Authority	0.10	0.17	0.45	0.18
10 Formulating policy aims	0.08	0.57	0.60	-0.07
11 Awareness of alternatives	0.09	0.62	0.25	0.26
12 Test of public debate	0.06	0.08	0.22	0.78
13 Strategy for change	0.18	0.58	0.22	0.12
14 Retention of confidence	0.14	0.13	0.42	0.32
15 Foreseeing consequences	0.16	0.61	0.03	0.33
16 What affected think are important issues	0.15	0.30	0.16	0.48

TABLE 11:8Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984): Factor analysis of outcomes

Total sample: 124 cases

Factor	%age of variance	cumulative %age	
1	79.0	79.0	
2	12.2	91.2	
3	8.8	100.0	

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>
1 Understanding 1	0.40	0.50	0.09
2 Understanding 2	0.49	0.53	0.09
3 Information 1	0.29	0.75	0.09
4 Information 2	0.62	0.21	0.27
5 Co-operation	0.59	0.45	0.15
6 Commitment	0.55	0.53	0.06
7 Exploring differences	0.50	0.22	0.41
8 Educational considerations	0.65	0.20	0.26
9 Authority	0.33	0.21	0.19
10 Formulating policy aims	0.17	0.51	0.17
11 Awareness of alternatives	-0.02	0.53	0.52
12 Test of public debate	0.38	0.16	0.36
13 Strategy for change	0.47	0.41	0.19
14 Retention of confidence	0.73	0.24	0.20
15 Foreseeing consequences	0.35	0.05	0.58
16 What affected think are important issues	0.18	0.12	0.76

putting the policy-makers' ideas to the test of public debate (variable 12), providing a strategy for making changes (variable 13), and foreseeing the consequences of change (variable 15).

While, for the reasons given earlier, the minor factors are not regarded as significant, they do point clearly in other directions from Factor 1, and each has, among its defining variables, one which does not appear as significant in either of the other factors. Hence, in Factor 2, the most heavily loaded variable was providing information for the decision-makers (variable 3 - loading 0.75), while in Factor 3 the most heavily loaded item was finding out what those affected think are the important issues (variable 16 - loading 0.76).

Respondents used more criteria to judge the outcomes and it would appear that the criteria used point in an essentially different direction than when objectives are considered in isolation from practice. While there is an element of "cognition", as revealed by the status of variables 1,2,7,13, and 15, these add detail to the factor rather than define it. The defining variables are essentially client-orientated and "affective" in character.

The factor analysis results described above treated the responses concerning objectives and outcomes separately. However, when the responses for objectives and outcomes were factor analysed together another interesting pattern becomes apparent. While the earlier inspection of the means and variances for the 16 variables showed the means for outcomes to be consistently lower in all cases, it also indicated that several of the objectives were judged to have been achieved in some measure. This further process detected two major factors, together accounting for 66.8% of the total variance, which point towards a clear dichotomy in the group as a whole between their valuation of each of the objectives and their achievement. Again there were several minor factors but none individually accounted for more than 8.3% of the total variance.

Inspection of the loadings for the variables in Table 11:9 reveals a consistent separation of the outcomes from the objectives in Factor 1 and a similarly consistent separation of the objectives from the outcomes in Factor 2.

In the judgment of the total group of respondents, had a particular objective been both highly valued and judged to have been achieved in large measure, then a far closer correspondence between the loadings would be anticipated. In none of the cases is that degree of correspondence observed.

TABLE 11:9 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984): Factor analysis of objectives with outcomes

	Factor	%age of variance	cumulative %age
	1	37.0	37.0
	2	29.8	66.8
	3	8.3	75.1
	4	7.8	82.9
	5-8 inc.	17.1	100.0

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Factor 1 (37.0%)</u>	<u>Factor 2 (29.8%)</u>
	1	-0.00	0.04
	2	-0.10	0.15
	3	0.04	0.42
	4	-0.04	0.31
	5	0.02	0.65
	6	0.05	0.76
	7	0.07	0.61
	8	0.02	0.24
	9	0.14	0.47
	10	0.08	0.50
	11	-0.20	0.37
	12	-0.09	0.50
	13	0.05	0.24
	14	-0.14	0.58
	15	-0.07	0.17
	16	-0.01	0.38

<u>Outcomes</u>	<u>Variable</u>		
	1	0.67	-0.03
	2	0.74	-0.02
	3	0.68	0.02
	4	0.65	-0.12
	5	0.74	0.12
	6	0.76	0.19
	7	0.60	-0.14
	8	0.68	-0.07
	9	0.37	0.25
	10	0.44	0.10
	11	0.35	-0.07
	12	0.45	-0.14
	13	0.62	-0.03
	14	0.72	0.02
	15	0.35	-0.00
	16	0.27	-0.05

TABLE 11:10 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984): Scales derived from factor analysis

A. OBJECTIVES

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Loading</u>
1 To ensure that people understand that a decision has to be made	0.62
2 To ensure that people understand the decisions that have to be made	0.41
3 To provide information for the decision-makers	0.52
4 To provide information for all those affected by possible changes	0.64
7 To explore the differences between people	0.41

B. OUTCOMES

1 People understood that a decision had to be made	0.40
2 People understood the decisions that had to be made	0.49
4 Information was provided for all those affected by possible changes	0.62
5 The co-operation of those affected was ensured	0.59
6 There was shared commitment to the proposals	0.55
7 The differences between people were explored	0.50
8 Educational considerations were discussed	0.65
9 Consultations gave more authority to those who have to make the changes	0.33
12 Policy-makers' ideas put to test of public debate	0.38
13 Strategy for making changes provided	0.47
14 Confidence of those affected retained	0.73
15 Consequences of possible changes foreseen	0.35

Specific Comparisons

Factor analysis of the total sample provided scales for measuring the degree of agreement between selected sub-groups concerning what they thought should be the objectives of consultation, and the outcomes as they perceived them in this particular exercise, which might remain hidden if the respondents were regarded as cohesive in their views (see Table 11:10). For these purposes it was hypothesised that four specific T-test comparisons might reveal important similarities and differences, which could possibly follow from the extent to which the different sub-groups might perceive themselves as potentially affected, either beneficially or adversely, by the changes proposed, and their differing degree of involvement in policy-making. Hence the responses of primary school

heads were compared with those of middle school heads; the head teachers as a whole, including secondary heads, were compared with governing body chairmen; the leaders of the parents' action groups were compared with the other county school groups; and the Roman Catholic respondents (primary and middle school heads and key members of the working party) were compared with all the other groups.

In testing for differences between sub-groups, Youngman observes that groups of under 10 cases are rarely satisfactory and in general statisticians tend to recommend the use of sub-groups of at least 15 cases.³ With one exception, the sub-groups in this analysis met that criterion. The group of leaders of parents' action groups, containing 13 members, slightly violated it; however, the group was included in the analysis as being very distinctive in character and as having the potential for revealing differences in approach in comparison with the other groups. In addition to the scales derived from the factor analysis, these comparisons were also based on all the items in the response schedule, on the hypothesis that the more specific comparisons might reveal items of significance between the sub-groups which factor analysis of the total sample of respondents had failed to show.

Primary and middle school heads compared (Table 11:11)

The primary heads as a group tended to place a higher value on the posited objectives within the scale, with a cumulative mean of 22.84, than their middle school counterparts (mean 21.38), with a probability of the effect being random of 0.036. Within the scale, the primary school heads placed a significantly higher value on exploring differences as an objective of consulting than did middle school heads (Var. 7), the former seeing it as important while the latter regarded it as merely desirable. The formulation of policy aims by means of consultation was an objective (Var. 10), not on the scale resulting from factor analysis, which was also valued more highly by the primary school heads, though it was still regarded as important by both groups.

When outcomes within the scale are considered a larger divergence in the cumulative mean scores becomes apparent, though it does not have the degree of

statistical significance attached to the results concerning objectives, indicating that the primary heads judged that more of what they looked for in the consultations had in their view resulted from them. Two items in particular show significant differences between these two groups of head teachers. The retention of confidence (Var. 14) was judged to be greater among the primary school heads, though still only a partial outcome, while the primary heads also felt that the consultations had made a more positive contribution to the formulation of policy aims (Var. 10).

TABLE 11:11 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984):
T-test Analysis: Primary and Middle School Head Teachers

Group	Variable	Group 1 (Primary Heads)			Group 2 (Middle School Heads)			
		No. of cases	Mean	S.D.	F Value	2-Tail Prob.	Separate Variance Est. T Value	2-Tail Prob.
1	Objectives on scale	26	22.84	2.39	1.16	0.74	2.17	0.036
2		21	21.38	2.22				
1	Outcomes on scale	26	33.76	7.73	1.39	0.45	1.31	0.198
2		21	31.04	6.55				
<u>OBJECTIVES (detail)</u>								
1	No.1 Understanding 1	26	4.76	0.51	2.92	0.01	-1.13	0.267
2		21	4.90	0.30				
1	No.2 Understanding 2	26	4.65	0.56	1.46	0.36	0.96	0.342
2		21	4.47	0.68				
1	No.3 Information 1	26	4.69	0.61	1.21	0.64	0.88	0.384
2		21	4.52	0.68				
1	No.4 Information 2	26	4.69	0.54	1.77	0.17	1.87	0.070
2		21	4.33	0.73				
1	No.7 Differences	26	4.03	0.91	1.35	0.47	3.05	0.004
2		21	3.14	1.06				
1	No.10 Policy Aims (not on scale)	26	4.65	0.56	3.46	0.00	2.21	0.035
2		21	4.09	1.04				
<u>OUTCOMES (detail)</u>								
1	No.10 Policy Aims (not on scale)	26	3.15	1.22	1.41	0.43	2.06	0.045
2		21	2.47	1.03				
1	No.14 Confidence	26	2.30	1.05	1.87	0.15	2.06	0.046
2		21	1.76	0.76				

TABLE 11:12 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984):
T-test Analysis: County School Heads and Governing Body Chairmen

		<u>Group 1</u> (County School Heads)			<u>Group 2</u> (Gov. Body Chairmen)			
<u>Group</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>No. of cases</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>2-Tail Prob.</u>	<u>Separate T Value</u>	<u>Variance Est. 2-Tail Prob.</u>
1	Objectives on scale	56	21.98	0.32	1.19	0.68	-0.19	0.847
2		21	22.09	0.48				
1	Outcomes on scale	56	32.89	6.99	1.98	0.04	-2.49	0.019
2		21	38.71	9.83				
<u>OBJECTIVES</u> (detail)								
1	No.1 Understanding 1	56	4.83	0.41	1.10	0.75	0.70	0.488
2		21	4.76	0.43				
1	No.2 Understanding 2	56	4.60	0.59	1.21	0.65	-1.09	0.282
2		21	4.76	0.53				
1	No.3 Information 1	56	4.48	0.76	1.63	0.23	0.32	0.748
2		21	4.42	0.59				
1	No.4 Information 2	56	4.53	0.63	1.10	0.84	0.38	0.705
2		21	4.47	0.60				
1	No.7 Differences	56	3.51	1.06	1.01	0.94	-0.55	0.588
2		21	3.66	1.06				
<u>OUTCOMES</u> (detail)								
1	No.7 Differences	56	2.48	0.91	1.09	0.76	-3.32	0.002
2		21	3.28	0.95				
1	No.8 Educational considerations	56	2.91	0.83	1.79	0.09	-2.46	0.020
2		21	3.57	1.12				
1	No.11 Alternatives	56	2.92	1.14	1.04	0.86	-2.17	0.037
2		21	3.57	1.16				
1	No.12 Public debate	56	3.08	0.90	1.64	0.15	-2.75	0.010
2		21	3.85	1.15				
1	No.14 Confidence	56	2.08	0.92	1.64	0.15	-2.36	0.025
2		21	2.76	1.17				
1	No.15 Consequences	56	2.76	0.93	1.33	0.39	-2.66	0.012
2		21	3.47	1.07				
1	No.16 What affected think	56	3.08	0.95	1.68	0.20	-4.14	0.000
2		21	4.04	0.74				

Comparison of county school heads and governing body chairmen (Table 11:12)

When these two groups are compared regarding objectives no major divergences appear and there is apparently very close agreement concerning the desirability of those items on the scale and when each item is considered separately. Major differences, however, do become apparent in a comparative analysis of their perceptions of the outcomes. The groups differ markedly on several variables and where the differences occur there is a consistent trend for the governing body chairmen to be more satisfied that the objectives had been attained. Hence the governing body chairmen felt that the consultations had enabled the differences between people to be explored (Var. 7), educational considerations to be discussed (Var.8), the policy-makers' ideas put to the test of public debate (Var. 12), confidence in the decision-makers retained (Var. 14), and the consequences of possible changes foreseen (Var. 15), to a considerably greater extent than head teachers.

While most of the head teachers' responses on these items were on the negative side of the answer scale, governing body chairmen exhibited the opposite tendency. Only on the issue of the extent of public debate did the heads agree that it had resulted to some extent, while governing body chairmen were, as a group, closer to considering that this particular objective had been attained in most respects. On only one item, that of the retention of confidence, were both groups inclined to take a negative view, both agreeing that this objective had been least achieved, but here again the heads were more inclined to the view that the consultations had little impact in that direction.

Of those items not on the scale two show important differences between the groups. Governing body chairmen felt far more strongly that the consultations had made the decision-makers more aware of alternative courses of action (Var. 11), while the most significant divergence lay in the extent to which the groups judged the consultations had revealed what those affected thought were the important issues (Var. 16). While the heads felt this had resulted only to some extent, governing body chairmen took the view that the LEA would be able to make that judgment in most respects.

TABLE 11:13 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984):
T-test Analysis: Parents' Action Groups and other LEA Groups

Group	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Group 1 (Parents' Action Groups)		Group 2 (other LEA Groups)	
						2-Tail Prob.	Separate T Value	Variance Est. 2-Tail Prob.	
1	Objectives on scale	13	22.76	3.58	2.20	0.03	0.86	0.403	
2		96	21.88	2.41					
1	Outcomes on scale	13	29.07	5.10	2.30	0.10	-3.45	0.003	
2		96	34.67	7.74					
<u>OBJECTIVES (detail)</u>									
1	No.1 Understanding 1	13	4.69	0.63	1.69	0.16	-0.49	0.632	
2		96	4.78	0.48					
1	No.2 Understanding 2	13	4.69	0.48	1.47	0.46	0.39	0.701	
2		96	4.63	0.58					
1	No.3 Information 1	13	4.46	1.12	2.53	0.01	0.04	0.967	
2		96	4.44	0.70					
1	No.4 Information 2	13	4.76	0.59	1.23	0.72	1.38	0.185	
2		96	4.52	0.66					
1	No.6 Commitment	13	4.23	0.59	2.17	0.13	2.32	0.031	
2		96	3.79	0.88					
1	No.7 Differences	13	4.15	1.28	1.39	0.36	1.76	0.101	
2		96	3.50	1.08					
1	No.8 Educational considerations	13	4.92	0.27	4.63	0.00	2.19	0.037	
2		96	4.70	0.59					
1	No.11 Alternatives	13	4.92	0.27	8.92	0.00	4.52	0.000	
2		96	4.40	0.82					
1	No.12 Public debate	13	4.61	0.65	1.77	0.26	2.23	0.038	
2		96	4.16	0.86					
1	No.13 Strategy	13	4.46	0.77	2.08	0.15	2.02	0.057	
2		96	3.96	1.11					
1	No.16 What affected think	13	4.84	0.37	3.51	0.02	4.55	0.000	
2		96	4.27	0.70					
<u>OUTCOMES (detail)</u>									
1	No.3 Information 1	13	2.92	0.64	2.04	0.16	-3.24	0.004	
2		96	3.57	0.91					
1	No.4 Information 2	13	2.69	0.85	1.32	0.61	-2.53	0.022	
2		96	3.34	0.98					
1	No.5 Co-operation	13	2.00	0.70	1.94	0.20	-2.22	0.039	
2		96	2.48	0.98					
1	No.7 Differences	13	1.61	0.50	4.02	0.01	-6.50	0.000	
2		96	2.75	1.01					
1	No.8 Educational considerations	13	2.61	0.65	2.15	0.13	-2.49	0.022	
2		96	3.12	0.95					
1	No.14 Confidence	13	1.69	0.48	4.31	0.00	-3.39	0.002	
2		96	2.26	0.99					

Comparison of Parents' Action Groups with all other LEA groups (Table 11:13)

Comparison of the views of the leaders of the parents' action groups with the other LEA groups reveals the greatest number of divergences over both objectives and outcomes. When those objectives on the scale alone are considered, no major statistically significant differences become apparent; however, it is clear that the parents attached very different values to many of the objectives which factor analysis of the total group of respondents had failed to reveal. Hence the parents' groups attached significantly higher values to ensuring that there was commitment to change (Var. 6) and that educational considerations were discussed (Var. 8), to the decision-makers being made aware of alternative courses of action (Var. 11), to putting plans to the test of public debate (Var. 12), to providing a strategy for change (Var. 13), and to revealing what those affected think are the important issues (Var. 16) than the remaining participants did when considered as a whole. For two of those items, awareness of alternatives and revealing what those affected thought, the 2-tail probability that such an effect was random was 0.000.

Significant divergences also occur over outcomes. The mean for the parents, at 29.07, is significantly lower than that for the other groups at 34.67, indicating that the parents were generally far less satisfied with the perceived outcomes of the consultations. Certain individual items within that overall pattern show statistically significant differences. Considering the extent to which information had been provided for those affected by the changes (Var. 4), co-operation engendered (Var. 5), differences explored (Var. 7), educational considerations discussed (Var. 8), and confidence retained (Var. 14), the parents were consistently of the view that those objectives had been achieved to a lesser extent than the other groups.

Comparison between the Roman Catholics and LEA participants (Table 11:14)

While the two consultative exercises were self-contained, it was felt that a comparison between the Roman Catholic and LEA respondents would be valid as both groups as a whole contained people with varying degrees of involvement

TABLE 11:14 Hull Consultations: 2nd Phase (1984)
T-test Analysis: Roman Catholics and LEA participants

		<u>Group 1 (LEA participants)</u>			<u>Group 2 (Roman Catholics)</u>			
<u>Group</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>No. of cases</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>2-Tail Prob.</u>	<u>Separate T Value</u>	<u>Variance Est. 2-Tail Prob.</u>
1	Objectives on scale	109	21.99	2.58	2.43	0.06	-2.45	0.022
2		15	23.20	1.65				
1	Outcomes on scale	109	34.00	7.67	2.00	0.04	-1.10	0.287
2		15	37.20	10.86				
<u>OBJECTIVES (detail)</u>								
1	No.1 Understanding 1	109	4.77	0.50	3.79	0.00	-1.98	0.057
2		15	4.93	0.25				
1	No.3 Information 1	109	4.44	0.76	4.71	0.00	-3.58	0.001
2		15	4.86	0.35				
1	No.4 Information 2	109	4.55	0.65	6.52	0.00	-4.17	0.000
2		15	4.93	0.25				
1	No.8 Educational considerations	109	4.73	0.57	2.39	0.01	2.84	0.012
2		15	4.06	0.88				
1	No.15 Consequences	109	4.49	0.70	1.85	0.19	2.42	0.024
2		15	4.13	0.51				
<u>OUTCOMES (detail)</u>								
1	No.6 Commitment	109	2.21	0.94	1.16	0.63	-2.13	0.048
2		15	2.80	1.01				

in the actual making of the decisions. In this comparison the major divergences occur over objectives. Roman Catholic respondents placed a higher value on those items within the scale than the LEA respondents with a mean cumulative score of 23.2 as against 21.9 (2-tail probability 0.022), and differed significantly concerning the greater importance they attached to providing information for the decision-makers (Var. 3) and for those concerned in the changes (Var. 4), and gave a somewhat higher value also to people coming to understand that a decision was necessary (Var. 1), though in the latter case the item did not reach the same level of statistical significance (0.057). On all three above objectives, while both groups regarded them as important, the Roman Catholics saw them as more so, being much closer to regarding them as essential.

Regarding perceived outcomes, there was also an appreciable difference in the cumulative mean scores of the two groups; 37.2 for the Roman Catholics as compared with 34.0 for the LEA respondents, though here the differences fail to reach a statistically significant level. However, within that pattern, one such difference does occur. The Catholics as a body felt that a greater degree of commitment to the changes had been ensured by means of their consultations (Var. 6), being close to the mid (positive) point on the response scale, while LEA respondents inclined much closer to the negative side of the scale and took the general view that little commitment had been ensured.

Specific Comparisons: Conclusions

Comparison of the selected sub-groups tends to support the general hypothesis that the differently composed groups would have different perspectives on the consultations, particularly regarding perceived outcomes. The results of the T-test analysis show generally greater divergences of view over the outcomes and, broadly, a more substantial measure of agreement over the desirability of the objectives, though here there are also some interesting divergences of view over particular variables. It is also possible to offer an explanation of those differences in terms of the extent to which the different groups could anticipate being affected, and perhaps also in terms of their degree of involvement in the decision-taking.

The first possible explanation would appear to apply to the comparison of the primary school with the middle school heads, the former being substantially more satisfied that the desired objectives had been achieved, this being particularly apparent in their judgment that a greater degree of confidence in the decision-makers had been engendered by the consultations and that the aims of policy had been formulated during the process. This reaction is possibly a reflection of the fact that the primary school as an institution, though subject to upheaval during the proposed re-organisation, was less obviously under threat than the middle school whose rationale and continued existence were being challenged. It is possible, therefore, to propose that the primary school heads, who could see an opportunity for further development

for their schools, could take a more sanguine view of the consultations and accord them a more positive part in the emerging policy than their middle school colleagues. It is also possible that the generally higher value the primary heads attached to the objectives on the scale, particularly that of exploring differences, and to the formulation of policy aims, which had not emerged as significant from factor analysis, was also a reflection of that position. It would appear that when one is particularly affected even matters of principle can become coloured by the perceived reality of the situation.

The head teachers as a group agreed substantially with the governing body chairmen about the desirability of the objectives on the scale. There were however significant differences in their perception of the outcomes. While there are differences in their perceptions of the achievement of several of those on the scale, perhaps the most important differences occur with the two items which did not appear on the scale resulting from factor analysis, which related to the decision-makers' awareness of alternative courses of action and the revelation of what affected parties thought were the important issues. That difference in perception could also be a product of perspective; while the head teachers as a whole were perhaps more inclined to view the outcomes as they affected their schools, the governing body chairmen had to make a more global judgment as representatives of the interests of both primary and middle schools.

The leaders of the parents' action groups emerge as the most at odds with the other LEA groups over both objectives and outcomes. For the outcomes, it could perhaps have been anticipated that parents' action group leaders would see themselves as deprived, as the main body of that sub-group consisted of representatives of groups formed principally to defend the middle schools, and they were thus essentially antagonistic towards the proposed policy and sought nothing less than its complete abrogation. Hence they, more markedly than the others, showed themselves of the opinion that the consultations had been unsatisfactory from an informational aspect, both for the decision-makers

and for themselves, that less co-operation had resulted, that differences had been less well explored, that educational considerations had been less prominent, and they confessed to having less confidence in the decision-makers (see Table 11:13).

However, such a different perspective on the desired objectives of consulting was not hypothesised. The parents' action group leaders valued more highly than the other LEA groups numerous items which did not appear on the scale, and it was these which, in the main, achieved statistical significance. Hence they attached greater value to those variables which taken collectively would seem to demand of the LEA greater accountability to parental opinion. As with the middle school head teachers, but more markedly, it would appear that perspective can affect valuation of objectives as well as influence a judgment about the outcomes in a particular case.

Given the difference in scale of the two consultative exercises, and the difference in size between the groups, comparisons between the Roman Catholics and the LEA groups can only be limited in scope and of restricted value. However, it is again interesting that a comparison of objectives yields the greatest divergences. The Catholics' higher valuation of the informational aspects of consulting and the greater importance attached to people understanding the necessity for a decision are possibly a reflection of the need for the Catholic Working Party to carry the Catholic community with them and, lacking an administrative infrastructure, of the Working Party's desire to be as well-informed as possible in order to advise the Church authorities. Both of those needs were prominent in the interviews with the Catholic respondents.

The higher general mean for the outcomes within the scale and the greater extent to which commitment to the changes had been achieved by means of the Catholic consultations is perhaps also attributable to the greater cohesion of the Catholic community and thus to a difference in the task facing the Catholic Working Party when compared with the more diffuse nature of the interest groups with whom the LEA had to consult.

The Two Consultative Phases Compared (Tables 11:15 & 11:16)

Direct comparisons between the two phases of the Hull consultations must inevitably be limited in consequence of the different number of cases examined, the greater width of the constituency included in the second phase in comparison with the first, and the greater complexity of the issues involved in the second phase. However, with these reservations, when the mean scores for the total number of respondents is compared, on both objectives and outcomes, an interesting, and perhaps instructive, picture would seem to emerge.

Comparing phase I with phase II, respondents' valuations of the eleven items common to both schedules remain fairly constant. Of the six more highly prized objectives revealed in the first stage analysis four show slight increments in valuation between the phases, one remains the same, and one attracts a slightly reduced value. Those items judged to be of median value in the first phase also show a slight increment in the valuation attached to them between the two phases, with the exception of item 7, which was concerned with the legitimising effects of the consultative process, and would appear to be less highly valued by the wider constituency of the second phase. Participants' aspirations would appear to remain fairly constant over time. These effects, however, could be the product of the different number of cases considered in each phase.

While again a comparison of the outcomes between the phases could be vitiated by the number of cases involved, the consistent trend here is for each item to record a lower cumulative mean score for the group as a whole in the second phase. As can be seen from Tables 11:15 & 11:16 the standard deviations for the items relating to objectives and outcomes are generally close to similarity or somewhat narrower when phase II is compared with phase I. Given the larger number of cases involved in the second phase analysis, this would lend some support to the possibility of there being a trend in the responses as argued above. It is tempting to hypothesise from this that the wider the LEA consults, and the more complex the issues, the less the generally approved objectives are likely to be achieved in the estimation of the general body of those consulted.

TABLE 11:15 Comparison of Mean Scores for the Objectives of Consultation between Phase I and Phase II

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Phase I (39 cases)</u>		<u>Phase II (124 cases)</u>		Difference: Phase I/II
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1 Understand <u>that</u>	4.64	0.66	4.79	0.48	0.15
2 Understand <u>the</u>	4.64	0.62	4.64	0.55	0.00
3 Information/ decision-makers	4.33	0.83	4.50	0.73	0.17
4 Co-operation	4.23	0.90	3.97	0.91	0.26
5 Commitment	3.76	0.77	3.82	0.88	0.06
6 Differences	3.23	0.90	3.60	1.09	0.37
7 Authority	3.79	1.32	3.11	1.25	0.68
8 Policy Aims	3.71	1.09	4.00	1.07	0.29
9 Strategy	3.76	0.98	4.04	1.07	0.28
10 Confidence	4.30	0.69	4.36	0.74	0.06
11 Consequences	4.30	0.69	4.45	0.69	0.15

TABLE 11:16 Comparison of Mean Scores for the Outcomes of the Consultations between Phase I and Phase II

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Phase I (39 cases)</u>		<u>Phase II (124 cases)</u>		Difference: Phase I/II
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1 Understood <u>that</u>	3.87	0.76	3.54	0.88	0.33
2 Understood <u>the</u>	3.38	1.09	3.12	0.87	0.26
3 Information/ decision-makers	3.79	0.80	3.50	0.93	0.29
4 Co-operation	2.76	1.03	2.49	0.98	0.27
5 Commitment	2.76	1.06	2.28	0.96	0.48
6 Differences	3.05	1.07	2.68	1.06	0.37
7 Authority	3.38	1.13	2.51	1.16	0.87
8 Policy Aims	3.48	0.96	2.75	1.22	0.73
9 Strategy	3.25	1.09	2.87	1.07	0.38
10 Confidence	2.51	1.12	2.25	0.97	0.26
11 Consequences	3.20	0.97	2.92	1.01	0.28

ReferencesChapter 11

- 1 Youngman, M.B. Analysing Social and Educational Research
London, McGraw Hill, 1979, p97.
- 2 Ibid. p107.
- 3 Ibid. p80.

Chapter 12 - Conclusions and analysis: consultation and policy-making in Humberside LEA

This study has examined Humberside's attempts to achieve a balance between effective management of resources and consultation with a range of interest groups in the determination of a new school structure for the City of Hull in consequence of falling enrolments. Writing in 1978 of the situation presented to LEAs by falling rolls, Briault described it as a mixture of problems and opportunities as they attempt to find answers to the complex inter-relationship between school-level decisions concerning the curriculum and staffing, on the one hand, and administrative and policy decisions in respect of resources on the other, in which it was important to achieve the 'right balance between good management and adequate consultation'¹

The principal objective of this study has been to determine the contribution of a series of separate but related consultative exercises with interests, within and without the formal structure of local government, to policy development. The interviews with a cross-section of key participants were structured in order to find answers to the following questions:

1. Did the consultations with the Authority's 'clients' act as a determinant of policy?
2. If client consultation could not be described as being a major influence in determining the direction of educational policy, then what other effects did it have?
3. Did consultation modify the application of policy otherwise determined and, if so, how did both the policy-makers and clients perceive the importance of those modifications and the role of consultation in bringing them about?
4. Given the range of possible reasons for consulting over a major policy issue elaborated in the literature relating to organisational management and educational administration (see Chapter 3), were there any by-products of consultation which have a bearing on the process of LEA policy-making from the policy-makers' perspective and that of the clients?

Hence it was hypothesised that the different parties would have different perspectives on the purposes of the consultations in which they were involved and different expectations of their outcomes.

An examination of the extent to which those questions can now be answered, and an assessment made of the validity of those hypotheses, provides the framework for the main conclusions proposed. An attempt is also made to place Humberside's decision-making strategy for Hull into the wider context of the options available to LEAs in dealing with falling enrolments and selected models of LEA decision-making are also applied to those events as a means of evaluating the process of change.

Client consultation and policy determination

The extent to which client consultation has the potential to determine the direction of educational policy is conditioned in large measure by the role assigned to it by the policy-makers as the main originators of policy initiatives and of the consultative process itself. Within Humberside LEA it was they who decided who should be consulted, how, when, and about what. Hence the policy-makers determined the make-up of the two professional working parties which reviewed 16-19 provision and the curriculum in the South West Hull senior high schools and also who should be invited, as partners in the education service, to the consultative meetings which preceded the public meetings which came later in both phases of the development of the Hull proposals. The Authority also provided the initial discussion documents at each stage and determined the time-scale of each exercise. Moreover, at each stage, consultation took place when the policy-makers had come to certain conclusions about both the nature of the problem they faced and the confines within which a solution had to be sought.

The use of working parties at an early stage in policy formulation would seem to have considerable potential for satisfying the wishes of the majority of clients, as revealed by the interviews with participants in both phases of the Hull consultations, to be involved at the interface between the initiation of policy and the formulation of more concrete proposals when their views would have a chance to influence decisions (see Chapter 10, Qu. 3). In that context it is notable that on both working parties the clients, representatives of the teaching profession, and initiators, officers and advisers, acted in partnership to investigate and report upon an issue.

The working party which investigated the needs of 16-19 year-olds on Humberside (1977-80) and reported on the provision required to satisfy those needs would seem to have had the greatest potential for determining the direction of future policy. Opinion was widely sought and a crystallisation of those views appeared in successive reports. Broad consensus was achieved about the objectives of 16-19 education which provided the broad strategic framework within which those needs might be met within the differing conditions obtaining in different parts of the County. However, in the event, the input from consultation served to elaborate the propositions the administration had put forward in the initial discussion document rather than to generate new propositions or reveal new dimensions of the issue, except in so far as respondents were able to highlight particular aspects of the issues to which the initial document might not have given due weight. Consultation in this instance served to provide the planners with more soundly-based information on which future decisions might be based. Its directional influence was general and confirmatory in character and could perhaps be no more given the nature of the exercise.

The other working party concerned with the senior high schools in South West Hull (1980) had a more specific role (see Chapter 6). The major strategic decision to retain the existing ages of transfer had been taken and its brief was to examine the curricular and staffing implications of maintaining secondary schools of different sizes within that policy framework. The effect of its recommendations, however, was significant in directional terms, within the confines of that policy, in that it confirmed the previous, perhaps uncritically accepted, policy of a minimum of 8 forms of entry for senior high schools as one basis for future institutional decisions. Being the product of close consultation with informed teaching staff, the working party's report was more likely to command support among the profession when difficult institutional decisions had to be made later, and it became a major point of reference regarding viable size of school. The working party's report also quantified the potential effects of secondary school size on the main school curriculum, planning information which had not been made available to the administration by the earlier 16-19 Review.

The remaining parts of the consultative process, all of which involved a diversity of interested groups in addition to the teaching profession, concerning the possible closure or amalgamation of selected senior high schools (1980-82), the examination of the proposal to return to 11 plus transfer in 1984 (see Chapter 8), and the parallel consultations between the Authority and the voluntary sector, and those which took place within the Roman Catholic and Anglican communities (see Chapter 9), were confined to the consideration of options within a framework proposed by the Authority, or the practicalities of implementing one out of several alternative courses of action previously considered by a select group of elected members.

As the first phase of the Hull consultations culminated in deferral in February 1982 they would appear, on the surface, to have been unproductive in terms of policy development. However, the reporting of how interviewees accounted for the decision to defer re-organisation pending a more thorough review of the schooling system in the City indicated that they perceived a causal connection between the consultations and the taking of that, essentially political, decision (see Chapter 10, 1st Phase Interview Analysis, Qu. 15). The consensus of opinion was that the exposure of the Authority's plans, and the opposition which coalesced around particular aspects of the proposals, had the effect of making the politicians aware that, lacking general acceptance, their plan would be difficult to implement, while that opposition also provided the opportunity for long-standing dissatisfaction with existing structural arrangements to re-emerge within the controlling group. Parental and other opposition had the catalytic effect of causing the political leadership to pause for thought and subsequently to propose a change in direction for their policy.

In the culminating round of consultations in 1984 it is significant that the essential strategic decision to propose a return to 11 plus transfer, coupled with sixth form colleges, was taken by the working group of elected members and was not an overtly consultative exercise, except in so far as officers were able to advise it and the elected members had taken soundings

within the party (see Chapter 7). The general consultation was a factor in determining the direction of educational policy in general terms only. The policy-makers defined its role in each case and reserved themselves the decisions of political import relating to age of transfer and, thereby, the character of the schools in a re-organised structure.

Client consultation and policy modification

Another direction in which consultation's contribution to policy can be sought is to attempt to assess its influence on those areas which might be open to modification within a particular strategy. The second phase of the LEA consultations culminated in a modified plan being approved by the Education Committee in May 1984. Interviewees among both clients and policy-makers interpreted certain changes as the Authority's response to views expressed in writing and at public meetings (see Chapter 10, 2nd Phase Interview Analysis, Qu. 18). The two changes on which most focused were the retention of East Park as a neighbourhood secondary school in East Hull and the consequent designation of Burnside Junior High School as the premises for the sixth form college in that sector, and the decision to allow certain 5-11 schools in North and West Hull to become much larger than the Authority had proposed, by forming one new school from former primary and junior high schools on shared sites.

The future of East Park and Burnside schools had proved the single most contentious proposal during the period of public debate. Notwithstanding the suggestion made by some interviewees that this proposal had been included as a negotiating point which the Authority was prepared to concede if opposition proved overwhelming, most regarded it as the most important modification because it both improved the plan in terms of providing a better distribution of schools in East Hull while at the same time reducing the size of the proposed 11-16 schools in the sector, large secondary schools having been a point of parental concern at the public meetings, and eased potential travelling difficulties, while it also had the effect of reducing significant opposition to the plan as a whole. The East Park Parents' Action Group firmly took the view that the Authority would have proceeded but for their well-organised campaign of

opposition, while the Chairman of the Education Committee acknowledged that, though some controversy was anticipated, that proposal had been the Authority's mature judgment of the best way to proceed in East Hull and they wished to seek confirmation for that judgment.

The modification regarding larger 5-11 schools in North and West Hull was less generally contentious, but of great importance to those parents and teachers who had raised the issue repeatedly at the public meetings. Most interviewees saw that adjustment as a sensible response to public opinion, while, as the Chairman acknowledged, it was possible for the Authority to accede to that pressure as the consultations had revealed no significant local opposition to that change. He added, significantly, that the question of the size of the primary schools in those areas was not a major matter of principle.

The potential contribution of consultation to policy for the voluntary sector could, at best, result only in modifying proposals made by the responsible authorities and was determined by the procedures adopted by the Roman Catholic Working Party, which acted on behalf of the Bishop of Middlesbrough, the Bishop of Hull and others who negotiated on behalf of the York Diocesan Council of Education.

The deliberations of the Roman Catholic Working Party, in response to expressed public and professional opinion, resulted in two significant modifications to their proposals, one leading to the reversal of a finely balanced initial working party recommendation, the other resulting in the endorsement of a proposal from a head teacher who was not a member of that group.

In the first case the ultimate proposal to retain the well-equipped middle school as the site for a new 5-11 school in East Hull in preference to the more centrally located primary school in the area was, as working party minutes revealed (see Chapter 9b), the direct outcome of the public meetings which had shown overwhelming community support for retaining St. Gregory's, despite the working party's earlier soundings of the community which, in their judgment, had shown a slight balance in favour of the primary school. In West Hull the consultations concerning St. Patrick's and St. Jerome's provided the

opportunity for the modification of a proposal, previously put forward by the head of St. Patrick's Primary School, that the two should join forces. This resulted in the working party's recommendation that the staff and pupils should be transferred early to St. Jerome's Junior High School in order to ensure its viability, on re-organisation, as a 5-11 school. The public meeting at St. Jerome's and other soundings made by the heads concerned and the working party had indicated substantial parental and parish support for the move.

However, important as community support was to the Roman Catholic Church's representatives, vocal pleas on behalf of particular schools were not the only determining factor of the working party's final proposals. On the Orchard Park Estate in North Hull it held to its original view, taken on the grounds of efficient utilisation of buildings and a desirable distribution of schools, that closure of the junior high school there was essential if an effective Catholic primary school presence was to be sustained in that part of the City. Community support for the junior high school was in this case subordinated to the demands of good resource management, while the consultations as a whole served to provide the working party with a substantial mandate for its proposals in their final form and no statutory objections were lodged by the Catholic community when the public notices were issued.

As the complex series of events surrounding the future of the Church of England schools has shown (Chapter 9a), those proposals were the product of negotiations between the Local Education Authority and the York Diocesan Council of Education. Wider consultation played a minor and belated part in that process and, in the circumstances, could not result in modifications to the negotiated settlement. The negotiations themselves achieved only minor modifications to the local authority's desired relationship with the Church of England in a re-organised pattern, modifications which were regarded as insignificant by the community objectors to the Church's proposals.

It would appear then, from the cases examined here, that client consultation can also be effective in modifying policy, but within the

limitations imposed by the planning principles adopted by the authority concerned, and provided that an acceptable alternative course is open to the policy-makers which enables them to make equally effective use of resources.

The effects of the consultative process

Assessment of the extent to which consultation between the policy-makers and with their clients influences both the direction and content of decisions is one approach to measuring its contribution to educational policy. A complementary approach is to focus on the process itself from the participants' perspective. That approach is phenomenological in character and asserts that the "actors" in a given situation construct their own reality about what is happening (for a fuller discussion of phenomenology, see Chapter 1). Determination of that aspect of the consultations was one objective of the interviews and the focus of the response schedules concerning participants' perceptions of the objectives and outcomes of consultation.

One cumulative effect, referred to by interviewees in both phases of the Hull consultations, was an increased public understanding of the need for action, an increased public awareness of the issues at stake and a somewhat greater understanding of the action proposed in each stage (see Chapter 10, 1st Phase Interview Analysis, Questions 4 & 7; 2nd Phase Analysis, Question 16). That effect, however, was counterbalanced by interviewees' level of support for the proposal to change the age of transfer and their assessment of the extent to which the consultations had influenced their views (see Chapter 10, 2nd Phase Interview Analysis, Question 15). Those consultations tended to confirm long-held views, either for or against the plan, in the majority of cases. Indeed, for the Parents' Action Group, who saw the public meetings as a confrontation between themselves and the Authority, the second phase consultations were counter-productive, serving to increase their resolve to defeat the plan. The re-educative potential of the consultative process was, in this instance, nullified by their prior stance. It is clear also that, in general, respondents' expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the

consultations ran parallel with their attitudes of support for or opposition to the plan (see Chapter 10, 2nd Phase Interview Analysis, Question 20). However, the majority of consultees were able to separate the consultative process from the outcomes as they saw them and were prepared, in the main, to give the Authority credit for an honest attempt at involving the general public and parents (see Chapter 10, 1st Phase Interview Analysis, Question 12; 2nd Phase Analysis, Questions 12 & 13).

Chapter 11 contains an analysis and commentary upon the data gathered about participants' judgments of the objectives of consulting and their assessment of its outcomes in the exercises in which they were involved. Broad conclusions are drawn here from that analysis in respect of the hypotheses upon which that part of the study was based, and an attempt is made to assess their relevance to other aspects of policy-making.

The several analyses to which the data gathered from the different groups of participants was subjected support, in broad outline, the main hypotheses that perspective does influence judgments about both the objectives of consulting, when seen as matters of principle, and its outcomes in practice. This becomes particularly apparent when the sub-group analysis of the second phase of the Hull consultations is inspected (see Chapter 11 discussion and Tables 11:11 to 11:14).

All the objectives presented were given a positive value by the general body of participants and that valuation, with some differences between the sub-groups analysed, remained fairly constant over both phases. There was, however, a shortfall in both phases in the extent to which participants judged the objectives to have been realised, though there was variation between groups in their judgment of its extent (see Chapter 11 discussion and Tables 11:15 & 11:16).

A particularly interesting outcome of factor analysis of the responses in the second phase was the separation of the factor relating to objectives from that concerned with outcomes; the defining variables in the first being concerned with understanding and information and cognition generally, while

those in the second had more to do with feelings and reactions to the process itself (see Table 11:9). This suggests that, while consultation with a wide group of clients can lead to greater general understanding of a situation and provide information for the decision-makers, the process itself serves also to generate expectations in the consultees which it might be difficult for the responsible authority to satisfy. Inability to satisfy those expectations could colour consultees' view of the decision itself, leading to lack of commitment and difficulties when policy comes to be implemented.

Some of the findings from the sub-group analysis of the Hull second phase consultations serve to illustrate those divergences. For example, the primary school heads, when compared with their middle school colleagues, took a more positive view of the outcomes generally (see Table 11:11): governing body chairmen, when compared with head teachers as a whole, expressed greater satisfaction that the consultations had enabled differences to be explored, and the consequences of the proposals to be foreseen, while they also felt that a greater measure of confidence in the decision-makers had resulted (see Table 11:12). The parents, when compared with all other respondents involved in the LEA's consultations, were the most divergent. They placed a higher value than others on certain objectives, especially those relating to commitment, to the Authority being made aware of alternatives, and to finding out what those affected thought were the important issues; while also their general mean for the outcomes was significantly lower than that of the other groups (see Chapter 11 discussion and Table 11:13). A further interesting group comparison is that between the Roman Catholics and the LEA respondents. The former put a somewhat higher value on the objectives relating to the provision of information and on consultees coming to understand that a decision was necessary, while, among the outcomes, they recorded a greater degree of commitment to change (see Table 11:14).

A hypothesis which can be proposed on the basis of the latter comparison in particular is that the more diverse the constituency of interests consulted, and the LEA's constituency was necessarily of that nature, the less likely it is

that consultation will lead to expressed satisfaction with the process in all of its aspects. Client consultation, while it is necessary, and was seen to be productive by most parties in its informational, even educative aspects, can set up tensions and expectations which lead to dissatisfaction with those outcomes which relate to the particular interests of the different 'stakeholders'. When consultation becomes public and takes place on a large scale its potential for consensus-building and for changing attitudes would seem to be limited. From a politician's perspective it is cautionary that, of all the objectives, the one judged by the clients to have been least achieved, in both phases of the Hull consultations, was retention of confidence in the decision-makers; while the legitimising effects of consulting those affected by policy, though achieved to a degree, was a low priority for the consultees, and particularly was that so when the re-structuring of the school system was the point at issue (see Tables 11:15 & 11:16).

Humberside's strategy in a wider context

By 1980 Briault judged that the task of balancing good management with adequate consultation would differ between LEAs, depending on their particular circumstances. He envisaged conditions in which coping with change could be accomplished by gradualism, for example, where an area is served by large schools and contraction is below the national average, and others, where the schools vary considerably in size and falling enrolments are exacerbated by population movement, in which a more dynamic approach would be needed.²

Those different conditions can also be encountered in different parts of a single Authority, Humberside being a case in point. In the Hull and Grimsby Divisions, where the secondary schools differ in size and character and have been differentially affected by falling enrolments, the Authority has made radical proposals for change, while the large 11-18 comprehensive schools in the East Riding Division and the pre-existing system of 11-16 schools feeding one sixth form college in the Scunthorpe Division have suffered relatively less disturbance.

In institutional terms Walsh argued in 1983³ that the apparently simplest approach of closing or amalgamating secondary schools in order to protect a varied curriculum would rarely address all the problems. In his view education authorities would also have to consider the character of institutions and look possibly to a break at 16 or to dismantle middle schools. Earlier, Pratt⁴ had argued that LEAs had broadly three options. The first, and most expensive in resources, would be to allow class sizes and pupil/teacher ratios to fall while sustaining the existing curriculum and the same number and distribution of schools. The remaining options were either to maintain the average size of the first year entry and subject range while keeping class sizes and pupil/teacher ratios roughly constant, which would entail closures, or to share out the falling entry among schools and accept a proportional reduction in staff, which would involve reducing the scope of the curriculum. A difficult choice between the latter two 'squeeze' strategies, as Pratt called them, would face LEAs where population movement was combined with the declining birth-rate.

Between 1980 and 1984 Humberside adopted a mixed strategy with regard to Hull. It first reviewed the curriculum in middle and secondary schools⁵ and proposed selective closures, adopting the first of Pratt's 'external squeeze' strategies. From 1984, it turned to the dynamic solution of dismantling the middle schools, a return to 11 plus transfer and a break at 16.

On the basis of a survey of several sample LEAs' approaches to dealing with falling rolls in secondary schools, Briault⁶ adduced certain principles on which he argued they should consult and made a series of procedural recommendations. He argued that they should aim to sustain as few large schools as possible rather than look to maintain as many survivors as could be sustained, thus avoiding an impoverished curriculum and attendant difficulties relating to differential parental preferences when smaller schools are compared with their larger neighbours in terms of their curricular offerings. Briault also proposed that decisions on size might also have to relate to decisions about the age of transfer, and, if there were to be fewer schools, those with

parental support should be among them. In reducing the number of schools he also argued for amalgamation rather than closures in order to ensure professional consensus over which staff would be working together in a future pattern.

Briault also made a series of recommendations which prescribe a consultative/consensual model for bringing about change.⁷ The more important, in the context of the present study, are that each LEA should establish the principles on which it intends to plan, including age of transfer and the type of institutions providing post-16 education; that principles should be translated into proposals for change by a combination of officers, advisers and teachers in the first instance and subjected to consultation on as wide a basis as possible; that, given consensus on proposals, elected members should accept a long-term commitment to them; that parental preferences should be reflected in the choice of school to be retained; and that the schools, through their governing bodies, heads and teachers' representatives, should be fully consulted during the planning process.

Briault and Smith's survey contained a number of case studies from which conclusions were drawn about consultation and policy-making. One of these has been chosen for comparison with events on Humberside because of certain parallels in the two situations and in the process followed, if not in the ultimate solution, and also because of Briault's observation that Jayton worked, in 1978-79, on lines which to him embodied important principles in that it first made public the facts and forecasts of secondary school numbers, it offered alternative patterns and only at a later stage developed detailed proposals based on one of them, and it modified its proposal in the light of consultation.⁸

Jayton LEA

Jayton⁹ is a large urban authority organised on a divisional basis which, like Hull, had experienced falling rolls arising from both a declining birth-rate and population migration and had, similarly, also attempted to achieve balanced entry to its secondary schools in terms of ability and

parental choices. The Authority initiated change by openly consulting on possible changes in the system as a whole and produced a consultative document containing several alternative patterns, each having particular regard to provision for 16-19 year-olds. Four ways of providing 16-19 education were identified: the continuance of sixth form co-operative arrangements between schools, supplemented by a Sixth Form Centre; a Sixth Form Centre to provide for all post-16 education in the borough; a Sixth Form College under schools regulations; a Tertiary College under further education regulations. Four possibilities for 11-16 education were also outlined: a middle school system, which was not recommended for further discussion; the retention of all existing schools; a system of "federal" schools; and a reduced number of schools. Statistical forecasts of numbers to 1986 indicated that, if Jayton attempted to retain all its schools and parental choice remained, the majority would face significant decline. After lengthy consultation the option of reducing the number of schools by amalgamations, combined with a Sixth Form Centre for the whole area based in one of the surplus secondary schools was chosen.

In respect of Briault's paradigm there are parallels between Humberside's and Jayton's policy-making strategies. A major difference, however, is that Humberside proceeded by a series of self-contained but related consultations rather than by means of one exercise. Hence, while several alternatives were considered over the planning period as a whole they were not each, at the same time, subject to wide consultation. Like Jayton, Humberside made its planning principles clear in a long series of consultative documents, while the decision to convene working parties at an early stage in planning was an attempt to involve important interests in policy development. Working party membership was not, however, as purely "professional" as Briault would have it when it came to making proposals for change. When planning passed from matters of educational principle and curricular issues to more particular institutional and system-wide decisions of a strategic kind elected members played a significant role to the virtual exclusion of other interests.

Throughout, the Authority sought consensus by means of consultation while, eventually, there was political commitment to a change in the age of transfer to Hull schools which even survived the change in political control of the County Council in 1985. Other parallels are the modification of the Authority's proposals in the light of consultation and allowing parental preferences to play a part in determining which schools should be retained in a re-organised structure. It is also notable that neither Jayton nor Hull felt that all possibilities were equally viable. Hence, while Jayton included middle schools as a possible alternative it did not recommend them for further discussion any more than Humberside actively considered a change to 8-12 middle schools for Hull in 1984. The possibility was noted in the consultative documents but was not developed further.

Whether Humberside's consultative approach was as wide in practice and as "open" in principle as Briault would recommend is arguable. The amount and extent of public and professional consultation would appear to be conditioned by both the political context in which a particular decision is taken and the extent of the changes proposed, both having a bearing on the constituency of those consulted.

Modelling LEA policy-making

Shipman¹⁰ urges caution in the use of models to provide interpretations of a complicated service such as education and his strictures concerning model-building need to be borne in mind when an attempt is made to analyse the complex processes of consultation and educational policy-making at the local level. Shipman's major reservations are that models tend to become the reality instead of a source for hypotheses, that it is easy to pass from model to conclusion, and that they appear true because readers fit their own experience to the image with the result that other possible explanations are ignored. However, as Shipman admits, the major alternative perspective, to which he subscribes, is to view action as the resolution of conflict between interest groups in which muddle is frequently part of the picture and to accept that some changes are inexplicable.¹¹

Bearing those strictures in mind, the policy-making process within Humberside LEA is examined here in relation to Jennings's model of policy-making in local education authorities¹² as the basis for a commentary upon events and with the purpose of assessing the extent to which it enlightens what happened, and the extent to which it accounts for the possible effects of consultation, on the basis of, hopefully, not too selective a review of those events.

Details of the sequential stages in Jennings's model are given elsewhere (see Chapter 3). The model has, essentially, a governmental aspect, during which policy is initiated and early opinion-making occurs, and a later more public aspect, when alternatives are debated and policy is ultimately legitimated.

In the earlier less public phase, Jennings argues that the policy-makers decide who to listen to, gather opinion within the government and perhaps selectively outside it, and views begin to crystallise to the effect that certain possible solutions might be denied early on the grounds of their resource implications or their political acceptability. In the several consultative episodes considered in this study the policy-makers in each case decided who to listen to and structured the process accordingly. In the 16-19 Review (1977-80) members and officers, having perceived a problem, created a working party whose membership was determined by them, and proceeded to test out ideas. Similarly, in 1980-82, the South West Hull Working Party, whose membership was also determined by the policy-makers, was a potent force in reformulating professional opinion about the desirable size of senior high schools in the future. Perhaps the most clear example of politically influenced reformulation of opinion were the deliberations, between 1982 and 1984, of the working group of members, officers and teachers' union representatives which formulated the proposals for a change in the age of transfer to Hull schools. Their work effectively denied detailed consideration of the alternatives of transfer at 12, or a return to the previously rejected strategy of retaining 13 plus transfer at the subsequent stages of discussion and debate.

In Jennings's analysis, during the remaining stages alternatives emerge, the policy-makers decide which to pursue on the basis of an assessment of the influence carried by those who are dissatisfied and the control they can exert over the remaining stages of policy-making when alternatives are shaped into proposals, consent-building occurs, and proposals are legitimated and ratified by a majority of the policy-makers. The latter stages of the model also enlighten both phases of the Hull consultations when those consultations are seen as parts of the one, cyclical, process by which the Authority attempted to find a solution to falling enrolments.

Several potential solutions were put forward as the different interested parties considered the issues. However, at the stage of more public discussion, which in both phases was "orchestrated" by the Authority, political acceptability, for the time being, restricted debate to a more limited consideration of alternative ways of working within and sustaining a particular strategy, rather than a discussion of alternative strategies. In both phases relatively minor adjustments were made by the Authority when they were acceptable to it as leaving the main fabric of the proposals intact while at the same time allowing for the objections of particular pressure groups.

Consent building was attempted but was not achievable in 1982. There was also an attempt at legitimation through consultation, but the process of selecting from competing proposals failed to achieve sufficient consensus among the political leadership and the Authority was unable to proceed. The policy-makers had, therefore, to re-assess the situation and adopt an alternative strategy of investigating the larger issue of educational opportunities in Hull schools as it possibly related to the structure of the school system as a whole. Subsequently, the lengthy deliberations of the Working Group of members provided the alternative of changing the age of transfer to secondary education which, prima facie, commanded sufficient political support in the Labour group for it to be put out to consultation.

In 1984, despite the mobilisation of pressure groups and the conflict which accompanied the public consultations, the political leadership judged

there was sufficient consensus among both the policy-makers and a sufficient number of those potentially affected by the proposals to enable them to make the decision. Compromises were made with the opponents of particular aspects of the plan and, in the Authority's judgment, sufficient consent, or at least assent, was built up during the consultations to enable it to decide upon a radical change to the system.

Some evidence for the validity of that judgment is contained in the responses of those interviewees concerned to retain East Park School, on which substantial controversy had centred, in terms of their expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the consultations (see Chapter 10, 2nd Phase Interview Analysis, Question 20) and the general support they were in consequence prepared to give to the crucial element of a return to 11 plus transfer, in the generally greater satisfaction with the overall outcomes of the consultations shown by the primary school head teachers (see Chapter 11), and in the recorded consent of several of the teachers' unions (see Chapter 10, 2nd Phase Interview Analysis, Question 15 - attitudes towards the Authority's plan).

While Jennings's model attempts to account for the complexities of LEA policy-making, perhaps his most illuminating comment on the process as a whole is his observation that it is not how the central participants, elected members and officers, deal with the public and other agencies outside local government which is the most important in making decisions about process but how they deal with each other.¹³ While those relationships are rarely documented and difficult for an outside observer to give chapter and verse to, the interviews with the Chairman of the Education Committee and other elected members (see Chapter 10, 1st Phase Interview Analysis, Question 15) lend some substance to that assertion in this case. The consensus of elected members' opinion was that the deferral of a decision in February 1982 was a political decision resulting from disagreements within the leadership which the consultations had brought to the surface, while the membership of the subsequent working group of members formed to investigate educational opportunities in the City

contained a careful balancing of political interests on the County Council in an attempt to avoid such dissension in the future.

Client consultation as a strategy in LEA policy-making

This has been a study of how Humberside LEA used client consultation as a strategy in making decisions about the structure of the school system in Hull. That process enabled those who were consulted to participate in developing aspects of that policy.

Beattie,¹⁴ in the context of parent participation in educational affairs, models the participatory process as an attempt to achieve a combination of aims based upon Pennock's¹⁵ summary of democratic political theory concerning the justification for the introduction or extension of participatory democracy. Those aims are seen by Pennock as attempts to achieve both responsiveness and legitimacy, which, together, would hope to improve governmental action by being based on increased information and flexibility of response and in making that action more publicly acceptable, to enhance personal development when people assume some responsibility for matters which affect them, and to overcome alienation. Beattie observes that those reasons fall into two groups; the first two being government-orientated and conservative in character, the remainder being client-orientated and reformist.¹⁶

Beattie also hypothesises¹⁷ that, as governments initiate participatory structures, the main purposes they would be expected to fulfil initially would be those relating to legitimacy, followed by an evolution in the direction of responsiveness as the policy-makers see the advantages of earlier accounting for clients' views in reducing conflict. As the public becomes aware of the greater responsiveness of the system then the more likely it is to pursue collective aims, thus overcoming alienation, while personal development through operating the system becomes possible. Acknowledging that this sequence is but a model Beattie proposes that an LEA might seek to achieve all four aims together. It might seek to legitimise a decision already taken, it might wish to increase responsiveness at the same time by providing information which permits the bureaucracy to make adjustments, it might also encourage

the community to articulate its own ideas about the school system with a view to reducing alienation, and it might provide opportunities to become involved in decisions.

As an LEA-initiated process, all four aims would appear to have been present in Humberside's consultative strategy, particularly in the more public elements of that process when parents and other groups became involved. At important points in the making of the policy certain decisions, for which the Authority sought support and legitimation, had already been taken before those wider consultations took place. Adjustments to the Authority's proposals and those of the Roman Catholic Church, were made and these were apparently aimed at increasing responsiveness by enabling the decision-takers to envisage more efficient and less contentious change; while there was also an attempt to involve both the teaching profession and the wider community in the structure of decision-making at points determined by the decision-takers and to encourage both to formulate their desires.

It can be concluded from the cases reviewed in this study, depending always on the leadership's assessment of the appropriateness of consulting and the particular focus it should have in each case, that the role of client consultation can be both strategic and tactical. It can contribute to a change in the direction of policy in so far as the politicians use its outcomes, as they perceive them, to assess the extent of change necessary, but, when that strategy has been determined by them, its potential for bringing about changes thereafter becomes tactical and is limited to the application of that strategy. Consultation with defined groups, apart from modifying the application of policy in the latter stages of its development, also had a formative role in refining the overall objectives of LEA policy at an earlier stage, while, within the limits discussed earlier, it also made some contribution to making the Authority's policy and that of the Roman Catholic Church more acceptable to those affected by it.

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Appendix IHull Re-Organisation Phase I Interview Schedule

Qu. 1 Is there any difference in your opinion between interested parties being consulted about a matter of policy and those interested parties participating in making policy decisions?

Qu. 2 Which of the following most nearly expresses what you mean by participation?

- A Playing a direct part in the determination of policy
- B Having a right of veto
- C Being involved in negotiating a solution
- D Being able to offer advice
- E Being able to listen/observe

During the consultations which of those would you say you were doing?

During the consultations which of those would you have wished to do?

Qu. 3 At which of the following stages in policy-making do you think it is important for you first to be consulted?

- 1 When a problem is seen and possible action is suggested
(initiation)
- 2 When a more detailed plan to deal with a problem is being made
(formulation)
- 3 When decisions are ready to be put into operation
(implementation)

What are your reasons?

Qu. 4 Were you aware that the Senior High Schools had a problem with falling rolls and had a possible solution formed in your mind at the time of the first consultative meeting on 6 May, 1980?

If Yes - What was your solution and did the subsequent consultative meetings change your view in any way?

If No - At what point did a solution occur to you and what contribution did the meetings make to that view?

Qu. 5 The document presented to the meeting on 6 May, 1980, referred to the proposals as a 'basis for consultation only'.

Did you see the possible outcome of the consultations as 'open-ended' at that time?

What are your reasons for that view?

Qu. 6 What did you think the Education Authority hoped to achieve by holding that series of consultative meetings between May 1980 and February 1982?

Qu. 7 What contribution do you think those meetings made to the development of the Education Authority's plan?

- Qu. 8 Were you aware that a Working Party was investigating the curriculum of the 4 Senior High Schools in South West Hull in 1980?
 What did you see as the purpose of that review?
 Which of the following in your opinion best describes the purpose of the review?
- A It was an open inquiry concerning the viability of 6FE schools arising from genuine doubt.
- B It was intended to demonstrate that 6FE schools were undesirable.
- Qu. 9 Did you feel sufficiently informed of the activities of the South West Hull Curriculum Working Party?
- Qu. 10 In your opinion was the membership of the South West Hull Curriculum Working Party adequately representative of the interests involved?
 (List of members given to interviewees)
 What are your reasons?
- Qu. 11 What, in your view, were the results of the Working Party's activities?
- Qu. 12 Were you essentially satisfied or essentially dissatisfied with the public consultative procedures adopted by the Education Authority?
 If you were not satisfied what alternatives would you suggest?
- Qu. 13 Do you think that the right groups of people were consulted and at the right time?
- Qu. 14 What contribution do you think parents can make to decisions of this kind?
- Qu. 15 What part do you think the consultations played in deferring a decision on February 17th, 1982?
- Qu. 16 Did the consultations in your opinion have both positive and negative results?
 Do you think the consultations were worthwhile in view of the fact that no decision was taken?
- Qu. 17 Have you any further comments you wish to make and are there any important questions which you think I have failed to ask you?

Qus. 1, 2 & 3 as first phase schedule.

Qu. 4 It was suggested at public meetings that the recent consultations were not 'genuine'. What would you look for in the consultative process for you to be able to describe it as genuine consultation?

Qu. 5 Did you feel that the consultations enabled you to share in the development of policy?

Qu. 6 Are there any limitations on you being able to participate in the making of policy decisions in the sense in which you have defined participation?

Qu. 7 Did you think you were given sufficient information about the Authority's proposals in order for you to come to a conclusion about them?

Qu. 8 During the consultations several groups of people asked for more time to consider the plan than the Authority allowed. Did you agree with that request?

If the request had been granted, do you see any advantages or disadvantages in a longer period for consultation?

Qu. 9 Did you attend any of the public meetings?

What do you think the Authority hoped to achieve by holding that series of public meetings?

Qu. 10 Did you feel that your own views about the proposals were presented at those meetings?

Qu. 11 Did you feel that your views could be adequately presented by other means?

Qu. 12 To what extent would you say you were satisfied or dissatisfied with the arrangements provided by the Authority for consulting the public on this issue?

What alterations or improvements, if any, would you suggest?

Qu. 13 Do you think the Authority made sufficient effort to involve parents in the consultations?

Qu. 14 What contribution do you think parents can make to decisions of this kind?

Qu. 15 Are you in favour of the Authority's plan to change the age of transfer to 11 and to establish Sixth Form Colleges?

Qu. 16 What is your preferred solution to falling rolls in Full schools?

- 1 The Authority's plan
- 2 12 plus transfer and schools to keep sixth forms
- 3 12 plus transfer and sixth form colleges
- 4 Retain present system and close selected schools
- 5 Retain present system, close no schools, but improve pupil-teacher ratios
- 6 Retain present system and allow selected schools to keep sixth forms
- 7 Other.....

What are the reasons for your choice?

Qu. 17 Would you have preferred the Authority to put forward more than one plan for public consultation?

Qu. 18 On May 9th, 1984, the Education Committee took the decision to adopt the plan, with certain changes.

Do you see those changes as important? If you do, which are the important changes and why are they important?

Why do you think the Authority made those changes?

Do you think the changes will make the proposals more acceptable to those who were consulted?

Qu. 19 (Pressure groups only)

You declared opposition to the plan at an early stage in the consultations.

What did you hope would happen as a result of the consultations?

What did you think might happen as a result of the consultations?

Qu. 20 To what extent would you say you were satisfied with the results of the consultations, as you see them, as at 9th May, 1984?

What are your reasons?

Qu. 21 Are there any important things you wish to say about the consultations which you have not been able to say on the basis of the questions I have asked you?

Qus. 1, 2 & 3 as previous schedule.

Qu. 4 It was suggested at the LEA's public meetings that the recent consultations were not 'genuine'. What would you look for in the Catholic Church's procedures for you to be able to describe their consultations as genuine?

Qu. 5 Did you feel that the consultations enabled you/others to share in the development of the proposals for Catholic schools?

Qu. 6 Are there any limitations on you being able to participate in the making of the Catholic proposals in the sense in which you have defined participation?

Qu. 7 Did you think you provided/were given sufficient information about the Working Party's proposals for Catholic schools for others/you to come to a conclusion about them?

Qu. 8 During the LEA's consultations several groups of people asked for more time to consider the plan than the local authority had allowed. Did you agree with that request?

If the request had been granted, do you see any advantages or disadvantages in a longer period for consultation?

Would there have been any advantages in having a longer period for the Catholic consultations?

Qu. 9 Did you attend any of the public meetings for Catholic schools? What do you think the Working Party hoped to achieve by holding that series of public meetings?

Qu. 10 Did you feel that your own views about the Working Party's proposals were presented at those meetings?

Qu. 11 Did you feel that your own views about the proposals could be adequately presented by other means?

Qu. 12 To what extent would you say you were satisfied or dissatisfied with the arrangements made by the Working Party for consulting the Catholic community on this issue?

What alterations or improvements, if any, would you suggest?

Qu. 13 Do you think the Working Party made sufficient effort to involve parents in the consultations?

Qu. 14 What contribution do you think parents can make to decisions of this kind?

Qu. 15 Are you in favour of the local authority's plan to change the age of transfer to 11?

Qu. 16 What is your preferred solution to falling rolls in Hull Catholic schools?

Qu. 17 Would you have preferred the Working Party to put forward more than one plan for public consultation?

Qu. 18 There were certain changes made to the Working Party's proposals for the distribution of Catholic schools in Hull.

Did you see those changes as important? If you do, which are the important changes and why are they important?

Why do you think the Working Party made those changes?

Do you think those changes will make the proposals more acceptable to the Catholic community?

Qu. 19 To what extent would you say you were satisfied with the results of the Catholic consultations, as you see them, as at 9th May, 1984?

What are your reasons?

Qu. 20 Are there any important things you wish to say about the consultations which you have not been able to say on the basis of the questions I have asked you?

The Objectives of Consultation

- 1 To ensure that people UNDERSTAND that a decision has to be made

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 2 To ensure that people UNDERSTAND the decisions that have to be made

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 3 To provide INFORMATION for the decision-makers

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 4 To ensure the CO-OPERATION of those affected

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 5 To produce SHARED COMMITMENT to decisions

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 6 To explore the DIFFERENCES between people

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 7 To ensure LEGITIMACY on the part of those implementing decisions

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 8 To formulate the AIMS of policy

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 9 To provide a STRATEGY for effecting change

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 10 To retain the CONFIDENCE of those affected by change

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
 - 11 To foresee the CONSEQUENCES of possible changes

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant
- OTHER.....

essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant

The Outcomes of the Consultations

- 1 People UNDERSTOOD that a decision had to be made

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 2 People UNDERSTOOD the decisions that had to be made

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 3 INFORMATION was provided for the decision-makers

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 4 The CO-OPERATION of those affected was ensured

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 5 There was SHARED COMMITMENT to the decisions

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 6 The DIFFERENCES between people were explored

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 7 LEGITIMACY on the part of those implementing decisions was ensured

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 8 The AIMS of policy were formulated

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 9 A STRATEGY for effecting change was provided

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 10 The CONFIDENCE of those affected by change was retained

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 11 The CONSEQUENCES of possible changes were foreseen

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- OTHER.....

 completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all

Dear.....

With the permission of the Director of Education I am researching into the consultations concerning the LEA's proposals for the re-organisation of schools in Hull. My research project is a private one for a higher degree and is in no way official.

It would assist me a great deal if you could spare a few moments to complete the enclosed brief questionnaire and return it, at your convenience, in the envelope provided.

The Questionnaire

Sheet 1 : The Objectives of Consultation is intended to gain a picture of what you think the objectives should be when the LEA/Catholic Church consults those affected on a major policy issue.

Please underline the appropriate response on each item.

Sheet 2 : The Outcomes of the Consultations is intended to gain a picture of what you think actually resulted in the period from February to May, 1984.

Again, please underline the appropriate response on each item.

Please feel free to add any objectives of your own at the bottom of Sheet 1 if you wish to do so, and rate them accordingly on both sheets.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

B.V. Spence.

The Objectives of Consultation

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | To ensure that people UNDERSTAND <u>that</u> a decision has to be made |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 2 | To ensure that people UNDERSTAND <u>the decisions</u> that have to be made |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 3 | To provide INFORMATION for the decision-makers |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 4 | To provide INFORMATION for all those affected by possible changes |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 5 | To ensure the CO-OPERATION of those affected |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 6 | To produce SHARED COMMITMENT to decisions |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 7 | To explore the DIFFERENCES between people |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 8 | To ensure that EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS are discussed |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 9 | To give more AUTHORITY to those who have to put changes into effect |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 10 | To formulate the AIMS of policy |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 11 | To ensure that the decision-makers are made aware of ALTERNATIVE courses of action |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 12 | To put the policy makers' ideas to the TEST of public debate |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 13 | To provide a STRATEGY for making changes |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 14 | To retain the CONFIDENCE of those affected by changes |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 15 | To foresee the CONSEQUENCES of possible changes |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| 16 | To FIND OUT what those affected think are the important issues |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |
| | OTHER..... |
| | essential / important / desirable / not very important / unimportant |

The Outcomes of the Consultations

- 1 People UNDERSTOOD that a decision had to be made
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 2 People UNDERSTOOD the decisions that had to be made
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 3 INFORMATION was provided for the decision-makers
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 4 INFORMATION was provided for all those affected by possible changes
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 5 The CO-OPERATION of those affected was ensured
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 6 There was SHARED COMMITMENT to the proposals
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 7 The DIFFERENCES between people were explored
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 8 EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS were discussed during the consultations
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 9 The consultations gave more AUTHORITY to those who have to make the changes
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 10 The AIMS of policy were formulated
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 11 The decision-makers were made aware of ALTERNATIVE courses of action
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 12 The policy makers' ideas were put to the TEST of public debate
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 13 A STRATEGY for making changes was provided
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 14 The CONFIDENCE of those affected was retained
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 15 The consultations enabled the CONSEQUENCES of possible changes to be foreseen
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- 16 The consultations FOUND OUT what those affected thought were the important issues
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all
- OTHER.....
completely / in most respects / to some extent / not very much / not at all

- a) Letter from Director of Education to the Head Teachers of all schools in the Hull Division concerning the Authority's proposals to re-structure the school system, dated February 1984.

- b) The Parents' Information Leaflet issued by Humberside LEA.

- c) Letter from the York Diocesan Council of Education to parents, dated April 1984.

- d) Parents' Information Leaflet issued by the Middlesbrough Diocesan Schools Commission.

**HUMBERSIDE
County Council**



Director of Education,
J. Bower, M.A.
Education Department,
County Hall,
Beverley,
North Humberside,
HU17 9BA.
Telephone: 0482 867131

Your Ref.

Our Ref. DDE(S)/WMB

All enquiries to:

Tel. Ext.

Date 14th February, 1984.

Dear Head,

Reorganisation in Hull

Further to my letter of 8th February, 1984, I enclose a summary of the draft proposals being considered by the Education Committee on Wednesday, 15th February, 1984, at 2p.m.

I hope you will inform your staff of the proposals whilst respecting the embargo previously referred to. Copies of the Report will be distributed to you at one of the meetings arranged at the Education Centre on Thursday, 16th February, 1984. Any amendments emerging from the Committee's consideration will also be conveyed to you. The enclosed summary is derived from the parental leaflet which is being produced. Copies of the published leaflet for all parents will be distributed to you immediately after half term. Coffee will be available at the Centre from 9.30a.m. and tea from 1.30p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Director of Education

To: Heads of all Schools in Hull Division

Original leaflet was A3 size with area map on reverse

**Humberstone Education Authority
Education in
Kingston upon Hull
Proposals for Change**



This leaflet provides information about the proposals of the Humberstone Education Committee. It begins a consultative process which will try to make sure that parents and all those concerned may understand the problems, the proposed changes, have an opportunity to find out further details, and to make comments.

How can you find out more?

Public meetings commencing at 7.30 pm will be held as follows:

- Monday 5th March 1984. Bilton Grange High School
- Thursday 8th March 1984. Bransholme High School
- Monday 12th March 1984. Sir Henry Cooper High School
- Thursday 15th March 1984. Boothferry Junior High School

Education "Shops" will be open on the following dates and times which will allow parents to find out more details about the areas served by schools about the change to the new system and how to submit comments.

Place	Dates	Time
Buckingham Primary	6-8th March	10.00 am - 4.00 pm
Bilton Grange High	7-8th March	6.30 pm - 8.30 pm
Dutton Junior High	12-14th March	10.00 am - 4.00 pm
Bransholme High	14-15th March	6.30 pm - 8.30 pm
Newland Avenue Primary Annex	20-22nd March	10.00 am - 4.00 pm
Sir Henry Cooper High	21-22nd March	6.30 pm - 8.30 pm
Boulevard Junior High	26-28th March	10.00 am - 4.00 pm
Boothferry Junior High	28-29th March	6.30 pm - 8.30 pm
Education Dept Prospect House	Every Thurs & Fri from 22 March to 6 April	9.30 am - 4.30 pm

- The Roman Catholic Authorities have published a consultation document within the Catholic community.
- The Governors of Trinity House and St. Nicholas Voluntary Primary School are also considering future arrangements.

**Schedule of Proposed 5-11
County Primary Schools**

A. SOUTH WEST AREA

School	Nursery Places at Present	Expected Number on Roll 5-11	Accommodation Capacity
Asteride	40	180	230
Aimorpe (1)		240	390
Aimorpe (2)		240	390
Bethune		200	400
Chilern	39	150	240
Constable	40	280	240
Eastfield		550	550
Francis Askew	30	540	600
Newington	39	120	300
Paisley	39	230	240
Priory		210	210
Roxley		180	180
St. George's	26	290	210
Tibury	40	190	240
Wheeler		380	420
Wold	20	330	330
Voluntary Schools in Area			
St. Wilfred's Primary R.C.			290
St. Thomas More Junior High R.C.			300

B. NORTH WEST AREA

School	Nursery Places at Present	Expected Number on Roll 5-11	Accommodation Capacity
Appleton	30	220	220
Bracknell (1)		330	360
Bracknell (2)		330	360
Clarendon	40	240	300
Clifton	(60 place nursery adjacent)	240	245
Coun Park	40	240	270
Derepark	40	260	270
Endale	40	200	205

What is the present system?

- 82 primary schools have pupils aged 5-9. There were 16,750 pupils in 1983 and there will be 5,800 in 1988. There are three nursery schools and 35 schools with nursery classes.
- 51 junior high schools have pupils aged 9-13. There were 15,600 pupils in 1983 and there will be 12,400 in 1988.
- 17 senior high schools have pupils aged 13-18, in addition there is Trinity House School. There were 14,200 pupils in 1983 and there will be 11,700 in 1988.
- In 1983 there were 3 sixth forms with less than 50 pupils, 10 with between 50 and 100, 4 with between 100 and 150 and one with over 150 pupils.

What are the problems?

- Pupil numbers have fallen and will continue to do so.
- Junior high schools need at least 360 pupils to be effective but already 24 of them have less than 300 on roll. By 1988 the problem will be worse.
- Senior high schools will lose 2,500 pupils by 1988.
- Numbers fall further after 1988.
- As schools become smaller they will find it harder to maintain courses for pupils up to the age of 16.
- It is very difficult to provide for pupils in small sixth forms.
- We have too many schools for the number of pupils and the situation is getting worse.
- Spending money on buildings we do not need reduces the amount we can spend on the education of the pupils.

What can be done?

- In 1981 the Education Committee considered keeping the present system but with a much smaller number of schools.
- They were not sure that this would provide the best possible education in the city.
- They were particularly concerned about the problems of junior high schools in providing the necessary range of specialised teaching for pupils of secondary age.
- They saw difficulties in maintaining links between the three stages of education and getting continuity for the pupils.
- They decided to explore the possibility of changing the ages of transfer between schools.

What are the new proposals?

- Primary schools for children from 5-11.
- Every primary school to have nursery provision as quickly as resources will allow.
- Secondary schools for pupils aged 11-16.
- Secondary schools to take in at least 180 pupils each year. The plan to provide:
 - a) a good range of courses for all pupils and staffing to ensure a realistic choice for examination and non-examination pupils alike.
 - b) the opportunity for parents to opt for single sex education.
 - c) that each child's education should be enhanced by developing a feeder system so that each primary school is linked with a particular secondary school. Continuity of education should be a key feature of the new system.
- Secondary schools should be as accessible as possible. There is a proposal to build a new school at Bransholme.
- There would be two new Sixth Form Colleges, one in the east and one in the west of the city.
- These colleges would offer the courses which are now found in schools sixth forms and will provide a strong base for sixth form work.
- These new colleges, with the Hull College of Further Education, would provide a comprehensive range of courses.

What will be happening?

- Consultations will go on throughout March and April.
- The County Council will consider what has been said and having made final decisions will then publish public notices under the Education Act 1980 during the summer.
- If the proposal is approved the changes will be completed in 1988. Some changes in the arrangements for transfer between schools will be made from 1986 and further details can be obtained from the "Shops" listed on the front cover of this leaflet.

What about the voluntary schools?

- There have been discussions with representatives of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.
- With their agreement their schools are shown in the lists in this leaflet.

continued

School	Nursery Places at Present	Expected Number on Roll 5-11	Accommodation Capacity
Fifth Avenue (1) (60 place nursery adjacent)	60	300	400
Fifth Avenue (2)		300	400
Hall Road	29	360	360
Newland Avenue (60 place nursery adjacent)	60	120	120
Parkstone		270	270
Pearson		300	360
Shaw Park		210	210
Sidmouth		220	225
Stepney		150	210
Thoresby	26	350	300
Thorpepark		300	300
Voluntary Schools in Area			
Holy Name P.C. (P)			230
St. Vincent's R.C. (P)			110
St. Charles R.C. (P)	20		340
Endsleigh R.C. (P)		To be agreed	300
Newland St. John C.E. (P)			230
St. Nicholas (P)			100
St. John Fisher J.H.S.			500
C. NORTH EAST AREA			
Biggin Hill	40	500	500
Broadacre		300	300
Cleeve	20	230	300
Colford		260	270
Dorchester		350	390
Ferens	20	440	500
Highlands	40	500	505
Kimosa	40	140	290
Midmere		140	285
Sutton Park		330	400
The Dalles		500	520
Voluntary Schools in Area			
St. Andrew's C.E. (P)	20		160
St. Andrew's C.E. J.H.			360
St. Oswald's R.C. (P)	20	To be agreed	150
St. Anne's R.C. J.H.			240
St. James' C.E. (P)			175

School	Nursery Places at Present	Expected Number on Roll 5-11	Accommodation Capacity
D. SOUTH EAST AREA			
Beilfield		245	245
Buckingham	39	240	240
Davendish		300	370
Craven	30	220	220
Estcourt		215	215
Flinton	40	250	380
Feredyke		280	380
Gilshill		210	210
Griffin	20	240	240
Ings		450	450
Lambwath		140	140
Longhill	60	350	355
Marfleet		150*	100
Maybury	30	500	600
Mersey		320	400
Mountbatten		300	300
Neasden		300	330
Oldfleet	30	270	355
Scuthcoates	26	350	375
Spring Cottage		240	265
Stockwell	30	330	355
Stoneferry	26	140*	120
Thanet		420	450
Wansbeck	20	150	150
Voluntary Schools in Area			
Alderman Cogan C.E. J.H.			420
Archbishop Will. Temple C.E. Primary			240
Sacred Heart R.C. Primary		To be agreed	150
St. Bede's R.C. Primary	20		190
St. Richard's R.C. J.H.			480

*More accommodation needed

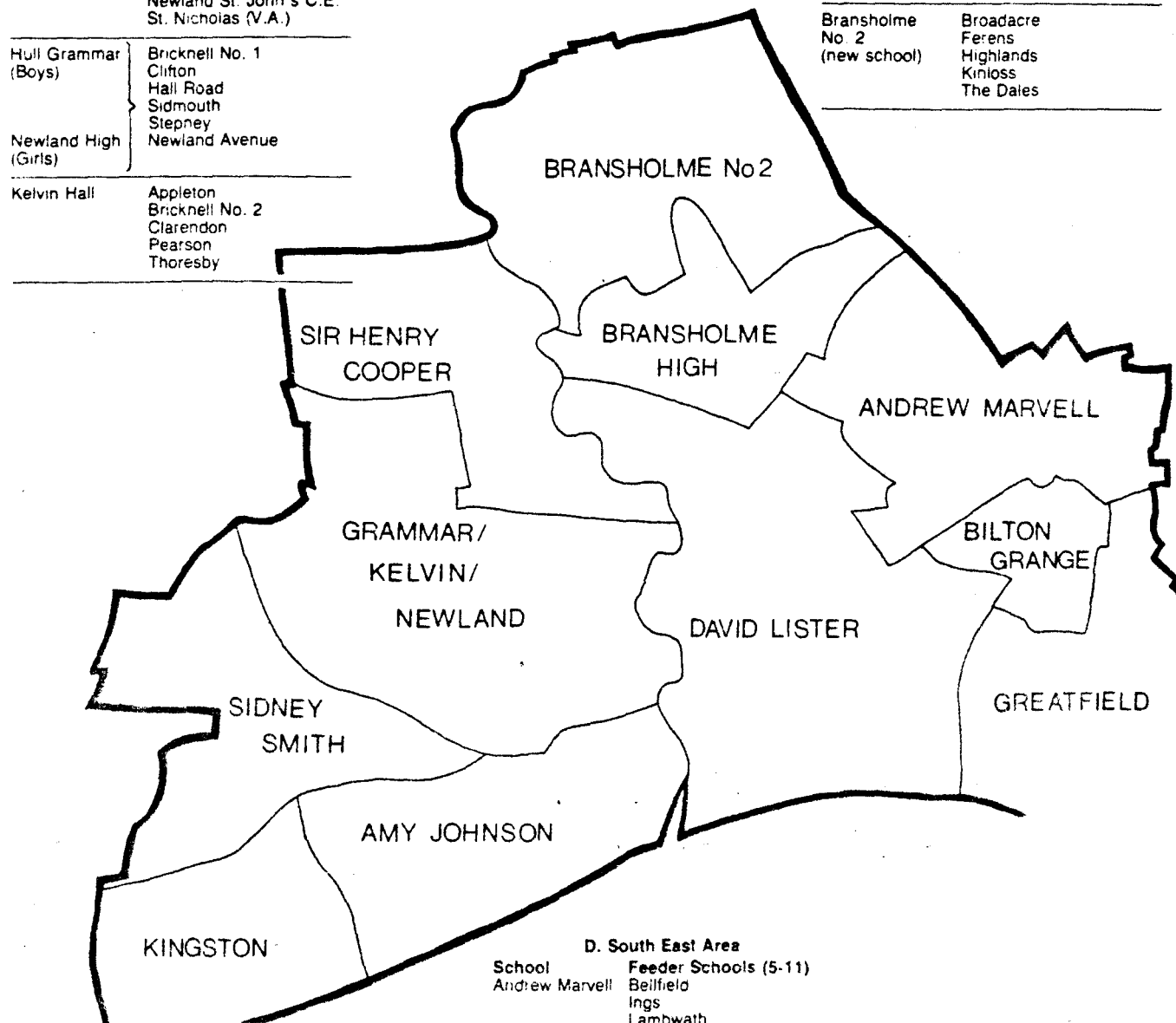
SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED 11-16 SECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS.
(Co-educational except where shown otherwise)

B. North West Area

School	Feeder Schools (5-11)
Sir Henry Cooper	Court Park Dane Park Endike Fifth Avenue (1) Fifth Avenue (2) Parkstone Shaw Park Thorpepark Newland St. John's C.E. St. Nicholas (V.A.)
Hull Grammar (Boys)	Bricknell No. 1 Clifton Hall Road Sidmouth Stepney
Newland High (Girls)	Newland Avenue
Kelvin Hall	Appleton Bricknell No. 2 Clarendon Pearson Thoresby

C. North East Area

School	Feeder Schools (5-11)
Bransholme High	Biggin Hill Cleeve Coleford Dorchester Midmere Sutton Park St. Andrew's C.E. St. James' C.E.
Bransholme No. 2 (new school)	Broadacre Ferens Highlands Kinloss The Dales



A. South West Area

School	Feeder Schools (5-11)
Amy Johnson	Adelaide Chilern Constable Newington St. George's Wheeler
Kingston & Boothferry	Bethune Francis Askew Tilbury
Sydney Smith	Ainhorpe (1) Ainhorpe (2) Eastfield Parsley Phory Rokeby Wold

D. South East Area

School	Feeder Schools (5-11)
Andrew Marvell	Beilfield Ings Lambwath Longhill Neasden Spring Cottage Thanet Wansbeck
Bilton Grange & Hopewell	Griffin Maybury
David Lister	Buckingham Cavendish Craven Estcourt Gillshill Mersey Southcoates Stoneferry Archbishop William Temple C.E.
Greatfield	Flinton Foredyke Marlee Mountbatten Oldlee Stockwell

YORK DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF EDUCATION

R. A. Hewitt, M.A., Diocesan Director of Education (Schools)

Diocesan Education Office
8 Minster Yard
YORK YO1 2HH
Tel. York (0904) 53252

4th April 1984

Dear Parent

Reports in the local press and on local radio have served to publicise the main details of the consultative proposals for the re-organisation of the six Church of England schools in Hull, and contacts about them with the schools have doubtless resulted. Headteachers have, of course, already spoken to their staffs.

Perhaps the first point to be made in this letter, which is intended to provide a written summary of the proposals, is that, if they are approved, none of the church schools will remain unchanged, because Hull's system of 5-9, 9-13 and 13-18 schools will be replaced by 5-11 and 11-16 schools, with sixth-form colleges to meet the needs previously satisfied by the sixth forms of the 13-18 schools. As parents consider the details, the Diocese earnestly hopes they will recognise that it has a responsibility to take a city-wide view, and will share it.

The leaflet distributed to parents on 5th March was intended to give a re-assurance that the church schools' future was not being regarded lightly by the diocesan authorities. I ought to stress now that the Diocese has insisted throughout on waiting until the Authority had stated its full proposals, and only then making a submission; otherwise, it would have laid itself open to the charge that it was seeking to dictate what was to happen. Now, with head in control of heart, it has confirmed its support for the scheme negotiated with the Authority by the working party and outlined below (for the sake of convenience, nursery provision is not included in the summary):

- (a) Newland St. John's School - primary school for pupils aged 5-11;
- (b) St. Andrew's Primary School - primary school for pupils aged 5-11 in the existing St. Andrew's Primary School and St. Andrew's Junior High School premises;
- (c) St. James' Primary School - primary school for pupils aged 5-11;
- (d) a new Church of England primary school for pupils aged 5-11 in the existing Alderman Cogan's Junior High School premises;
- (e) a new Church of England co-educational comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-16 in the existing Bilton Grange Secondary School premises.

The new primary school in Whitworth Street will accommodate pupils from the area served by the existing Archbishop William Temple School who have a Church of England preference, as well as other pupils from a local catchment area yet to be determined. The reduction in Church of England school places in the Garden Village and Holderness Road areas, because of the existing 5-9 and 9-13 schools becoming one 5-11 school, will be more than compensated for by the 11-16 provision at the new high school, to serve pupils transferring from the proposed Griffin and Maybury Primary Schools as well as from the new primary school in the existing Alderman Cogan's School premises, and pupils from other parts of the City having a Church of England preference.

In such a massive re-organisation, there are bound to be disappointments. There will also be opportunities, and I join the other members of the working party in asking parents to support what has been proposed, in the belief that the best possible terms have been obtained.

Yours sincerely

R.A. HEWITT

The Proposals about the Catholic Primary Schools

There should be eight Primary Schools, catering for children in the age range 5 - 11 years. (With Nursery Accommodation at each one.)

1. At St. Thomas More School, Elger Avenue (West Hull)
2. St. Charles', Norfolk Street. (Central Hull)
3. St. Vincent's, Queens Road. (Central/ North Hull)
4. Endersleigh School, Inglemire Lane. (North Hull)
5. Holy Name, Danepark. (North Hull)
6. At St. Anne's and St. Oswald's, Nidderdale, Sutton Park. (East Hull)
7. Sacred Heart, Southcoates Lane. (East Hull)
8. At a site to be decided in St. Francis' Parish (East Hull)

The Catholic Secondary School

It is proposed that the Catholic Secondary School should be sited at St. Mary's, Inglemire Lane.

This School would cater for Boys and Girls between the ages of 11 - 18 years.

This would mean that we are proposing to include a Sixth Form in this School.

CONSULTATION

- * You can write to the Chairman of the Working Party

Fr. K. Coughlan,
St. Bede's,
94 Staveley Road,
Bilton Grange,
Hull HU9 4SJ

- * You can write to the Secretary of the Working Party

Mrs. M. Scott,
St. Charles' Primary School,
Norfolk Street,
Hull HU2 9AA

- * You can come to one of the Public Meetings which have been arranged to consider these proposals;

Tuesday March 6th at 7.30 p.m. in St. Thomas More School
Elger Avenue, Hull.

Thursday March 8th at 7.30 p.m. in The Marist College,
Cottingham Road, Hull.

Monday March 12th at 7.30 p.m. in St. Richard's School,
Marfleet Lane, Hull.

Thursday March 15th at 7.30 p.m. in St. Charles' School,
Norfolk Street, Hull

Tuesday March 20th at 7.30 p.m. in St. Anne's School,
Nidderdale, Hull.

- * You can visit the "Consultation Room" at St. Charles' School, Norfolk Street, Hull. It will be open from 1.30 p.m. until 3.30 p.m. on Fridays March 9th, 16th and 23rd.

Appendix VII

Extent of Change Balance Sheet

		<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	
<u>LEA Schools</u>				
Nursery Schools (3-5)	3		Nursery Schools	3
Primary Schools (5-9)	69		Primary Schools (3-11)	31
Junior High Schools (9-13) ..	45		Primary Schools (5-11)	36
Senior High Schools (13-18) .	16		Secondary Schools (11-16) ...	13
(inc. nautical school)			Sixth Form Colleges (16-19) ..	2
	<u>133</u>			<u>85</u>
				-48
<u>Church of England Schools</u>				
Primary Schools (5-9)	4		Primary Schools (3-11)	1
Junior High Schools (9-13) ...	2		Primary Schools (5-11)	3
	<u>6</u>		Secondary Schools (11-16)	1
				<u>5</u>
				-1
<u>Roman Catholic Schools</u>				
Primary Schools (5-9)	8		Primary Schools (3-11)	3
Junior High Schools (9-13) ...	4		Primary Schools (5-11)	4
Senior High Schools (13-16) ..	2		Secondary Schools (11-16)	1
	<u>14</u>			<u>8</u>
				-8
	<u>153</u>		<u>96</u>	-55

Size of Schools

	<u>No. of pupils</u>	<u>Avg. size</u>	<u>Range</u>		<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Avg. size</u>	<u>Range</u>
<u>LEA</u>				<u>LEA</u>			
5-9	12991	324	62-424	3-11	8971	269	166-501
9-13	12885	295	131-608	5-11	10717	297	126-501
13-16	12451	632	404-1639	11-16	14450	1204	800-1650
	<u>40327</u>				<u>800</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>
					<u>32922</u>		
<u>C. of E.</u>				<u>C. of E.</u>			
5-9	763	191	110-255	3-11	330	330	330
9-13	710	355	327-363	5-11	765	255	175-360
	<u>1473</u>			11-16	900	900	900
					<u>1995</u>		
<u>R.C.</u>				<u>R.C.</u>			
5-9	950	124	66-205	3-11	950	316	150-420
9-13	1085	271	197-353	5-11	740	165	140-240
13-16	980	494	470-519	11-16	1250	1250	1250
	<u>3015</u>				<u>3690</u>		
	<u>4493</u>				<u>4089</u>		

Compiled from LEA School Information Leaflets (1985-87)
and Public Notices issued on 20th June, 1984.