

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

THE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

AND THE POLICY PROCESS

IN ENGLISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

IAN JAMES WATT

MARCH 1990
(Corrected June 1990)

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PART I

CHAPTER ONE

COUNCILLOR OFFICER RELATIONS - THE DEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS

(1) THE RESEARCH TOPIC

Furnishing a definition of the relationship between elected councillors and appointed officers in local government presents a number of difficulties because in many ways it is a curious relationship the roots of which are in the nineteenth century the period during which modern local government derived its existing organisational patterns. Overlying this historic base are numerous subsequent layers which contribute to the diversity of the relationship, a diversity which has resulted in conflicting interpretations of the roles of councillors and officers. In the literature of local government there are two recurring models those of the dominant politician and the all powerful officer and these stereotypes are illustrated by the following anecdotes: Joseph Heron was Town Clerk of Manchester for thirty nine years and it was widely held that he not only dominated council policy during that time, but also the Council's officials.

An official now retired who remembers Sir Joseph Heron tells how, when asked to come to a committee as his advice was wanted he would stroll in smoking a cigar and balancing himself on the edge of a table, would listen to the Chairman's explanation of the difficulty and then say 'you must do so and so'. If a member made any objection he would wave it aside repeat his instructions and then leave the room. (1)

Although the spectre of the all dominant official like Heron persists this is often the mirror image of the dominant politician. The subject of the case studies in this thesis is

the City of Kingston upon Hull which had as its political leader for over 40 years, up to his retirement in 1981, Sir Leo Schultz; his Labour group controlled the Council for all but two of those years and it was frequently said of him that he was an autocrat who dominated not only the officers of the Council but the members of his own party group as well, with his decisions being "rubber stamped" after the event by the formal bureaucratic and political decision making processes (Interviews). Yet following both Heron and Schultz marked changes came about in both cities:

(Heron's) successor, William Talbot, who had been Deputy Town Clerk for twenty three years was not nearly as forceful a personality; and consequently the duties assumed by the Council became less unified and more like a collection of individual committees (2).

After the departure of Schultz in Hull his political successor Patrick Doyle was a leader with initially only a limited natural constituency within his party group, a figure acceptable to the majority of the right and of the left but the first choice of neither (Interviews). Thus, the style became one of consensus, the party group reassumed its dominance and officers could no longer proceed on the unauthorised decisions of the political leader of the Council but had to await the collective party group decisions.

Although these conflicting images of on the one hand policy making councillors served by dutiful executing administrators and on the other of dominant officials given a free run by politicians are of interest the significant issues underlying these images is how decisions in local government are made, who

makes them and who influences them. It is important to know whether the elected politicians or the appointed officers control decisions in local authorities for three reasons, because of our assumptions about democratic accountability, because of the impact of local authorities on national as well as on local economic and social policy and because of the ways in which the relationship between the elected and unelected affects the functional performance of "representative" local government.

The importance of the electoral basis derives from the fact that apart from central government local authorities are the only directly elected bodies. Election imposes duties of accountability to the public on the one hand and gives powers to levy taxes and to exercise discretion in the spending of those taxes on the other. Being part of the system of representative democracy it is an implicit assumption that the policies and values espoused by the local authority will be determined by the elected representatives who are chosen by and who are accountable to the electorate. If it were to be established that unelected, unaccountable and (so far as the electors are concerned) irremovable officials are the effective decision takers then such a situation would offend the concept of democratic control. One would ordinarily expect there to be some degree of congruence between the values predominating in the community which the local authority serves and those espoused by their elected representatives. It is assumed that politicians win office because the majority of electors either perceive them to be

persons who will reflect and represent the interests of the local citizens or that the political party under whose banner they stand will do so. It is further assumed that in order to win and hold votes politicians will have regard to their electors demands. However, if bureaucrats dominate policy making such congruence cannot be assumed, officials are not accountable to the electorate and frequently officers in senior positions have no long standing local connections being careerists moving from authority to authority. If electors cannot effect real change at the ballot box because all politicians are equally constrained by the bureaucrats such an outcome would challenge the concept of democratic accountability.

The question of officer member relations is also important because of the impact local government has as the primary provider of services such as education, social services, housing, public protection and highways. With current annual spending of around £30 billion, with over 1.5 million full time employees and 0.9 million part time employees local government is an important factor in the national economy (3). As a result the three Thatcher administrations have directed much attention to local authority spending, however, "despite the aggressive nature of the Conservatives attack progress in reducing expenditure up to the mid-1980s was modest. Local capital spending remained at historically low levels but current expenditure continued to increase in real terms". Although the "dramatic growth in local authority employment up to the mid-1970s was checked" falling "by

about five percent between 1979 and 1982" it has "since remained relatively stable" (3). With so many public services being administered by local authorities making decisions about the level of spending, the distribution of resources and the quality of services, theirs is an important role which is underlined by the Thatcher legislative and policy changes designed to limit and circumscribe these powers. The consequences of compulsory privatisation and de-municipalisation of functions, the exposure of services to "competition" and the use of financial controls such as grant penalties and rate capping are that many Councils find themselves trapped between local consumption demands and centrally imposed restraints. The resolution of these issues is therefore a matter of interest and the influence of the local bureaucrats in this process merits particular attention because of the assumed primacy of the local politicians.

The relationship between officers and members is also of importance because of the influence it has on the functional performance of local government. The councillor officer relationship lies at an axial position in the organisational structure of all local authorities and it is therefore central to the who, how, when and why of decision making. Accordingly, we need to know about the influence of officers in the decision taking process in order to assess the impact of the values which they bring to that process in contrast to the politically motivated values of the politicians.

Given that the circumstances of the relationship give rise to valid concerns about the interaction of politicians and bureaucrats are we, nevertheless, merely going over well trodden ground? Is it possible to justify further research into this topic? Reviewing the literature there is, surprisingly, a paucity of relevant research material. Despite the plethora of official reports during the past twenty five years such as Maud (4), Baines (5), and Widdicombe (6) it appears that only a limited amount of empirical research has been undertaken into the working relationships and roles of councillors and officers. In this context Alexander noted that although there has been no shortage of concern about this issue "most of the published material amounts either to a general discussion of the relationship between policy and administration or deals . . . with the policy process" (7). Therefore, although, there is much tangential information to be had from these sources, this relationship, which is central to the policy and administrative process, has rarely been considered an issue in its own right. This omission was referred to by Rhodes (8) who stated that "one of the major actors in the decision making process is noticeable primarily for his absence from the studies of local politics" (i.e. the officer). A similar view was expressed by Collins Hinings and Walsh (9) who quoted in support Lewis (10) suggesting that there is an absence of "any systematic studies which have examined the interaction between the Councillors and the Officers". Collins et al consider that this lack of attention compared with other aspects of local politics "has allowed the

propagation of a number of myths about officer councillor relations". Dearlove advanced the view that there is a lack of research in this area (11) and in his study of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (12) he admitted that his omission of the role of officers was a "major shortcoming".

One of the principal reasons given by Dearlove for not including officers in his study was the "difficulty in finding a 'way in' to study their contribution to the policy process". Similarly, Hampton (13), in confirming this view observed that because the relationship was difficult to study academics had to retreat into analysis and model building. One notable exception to this picture is Laffin (14) whose thesis, based on interviews with Chief Officers and Chairmen of committees in eight northern metropolitan districts, examines the member officer relationship in terms of the professional and partisan ideologies of the participants and provides a useful source of empirically observed material which adds an additional perspective to the Case Studies considered in Part II below.

In conclusion, the relationship between local politicians and bureaucrats merits attention. These issues of democratic accountability, the influence of the relationship on local government spending, and the impact of the interaction between councillors and officers on the functional performance of local authorities are all of importance. In the light of the under

representation in the literature of relevant empirical material
further research is justified.

(2) METHODOLOGY FOR THE RESEARCH

This thesis examines the relationship between members and officers through a series of case studies, however, such a choice is not without its problems as Dearlove suggests in his study of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea:

Another criticism might be that I should have approached the task of explanation by introducing case studies of issues and decisions showing the Council in action. I rejected this approach to the problem because I do not consider that cases can be used as anything other than illustrations of the validity of a particular theoretical position. Not only do cases not speak for themselves but an emphasis on action and dramatic decisions positively misrepresents the daily reality of those whose task it is to manage the scope of government. Case studies inevitably emphasise change and disturbance and fail to get to grips with those forces which encourage policy maintenance and restrict governmental activity to undramatic instances of routine decisions. Questions of this kind will go unnoticed if action and not structure is made the subject of research attention (15).

In contrast Dunleavy in the "Politics of Mass Housing In Britain 1945-1978" used case studies but not without reservations particularly regarding pluralist accounts of policy making:

Three features of these case studies' methodology have tended to produce pluralist conclusions automatically. First, the issues studies have usually been those which have generated controversy or been seen as important or 'key' issues within conventional approaches to politics. No systematic sample of issues has thus been considered. Secondly, issues have been institutionally defined, as particular Acts of Parliament or executive decisions, and have been analysed over very short time periods only up to the point of decision and largely in terms of overt activity . . . Thirdly, . . . pluralist analyses are pervasively phrased in terms of a restrictive and subjective definition of interests as policy preferences. This links in with the conventional definition of issues and the lack of analysis of outcomes to provide a reinforcing and fundamentally circular process in which conclusions are predetermined by methodology (16).

It would be difficult to dispute the proposition that a case study is likely to present an incomplete picture or that researchers are almost inevitably attracted to a narrative of conflicts and actions, rather than seeking evidence of the hidden agenda or the forces of inertia. It also has to be admitted that the choice of case and topic area will have a critical influence on the outcome of the research. The circumstances which have enabled the researcher to gain entry may, of themselves, create bias. Thus, for example, has the researcher had a free choice or has he been manipulated by being allowed entry into areas the researched were willing expose and excluded from topics they wished to keep hidden? Equally, a group of co-operative actors may be unrepresentative of the local authority as evidenced by their willingness to co-operate in contrast to the lack of co-operation from other groups.

Polsby (17) suggests that more than one single issue area should be chosen when attempting to determine who actually prevails because "the same pattern of decision making is highly unlikely to reproduce itself in more than one issue area". Polsby also recommends that issues significant to the community should be selected on the premise that whilst a power elite may not elect to intervene in a trivial issue it would be highly improbable that it would not do so on an issue of importance. In contrast Dunleavy (18) took a single issue (ie high rise housing) and charted the decision making processes of three local authorities using case studies but by placing these studies within a comprehensively described national setting with each one being

taken from a different local authority and each having a different time span he was able to describe a sufficiently wide and contrasting picture on which to draw general conclusions. Adopting these two approaches, but confining the case studies to a single local authority, it is possible to select case studies in different issue areas and of varying importance which have developed over different time spans. By these means it should be possible to provide sufficient contrasts and enough data to assess the contending theoretical concepts.

What objectives are sought for the case studies? In identifying situations "where there are differences of preference between actors" should we accept that "actors whose preferences prevail in conflicts over key political issues are those who exercise power" and therefore accept the advice that researchers should "focus on actual decisions"? (19) However, decisions of themselves will tell us very little unless we have an appreciation of the context within which those decisions have been taken. It would therefore be inadvisable to neglect consideration of the institutional and legal frameworks within which the actors operate nor should organisational positions be disregarded. One must consider the possibility that the actions of councillors and officers are conditioned by the positions they occupy and that the resources available to them are concomitant to their occupation of particular positions within either the political or bureaucratic hierarchies. Thus, organisational position is a key setting.

However, a decisionally focused approach has to have regard to more than just constitutional structures and organisational roles it must also take into account the wider sources of power as well as the external influences and constraints which operate on councillors and officers. Decisions are of significance but only within a context because one of the dangers of depending too heavily on decisionally based analysis is its inability to account for "non decisions" that is to say those things which have not taken place in contrast to those which have (20). As it is impossible to research directly issues which have not manifested themselves this aspect of the critique of pluralism sets criteria which no empirical study can meet. As Polsby (21) noted "non-decisions" are not analyseable and although we must be sensitive to such things it is impossible to study them satisfactorily. Perhaps, even more difficult to determine is the extent to which preferences have been manipulated or influenced. The classic pluralist position is that peoples' interests are those which they express to be their interests, as corroborated by their actions, but what of situations where individuals or groups fail to act in response to developments which appear to be contrary to their interests? This challenges the pluralist assumption that interests can be equated with expressed preferences. In a somewhat similar way the operation of the "anticipated reaction" distorts expressed preferences where by anticipating an unfavourable response individuals or groups refrain from pursuing their primary preferences. Sharpe (as noted more fully in Chapter Two) considers that the anticipated reaction is central to the member officer relationship (22).

However, the researcher sets himself a very difficult task if he attempts to resolve such questions within the context of a case study. As a result one has to regard conclusions based only on "decisions" with some reservation for even if one places emphasis on "outcomes" or "who benefits" one must take into account the possibility that those favoured by the outcomes or the recipients of the benefits may be wholly passive, indeed, unintentional beneficiaries. Therefore it is necessary "to establish clear links between the distribution of benefits and the way in which issues are resolved" (23).

Therefore, case study findings must always be qualified by the limitations within which the researcher has to operate and the defects in the case study approach have to be recognised. However, these do not invalidate the use of case studies provided that the account is taken of the problems of this technique. In any event the various models and theoretical descriptions of the councillor officer relationship need to be tested and the case study is a valid means of achieving that objective. Although decisions and outcomes are worthy of attention

the basis for generalisation from a real case study is not the typicality of the case in any sense but the logicity of the analysis of the case. The case demonstrates the operation of general principles in a defined context (the real context). (24)

(3) THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

Although the policy process in English local government has attracted much attention over the years the working relationship between elected councillors and appointed officials is less well represented in the literature. The way in which political and bureaucratic interests are resolved has for the most part either been disregarded or treated as a peripheral issue. This thesis departs from the more usual emphasis on the politicians by giving the officers a place on centre stage, however, an all embracing description of this relationship is not its purpose. Because the case studies are limited to a single large urban authority this restricted source will impose some limitations on the scope of the conclusions in Chapter Six. However, these studies touch and concern issues and relationships which are likely to be found in most large urban authorities and as a result they should yield evidence as to whether or not certain features of the councillor, officer relationship emerge consistently in different situations which involve different policy issues, different actors and different externalities. If such features are demonstrated sufficient data may be obtained on which to draw more general conclusions. In this one finds support from Polsby who suggests that case studies usually:

Leave to their readers the task of determining how findings add to previous knowledge. When findings are not explicitly stated so that they relate to previous information they may be lost altogether. This on the whole seems more wasteful than if case writers were to advance general propositions which accurately reflected their admittedly limited data even if ultimately they proved to be wrong most of the time (25).

The remainder of Part I is devoted to a review of a number of models of the relationship, the consideration of the legal-constitutional framework of local government and a description of councillor officer interactions. Part II consists of the five Case Studies. In Part III the models and the various themes and issues considered in Part I are used as a basis for evaluating the findings from the Part II Case Studies.

CHAPTER TWO

DICTATORS OR SERVANTS? MODELS OF THE COUNCILLOR OFFICER RELATIONSHIP

(1) INTRODUCTION

The diversity of local government results in a diversity of opinions regarding the nature of the councillor officer relationship. Much of the analysis of these roles follows the pattern of the traditional debate which is essentially a discussion about political dominance versus bureaucratic dominance; as this is well documented in the literature of local government it provides us with an appropriate starting point. Two stereotypes are commonly advanced: the first is that of the elected politicians who decide policy and instruct bureaucrats whose job it is to execute, not make, policy. The second envisages an unelected, unaccountable cadre manipulating and outflanking the politicians by virtue of superior knowledge and command of the bureaucratic machine which enables them to impose their policy preferences on the politicians. Dissatisfaction with these dominance concepts has led to a variety of attempts to construct alternative frameworks which have regard to the inherent conflicts between the two traditional models. At the same time other aspects of the councillor officer relationship which are not satisfactorily accounted for by these dominance models also have to be explained. The traditional typologies and their alternatives are considered in this Chapter.

(2) THE DOMINANCE MODELS

The relationship between the elected councillors and the appointed officials in local government was traditionally conceived in terms of their legal and organisational authority. This assumed that councillors collectively, as the elected Council, determined policy and issued instructions which officials dutifully implemented. This conceptualisation proceeded on the premise that one could draw clear cut distinctions between policy and administration and that it was possible to allocate to members and officers defined and separate roles. Hart, for example, suggested that

officers and servants must, however, work under the directions of the council, for in general it is the members of the latter body alone who are responsible both legally and politically to the electors for the policy and activities of the authority. Legally the officers of local authorities are the servants of the council which appoints them..... Officers therefore though they tender expert advice to the elected members must act in general under the orders of the council or its committees and in this way the principle of representative government is preserved, for the officers do not come into direct political relation with the electors and are not responsible to them for their acts.

(1)

An alternative concept is that of Weber's "dictatorship of the official", which depicts the political "masters" as "dilletantes" standing opposed to "experts" (2). In the context of a governmental organisation such as a local authority it is suggested that full-time professional officers must inevitably dominate part-time amateur politicians by reason of their permanence, technical knowledge and expertise allied to their organisational position and control. Thus, the officer cadre is said to constitute an unelected elite (3).

A number of writers have questioned both these dominance models on the grounds that neither provides a convincing explanation of the policy administration dichotomy in practice. Although supported particularly by political practitioners there appears to be very little academic dissent from the view that the political dominance model has only limited validity it being said that "it is surely beyond dispute that the 'the model that officers are simply responsible for policy implementation while councillors are responsible for policy formulation is totally useless" (4). Similar doubts have been expressed concerning the "dictatorship of the official" it being suggested "that the relationship between elected representatives and appointed officials is rather more equal than Weber's . . . prophecy suggests".(5) Three aspects of the dominance models are worth some consideration; these are, the policy/administration dichotomy, the concept of role separation and the assumptions made regarding the kinds of issues which are of interest to politicians and therefore theoretically assigned to them in many models.

The policy administration dichotomy

Fundamental to the dominance models is the assumption that policy and administration are separate activities. The formal investigations into local government in the nineteen sixties and early seventies, (Mallaby, Maud, Redcliffe-Maud, Bains), all paid attention to this issue in considering the roles of the elected councillors and appointed officials and all found the concept wanting.

Maud, for example stated that

We argue that 'policy' cannot be defined and indeed that it should not be defined. Some issues are to reasonable men so important that they can safely be termed 'policy issues'. But what may seem to be a routine matter may be charged with political significance to the extent that it becomes a matter of policy. Other routine matters may lead by practice and experience to the creation of a principle or a policy; an isolated case may itself be a precedent for a line of similar cases. In advising on major issues officers are clearly contributing to the formulation of policy but in shaping administrative decisions officers may also, even if less obviously, be formulating a policy. 'Policy' and 'administration' will not serve to distinguish between the responsibilities of members and of officers. (6)

The Bains Report supported this view and suggested that the management process:

can be seen as a scale, with the setting of objectives and allocation of major resources at one end, moving through the designing of programmes and plans to the execution of those plans at the other end. As one moves through that management scale the balance between the two elements from member control with officer advice at the 'objective' end, to officer control with member advice at the 'execution' end. (7)

Dunsire suggests that all administration is political to a greater or lesser degree because government includes administration by definition and government is co-extensive with politics, however, he poses the question of whether on the scale of politicality, between the minimally political to the maximally political "there is a point . . . beyond which policy making is pre-eminently the work of elected persons and not of appointed persons". (8). This leads naturally to the issue of who decides when that point is reached. Dunsire is firmly of the opinion that such decisions are essentially political and who ever takes them is acting politically and in these terms the daily decisions

of officers on what should or should not be brought to the attention of the elected council are clearly "political". If this is the case then one must conclude that the circle has been closed and policy and administration are in fact indistinguishably one and the same. Accordingly, the issue becomes one of practice rather than principle.

Local authorities are political institutions to which politicians bring political values and officer responses are likely to reflect this political setting. However, each group has to acknowledge the legitimate interests of the other, reaching working accommodations based on the commonplaces of daily existence and in this process much depends on the attitudes and personalities of the people concerned (9). Bains noted the potential areas of conflict with councillors and officers both trying to "manage". He considered that they were too often "suspicious and critical of each others role" and although conceding that "friction and competition may aid efficiency" he was of the view that in some authorities this had been "allowed to impair both morale and efficiency" (10). Stewart on the other hand suggests that the concept of separation of policy and administration serves a useful purpose in that it "can be important as a reference point for both councillor and chief officer in working out their roles" because it represents a norm which can be used to call to task "the councillor deeply engaged in administration or the officer who foolishly claims in public to determine policy". (11)

Role separation - fact or fiction?

As it appears that policy and administration do not serve as a means of distinguishing councillor officer roles are there any other characteristics of separateness which enable us to do so?

The political dominance model is founded on the assumption that councillors and officers do different things and have quite separate functions to perform. Among the politicians there appears to be a widespread belief in the political dominance model. Widdicombe found for instance that councillors are concerned about officer incursions into policy and decision making processes (12). As a group politicians appear to be disinclined to recognise the academic consensus doubting their supremacy and the "myth" that councillors make policy and officers administer it continues to have a very powerful hold despite the weight of opinion to the contrary (13). This is borne out more often than not by the way in which councillors, at least in public, describe their own roles and those of the bureaucrats with whom they work. Thus, the leader of a Conservative controlled district council in the West Country asserted that by dispensing with the Chief Executive, rationalising departments and committees, his Authority had achieved a situation in which "policies and priorities are now really the preserve of councillors implementation only is delegated to a small team of Chief Officers", (14). Similarly a Labour group leader of a northern "shire" county council declared that "it is the

responsibility of chief officers to carry out this task of implementation and for this they are answerable to the Council through their committee" (Interviews).

The claims of the politicians contrast with the reticence of officers. Researchers commonly report difficulty in penetrating the bureaucracy with officers maintaining that they are merely implementators of policy and not policy makers:

it proved impossible to break through the cultural cliché that they, (the officers), were simply servants advising the all-powerful policy making councillors whose decisions they readily implemented (15).

Similarly Hampton found that:

The relationship between politicians and local authority officers is difficult to study academically. In this it is no different from other close relationships such as exist within a family or a marriage, the participants are bound by mutual interdependencies and they are loath to reveal the unclothed realities which exist behind the show of conventional dress, 'the politicians decide policy and we administer it', so I have been told in many interviews with senior well qualified officers. 'Yes, but . . .', I continue, but I get nothing in return but a bland smile (16).

Despite the claims of the participants the evidence indicates that both councillors and officers are involved to a greater or lesser extent in the whole range of an authority's activities with councillors having a legitimate interest in how policy is administered and officers in making policy. In this process Stewart, for example, suggests that the officers "may be the decisive influence" (17) and although Bains did not go so far as

that he admitted that officers have a role in the stimulation and formulation of policy (18). Page suggests that there is "clear evidence that what is indisputably part of policy making by almost any definition, such as making public expenditure decisions is something that senior officials do, or at least play an important part in" (19). It is therefore the extent of their participation which is the issue not whether it takes place at all (20) and the differences between them lies in the different sets of expectations and values they bring to policy making because -

both bureaucrats and politicians engage in policy making and both are concerned with politics. The real distinction between them is whereas politicians articulate broad diffuse interests of unorganised individuals, bureaucrats mediate narrow focused interests of organised clienteles (20).

A number of authors have suggested that the personal relationship between local government officers and elected councillors is much closer than that between the civil servant and his minister. This has led them to the conclusion that personal relationships are of significance. Gyford for example places some stress on the interaction between members and officers, formal and informal, at work and outside working hours (22). So if we have a position where there is clear evidence that officers participate in policy decisions and also that they have close relationships with the politicians why do officers as a group find it advantageous to acknowledge the political dominance model? In this regard Peters suggests that politics and their administration is an "ancient proverb" which "has displayed amazing powers of survival" despite all attempts to lay it to

rest so that it must serve some purpose both for politicians and administrators:

for administrators this presumed separation of administration and politics allows them to engage in politics without the bother of being held accountable politically for the outcomes of their actions. Further they can engage in policy making . . ." (and for politicians it provides) a certain latitude . . . which they might otherwise lack", (allowing) "many of the difficult decisions . . . to be made by individuals who will not have to face the public at a subsequent election. (23)

Is Peters right and do officers engage in politics? Widdicombe confirmed that partisan party politics are now the almost universal backdrop of English local government (24) so that senior officers cannot avoid contact with party politics. However, is it that officers are participating in party politics or are they just making a professional contribution to decisions which have a political character? In most cases it would only be overtly party political actions of officers which would be regarded as "political" by either councillors or officers. Officers engaging in party politics, as such, are usually very unpopular with other professionals who are, as a rule, far from happy when their colleagues blatantly display party allegiances. Although a personal commitment to a particular party or sympathy with its policies is accepted other officers will be very suspicious of officials who appear to be hand in glove with the councillors on the basis of a common political affinity. In such circumstances they are likely to feel unable to freely express personal and professional views in confidence for fear of having these reported by the "spy in the camp". Resentment is also

likely if "a political" officers' personal or departmental interests are advanced; the suspicion will arise that such advancement is not on merit but the result of political patronage (Interviews).

Usually, a broad consensus exists in favour of established policy irrespective of party politics. Routine items which constitute the overwhelming bulk of local authority agendas, are usually decided without party political debate except in the most partisan authorities. When party politics emerges into the arena the inclination of the vast majority of officers will be to recognise the conventions and avoid the political content of the issue if possible (25). If, councillors make party political proposals, which the officers oppose, it is more than likely that the officers would suggest that their contrary views were tendered on impartial objective grounds and were therefore non-political (Interviews). However, even though officers may consciously strive to avoid "party politics", it is impossible to maintain that officer advice is apolitical and value free. It is quite clear that officers do pursue "policy" objectives of their own which may be as "political" as those of the politicians. Although the motivations behind officer inspired policies are usually professional or departmental one must not overlook the fact that senior officers just as much as influential politicians often have personal axes to grind and like them may find ample opportunity of imposing their personal preferences on the system.

The differences between councillors and officers are most easily identified by the means they each have to employ in order to achieve their respective "political" objectives and it is when public consequences flow from the implementation of those objectives that the distinctions between elected accountability and the absence of any such accountability become readily apparent. To illustrate the point if education officials propose a school rationalisation programme this is undoubtedly a "policy" decision. Although their proposals may be irrefutable statistically, financially and educationally it is almost axiomatic that any suggestion for school closures will give rise to protest and resentment. In situations of this kind it is much easier for the officers to advance professional "policies" than for the councillors to adopt those "policies". Even though both groups will be aware of the likelihood of hostile reaction from the public this will be far less inhibiting to the officers because it will be the elected councillors who will have to bear the brunt of that reaction and not themselves. In responding to the public the officer knows he is always at one remove, whereas, the councillor must respond to the electors knowing that his position, unlike the officers, depends ultimately on the support of the voters. Whilst the two groups of actors are locked into the same predicament the officer approaches that situation with quite different considerations to those of the councillor although if Peters' hypothesis were right there should be evidence that local politicians leave decisions giving rise to unfavourable reactions to the bureaucrats with the intention of

diverting the opprobrium of the electorate to the officers and away from themselves. This is a difficult proposition to sustain in the context of English local government and there appears to be little evidence to support it.

Up to this point the underlying assumption has been that "policy making" by either councillors or officers was of a wholly discretionary character. This is not always the case. With non-discretionary activities such as the discharge of statutory duties there is no choice but to carry out the duty imposed and the only discretion allowed is in the manner of carrying it out. In such cases officers proposing "policy" decisions do so in the knowledge that if the issue becomes highly contentious they have the opportunity to shelter behind not only the politicians but also behind the legal justification of statutory duty. An example of this kind is to be found in a case study by Elcock concerning the provision of gypsy sites (26). The duty to provide these sites is a mandatory responsibility imposed on local authorities and almost invariably a proposed site attracts vociferous opposition from surrounding owners and occupiers. Elcock contrasted the attitudes of the elected and the appointed; the councillors wished to evade the law if possible, whilst the officers accepted the law without question so that

it was necessary not only to persuade politicians of the need and obligation to make provision for gypsies . . . but also to persuade them in their turn to educate their electors in their obligations under the law (26).

In this situation the officers felt free to press for "policies" to meet legal requirements because they did not have to account to the electors who would be affected by the gypsy encampment.

In contrast the councillors were acutely conscious of the electors likely response (Interviews). In contrast to the equivocation with the gypsies in a case study of a planning decision in Warwick it was claimed that the officer group had structured agendas, manipulated and excluded councillors and inhibited public participation concluding that

whilst it would be an overstatement to say Warwick District Council is run by its officers with councillors as passive onlookers, full-time officers appear to exercise considerably more power and influence than part-time councillors (27).

In conclusion there is much evidence to suggest that officers do in fact engage in policy making activities because law, control of the bureaucratic machine, possession of expertise and knowledge, all contribute to the influence officers exercise over the policy process. Accordingly, the use of shorthand expressions such as "policy", "administration", "political" and "party political" have to be treated with some caution in the context of descriptions of the roles of politicians and their officials.

Are politicians interested in "dominance" issues?

The political dominance model assigns policy to the elected politicians and administration to the officials. This implies that it is policy which concerns the politicians rather than the

execution of policy decisions or the administration of ongoing policies. However, if one were to equate policy with the degree of political interest shown in the business of the local authority the result would probably reflect a considerable interest on the part of the politicians in the parochial minutiae of local administration. Thus, the location and provision of bus stops involving a few hundred pounds may command much more attention than say the design specification for new roads involving substantial expenditure over many years. Similarly, the proposal to turn a house into a mosque may generate far more detailed involvement on the part of the main body of councillors than a multi-million pound development scheme. This highlights a potentially serious flaw in the political dominance model, namely, its assumption of competence on the part of the politicians. It could be said that these two examples indicate that it is only routine decisions which are within the the ordinary councillors understanding and experience and that they lack the expertise required to participate in policy decisions. If one assumes a low level of competence for local politicians this explains why councillors become involved in the details of minor level decisions and why officers are found formulating strategic policies.

An alternative to the assignment of issues to the participants on competence grounds is to do so on the criterion of political significance. Thus, intrinsically unimportant issues may have

considerable political significance and therefore are issues which have to be determined by politicians. The test of political salience depends almost wholly on the political perspectives and values of those making such judgements and the circumstances in which these are made. By its very nature the political content of an issue will vary over time, it will be cyclical and invariably subjective, as with the examples noted above, so that the electoral implications of the planning application for the mosque may for a period of time be far more important than the new town centre shopping scheme which is intrinsically much more important but less politically contentious.

A third view is that the involvement of politicians in detailed matters owes much to history and tradition, that there is a cultural expectation that councillors do particular things. Bains noted the "widespread involvement of elected members in day to day administration and the consequent misuse of the committee system". Bains, however, commented that "it is unlikely that one can rule out the elected representatives . . . from any particular part of the management process" (28). In retrospect it seems that very little has changed since the 1974 reorganisation and the aims espoused by Maud and Bains are very far from realisation. This should cause no surprise because in many respects nothing has changed.

Stewart commenting on the effects of reorganisation for example noted that

local authorities did not spring up anew at reorganisation they brought with them a history made by the predecessor authorities. Many of their officers and councillors served in those authorities. The new authorities inherited offices and buildings. They also inherited traditional patterns of working (29).

These traditional patterns of working in many large urban authorities entail enormous numbers of committees, sub-committees, working parties, visits, briefings and consultations. Agenda papers are often lengthy containing a huge amount of detail and councillors spend many hours of discussion on such agendas debating the fine points of detail with the result that the time given to genuine policy issues is often squeezed by the weight of routine matters.

With the politicians spending all their time on the details it may well be that policy is being made by the officers; as Rhodes has noted "the decisive power in modern society lies with the bureaucracies and their managers with political control becoming less and less effective" (30). The officers in the higher reaches of a local authority, those who deal with the politicians on a day to day basis, are more likely to be engaged in making policy than executing it, (policies are implemented in the main by the middle and lower ranks of the local government services). These officer policy makers possess knowledge and technical skills, access to resources together with control of the bureaucratic machine and all of these levers place them in a very

powerful position. It is against this established power base that the politicians have to impose their policy preferences. What officers lack, (in most cases), is the formal power to "make" policy as we shall consider in Chapters Three and Four.

Widdicombe confirms that the 1974 reorganisation did not result in a new managerial relationship between councillors and officers (31). By assigning high policy to the elected members it was an implicit assumption of Maud/Bains that the politicians would possess the skills to undertake these policy duties. However, where they lack those skills the councillor's only route to understanding is through whatever avenues the officer decides to lead him and

such a situation fairly teems with occasions for mistrust and suspicion. Understanding the complexities of a problem is not deciding the question but it is a prerequisite; the man who does not quite grasp a matter may feel he is being presented by one who does with a *fait accompli* (32).

The issue of cognitive competence goes to the root of the relationship and to the distribution of tasks between members and officers. When the aspirations of the politicians meet the professional bureaucratic machine outcomes are determined by the respective competence of these two groups to achieve ascendancy within a particular set of circumstances. Laffin suggests that elected members are "heavily dependent on the officers for the flow of information about the authority's environment as well as for cognitive skills" noting the difficulties faced by members in developing a counter strategy to reduce such dependence because of the "virtual absence of alternative sources of information and

necessary skills for members" (33). Therefore although the politicians have control of the formal legal decision making process they are often dependent on the officers for the most vital resource that of the data on which decisions are made. Furthermore in order to give efficacy to the implementation of decisions broad delegations have to be given to the officers. Within those delegations lies considerable scope for interpretation and for the development of policy modifications or even the creation of new policies through series of decisions made within standing delegations.

Conclusions on Dominance

Both the dominance models assume that there are separate and definable actions called policy and administration and that it is possible to assign precise roles to the elected members and unelected officials. The political domination model is the norm and officer domination is usually described in terms of it being a departure from that norm with the underlying implication that the politicians policy making role has been improperly usurped. The concept of political dominance has been widely questioned not merely by academics but in the various Royal Commissions and Reports which have confirmed that role separation founded on the policy and administration dichotomy is of little value. If the basis of the dominance models is in doubt it is necessary to seek more satisfactory explanations of the councillor officer relationship. However, the strong belief in role separation on the part of a significant body of its practitioners is a curious

and unresolved aspect of the matter which must not be disregarded.

The forgoing discussion has highlighted the very considerable problems presented by both dominance models. The problems are not confined to role definition alone, but, also in the assumption that politicians are necessarily interested in policy and do not have a role in administration. Equally the assumption that officers are properly to be confined to administration and do not have a legitimate interest in policy is likewise difficult to reconcile with most empirical evidence.

We next consider alternatives to the dominance models.

(3) ALTERNATIVES TO THE DOMINANCE MODELS

As an alternative to the dominance models discussed above a number of writers, for example Cockburn (34) Green (35) and Alexander (36), have postulated a joint elite of senior members and officers. However, the plurality of the sources of their power and the wide range of the influences on them suggest that this elitist description may be insufficient. Councillors and officers have many relationships because the "local authority is not a closed organisation. The local authority acts upon and is acted upon by its publics" it "does not have one public but many" which it defines "by different relationships". The potential number of participants is therefore quite substantial and as a result local government has many actors "who may have little in common except a relationship to the local authority. They have differing interests and differing values," (37). From these premises Stewart contends that a local authority is a collective of roles containing within it inherent pressures towards both cooperation and conflict (37).

Most immediately the councillors have a relationship with their party group on the Council and with their local party and officers have similar departmental and professional relationships. Within the parties and within the departments are many separate interests which have to be negotiated and reconciled. Councillors also have relationships with electors, opposition parties, the media, pressure and interest groups and with the community at large in which they work and participate in

as members of organisations and voluntary groups. Officers sometimes have a wider involvement with the community as well, certainly they will be targets for pressure and interest groups, (38). They will also have a relationship with their own profession which takes them beyond the confines of the local authority at both local and national level and they also have intra-professional contacts both within and without the local authority. All of these relationships work on different levels and sometimes because of conflicting aims these differences have to be resolved and the various influences rejected or accommodated.

At the point where pluralist and elitist theories meet it may be possible to effect a reconciliation by depicting members and officers as competing elites, one elected possessing political power and legitimacy and the other appointed, possessing technical knowledge and expertise. However, it may be these two sets of elites do not in fact compete with each other but in reality work together through a tacit alliance in furtherance of their respective interests each side deriving different but mutually compatible advantages from the arrangement. The concept of interactive relationships with the worlds external to the local authority which officers as well as elected politicians both participate in further challenges the adequacy of the domination models. Developing this theme of the mutuality of participation leads to the power sharing model as an alternative framework for analysis.

We now turn to consider in some detail a number of models of the relationship which recognise sharing in the policy process as a given but which also attempt to account for the characteristics of domination which are to found from time to time in specific local authorities.

(a) Hampton's Models

A useful model to start with is that formulated by Hampton who identifies five key characteristics of local authorities which affect the councillor officer relationship. On the basis of these general characteristics which apply to all local authorities Hampton suggests that these will be combined in different ways in each individual authority to produce the context within which the politicians and the officers of that authority will relate to each other (39). The five characteristics are: the range and size of service provision; the extent of professionalism; the extent of party political organisation; the extent of sensitivity to public service provision and the degree of central government interest or influence. Developing these to describe six types of authority with a similar combination of characteristics Hampton proposes the following models:

Model A - Pluralist Partnership - where a high emphasis is shown on all five characteristics - typical of some large conurbations.

Model B - Party Corporatism - said to apply typically to Labour controlled urban areas outside the conurbations with dominant politicians and with a paternalistic attitude to the public but not arousing undue central government attention.

Model C - Managerial Corporatism - said to apply to less politically active areas but with strong central government interest, typically a Conservative controlled county.

Model D - Officer Independence - small, non political, low budget, authorities with officer domination - said to be typically rural Wales.

Model E - Party Independence - small, politically dominated authorities - the public participate through the party or are ignored and officers 'do as they are told' - said to be typically small urban Labour controlled areas.

Model F - Citizen Dominance - said to apply typically to a Parish Council - few, if any, professional officers - little central government interest - dominated by individuals or parties.

Hampton's approach assumes that local authorities of a similar size, with similar socio-economic and political characteristics discharging the same sets of professionalised functions will operate in a similar manner. However, we are aware from the literature of local government that one of its more confusing

characteristics is the diversity of its organisational arrangements even between outwardly very similar authorities. Therefore although Hampton's five characteristics and six models are a useful starting point these leave many unanswered questions regarding the reconciliation of diversity within similar types of authority. We need to understand how and why these factors combine differently between authorities and although Hampton points up the need to analyse structural and organisational settings as well as the role of major external actors, such as central government, all of these points need more development if we are to advance our appreciation of the councillor officer relationship. Therefore, building on the Hampton approach the factors which appear to be of particular relevance are: functions; size; status; the character of the locality; political control and socio-economic factors. Considering each of these in turn:

(i) functions

The functions discharged by an authority predetermines the particular professional groups who will be employed by that authority. Stewart suggests that "Sets of functions can be regarded as a powerful influence on the dominant perspective of a local authority" and that "A function set implies a set of choices and a mix of professional experience and attitudes and over time it will imply particular experiences for councillors" (40).

The implication of this is that politicians will eventually absorb professional values and adopt these in the policy positions taken by them as politicians. As a result a shire district which lacks key professions such as social workers and educationalists as well as police and fire workers will have a different set of references to those of the metropolitan districts or the County Councils.

(ii) size

There are big differences in the size of local authorities and the scale of their operations. The three main measures are geographical size, population size and total expenditure. The counties have a population range of not much more than 100,000 (Isle of Wight) to fifteen times that figure (Hampshire). District Councils range in size from less than 25,000 (Teesdale) to over 1,000,000 (Birmingham). Communications within large rural areas are typically poor with few public transport services but within urban areas communications are generally good. In rural areas it is quite possible for a councillor to have a ward which in area is bigger than the whole of an urban unit of local government so that the accessibility of the electors is restricted. In an urban area with a local evening newspaper and radio station the electors have a means of almost instant

communication but in the remote rural areas with weekly newspapers and no local radio the quality of communication is of an entirely different order.

Differences in the size of financial resources are also very marked. In 1985 - 86 the Teesdale District Council, for example, had a rateable value barely exceeding £2m whilst that of the County of Essex was over £241m and in each authority the spending programmes matched those base values. There is little doubt that councillors and officers who have to accustom themselves to decisions involving millions of pounds develop different attitudes to those who manage very modest budgets.

Many of the differences in professional outputs can also be attributed to comparative resources because the quality and experience of professional staff is set by salaries and career prospects. Population is the principal determining factor in the salary structure so that the largest authorities offer the biggest salaries. As a result "high flyers" are likely to be attracted to those authorities with the greater financial rewards as well as the better opportunities for professional career advancement.

(iii) status

The status of the local authority in the local government hierarchy will also be a factor. This is particularly relevant to the former large county boroughs, which were reduced to shire district status in 1974. Following reorganisation there was considerable ill feeling between these authorities and the County Councils, not all, but most, seem to have taken the change less than graciously of which Hull is a good example where both the politicians and officers were united in their common cause against Humberside County Council over a wide range of issues (Interviews).

Status also defines the extent of the councillors' legitimate influence on governmental actions within their locality and therefore the extent to which the public at large will attribute importance to their role. However, at the present time the reduced status of the big eleven, (with their much more limited range of services), does not seem to have diminished those interventionist, innovative characteristics which were the hallmark of the county boroughs. Even if, they do not have the same range of functions as the metropolitan districts these authorities continue to pursue analogous policies and to strike very similar attitudes. An easy explanation for this would be to suggest that the common motivation was

political, (the majority of the big eleven and the metropolitan districts having been under Labour Party control since 1974). However, as of much significance is their common genesis in the industrial prosperity of the nineteenth century and their sense of cohesiveness and identity which has survived reorganisation. Civic pride and an awareness of historic continuity strongly influence the attitudes and assumptions prevailing in such authorities and re-organisation has been insufficient to eradicate this legacy.

(iv) the Character of the Locality:

The predominant character of the local area influences attitudes particularly those of councillors because of their local connections. Stewart expresses the point like this:-

Within a particular local authority certain values will be accepted and certain assumptions made as to the needs of local communities and the desired pattern of change or lack of change. These views, which can be developed to the point where they can properly be described as an ideology of the locality will be held most strongly by councillors who are by their very role more attached to locality than the professional officer. (41)

In the "ideology of the locality" the urban rural split provides some interesting contrasts, particularly with Conservative councillors as a group. It is possible to detect a greater degree of coincidence between the views

of the big city Tory councillors and their Labour opponents than can be seen between the same urban Tories and their counterparts from the rural areas. The basic political values may be more or less the same but because of the very different "cultures" to which they belong, their response to issues and the way in which they apply those shared political beliefs are different both in style and emphasis.

If councillors can be culturally conditioned by their environment and the problems and issues they face, the same is probably true of the officers. One would expect there to be a degree of consistency in officer behaviour and attitudes, with standardised professional values prevailing in all authorities. However, the evidence appears to be very much to the contrary with wide variations in organisational arrangements and outputs. These variations suggest that either the politicians succeed in overriding professional values and in imposing political value judgements or, alternatively, professional values are modified to adjust to local conditions. In either case the countervailing political forces must be strong enough to overcome the entrenched professional bias which would be inclined towards the achievement of standardised services and consistent decisions rather than to local standards and idiosyncratic policy positions.

Unlike the elected councillors, officers, (with the career goal of ultimately reaching a top position), frequently move from authority to authority in order to obtain a further step in their upward progression through the bureaucratic hierarchy. This process should reinforce professional values and insulate them from local values. However, in seeking career advancement, especially at senior levels, there appears to be a tendency for officers to stay within the same kind of authorities. Whether this is a deliberate act of choice by officers or whether councillors select officers from authorities which are similar because of the relevance of their experience is a topic that deserves systematic attention.

(v) political control

Although it might be assumed that differences in political control would inevitably be reflected in the performance of a local authority the evidence is far from decisive. In a study of county boroughs Oliver and Stanyer suggested that soci-economic factors are more important than political attitudes in determining expenditure (42). However, Boaden concluded that:

Labour councils were more active in services with a significant impact on the overall role of

government. They were bigger spenders on the bigger services. In addition, they were more active where the service appeared to benefit sections of the community supporting them. (43)

Gyford considered that "It certainly appears to be true that party can affect perceptions of needs and the proper way to meet them "(44) and in support of that view he also cites Boaden. Similarly Alt (45) and Ashford (46) found that party made a difference to spending patterns. Rhodes suggests that party interests "receive their clearest expression in the differences in policies (and associated levels of expenditure)." (47) Gyford on the other hand is of the opinion that the role of party "in determining the range and quality of service does not necessarily extend to all activities of the Council" and that there are examples of disputes which cross party lines as well as many examples of non-party issues, he concludes that when such divisions occur "which is not all the time" these will relate "to some fundamental issues which cannot be brushed aside, issues of basic local government policy and also of the defence of the different interests for which the parties stand and by which they are sustained." (48) Sharpe and Newton in an analysis of the output expenditure of local authorities found that political control was a significant factor.

In relation to the county boroughs councils they noted that:

Authorities which stay under Labour control increase their spending more than authorities under continuous Conservative control. Authorities which switch to the Conservatives cut their spending in relative terms but do so slowly. Conservative authorities which switch to Labour control increase their spending and do so quite rapidly. There is in other words a clear party control effect on spending . . . (49)

(vi) socio-economic factors

Sharpe and Newton suggest that the different socio-economic characteristics of local authorities result in differences in their spending patterns. The basis for their categorisation of urban centres proceeds from the central place theory, a concept which conceives the urban system as:

a nested hierarchy in which each city provides all the services and facilities of cities which are below it in the hierarchy plus an additional range of specialised services and facilities.
(50)

They devised a set of nine city types as follows:

- (1) Metropolitan Capitals
- (2) Secondary Capitals
- (3) Industrial Satellites
- (4) Suburban Authorities
- (5) Large Free Standing Commercial and Industrial Cities
- (6) Small Free Standing Industrial Cities
- (7) County Towns
- (8) Administrative and Commercial Centres
- (9) Seaside Resorts (51)

Within each of these types Sharpe and Newton found differences in output expenditure and they also identified regional differences in spending patterns and historical factors which gave rise to unique spending characteristics. Hull was categorised by Sharpe and Newton as a large free standing commercial and industrial city serving as the centre for a hinterland consisting of small towns and rural areas a characteristic which gives rise to differences in spending to the urban capitals. Sharpe and Newton conclude that their evidence demonstrates that "spending is influenced by the particular economic base and function of a city as well as its position in the urban hierarchy" (52). Thus, the relationship of the local authority to its hinterland is of relevance to its performance, an excellent example of this being the planning case in Part II.

(b) The Collins, Hinings and Walsh Models

An alternative set of models, has been provided by Collins et al which are described by them as "abstract analytical constructs", which are "not intended to be descriptions of how things actually work in any given empirical situation" (53). Collins et al's first model is the "Representative", this is the traditional orthodox model ie. "the elected members control policy and the officer structure administers it". "Power in this model is

clearly seen as resting with the member" who is expected to be continuously involved at all stages of the decision making process, and not merely being a decision taker selecting from amongst policy options. The "Representative Model" has two separate Sub-models - the "Individual Representative" and the "Collective Representative". The "Individual Representative" Sub-Model assumes a series of fragmented relationships between individual members and officers. Where this pattern of conduct occurs committees are said not merely to legitimise decisions "but will also be the arena of actual decision making" and it is suggested an absence of a corporate dimension in a local authority will lead to "a high degree of differentiation between committees and between departments". The "Collective Representative" Sub-Model "takes the political party as the major decision making focus" and it is suggested that the real decisions will not be taken at the formal meetings of the council but within the controlling party group prior to such meetings. This is said to lead to a requirement for channels of communication between officers and members and to emphasise the relationship between chief officers and committee chairmen. The second model is the "Technocratic" which emphasises the power of the officer arising from his possession and control of technical skills and knowledge. It is contended that only the officer is capable of making decisions dependent upon that knowledge. On this view where the amateur politician tries to challenge the technocrat he will fail. Thus in this role the member is relegated to constituency matters. The third model is the

"Corporate" which combines the "Collective Representative" and "Technocratic" models. This model proceeds on the premise that key groups of members and officers are brought together to exercise power jointly as a member officer elite.

In relation to their three models Collins et al suggest that an authority "may vary in the way in operates from issue to issue or service area to service area" and that on "one issue its pattern of operation may approximate to that employed by one model, on another to a quite different model". However, one probably needs to extend this to include the possibility of variations within "issues" and "services" and also to allow for the possibility that different groups of members and officers within the same issue or service area could be adopting quite distinct modes of operation. Indeed, one could envisage that at different times in the sequence of events the participants could adopt first one model and then another in relation to the same matter. Although in a situation where the "Corporate" model appears applicable but the issue is of a technocratic character one cannot assume for example that technocratic knowledge will be vested in the corporate management elite. Collins et al note that "those with such knowledge may not be the officers at the top of the organisation but . . . (be the) more technically sophisticated subordinates". So the corporate managers (chief officers/leading members), could be in the hands of subordinate technocrats, the corporate management structure merely legitimising decisions which have in effect already been made at a lower level in the

officer bureaucracy. Relative to the "Collective Model" Collins et al advance the proposition that it is not "simply the fact of party organisation but the political complexion of the authority that is important" and they cite Greenwood and Stewart (54) as suggesting that Labour councils are more corporately orientated than Conservative councils and cite Maud (55) as suggesting that Labour councils are more likely to pay attention to detailed implementation of policy. They add their own view that the parties are possibly interested in different issues - for example that Labour will be much more interested in social and welfare issues and they suggest that the "Collective Representative" Model and greater involvement with detailed decision making goes hand in hand.

Collins et al identify three primary factors as indicators of the roles of members and officers these are: expert knowledge, the complexity of the problems and the size and scale of the local authority's operations. In relation to the complexity factor one should add by way of qualification its two sub-divisions (later discussed) the human/social and the technocratic/scientific. Collin et al also omit a significant but admittedly random factor that of the individual. The personal power of certain individuals appears to be capable of distorting or extending the ostensible limits within which officers and councillors operate. For example, within the same authority if one were to select a number of service committees it is likely that one would find that because of differences in the strength of personality,

experience and motivation of chief officers and chairmen, the balance of power between these key figures varied quite markedly which suggests that roles are likely to change to some degree when the holders of institutional positions change. Accordingly, the Collins et al model is less satisfactory in this regard because of its lack of flexibility in accounting for these variables.

(c) Sharpe's Model

Sharpe approaches the councillor officer relationship from a different standpoint. At the outset he dismisses the proposition of dominance by either politicians or officials claiming that

both get off on the wrong foot in the sense that they assume two sets of people coming together for the first time . . . in reality the politician and the technocrat are much more likely to have known each other over a long period and they will certainly know the context in which each operates. Each side can therefore make calculations which strike a balance between what they want and what they know each other is willing to accept (56).

This process of mutual adjustment between the participants forms the basis of Sharpe's "operating ideology". He suggests that it is impossible for representative democracy to work without this, otherwise in any discussion on policy issues one would have to go back to first principles every time and as a result there has to be an agreed mode of operation if the service being administered is going to function effectively. Sharpe contends that "this implies a sense of mutual trust running from the electorate through the elected members to the technocrat". The officer

therefore operates in a world of anticipating the reactions of the councillors, individually, collectively and politically and his advice is, in effect, preconditioned by these anticipated restraints.

Politicians and technocrats are said to be prisoners of their own operating ideology and that "no one is necessarily controlling anyone else: the technocrat is the full time expert in the operating ideology and the politician a part-time one". Sharpe's conclusion is that "power shifts over time" and the electorate, the technocrat and the politician at various stages in the evolution, implementation and development of a policy, each have a phase of domination. Accordingly, he resists the theory of an elite, predominating, bureaucracy and claims that this is demonstrably contradicted by the evidence, maintaining that ultimately when the public withdraws its support the power of both politician and technocrat will crumble. Sharpe suggests that ultimately power rests with the electorate so that fundamental change starts at the ballot box; for him this explains how non incremental changes come about arguing that it is the general political climate which is the primary setting factor for the operating ideology and it is within that setting members and officers have to work. The operating ideology therefore offers some advantages over the more rigid models described above because it is less specific, its disadvantage is that it is an imprecise framework and in consequence it only provides a methodology for analysis in contrast to the more

positive guidance of the other models. That is both its strength and its weakness.

(d) Laffin's Models

A development of Sharpe's operating ideology is to be found in a study of the relationships between chairmen and chief officers in metropolitan councils (57). Laffin suggests that the basis of the relationship is a "negotiated order" in which councillors and officers "tend to try to establish relations of mutual trust and understanding - in other words to minimise the amount of uncertainty in the relationship". He found that many of the chief officers he interviewed described their relationship with leading members as a "partnership". Laffin regards this as indicating the acceptance on the part of councillors and officers that they have complementary rather than conflicting roles with both sides acknowledging the expectations of the other and recognising each others legitimate areas of responsibility and concern. Laffin considers that the member officer relationship is an "inter-organisational relationship" which brings out the significance of the different power bases and ideological stances of members and officers. For him the party group and the professional departments constitute organisations each with their separate ideologies with the result that when dealing with each other on a personal level the politician and the bureaucrat primarily view the other not as an individual but as a representative of the other group. This places much less

emphasis on the "inter-personal relationship" although Laffin concedes that in some cases this may be a significant factor. In any event the chief officer and his chairman "have to trust and have confidence in each other on a personal basis and not just as 'representatives' of their organisations". Laffin suggests that good personal relationship may overcome many of the ideological and organisational conflicts inherent in the system.

The relationship between these two "organisations" is said to be a negotiated one because even though politicians have the formal authority of the council vested in them "the evidence indicates that there is still considerable scope for negotiation" which arises because of the uncertainties of their relationship which Laffin categorises as cognitive, as normative and as to the intentions of others. Laffin notes that the general assumption that officers have a greater ability to cope with cognitive uncertainty in contrast to "the correspondingly limited ability of the members" is an explanation for officer power. In dealing with cognitive uncertainties professional ideologies provide both comprehensive guidelines to the resolution of problems as well as an accumulated shared experience whereas the ideologies of the politicians are far broader and less specific. Normative uncertainties regarding the types of problem a local authority should be concerning itself and the policy response appropriate to them provide a contrast to cognitive uncertainty in that "for elected members their partisan ideologies are important in reducing uncertainty over the grand policy questions . . . and

broad policy issues", although on matters of detailed application Laffin considers that partisan ideologies are of less use especially when it comes to selecting and ordering priorities. This leads him to suggest that the

reliance on over 'generalised purposes' enables professional officers to fill the gap with their own professionalised priorities. In this way the members are dependent on the officers to fill out their broad policy preferences and even to provide preferences where members have none. (58)

The third area of uncertainty Laffin puts forward is that regarding the intentions of others, that is the uncertainties felt by members about officers and by officers about members and by both groups about external interests such as central government, the political parties, or pressure groups. It is this category of uncertainty which Laffin sees as most threatening to officers suggesting that professional ideologies are founded on predictable behaviour and constant values which are exposed to less predictable and more variable partisan ideologies, this is said to place the officer group in a position of greater uncertainty than the politicians.

In order to accommodate these three categories of uncertainty, Laffin contends that both councillors and officers develop various strategies designed to reduce the degree of uncertainty or alternatively they concede dependency on particular issues or areas of responsibility on the basis that it is legitimate and necessary to do so. The cognitive strategy is one which Laffin sees largely as an officer strategy, that is the use of technical

complexity and knowledge to maintain officer dominance. However, he concedes that officers "are unlikely to succeed in deflecting the members from a course of action based on an ideological commitment" noting that officers have a need "to maintain credibility with the members". With the increasing erosion of respect for professionals Laffin considers that officers have to work hard at convincing the politicians in terms they understand in order to achieve acceptance of professional advice. However, this process cannot apply to every issue

consequently members have to accept a great deal on trust just to get through the business of their authorities and they rely on professionalism as a guarantee that officers are not misleading them or abusing their position. (58)

The normative strategy according to Laffin is associated with situations where one actor substitutes his own policy preferences for those of another when he is permitted to do so by reason of the others uncertainty regarding his own policy preferences. Such a situation arises in two ways either because of the indifference of one of the parties or by co-optation. Co-optation as envisaged by Laffin exists where professionalised departments consciously seek to inculcate the elected members with their values and problem definitions. The "organisational strategy" is the dependence on the part of either members or officers on the other for organisational performances. Thus, "the key performance is the members final agreement as the legitimate policy or decision makers" which provides the politicians with a crucial strategic card which they can play in a way which effectively excludes the officers from decisions.

Laffin illustrates this proposition by suggesting that the party group may take a policy decision even before the officers have had time to consider the issue in question thus effectively tying their hands with a *fait accompli*. However, the officer's response lies in their control over the means of implementation on which the politicians depend.

Laffin characterises the power of the politicians in two ways - the first is the essentially negative one of being able "to preserve the status quo by simply stifling any new policy initiatives" which he suggests is shared by all elected councils. The second is the capacity to effect policy change which Laffin considers only exists where there are organised political parties and a cohesive ruling group. However, the councillors to achieve these aims have to work through a "negotiated order" with the officers and this "order" falls four square within Sharpe's concept of an "operating ideology", namely, that the two groups reach an accommodation and establish a *modus operandi*. A notable deficiency in the Laffin models is that no real account is taken of the role of the individual whereas the writer's own experiences in a number of large urban authorities strongly suggest that the role of individuals, both politicians and bureaucrats, is often a crucial factor in determining outcomes.

Support for this is to be found in Rhodes who although conceding that the role of personality is an elusive concept nevertheless believes that

The timing of interventions and the ability to anticipate the moves of the other side will be influenced by the experience skills and commitment of individuals. Individual appreciation of tactics can vary greatly (59)

Irrespective of organisational structures and assigned responsibilities these are sometimes overridden by powerful politicians and in some cases by powerful officers as well. Powerful individuals have the capacity to bend the rules, to turn up in various situations and exercise an influence one would not have ascribed to them on the basis of the formal structure of the authority (Interviews). Even within those formalities a particular service may be dominated by a very powerful chief officer of long standing with a relatively inexperienced committee chairman or vice versa, either of these two extremes is likely to lead to distinctly different relationships within the service committee concerned and even between committees and other political and bureaucratic sources of power. Within a single authority it is therefore possible to envisage a series of relationships of unequal "weight" being found at the chairman, chief officer interface each of which is the result of personal and not institutional characteristics.

(4) CONCLUSIONS

The councillor officer relationship exists within a variety of contexts but primarily those of politics and professionalism. However, councillors and their officials are also subject to many other influences including, legal and constitutional constraints, the policies of central government, the positions taken by national policy communities, the activities of interest and pressure groups, the demands of the local electorate and the scrutiny of the media. At the root of their relationship is the potential radical divergence of political and professional aims against a background of potentially conflicting external relationships and influences. Accordingly, any approach to the analysis of their roles must recognise this plurality of aims, interests and values.

This Chapter has cast doubt on the political dominance model noting a widely held academic view that it lacks conviction despite its political adherents. At the same time we have noted Newton's opinion which doubts the validity of the bureaucratic dominance model. The third possibility of power sharing emerges through the alternative models considered above. However, shared power does not necessarily mean an equality of influence. The influence each group possesses is likely to fluctuate over time, between services and even within specific issues.

These inequalities of influence probably reflect differences in the motivations of the two groups which may be expressed as in the one case as a differential ability to shape policy and in the other as a differential desire to shape policy. Officers with technical skills and knowledge, access to resources and control of the bureaucracy may well have the ability to shape policy but lack the motivation whilst the politicians possess the motivation but lack both the ability to express it effectively as well as the means to implement it. It is in the resolution of these differential motivations that roles are established and although Laffin best describes this aspect the models of Sharpe, Collins et al and Hampton describe other salient features of the relationship. At the same time it has to be conceded that the dominance models reflect relationships which have been observed in particular local authorities at particular points in time. In the face of this conflicting evidence one cannot conclude at this stage that any one of the models is inherently to be preferred.

In the following two Chapters the a priori evidence about the respective powers of members and officers is examined before presenting the Case Studies (Chapter Five) and re-evaluating the models (Chapter Six).

CHAPTER THREE

THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

(1) INTRODUCTION

Local authorities are creatures of statute so that one would expect to find that the legislation regarding their powers and duties would include provisions regulating the roles of those who work within them ie. councillors and officers. The purpose of this Chapter is to establish what the law stipulates in this regard and then to go on to consider whether or not the law favours one group or the other or treats them with a neutral equality. From this point one can assess the legal aspects of the councillor officer relationship relative to the models considered in the preceding chapter. The ultimate question is whether the law accords the politicians the same degree of primacy accorded them by democratic theory. In the literature of the politics of local government insufficient attention has been paid to the part the law plays in shaping and conditioning the actions of elected councillors and appointed officials. Usually consideration of the legal and constitutional issues has been restricted to an examination of the structure of local government and the allocation of powers and duties between different types of authority.

The role of the law in local government has become much more apparent since 1979 with the legislation of the three Thatcher governments. There is evidence that this legislation has increasingly brought the law into local politics: (in Bridges et al (1) an extended discussion of this topic is to be found).

However, imposing legislative controls from the centre supported by subordinate legislation and administrative action is not novel and does not break any new constitutional ground, what distinguishes the Thatcher years is the sustained application of such measures over a broad front and over a comparatively long period of time. The reaction of local government to this is well documented and a spirited defence of local authorities has been mounted most notably by Jones and Stewart (2). However, those who express resentment at the use of the law to restrain what they misguidedly view as an autonomous polity miss the point. This was succinctly expressed by Widdicombe:

In Great Britain Parliament is sovereign. Although local government has origins pre-dating the sovereignty of Parliament, all current local authorities are the statutory creations of Parliament and have no independent status or right to exist. The whole system of local government could lawfully be abolished by Act of Parliament. Central government is not itself sovereign and indeed its powers are - or may be - circumscribed by Parliament just as much as those of local government. In practice, however, central government is drawn from the political party with a majority in Parliament and its de facto political strength is accordingly much greater than that of local government. (3)

Widdicombe suggests that the position of local government within the political system is governed by informal constitutional conventions as well as deriving its existence and powers from Parliament. However he notes that it would be wrong to assume "that such constitutional convention amounts to or derives from any natural right for local government to exist." Widdicombe concludes his brief review by asserting that local authorities do not derive authority from a "local mandate".

The electoral basis:

lends added authority to actions they take within the law and to any proposals they may make for changes to the law but does not provide a mandate to act outside or above the law. Local authorities may properly lobby for changes in the law but in their day to day conduct of affairs they must act within the law as it stands. (4)

It is these propositions of Widdicombe which have been the battle ground for the ideological struggle between the "New Urban Left" and the Thatcher government (5). There is little doubt about the victor in this contest and eventually all have submitted to the law even the Militant Tendency in Liverpool. It could be argued that with electoral turn out averaging around 40% and with much evidence indicating that it is national rather than local issues which usually determine outcomes (6) the electorate has a much more acute perception of the relative importance of local government than its activist advocates. Although local authority spending and its role in delivering welfare services has considerable national significance ultimate control rests with the centre and perhaps this is what the electorate instinctively recognise.

Within the legislation specifically applicable to local authorities, within the great mass of general legislation and within the common law, resides the legal framework of powers and duties which constitute the basis for the institution of local government. The roles of the councillor and the officer must first be considered in this context.

(2) THE LAW BOUND ORGANISATION

The fundamental characteristic of local government is that it is a creature of statute. Stewart considers as a consequence that local authorities are "law-bound" organisations in which the law impinges at many points. He suggests, furthermore, that in their internal regulatory arrangements authorities are similarly "rule bound by standing orders" (7). In this light the law may well be seen as a constraint, however, it is equally possible to regard it as a power resource of some significance to those able to manipulate it to serve their own ends. In any event it constitutes a formidable influence on the policy process whether as a perceived, or as an actual, constraint on the limits of action.

(a) The Legal Constraints

The modern local authority has its origins in the legislation of the last quarter of the nineteenth century but all authorities today are statutory corporations created by the Local Government Act 1972. The most important legal principle applicable to a statutory corporation is the doctrine of ultra vires;

unlike a natural person who can in general do whatever he pleases, so long as what he does is not forbidden by law or contrary to law, a statutory corporation can do only those things which it is authorised to do by statute directly or by implication (8).

So that if a statutory corporation acts outside its statutory authority, it is said to be acting ultra vires i.e. beyond its powers. It is the view of Cross that the doctrine of ultra vires had historically so stamped itself upon the administration that there had been a tendency to think that structural and management patterns were unchangeable (8) and for a very long period these perceived restraints of law seem to have had a marked effect on the way in which local authorities organised and managed their affairs. On the other hand Stewart contends that although "the myth of statutory constraint is a powerful influence in many local authorities" and although there is a basis for the myth in that local authorities are law-bound organisations he believes it is overstated. Stewart considers that the wide variations in the levels of expenditure and of choice of expenditure is indicative of a very considerable discretion and he claims that the "myth" of statutory constraint often obscures the real constraints "of expectation and of organisational interest" (9).

The most obvious historic manifestation of the role of the law in local authorities was the predominance of the legal profession, (in the guise of the town clerk as *primus inter pares*), which lasted until the management led reforms of the sixties and early seventies. Even today the role of the legal profession is still of considerable significance because legal knowledge is very important to many local government professions as diverse as accountancy and social work. Given the importance of the legal/statutory basis of local government it is surprising to

find so little law regulating the performance of members and officers. The lack of legislative role definition means that there are few legal restraints preventing either group encroaching into the assumed territory of the other and in consequence the modus operandi of the relationship tends to be based in custom and practice rather than in law. This legal ambiguity provides the setting for conflict which Widdicombe noted as follows:

the political parties find common cause in pressing for a greater assertion of the power of councillors over officers. 59% of councillors agree rather than disagree that 'Council officials have too much influence over decision making'..... This greater assertiveness has led to a challenging of the established frontiers between councillors and officers and has increasingly drawn councillors into day to day management issues. This has in particular caused frictions between committee chairmen and Chief Officers. (10)

In strict legal terms, an elected member of a local authority has only very limited status because it is the corporate body i.e. the Council and not the individuals who compose it, which is of legal significance, thus, "a member in his individual capacity has no executive powers and can exercise no lawful authority" (11). The principal legal rights of members are to inspect documents and to be paid allowances and the principal duty is to disclose any pecuniary interests, either direct or indirect, in any matter discussed at a formal meeting of the council. In practice the involvement of councillors, particularly, committee chairmen goes well beyond the minimal legal position.

In law, the position of officers of local authorities is both more explicit and extensive than that of members (12). There is a general power given to local authorities under the Local Government Act 1972 to appoint such officers as they think necessary for the proper discharge of the authority's functions and officers appointed under the 1972 Act hold office "on such reasonable terms and conditions, including conditions as to remuneration as the authority appointing him think fit" (13). However, there are exceptions to these general rules. Chief constables their deputies and assistants must be appointed in accordance with the Police Act 1964; certain categories of officers must be appointed by the local authority such as chief education officers, chief fire officers, inspectors of weights and measures and under the Social Services Act 1970 the authority must consult the Secretary of State before appointing a director of social services and he may prohibit the appointment of any person deemed unsuitable (14). Similarly the pay conditions, discipline and dismissal of police and fire officers is controlled by regulations determined by central government (15).

Officers like councillors are under an obligation to disclose pecuniary interests whether direct or indirect and are subject to restrictions against accepting any fee or reward other than their proper remuneration. There have been a number of important judicial decisions relating to the duties officers owe in law, not just in terms of employee to employer but also to the public at large. Perhaps the most significant of these judicial

interventions is the case of the Attorney General - v - De Winton where the court held that a local authority's Treasurer stood in a fiduciary relationship to the ratepayers as a whole and that despite the fact that he held office "during the pleasure of the Council only" this did not enable him to plead the orders of the Council as an excuse for an unlawful act (16). In a subsequent case involving a Town Clerk a similar view was taken that the officer stood between the Council and the ratepayers and that he was not entitled to stand by inactive "merely because he would otherwise have been liable to dismissal from his office without notice" (17). However, this principle must not be pushed too far because it does not:

put an officer in an independent position in which he owes duties to the ratepayers justifying him in disregarding the lawful directions of the Council whose servant he is (18)

In this context it is interesting to note that Widdicombe recommended that officers, (the chief executive), be given certain statutory duties exercisable on a personal basis independent from their employing council (19).

In carrying out his duties, an officer can incur personal liability even if he acts at the express direction of the Council, for example, giving misleading information on which a third party relies to his detriment (20). Similarly exercising discretions delegated to him by the Council, for example, serving a prohibition notice on food premises may result in personal action against the officer concerned.

(b) Supervisory Agencies, Central Intervention and Legal Challenge

Central government acts not only through primary legislation, (Acts of Parliament), but also through subordinate legislation, (Statutory Instruments), which are issued under the authority of Ministers of the Crown and which have the same legal effect as an Act of Parliament. In addition the government of the day can take a wide range of administrative action usually embodied in government circulars and other similar policy directives. All of these bear down on the councillors and their officials. In the last two decades government has also employed a number of central agencies such as the Audit Commission and the Local Commission for Administration as instruments of control at one place removed from government. The Audit Commission's role is to monitor local authority spending and promote the efficient use of resources. The Commission for Administration is directed to rectifying administrative actions which result in an injustice. The influence of these agencies have become of increasing significance on the conduct of local authority business. Intervention differentially affects officers and councillors and therefore the relationship between the agency professionals and the local bureaucracy is different in quality from the relationship with the politicians.

The reason for including these agencies in this review is not merely to demonstrate how external bodies empowered by law constrain and influence the decision making processes of local government but also to highlight the differences in the relationship between the bureaucrats appointed by central government and their counterparts in local authorities on the one hand and the central bureaucrats relationship with local councillors on the other. The usual channel of contact between the agencies and the authority is through the local bureaucracy most often on a professional to professional basis. So that, for example, the Council's Treasurer deals with the Audit Commission and the Council's Solicitor with the Local Commissioner for Administration. In any of these situations it may well be that there is a community of interest between the local authority and central agency professionals. Officers have the opportunity to suggest or encourage such agencies behind closed doors to say or do things as an external body which as employees of the Council they would feel constrained from doing. Even if through loyalty to their employing Council they remain silent central intervention may, nevertheless, be welcome if it accords with their own professional views. On the other hand it is equally possible to conceive of central intervention being welcomed by the politicians and being less well received by the officers. Thus, a right wing Conservative Council could have used recent privatisation legislation and Audit Commission Reports to take action against the inclinations of an unwilling bureaucracy. Accordingly, the activities of these agencies is of considerable

interest in the context of councillor officer relations. The opportunities this layer of control provides are more likely to favour the interests of the bureaucracy but not exclusively. However, underlying it all is the statutory and legal framework which may be used to challenge decisions of both bureaucrats and politicians. This has had the result that one professional group, lawyers, have become front line troops rather than back room boys.

The Local Commissioners of Administration, (the 'Ombudsmen'), possess powers to review the actions of both politicians and bureaucrats. However, the decision of an Ombudsman only has the status of a non-enforcible recommendation and local authorities may (and do) choose to ignore them. The Commission for Local Administration in England was constituted by statute in 1974 (21). There are three commissioners for England whose role is to consider complaints from the public regarding injustices suffered as a result of maladministration by a local authority. Maladministration includes failure to follow proper procedures, delay, incompetence, unfairness and bias but because maladministration is not defined this leaves a wide discretion to the commissioners. However, the commissioners cannot deal with a complaint if there is some other remedy available through the courts, tribunals or through the local public inquiry process (eg the planning appeal system) and are also prevented from considering complaints which affect most or all of the inhabitants of the area.

The intermediaries between the Ombudsman and the Council will be the officers of the Council. Usually the Chief Executive or the Legal department will be in charge of the formal response to the Ombudsman. The department within whose remit the "offence" has occurred will be a contributor to the response. The complaint may be about the decisions of an officer under delegated authority or a formal decision of the Council. The majority of cases involve the housing and planning functions of district councils. Questions such as whether a house has been allocated to a tenant in accordance with the housing policy of the Council or whether a neighbour was consulted about a planning application. If councillors have "bent" the rules the officers may derive some private satisfaction in a finding against the Council. On the other hand where a planning officer has failed to consult a neighbour about a planning application the councillors in their turn may be able to use that against the officer.

The distinction between the cases is that in both instances the preparation of the "defence" is in the hands of the officers. On completing an investigation the commissioner sends a report of his or her findings to the parties. It is also made available for public inspection. The local authority is obliged to consider the report and notify the commissioner what action it proposes to take. If the commissioner is not satisfied he or she may issue a further report. Widdicombe records that in "1984-85 the local ombudsmen in England received 3,389 complaints" of

which "two hundred and ninety two complaints were the subject of full formal reports" and "maladministration causing injustice was found in 193 cases" (22).

The Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England and Wales was established by statute in 1982 (23). The auditor's role since the setting up of the Commission has become of increasing significance to local authorities because he has many more teeth than the Ombudsmen. He has the power to expose officers as well as councillors to the risk of personal penalties, the so-called surcharge by referring items of expenditure to the courts for a declaration of unlawfulness. More serious consequences follow if the Auditor certifies that there has been wilful misconduct. The surcharge may involve making full restitution to the authority of all the unlawful expenditure and in addition the politicians may also suffer disqualification from public office for five years. The Audit Commission has been described as fulfilling:

the Government's general strategy of reducing local spending. The Commission is nominally an independent body but its governing body is appointed by central government. In its work it has rather narrowly concentrated on issues of economy and efficiency and has tended to lend ideological support to Conservative Government claims about 'waste' in local government" (24).

The Commission employs district auditors who conduct the audits of the accounts of local authorities, (although in some areas private auditors are engaged), and lays down the guidelines for conducting audits. The auditor does not have to rely on his own investigative powers alone because provision is made to permit electors in the area to make representations to the auditor and if a particularly serious matter has been brought to light by an elector the Audit Commission can order an extraordinary audit of the local authority concerned. If at any time the Auditor discovers an item of expenditure he believes to be unlawful he can apply to the High Court for a declaration under the 1982 Act (25). If the court agrees and makes the declaration it may also make an order that the illegal expenditure shall be repaid by any member or officer of the local authority.

However, what precisely constitutes unlawfulness is difficult to establish with certainty as it is within the power of the Courts to declare expenditure even on a lawful objective as "unreasonable". The leading case on this point concerned the payment of wages in the London Borough of Poplar (26) and more recently the issue was reconsidered in another London wages case involving Camden (27). Until the Camden case the law had been reasonably settled and an auditor could only challenge a local

authority's discretion to make expenditure on a lawful objective if he could show that

(a) the Council had taken into account matters which it ought not to have taken into account or (b) it had refused or neglected to take into account matters which it ought to take into account or (c) it had come to a conclusion so unreasonable that no reasonable authority could have come to it (28).

In the Camden case the district auditor took the Council to Court because it had been paying a group of manual workers in excess of the amount agreed in the national pay negotiations between the local government employers collectively and the trade unions. The district auditor's application was in the event not upheld by the High Court which decided that the failure to take account of the national pay negotiations was not sufficient to constitute unreasonableness in this case. The Court was of the view that each case would have to be looked at on its merits and that it was a qualitative not a quantitative judgement which had to be applied. Failure to take account of relevant matters or taking into account irrelevant matters was only evidence of possible illegality and did not amount to illegality itself.

Thus, even expenditure decisions where the general purposes are lawful are capable of being challenged on the test of "reasonableness" a concept which is neither fixed nor precisely defined. This creates a lawyer's paradise where he must determine the limits within which the Council can exercise its discretion and as a result local government lawyers have found themselves under increasing pressure because of the

politicisation of the law. In referring cases to Counsel the local authority lawyer not only sub-contracts his risk but also taps into the national legal world to strengthen his professional position viz a viz the councillor politicians. This legal world is largely alien to the politicians and the balance of advantage in such situations lies with the officers.

Action through the courts tribunals and the public local inquiry system provide opportunities for the public at large to challenge local authorities as corporate bodies. In some cases action against particular councillors or officers of the authority may be possible. Individual rights may be pursued through the courts in the ordinary way. Persons aggrieved by planning decisions have a right to resort to the planning appeal system. Those aggrieved with rating or compensation decisions can utilise the Valuation Courts and the Lands Tribunal.

More generally judicial intervention in respect of the administrative actions of local authorities may be sought by what is called "Judicial Review" (29). Under these powers the High Court has been given a very wide discretion and is not precluded from considering a case even if there is an alternative remedy which the person applying for judicial review has not taken. The applicant has to prove two things at the outset, that there is a prima facie case (ie a complaint of legal substance) and secondly that he has sufficient standing in the case (ie that he is not too remote and has a real interest). Most cases before the

courts for Judicial Review fall into four categories: that the local authority is ultra vires ie has acted outside its powers; or that it has failed to discharge a statutory duty; or that in relation to actions which are within its powers it has acted illegally; or that it has failed to observe certain procedural requirements. However, there are limits to the intervention of the courts because the judges will not substitute their own views on the merits of the case; the courts do not review the quality of the discretion exercised by the local authority but restrict themselves to the question of whether it was properly exercised in a procedural sense and that the conclusion reached was not so unreasonable as to be regarded as perverse.

Thus, these areas of legal challenge bring the local authority lawyer into prominence not only after a challenge has been made but more significantly at the point of making decisions. The way in which the officer represents the issues and weighs up the risks will often shape the Council's decisions. As a result the law places the legal officers in a powerful position in situations when legal issues are in question because the politicians have no option other than to invite the officers to advise them. Although the matter may well be highly political in character these legality issues give the politicians no choice and officers have to assume a leading role.

A different emphasis arises when officers find themselves caught in a legal trap between the politicians at the centre and those at the local level. One of the best recent examples of this is the confrontation between Michael Hesletine then Secretary of State for the Environment and the City of Norwich (30). At issue were the statutory right to buy provisions conferred on council house tenants under the first major legislation of the Thatcher administration. The Secretary of State has the right to intervene if it appears to him that council tenants are having difficulties in exercising their rights and if he is satisfied that tenants are likely to be impeded he is given wide powers to do anything he considers necessary to rectify the situation (31). In the Norwich case Heseltine came to such a conclusion invoking the intervention powers in December 1981 and although the City Council challenged him in the courts it was unsuccessful. Eventually the Council agreed to co-operate with the DoE official sent in to take over (32). However, up to that point the officials were faced with having to co-operate with the DoE emissary contrary to wishes of their employer.

Similar conflicts arose with the abolition of the metropolitan counties. The response of the Labour controlled authorities not to co-operate in any way with the government regarding the arrangements for the transfer of functions left officers in an uneasy position between the central and local politicians and led to a number of incidents, for example, in Liverpool and Sheffield of employees incurring the displeasure of either their employer

or their trade union or both for having merely discussed such issues with the agents of central government.

In these legal confrontations the officers have to proceed with caution. The politicisation of the law as a result of the centre using it as a means for controlling or extinguishing locally desired political goals has resulted in a degree of disrespect for the law amongst local politicians (33). Nevertheless, this "new" dimension for local politics is much more an officer world than a politicians world so that on balance the officers are likely to emerge as the more powerful of the two groups if the law becomes a dominant factor.

(c) Legal Powers: The Effects of Delegation

The Local Government Act gives a general power to local authorities to delegate any of their functions to a committee or a sub committee which must comprise at least two Councillors. Accordingly, there is no power to delegate authority to a single councillor (34) although the law allows such delegations to be made to officers. Therefore, the "executive" type chairman of a committee cannot lawfully exercise the decision making role but the chief officer may be delegated to do so. As a result the "executive" chairman must either prevail on an officer with the necessary delegated authority to take the decisions for him or alternatively he has to seek retrospective approval from a properly constituted committee. Although as noted below

retrospective approval may not always be possible within the law. Clearly, these statutory arrangements favour officers in terms of individual personal power to act.

An examination of the minutes of the past proceedings of Hull City Council reveals a recurring item at the end of each committee's proceedings entitled "Chairman's Decisions Records". This was a report of decisions taken by chairmen as urgent business since the last meeting for which retrospective approval was being sought. This practice came before the courts in a case involving the London Borough of Hillingdon (35). The Chairman of Hillingdon's Planning Committee had purported to take a decision pursuant to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning legislation. Mr Justice Woolf declared this practice was unlawful because a single councillor could not constitute a committee or sub-committee for the purposes of the Local Government Act (36). There had been no attempt by the Council to ratify the councillor's decision subsequently so the point was not taken by the court but "there is good authority for the view that there can be no ratification of an act where there could not have been delegation in the first place", (37). As a result of this decision Hull City Council have now discontinued the practice of "Decision Records" replacing them by small standing committees constituted to deal with urgent business. However, because of the local government freedom of information legislation, (38), public notice of not less than three clear working days must be given of such meetings which inhibits swift decisions and early administrative action.

The alternative permitted by law is to give the unelected officer a free hand by delegating the power to him personally which is the complete negation of the concept of democratic control. A device adopted by some authorities is to give the delegated power subject to it being exercised in consultation with the Chairman of the committee. Before the 1972 Act there had only been limited powers to delegate to officers:

the implication was of course that in the absence of a direct statutory power an officer could not act except with the authorisation of his Council. This of course made a nonsense of the widely accepted practice that whatever action an officer took within the scope of his general authority or within the terms of a policy settled by the Council, that would be taken as the act of the Council itself (39).

The present legal position is that the statutory duties on local authorities must be decided by the Council "the power to decide cannot be made by an officer without statutory authority or formal delegation" (40) and that in any other matter an officer cannot act in a manner which binds the authority "if by so doing it would hinder or prevent the authority in the exercise of their discretion conferred on it by statute" (40). However, although the actions of officers are constrained by the law at the same time the law permits them sole unfettered decision making powers and a wide individual discretion. When councillors exercise a discretionary power within the law they must always do so collectively.

(3) THE OFFICER AS EMPLOYEE AND THE COUNCILLOR AS EMPLOYER

The roles of employer and employee normally give rise to rights and obligations on both sides and in this respect local government is no different to other forms of employment. However, the elected councillors can in law only act collectively through the council as a corporate body. Officers in law act in an individual capacity. Nevertheless, in practice councillors as individuals are frequently engaged in the affairs of the authority and officers are similarly found acting collectively as a group. Officers serve the Council as a whole not individual councillors or even the controlling political party. Thus, whilst officers owe a duty to all of the council as corporately constituted, including the opposition, it has at the same time to work with the administration in control of the authority. As a result officers may find themselves under pressure from the political extremes on a Council. From this it is apparent that the local government employer employee relationship possesses extra layers of complexity in contrast to conventional employment. The nearest comparison to local government is in the Whitehall ranks of the civil service, however, there are as many differences as similarities between the two. The generally closer relationship between local politicians as employers and the specialist professional officers as employees creates the conditions in which the product of their employment relationship, (i.e. services and functions), is fundamentally affected by the nature of the relationship between them.

(a) The Conditions of Employment

Although local authorities have a discretion under the 1972 Act regarding terms and conditions of employment by virtue of participating in a centralised collective bargaining system they have effectively relinquished direct control over such matters. The three local authority associations - the Association of County Councils, The Association of Metropolitan Authorities, and the Association of District Councils represent the employers side. There are separate negotiating bodies for chief executives and chief officers grades and for the generality of officers. The officers are the largest group and their negotiating body is the National Joint Council for Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical staffs. The Scheme of Conditions of Service, (for shorthand usually called "the Purple Book") (41), regulates all aspects of the officers employment, e.g. pay, discipline, holidays, pensions. It is within the context of the Purple Book conditions that annual negotiations on pay are conducted between the Associations and the various trade unions who have been accorded negotiating rights. Some local variations to the national conditions are to be found, usually in relation to such matters as holidays and other benefits over and above the national minima. Until recently there had been considerable uniformity with the nationally negotiated terms and conditions being applied. However, some authorities, particularly in relation to the top posts have broken away from the agreed scales and conditions. Kent County Council have been prominent in this

with private sector type fixed term contracts, high salaries and ancillary benefits such as cars and free private health insurance.

(b) The Officer and Politics

What is particularly noteworthy about the Purple Book is the scant attention paid to the political setting against which backdrop employment in local government takes place. This fundamental aspect of the employment relationship of all senior officers is hardly touched upon. One of the few provisions, which makes reference to this topic states that:

the officer should not be called upon to advise any political group of the employing authority either as to the work of the group or as the the work of the authority, neither shall he be required to attend any meeting of any political group (42).

This attempt to exclude officers from being drawn into party politics by virtue of their office is, directed to form rather than reflecting what in practice happens. It leaves wide open the most important issue i.e. the extent to which officers should be involved in the formulation of policy and even though almost completely ignored this remains the most potent employment issue of all.

According to Widdicombe senior officers of local authorities have three roles: as "professional managers" of service departments, as "advisers" to the Council - on fact, law and policy and as "arbitrators" standing outside political conflicts ensuring that

"council business is conducted fairly and with propriety" (43). Widdicombe noted the difficulty of acting as a neutral adviser to the whole Council and at the same time of giving advice to the ruling party group in following terms -

We recognise . . . however that some senior officers have encountered difficulty in striking a balance between their statutory responsibility to the Council as a whole and the need to give advice to the majority party (43).

However, Widdicombe found that in practice that attendance at party groups "is the exception rather than the rule". The chief executive always attends only in 1% of authorities, attends sometimes in 5%, attends occasionally in 27% and never in 66%. The Widdicombe research revealed that in 40 local authorities arrangements had been devised to provide party groups or leaders with dedicated backup services "generally the officers concerned are at a relatively junior level . . . and do not purport to replicate the role of chief officers." (43)

The officer's participation in party politics in his own right is a related but distinct issue. Until 1990 officers were not subject to legal restraints in pursuing political activities (44) and even these new restrictions are limited to the more senior groups of officials. However, notwithstanding the absence of constraints the overwhelming majority of local government officers did not involve themselves in party politics:

there is a strong convention that senior officers in particular, should refrain from overt support for a political party and even relatively junior employees are well advised not to take part in activities within the boundaries of their own authority's area. If the convention were breached the elected members might lose

confidence that professional advice was untainted by the partisan ingredient which it is their proper function to add to the local government process and that their instructions were being faithfully carried out, and members of the public might not be confident of fair treatment if they held political opinions different from those of the officers handling their affairs. (45)

Thus, it seems that the local government officer is an employee in a rather special situation: his terms and conditions of employment are not directly determined by his employer; the courts regard him as having a duty to the public at large; he may be held financially liable for his own and his Council's activities if the District Auditor initiates action against him; his professional code may bring him into conflict with both his employer and with his duty to the public at large; he can be forced to carry out work contrary to his employers' wishes; he can be sued in the civil courts in a personal capacity even if he has merely been carrying out specific instructions as an employee and finally his involvement in "political", (as contrasted with party political), activity is not recognised in any formal sense despite the fact that "political" issues are the common currency of his work.

(c) The Internal Power Structure

Given that the officer is an employee, who is his employer i.e. to whom does he look as the source of authority? In law an officer is employed by the council, i.e. the elected councillors collectively and formally convened. He is responsible to the corporate body i.e. the council and it is the source of

legitimacy. In most authorities in practice it is the councillors and chief officers who exercise direct day to day control over the affairs of the authority. With officers at lower levels the chief officer, (or even one of his subordinates), would probably be regarded as the person in charge for all practical purposes, although, the Council itself will still be generally recognised as the source of ultimate authority. In the case of chief and very senior officers ambiguities arise in the relationship of the officer to individual councillors, party groups and the Council corporately. Relations with the leading councillors and the party group exercising political control will be crucial to these top officers. The Council, as such, will merely provide a residual legitimacy for decisions emerging through this relationship between the ruling group and the senior officials. However, the concept of an elite of members and officers acting together is not recognised in law.

Individual councillors, usually chairmen of committees, may wield considerable personal power but of necessity they are obliged to work with and through the bureaucracy in order to implement policies or decisions because it is the officers who have access to the technical and administrative resources required to execute policies. Conversely, if a councillor occupies a key position in the political hierarchy the officer is obliged to work with that councillor and accommodate his interests, notwithstanding, any want of legal or administrative recognition accorded to that

particular political office. Differences between influential councillors and senior officers serve to emphasise that the role the politician plays is of crucial importance to the running of an authority. The causes of conflict between member and official may be purely personal, or be the result of a clash between professional and political values or be the result of an overriding professional duty meeting an irresistible political necessity. Regardless of the source of conflict what seems to emerge is that if this relationship is not working harmoniously the lack of mutuality at the top of the political and bureaucratic hierarchies will disrupt the smooth running of the department concerned.

The departmental chief officer, except in very unusual circumstances, will be invested with the full authority of the Council to regulate and supervise the persons employed in and the work of his department. The chief officer accepts responsibility for his department and all its business will be conducted in his name. Even if the politicians are all pervasive in practice, constitutionally this is legally incapable of formal recognition. The chief officer remains the only person with exclusive lawful authority for individual executive action and control over the bureaucracy. All officers in the department will be subject to the authority of the chief officer. The only formal access to the Council or its committees for a junior officer will be through, (and in the name of), the head of department. These lines of discipline and responsibility, (the classic bureaucratic

hierarchy), will be seriously prejudiced by relationships between politicians and subordinate officers except where such contacts are carefully monitored and controlled by the chief officer. In a large urban Council the volume of activity is such that it will be physically impossible for all councillor contacts to be restricted to the chief officer. However, unless the chief officer both knows about and controls such contacts his personal authority could be at risk. If a subordinate officer begins to advise politicians as if he were independent of the chief officer this confuses and distorts the conventional lines of responsibility and ultimately leads to conflict. Apparently recognising the potential damage this could cause councillors and officers seem inclined to observe the conventions. However, political dissatisfaction or a poor relationship with the chief officer might tempt a councillor to breach these unwritten rules and junior officers motivated perhaps by personal ambition may sometimes encourage politicians to do so.

Politicians have the power to appoint officers and to dismiss them but in most cases these powers are delegated to the chief officer. In a large urban authority the members usually will only be involved in hiring and firing those occupying senior posts. The ultimate power of members to dismiss them is a factor which all senior officials are aware being conscious of the risk of losing their jobs not because of misconduct or incompetence but rather as the result of losing the "confidence" of the politicians. This apprehension conditions officers to act with

circumspection particularly when employed by a highly "political" council pursuing strongly ideological goals. Although "open" dismissals at a senior level do occur very often these are disguised as retirements expressed to be "early" or on grounds of "health". In other cases officers may leave voluntarily having seen the writing on the wall seeking more congenial employment elsewhere.

The take over in Manchester City by the so called "hard left" wing of the Labour Group in the early eighties coincided with a remarkable series of departures from the chief officer positions in that authority over a comparatively short period of time. Roy Bee Manchester City Council's former director of recreational services has alleged that he was forced out because he refused to allow a local gay and lesbian rights campaign to have a stall at the city's annual agricultural shown. He is quoted as saying

I was offered early retirement. I did not want to go but I was told I could leave the easyway or the hardway. I was left in no doubt that If I didn't go I would be sacked on trumped up charges of incompetence. Since they assumed power they have got rid of all but two of around 14 heads of department at the town hall (46).

(4) CONCLUSIONS

The law-bound local authority is distinguished by its uncertainties rather than its certainties, the uncertainty of the law in relation to the exercise of discretions, the uncertainties in the various tests of reasonableness and the uncertainties in the roles of the elected councillors and the unelected official. This uncertainty more often than not operates in favour of the permanent official if and when he chooses to take the initiative and utilise his greater familiarity with the legal and procedural frameworks within which local government operates. The law, therefore, does not accord supremacy to the politician and leaves many issues open to be contested between councillors and officers. The constraints of law are more likely to be resented by the politicians than by senior officers with professional backgrounds experienced in the working of bureaucratic organisations. Officers will readily acknowledge the law and respond by seeking to work within its constraints. At the same time officers will strive to maintain professional aims and values. The politicians response is less subtle on the whole, he knows what he wants to achieve and he sees laws and regulations as unnecessary obstructions in his way and he therefore puts pressure on the officers to find the means to circumvent these "obstructions".

Unless the councillors adopt a cogent coherent political position which recognises the legal realities the advantage of the officers is unlikely to be neutralised. This has been evident over recent years when strong ideological issues have been raised by legislation resulting in much confrontational posturing between central government and local authorities. The 1979-83 Conservative government's right to buy provisions, noted above, gave rise to much resentment on the part of many Labour authorities (47). Similarly, the Labour Government's 1976 Education Act which attempted to impose comprehensive education on unwilling Conservative local authorities caused equal resentment. The most notable case was that of Tameside in Greater Manchester with the issues being vigorously contested through the Courts (48). Yet in all these cases the entrenched bureaucracy (which was familiar with a rule bound environment and had no inherent bias against adapting to changes in it) was in a stronger position being in command of the technical complexities of laws and regulations. In this world the amateur politician is almost always at a disadvantage especially if political ideology colours his response. Accordingly officers must be regarded as much more powerful than councillors in such situations.

If councillors decide not to delegate powers to officers to make staff appointments this device will ensure that they are able to exclude candidates unlikely to be compliant to their will or to be well disposed to their political aspirations and having appointed them the politicians also have the power to dismiss.

This creates a climate in which senior officers have to maintain reasonably good personal relations with the councillors for without political "confidence" the long term survival of a chief officer is very doubtful. The results of this overriding requirement are to be seen in the quality of the officers who succeed in local authorities and where "performance" often appears to be far less important than "confidence". There is a strong vein of officers whose main aim is to keep out of trouble and avoid disputes with the politicians as a means of preserving their personal position rather than holding out for professional and departmental goals. Innovative reforming officers run risks if not with a current sympathetic administration perhaps with a future administration after a change of control. All of these factors engender a culture of caution in which many officers who attain senior positions appear to possess an inherent tendency to play it safe. However, if the officer achieves the minimum level of confidence and "survives" neither his conditions of employment nor his pension can be materially affected by any actions of his employer and he has the general protection of the employment laws, the specific protections of the Purple Book Conditions and the support of local government trade unions and of the professional associations. He has no incentives to over achieve because until recently performance pay and other similar benefits were almost unknown. There is therefore a bias to mediocrity.

The most remarkable aspect of this legal framework is the potential it provides for officers to exercise individual power. The vagueness of much of the law and its failure to define roles and place limits on the legitimacy of the actions of the bureaucrats has all the hallmarks of the English constitutional approach. There are few written rules in local government but unlike the constitution and the common law conventions and precedents are not established to the same degree of certainty. As a result politicians and bureaucrats have to negotiate their own rules and outcomes therefore depend much more on individual and group motivation than on organisational structure or law. None of the models considered in Chapter Two admit of the role of law as a direct factor in the councillor officer relationship and to that extent all the models are deficient. The political dominance model appears to be founded on an implied assumption that constitutionally the elected councillors are accorded the dominant position and as we have seen this is not the case. Equally, the power sharing model if constitutionally based would be expected to be reflected in the legal-constitutional structure of local government. However, the legal basis for power sharing is not well established. Therefore, at this stage we are not in a position to prefer any of the models on the basis of legal and constitutional criteria.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESOURCES OF POLITICIANS AND BUREAUCRATS

(1) INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two reviewed a number of models of councillor officer relations concluding that none of them were fully convincing. At the same time considerable doubt was cast on the traditional model of policy making politicians and administering bureaucrats. Chapter Three examined the legal-constitutional framework of local government and concluded that the law was far from decisive as a means of defining either the legitimate or the actual roles of two groups of actors although it was found to have a more important role than usually assumed and was more likely to favour officials than elected representatives. This Chapter now extends the review of councillor officer relations from that legal-constitutional base to encompass the working relationship of politicians and bureaucrats. These relations develop on different levels and in different arenas with both internal interactions as well as interactions with a variety of external influences. All of these interactive relationships revolve around resources and the use and distribution of those resources is the key to control for with control resources can be directed and outcomes can be determined. Resources are therefore the theme of this Chapter and we need to know how resources are distributed who controls them and how they are used. Do particular objectives require the control and use of particular resources or does the control of resources dictate the ends? Is it that politicians and officers are looking for different kinds of involvement and are wanting different things out of the system

or are they just seeking different aspects of the same thing? In seeking to prevail what is more important the control of resources or the articulation of preferences?

In order to pursue these questions a framework is required and Rhodes' model of intergovernment relations provides a basis for constructing that framework (1). Central to the Rhodes analysis is the concept of "power-dependence" in which he suggests that all organisations are to some extent dependent upon other organisations for resources and that in order to achieve their respective goals organisations have to exchange resources. He suggests that irrespective of the degree of domination secured by an actor there will always be an element of dependence on others. Rhodes identifies five sets of resources relevant to the power-dependence relationship between local and central government, these are: constitutional/legal resources; hierarchical resources; financial resources; political resources and informational resources.

Of these five resource areas the first, constitutional/legal, has been considered in the preceding chapter. The concept of hierarchical resources, that is the holding of organisational positions which confer authority to issue commands and obtain compliance, is capable to being used as it stands as is the political resource of access to decision making powers and the legitimacy deriving from election. Rhodes' financial resource area is not directly applicable to councillor officer relations

although it is the local politicians who ultimately control the financial resources and therefore this is an adjunct to the political resource element. The last category of Rhodes is informational resources which for the purpose of this Chapter is encompassed within professional resources on the basis that one of the principal resources of officers is control over data and informational systems. A final category of resource which is proposed is that of external resources. As Rhodes' financial resources are partly in the hands of an external body (i.e. central government) so with our model both councillors and officers have to relate to a wide variety of external interests who variously exercise influence on them and the local policy process.

Within this framework of resources the politicians and the officials pursue their group and individual goals and doing so Rhodes suggests that there are three elements in play: interests, expectations and values -

'interests' refers to the stakes of individuals in the organisation; a stake commonly expressed in terms of demands for retaining or increasing control over the resources of the organisation. 'Expectations' refers to the behaviour expected of an individual in a particular position within the organisation by himself and by others. 'Values' refers to the most general evaluative standards used by the decision-maker to interpret the environment and his relationship to it (2).

In order to examine these issues this Chapter is organised as follows: section two considers goals and role expectations, sections three to six review the four resource areas noted above and section seven draws conclusions about councillor officer relations, resources and goals.

(2) GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

The goals and expectations of councillors and officers are reflected in the ways in which they relate to each other and how they use the resources available to them in pursuit of their interests, collective and individual. This section considers the goals and expectations of the two groups and assesses how these are formed and how these affect relationships and resource assignments.

(a) Goals

Politicians and officers have to address three sets of goals, as individuals, collectively as a group and corporately as the local authority. The individual has to effect a reconciliation between his personal goals and those of the group to which he belongs. At the inter-group level conflicts have to be reconciled or eliminated at the political-professional interface in order to establish corporate goals. The process of resolution is one of negotiating and bargaining the product of which will be an agreed set of goals and these goals provide the framework for making professional and political decisions.

As noted in Chapter Two there is substantial body of opinion that officers engage in policy making and councillors are motivated by the political significance of issues rather than being guided by assumed distinctions between policy and administration. There

is also the suggestion that the politicians lack of interest in "policy" is the product of their lack of the skills and resources to engage in the policy making process on equal terms with the officers. In such cases it is suggested that the officer group have the opportunity to advance their sectional interests and express their values by setting the corporate goals without effective challenge from the politicians. Although there is evidence of policy making officials there is little evidence to suggest that officers engage in party politics as such. However, it is undoubtedly true that officers operate in an almost wholly political environment and have a close relationship with the elected politicians in whom formal authority is vested.

Officers using their organisational resources bring to the agenda and goal setting process sets of professional interests and values which have to be reconciled with those of the politicians. The politicians need a counterbalancing set of supporting resources and organised objectives reflecting these values together with the cognitive capacity to advance their collective position against the officers. To achieve this each group has to work through the structures of the institution and within the overall constraints of constitutional legitimacy which sets the limits within which they both can act. The corporate goals which emerge will reflect the relative strength of the two groups which in its turn depends on the effectiveness with which they have articulated their respective aims and used the resources available to them in order to secure their preferences. Goals

which emerge out of this process can be the product of competitive struggle in which one side or other achieves domination, or they may be the product of compromise and bargaining between the two groups or one group may have ceded an area of interest to the other because it poses no threat to its collective aims. Within this goal setting process councillors and officers adopt various roles and it is to a consideration of these to which we now turn.

(b) The Role of Councillors

Councillors are not an homogeneous group, so what are their interests and expectations, what values do they bring and how do they see their role? Elcock suggests that "councillors are still the same kind of people that served on local authorities before reorganisation" (3) and claims in support of his contention a comparison between Maud (4) - a pre-re-organisation study - and the Robinson Committee on the Remuneration of Councillors (5) - a post re-organisation study. Ashford makes a similar point commenting that councillors continue to be "elderly male and middle class" motivated by a sense of civic responsibility rather than a wish to change "the aims and tempo of local government" (6). The Widdicombe Report (7) has largely confirmed this earlier research and the opinions noted above, finding that only 26% of all councillors are under 45, only 7% of all councillors are under 35, only 19% of all councillors are female and only 4% of all councillors are unemployed.

These figures of course conceal some striking variations such as the proportion of Liberal Party Councillors under 45, (49%), and the fact that in the metropolitan and London Boroughs the average age is dropping whereas in the rural shires it is increasing. Widdicombe also found that the proportion of councillors who were public sector workers (36%) matched the proportion of the working population at large (37%) and that 10% of councillors also worked for a local authority although more than half of these were either teachers or lecturers. Widdicombe noted that:

The employment and social characteristics of councillors also vary by political party. Labour councillors are four times more likely to be unemployed than are Conservative councillors. Half of Conservative councillors are from the two highest soci-economic groups as compared with only a quarter of Labour councillors. However, even Labour councillors are greatly over represented in these groups when compared to the population as a whole. (7)

With regard to the role orientation of councillors Newton suggests that they fall into three main groupings, a trustee group, a delegate group and a politico group:

The trustee regards himself as a relatively free and independent agent who is elected to follow his conscience exercise his own judgement and act according to his own assessment of the situation. In contrast the delegate chooses to give greater weight to the wishes and views of the electorate. The third type, the politico tries to fuse or combined these two so that he is both trustee and delegate either trying to balance them at one and the same time or choosing first one then other according to the situation. (8)

Within these groupings Newton identifies five role types: "the parochials", "the peoples agents", "policy advocates", "policy brokers" and "policy spokesmen" (9). A different analysis of role types was produced by Bains drawing on the evidence submitted to him and having reference to evidence given to the Maud Committee and the Redcliffe-Maud Royal Commission. Bains was also assisted by advisory panels of serving local government officers. From these sources Bains (10) identified five categories of councillor: those interested in policy matters; those interested in welfare type activities; those wanting to "manage" on strict commercial principles; those wishing to serve the community in a general sense and those whose main objective was to limit spending.

According to Newton, the parochials "combine in tight cluster, the delegate, the ward and the individual problem orientations" and they see themselves as a "special sort of unpaid social worker or ombudsman" with their main duty being to take up individual problems involving local authority services. This is Bains "welfare" councillor. Newton's peoples agents have strong similarities to the parochials in that their interests lie principally "with individual problems rather than general policy issues". Whereas "parochials tend to regard themselves more as public servants, peoples agents tend to see themselves more as protectors of the citizens of the city" in the belief that "the council member has to protect the general good and the common

interest". Bains "community" councillors are similar to the peoples agents. Newton's policy advocates are more politically committed than either the parochials or the peoples agents combining "the trustee role with a preference for policy matters" and "for governing the city as a whole". Newton considered that compared to the first two types they were ideologues who discussed "their council work within the context of a more or less explicit set of political beliefs and values". Policy brokers are akin to policy advocates in many respects having a strong interest in policy and the government of the city as a whole "but unlike the advocates they prefer the politico to the trustee role" and "are rather more likely to see themselves as moderates who perform the classical political brokerage role of mediator and reconciler of different interests".

Newton's final role category, the policy spokesman, has many similarities to the parochial except that instead of representing individuals and their personal problems the policy spokesman "speaks on behalf of the people of his ward and other people like them" regarding themselves as delegates of their ward but with an interest in general policy issues and the governing of the city as a whole. Unlike Newton Bains makes no distinctions between categories of "policy" councillor so that the third and fifth categories of Bains have no direct equivalents in Newton's scheme. This may in part be accounted for by Bain's much wider sample of opinion which included the shire counties and the rural districts areas of traditional conservative/independent control

where keeping down spending and more recently business type management have long been the driving force in contrast to the big urban areas with a quite different culture even when under Conservative control.

It is most unlikely that in any given local authority all the elected members would have the same role orientation and one would expect to find different groups of councillors. Newton found in Birmingham that "almost half the council members interviewed opted for the trustee role the remainder splitting equally between delegate and politico roles" (11). Bains on the other hand made no attempt to suggest where the balance would lie between his "constituency" and his "policy" groups (12). However, one would expect the "policy" group would usually be the smaller. In general the roles played by politicians will reflect their political interests and values the and expectations of party and electorate. These aspects are considered further in the section below on Political Resources.

(c) The Role of Officers

There appears to be little specific research into how officers conceptualise their roles, one of the exceptions being Laffin's study (13). Although officers have responded to most researchers by resorting to the conventional wisdom that they are administrators not policy makers there is enough evidence to suggest that this is far from the truth. Officers appear to fall

into three broad categories. The first group includes the chief and very senior officers who inhabit the corridors of power in the Town Hall, these officers have regular contact with elected members not only within the formal structure of the authority but also through a wide variety of informal contacts. The second group consists of the middle ranking officers who occasionally penetrate the world of the first group but more usually their contacts are limited to their fellow officers, the users of the councils services and external interests. This is the group at the sharp end who have to implement policy and deliver services and who by the nature of their work have an area of discretion, the exercise of which cannot always be pre-determined or circumscribed by those exercising authority from above in either the political or the bureaucratic hierarchies. The third group possess neither the organisational position and opportunities of the first nor the implementary discretion of the second group. Usually they have either no contact or minimal contact with the elected members and either no contact or low level contact with the users of council services. Usually their work can be controlled in a formalised bureaucratic manner within a rigid chain of command.

It is with the role perceptions of the first group we are primarily concerned and Laffin is of particular relevance because his interviewees were metropolitan district chief officers. They were described by him in this way

Chief officers usually have a commitment to their service and this reinforced by a commitment to their department as an organisation leads them to involve themselves in the policy process. In this way their policy role can be seen as a function of what others especially the members expect of them and their own concern to pursue their professional values (14).

Laffin goes on to suggest that there are three role types for chief officers reflecting the main patterns of expected policy and discretionary behaviour. The first of Laffin's role types is the "Instrumental Policy Role". This role type accords with the perception of the officer merely as an instrument of the elected council and corresponds to the orthodox policy-administration convention. In this role the officers discretion is limited to purely technical or detailed administrative matters with the politicians closely supervising their overall activities. It assumes not only that politicians know what policies they want but also that they have a detailed appreciation of how to carry those policies out. Therefore in accordance with this role type the politicians are said to formulate clear policies with officers giving their full support to those policies. The councillors instruct officers to implement these delegating only the necessary administrative and technical authority to carry out the specified policy which the officials then implement with minimal discretion in accordance with the specific instructions of the politicians.

The second of Laffin's role types is the "Interpreter Policy Role". In this typology elected members are not expected to be clear and definite when expressing their policy preferences to officers and at best only to have a very generalised awareness of the administrative and technical restraints on policy. The officers role is seen as one in which he not only assists in the diagnosis of problems and the formulation of policy but also that during the implementory phase he exercises an appreciable degree of discretion. Laffin suggests that where the politicians hold general and vague policy objectives which they are unable to express because of their lack of skills or informational resources they look to the officers to work these objectives out for them but to do this in a way which has regard to the politicians general preferences; in so doing the officers are exercising much more than an administrative and technical discretion.

The third and last of Laffin's role types is that of the "Policy Advocate". Here the conventional relationship between the politician and the bureaucrat is reversed and the officers play the dominant role initiating and formulating policy even though the members remain, de jure, the policy makers. In this "dictatorship of the official" role the elected members are considered incapable of grasping the complexities of policy formulation and implementation and that their interest lies in detailed matters with an immediate human interest and not with

abstract problems of policy. Therefore in this type the councillors have few or no policy objectives and expect the officers to formulate policies for them. In doing this the officers enjoy very considerable discretion in initiating and implementing policies.

The main motivation of officers at this level, whatever the role typology, is the pursuit of their professional interests to which they bring professional values and expectations. These are considered at greater length below in the section on Professional Resources.

(3) HIERARCHICAL RESOURCES

The achievement of goals is inextricably linked to the use of resources and in our adaption of the Rhodes framework hierarchical resources have been identified as the first of the key resource areas we need to examine. It is an arena shared by both politicians and officers and it includes all the formal-legal decision making structures of a local authority. Politicians occupy political offices within the hierarchy of the local authority; they will be appointed to various committees and sub-committees and all councillors will be entitled to attend the full council meetings. A mayor or chairman of the Council will be elected by the councillors, the party groups will elect leaders and the leader of the controlling party group will become the leader of the council. The majority group will also use their voting strength to secure the chairmanship of the committees of the Council. By occupying these positions the politicians obtain control of the formal decision making processes of the local authority. A few local authorities have no party political control and are held by "independents", however, this is an increasingly rare breed almost wholly confined to a limited number of rural areas (15). In the urban areas and the larger authorities a more recent phenomenon has been the "hung" council; in such situations the various parties and the officers have to negotiate a settlement regarding the distribution of power and agree administrative procedures.

Officers occupy posts in the bureaucratic hierarchy of the Council as paid servants of the Council. The more senior the post the more influential it is likely to be, although as noted below in section (5) of this Chapter (Professional Resources) not all departments and professions are of equal standing. As a result a relatively junior officer in the Treasurer's department, for example, may carry more weight than a more senior officer in the Parks Department. Nevertheless, within a department, because of the strict hierarchical structure, seniority in rank is the most relevant factor in an individuals ability to influence the course of events.

(a) The Formal Processes

The decision making processes of a local authority are shared by politicians and officers. Traditionally each department of the bureaucracy was matched by a committee of politicians but the Maud/Bains management proposals of the late sixties and early seventies have been widely adopted resulting in fewer committees with much broader remits. At the same time departments have been merged or grouped together on a directorate basis (eg, technical departments such as planning, engineering and architecture gathered together under one supremo).

The committee is the forum where politicians exercise their decision taking functions although the Council meeting is where formal legal authority lies. In a big city authority the

council will meet around every six weeks, although some councils meet every four weeks. This is to be contrasted with many county councils whose council meetings are usually quarterly. Extensive delegations are normally given by councils to committees, sub-committees and chief officers investing them with power to act without the need for ratification by the council. The objective of this is to secure the expeditious discharge of business so that the council meeting tends to be used as a place for political debate and invective rather than as the forum for decision taking. However in a "hung" Council it may be the only effective forum and this also applies in some smaller councils which grant few delegations. Even if extensive delegations have been given to committees, certain matters can only be decided by the full Council, for example, the setting of the rate. Officers do not directly participate in the proceedings of the full Council, this is the exclusive province of the politicians in contrast to the committees where members and officers commonly share the floor.

The preparation of committee agendas is an officer function but power to call meetings resides with the elected politicians. The proceedings of committees are regulated not only by general legal requirements but also by the Standing Orders of the council that is the rules of procedure. Thus, the chairman of a committee is obliged by law to observe and follow the agenda prepared by the officers and he cannot introduce new items of business without the requisite prior notice being given. This

gives the officer considerable influence over procedural and legal issues, the lawyer, for example, may intervene to rule the chairman and committee out of order and he will interpret the law and advise the councillors what they can or cannot discuss. The decisions of these meetings are also recorded by officers. If a committee is acting under delegated powers because its decisions are legally effective from the moment they are made officers have the ability to implement them even before the minutes recording the decisions have been printed. In such situations subsequent objections by the elected members to the minutes are rendered ineffectual. Even if minuted decisions of committees require formal confirmation at a full council meeting before they can be actioned (and are thus available for scrutiny by the politicians) subtleties of language and construction are often employed. This results in ambiguities which officers interpret (as usually intended) in a flexible manner.

Even during the proceedings of a committee officers have a considerable role to play in its deliberations. Not only is it an officer agenda but the solid core of all agendas are the officer's reports, prepared by officers on information gathered, selected and edited by officers and presented to the committee by officers. Even during a committee debate between councillors the officer has the opportunity to influence with "the well time remark, the cautionary aside to the chairman, even the occasional sigh or grimace which might prevent the councillors taking a decision unwelcome to the officers" (16). Although

practice varies between authorities, it is quite common for the officers to take an active part in committee debates the extent of such interventions being dependent on the relative strengths of the chairman and the officers, their personal relationships and the prevailing "culture" of the authority. It is apparent, therefore, that there is a degree of power vested in each group; the politicians have formal control over financial resources and by their votes they have the legal and political authority to determine the issues. However, officers have opportunities to exercise considerable influence throughout the process, in the identification and presentation of issues, in the debates leading to decisions, in recording decisions and in the implementation of decisions.

(b) The Bureaucratic Machine

Local government bureaucracy is organised around specific functions. Until the corporate and managerialist concepts took hold in the nineteen sixties the standard pattern was for each function to be discharged by a separate department. Although this is no longer the case the individual professions are still jealous of intrusions into their separate identities. The departmental ethos therefore still persists but in a modified form. Departments process nearly all of the inputs to the authority and outputs are almost always its exclusive province. The ways in which responsibilities are distributed between departments are more difficult to describe and it is often hard to discern the logic which lies behind the administrative

structure of some local authorities. In many cases, one suspects, these result from either short term incremental changes necessitated by circumstances, or from the imposition of the individual will of a politician or a chief officer. In the latter case these individuals manipulate the structure to suit tactical or personal goals. The interest lies as much in their ability to do so as in the resulting illogicality of their actions.

Despite the "reforms" of the sixties and seventies the institution of local government remains one formed around the discharge of specific functions. The internal departmental structure is typically a chief officer at the top, with a second tier deputy and/or a third tier assistant and then below them a descending series of levels of authority and competence. At each level the scope of an officers authority and the duties and responsibilities to be discharged are defined and each level is subject to the supervision and control of the level above it. The department operates within the standing orders of the Council, the national service conditions (17), local conditions of employment and discipline and the management instructions from the chief officer. These are all applied universally and constitute a body of impersonal rules and standardised procedures. Reports and formal advice usually goes out only in the name of the chief officer and his view formally prevails. These organisational arrangements fully accord with Weber's concept of rational legal authority within a bureaucratic organisation.

This classic pattern was not consciously adopted by local government but has emerged as the result of an evolutionary process in response to operational circumstances.

Consistency and predictability are assured because of the preponderance of rules and routine procedures (and because control rests) upon the recognition of the legitimate right of a particular officer within the hierarchy to exercise such authority. This right is automatically attributed to an office by virtue of its status position within the organisation and because of its technical competence (18).

Given such an organisational structure those at the top are in a position to ensure that their directives are carried out at each descending level of responsibility within the department and by using their authority to control the flow of information and access to sources these senior officers exercise considerable power. This is, therefore, an important resource for the officer group.

(c) The Political-Professional Management Structure

The senior officials have to have lines of communication to the politicians outside the confines of the formal (and public) committee system. Without a mechanism of exchange between them local government would simply not operate although the ways in which these exchanges are maintained and regulated are almost as diverse as the number of local authorities ranging from the highly formalised and structured to a loose informality. Whether an authority has a corporate, an intermediate or a non corporate structure, it remains true that the control over the information on which decisions are made is initially almost always in the

hands of the officers. The politicians need access to this data and if they wish to challenge the bureaucracy their mastery of informational sources has to equal that of the officers. Therefore the system of communications is crucial to political effectiveness. The power-dependence relationship is brought in to sharp focus at this point; the officers hold most of the informational resources which the politicians require and the officer's retention of exclusive control accords them power over the politicians. The political-professional management structures are intended by the politicians to wrest control over this vital resource from the bureaucrats. With corporate management which collectivises and keeps the officers at arms length confining the interface with the politicians to formal settings, the politicians are likely to be at a disadvantage. Unless councillors have the time and the ability to assimilate and understand the issues they will not be on an equal footing with the officer group. Thus, councillors will always be at a greater disadvantage than under the old system of direct one-to-one relationships in which the elected member's lack of expertise was compensated for by close personal contact which enabled the more perspicacious amongst them to detect attempts to pull the wool over their eyes or blind them with science. It was the realisation of this deficiency which has led to politicians operating within complex management structures in large authorities to appoint special advisers. Most notable in this process was the Labour majority group on the GLC in the nineteen seventies (19).

Some commentators take the view that corporate management has weakened the political control of local authorities and that the encouragement of the corporate approach was part of a wider strategy emanating from Whitehall which was intended to prevent local authorities articulating grass root demands for local services. Saunders suggests that central government is motivated to remove key policy-making areas from local government to ensure that these are insulated from "popular pressures". He claims that the introduction of corporate management within local authorities "has reduced the influence of elected members, removed key areas of policy making . . . and facilitated the development of close links between public authorities and private sector interests . . ." and that this approach has had the effect of de-politicising issues (20). Even if one were to accept the premise that central government views corporate management in these terms, it is to be doubted that corporate management is a significant factor in limiting democratic control of local government. Decisions about the organisational structure of a local authority are in the hands of the elected members. In many ways the politicians are probably less circumscribed in determining such issues than they are in intervening in the internal processes of the departmental and professional sub-organisations of the authority. Organisational structure is a once and for all decision which politicians with majority control can impose even against the wishes of the officers. What in practical terms they cannot do is control all

the day to day activities of a department or intervene in the vast range of professional decisions made every day. The Council can determine policy, impose discipline and change the organisational structure of the authority but the detailed minutiae of departmental business will always be beyond their reach. This gives officers an opportunity to clawback some of what they lose in organisational reforms imposed on them. It is the distinction between the macro and micro levels of the institution.

The ability of councillors to impose organisational change is demonstrated by the experience of Birmingham and Hull in the nineteen seventies. Although the management mania of the sixties epitomised by Maud and Bains was not universally adopted most authorities did take some steps towards reform even if some of them had only a brief flirtation with these concepts. An excellent illustration of the latter group is Hull, which for the three years prior to the 1974 reorganisation had a corporate management system. Yet post re-organisation it returned to a very traditional structure in which corporatism was eradicated not just in name but also in fact and has maintained this approach into the late eighties. In Birmingham the corporate management structure was abandoned after less than three years following the election of a conservative administration. Thus, Labour Hull under Sir Leo Shultz and Conservative Birmingham under Neville Bosworth rejected corporatism at about the same time probably for much the same reasons. Haynes found in

Birmingham that corporate management had caused feelings of "resentment and anxiety" amongst officers as well as councillors from both parties because it was "completely alien to the managerial environment and administrative culture with which the participants were familiar" (21). In this context it is interesting to note the views of Derrick Hender formerly Chief Executive of the West Midlands Metropolitan County Council who was associated with much innovative work in the field of corporate management in Coventry prior to the 1974 re-organisation:

The biggest disappointment of my life without doubt is that the ways we make decisions and manage are not much better than when I came into local government. I should have liked to have seen more experimentation with management..... But generally after re-organisation authorities went back to their bad old ways despite Bains. I'm not sure national or local politicians are interested in management practice with a political approach. The professional officer, generally speaking, is still not interested in management (22).

With corporate management politicians and officers have to operate through the Party Group, the Chief Officer Group and through a system of structured political/bureaucratic meetings. However, if an authority operates through either a traditional or intermediate organisational structure this will emphasise functional differentiation and fragmented working relationships between individual politicians and officers. Thus, the managerial mechanisms for controlling the exchange of informational resources and the political interpretation of issues is a key point in the process and the balance struck will impact on the ability of either the politicians or the professionals to secure their policy preferences.

(d) Chairman and Chief Officers

The relationship between chief officers and committee chairmen is one of the crucial points of interaction between the politicians and the bureaucracy and contacts between them will be many and varied. They will meet in casual unstructured situations, for example, meetings in the corridor, or in informal and private situations such as in the chief officer's room. In private but formal situations they will meet with others present, for example a chairman's briefing session. Meetings will also take place in structured situations but with the public and press excluded, for example meetings of committees of the council from which the public have been lawfully excluded. The ultimate forum for meetings, when their relationship is on display for all to see, is at formal public committee meetings of the Council

There is likely to be a reasonably free exchange of views between the chairman and the chief officer in private one-to-one situations which may well include revealing confidential information regarding bureaucratic or political rivalries. The two of them will possibly discuss policies and decisions with a frankness neither would employ in front of other councillors or officers let alone in public. This aspect of the relationship is therefore a very private one and how it operates and the candour of the exchanges depends on the extent to which the chief officer and the chairman have confidence in the other. In formal but closed situations the relationship between chief officer and

chairman will be more circumspect but one would still expect differences of view to be articulated with varying degrees of openness. In public situations their conduct may well be transformed with the chief officer's role apparently being wholly subordinate to that of the chairman.

Politicians recognise that "the close working relationship between the chairman of a committee and his chief officer . . . (represents) a partnership of immense value from which policy (is) often initiated" (23) with each side acknowledging that in order to achieve their respective departmental and political goals they need each other. This brings the politicians and the bureaucrats closer together each gaining from the relationship but also each having to give to the other in order to attain their separate but often co-incidental objectives. Although a strong chairman potentially has the power to subordinate and silence his officers this is not an option usually adopted by astute politicians. The experienced chairman knows that if he alienates the chief officer it will be very much harder for him to deliver his promises to his party and to the electorate. The exception to this is if the politicians goals are actively negative (for example, closure or privatisation where the elimination of existing services is the object of the exercise), then alienation is of less importance. Paradoxically the chief officer will be aware that in order to achieve his professional and departmental goals he needs the support of a strong chairman possessing sufficient acumen and political weight to ensure

first, that his department's programmes find a place on the politicians' agenda and secondly, that the resources and spending priorities to implement them are secured. Without this support the chief officer is likely to find himself in a weak position relative to other departments if they have effective political advocates working for them. This provides a strong imperative for the officer to reach an accommodation with his chairman or with those elected members who are willing to lobby his departmental cause in the political arena.

Within each local authority there will be distinct differences in the ways in which the chief officer chairman relationship operates. These differences will not be attributable to organisational structure, politics or professionalism which will be common factors but will arise from the interaction of the personalities involved. Among both chief officers and chairmen, who are thrust together by chance rather than by choice, there will be in the way of things some strong powerful personalities and some weak ineffectual ones. These random combinations not unexpectedly, throw up very different results in performance and style. The extent to which a chairman can influence the officers is very much a question of personal qualities because "a chairman is rarely likely to be the superior of an officer either in professional or social standing and if he seeks an ascendancy it must be based on personal or political factors or both" (24). The way in which the chairman reaches the chair is also likely to be a factor in whether he gains ascendancy, for if chairmanship

is merely a reward for seniority, rather than for political skills or mastery in a particular field, "there is a danger that he may bring the weariness, rather than the wisdom, of years to the position" (24). Similarly a chief officer may have emerged on exactly the same Buggins turn principle with no other distinction than having served the department for many years and kept out of trouble more often than not by maintaining the lowest possible profile. If, subsequently, a new dynamic committee chairman is appointed who seeks change and innovation the chief officer chairman relationship is likely to come under severe strain.

Although the move to corporate management was meant to replace these service related, semi-autonomous, one-to-one relationships the evidence suggests that in most authorities this has not happened and that even within authorities with a full blooded corporate structure on paper, in practice, close relationships between individuals have, of necessity, been maintained (Interviews). There are a number of reasons for this which are partly "cultural" conditioning and partly the recognition that programme area committees which dispense with the single service relationships of chief officer and chairman and replace it with a collective structure make it "more difficult to answer the question 'who is to blame?' (or 'who is to take the blame?') in an unequivocal fashion" (25). The corollary, of course, is who is to take the credit and as personal advancement is likely to motivate officers as much as politicians, collectivism has a

natural enemy in vanity. The working relationship between chairmen and chief officers therefore remains as the primary mechanism for mediating the political and bureaucratic demands on the system because the prevailing cultural ethos in most local authorities demands it. The reasons for the abandonment of corporate management in Birmingham was the failure to bring about a change in "the values, beliefs, goals and expectations held by the human members of the organisation" (26) without which procedural and structural changes would not work.

(e) Conclusions

Hierarchical resources provide as many opportunities for officers to dominate as they offer politicians. Each side has a dependence on the other and it is the effectiveness with which they pursue their collective interests in the power-dependence relationship which will determine outcomes. In that process if either side achieves ascendancy personal factors are likely to be of relevance.

(4) POLITICAL RESOURCES

The second of the resource areas in our analytical framework is that occupied by the political parties and the politicians. Political resources ultimately derive from the relationship between the electorate and the elected which in its turn is shaped by the position local authorities occupy within society particularly in their role as major providers of services to the local communities they serve. The primary source of the elected councillors power is that accorded by electoral legitimacy so that if hierarchical and legal-constitutional factors depict a situation in which the officer looms large within the political setting the politicians dominate. The politicians control through granting or withholding the resources necessary for the bureaucrat to function and therefore irrespective of the power officers possess to influence outcomes in the end the councillor has the fundamental facilitating or restraining control. This being so it should be political interests, values and goals which prevail, however, as noted above possession of resources may not be enough to attain these objectives and it is the effectiveness with which these are articulated and the resources used which determines the outcomes. Therefore, the questions which need to be addressed are, what constitutes a political resource, and how are they used? Four aspects of local government politics are considered local policy politics, local parties, the party group and party groups relationship with the bureaucracy.

(a) Local Policy Politics

In the large urban areas, with their long tradition of organised party politics, strong political direction and control has been their hallmark. These authorities are political bodies elected on political mandates and run by politicians, their decisions are inevitably political in nature and political considerations must affect the balance of the decisions they reach. Such authorities rely on the political legitimacy of election which

..... brings with it a set of beliefs and attitudes. It provides the elected councillors with a felt authority and a felt legitimacy for independent action that goes beyond the authority and legitimacy for independent action felt by, for example, an appointed member of a health authority. In our society the fact of election brings with it norms that affect the beliefs and behaviour of those elected and of those responsible to them (27).

Gyford considers that there are four types of local government politics: policy politics, (ie which policy will be adopted); partisan politics (ie which party will win a given contest); system politics, (ie the issue of what structures and procedures are instituted in order to produce decisions), and patronage politics, (ie the distribution of assignments within the decision making system). Whilst it is Gyford's conclusion that "most observers of local government will admit that partisan, system and patronage politics do occur" he was more cautious on the question of local policy politics. (28)

Although it has been widely contended that "local authorities have little discretion as to what policy decisions they take because they are not free agents but are effectively mere tools of the central government", Gyford dismisses this argument; he advances much the same reasons as Stewart (29) and Dearlove (30), namely, that the statutory and administrative controls exercised by central government are not all embracing and that opportunities for local choice continue to exist. This question, however, remains very much on the agenda because of the Thatcher decade of limiting spending and reducing the power and influence of local government. The effect, for example, of removing planning and economic development functions to Urban Development Corporations whilst restricted to a handful of authorities limits choice on a massive scale. Ending the role of local authorities as the primary providers of social housing if eventually achieved will remove the largest function at district level. Permitting schools to opt out of the local authority system if carried through on a large scale will emasculate education authorities.

However, as long as there is some degree of autonomy from Whitehall it is difficult to contend that there are no local policy politics. Thus, for example, although in the rate capping of the nineteen eighties the financial constraints were sometimes severe, (at least compared with the spending aspirations of the authorities), there still remained an element of choice, and in exercising that choice, however circumscribed, those discretionary decisions represent locally determined policy.

Accordingly the capacity to make policy decisions for the locality is a considerable power-resource which is formally in the hands of the politicians. In the nineteen eighties evidence of the ability of local politicians to strike individual positions contrary to national party policies and contrary to the general trend of similar local authorities is well evidenced by such councils as Liverpool and Lambeth. In the same period the Greater London Council showed that it was possible to use a local authority to articulate quite distinctive sets of policies at variance with central party policy and to use the Council as a platform for a different political emphasis. Thus, it can be seen that the ability to provide specifically local policies is a power-resource available to the politicians.

(b) Political Parties

The main motor of politics is the political party and in the large urban authorities partisan politics is the order of the day in the traditions of the old county boroughs

Politics in the county boroughs was almost completely a partisan business. Even where the performance of the parties was uneven, with one or other of the major parties dominating the Council over a period of time, electoral competition was typically intense (31).

This fierce partisanship seems to have strengthened over the years since reorganisation (32) and the question therefore is are these the politics of the locality or those of the centre, are

local parties accountable to the centre through the national political hierarchy or is there a system of local politics which is distinct and autonomous? Gyford and James suggest that

none of the parties possess any mechanisms whereby local politicians may be forced to comply with the wishes of the party at the centre, be it at Westminster or at Headquarters or indeed of the party at large convened in annual conference (33).

If one assumes that there are no constitutional means of control, are local parties influenced from the centre? Gyford and James suggest that the Conservative party with its leadership clearly focused in Parliament is more likely to heed the call to rally round the national leadership than in the case of the Labour party where the National Executive provides an equally strong alternative to the leadership of the Parliamentary Party. They concluded that the financial levers which can be exercised by political parties at the centre on local parties are slight, leaving only political and informational resources as areas where the national parties are able to directly influence local party organisations. This serves to confirm that there is local autonomy and that local parties do have the capacity to take local discretionary action further emphasising that these political resources are local and their use is locally determined.

(c) The Party Group

If there is a local policy politics it is the party group which is the principal mechanism for translating political goals into a

tangible reality. The interface between the political parties and their councillors can be quite complex; all the parties have different forms of internal relationships although a common feature is the party group which is the key point of control in councils with strong party political representation. It is where the leader and the committee chairmen derive their day to day authority and it is the place where all the important decisions are made.

When elected on a party ticket a new councillor joins the party group on the council; this group is not recognised in a legal sense nor, in many cases even in the council's standing orders. When mentioned at formal meetings of the council the group is likely to be referred to in an oblique way it will be said, for example, that such and such a matter can be "considered in another place". It is therefore set apart from the legal-constitutional process of the council and according to Gyford in the case of the Conservative Party "there is little emphasis on formal ties between the party and group. Policy making is the prerogative of the group in the final analysis". However, in the case of the Labour Party he suggests that the situation "is much more highly formalised, at least on paper" contrasting the control the local party has in determining the policy to be put forward at local elections "in consultation with the Labour group" with the requirement that there should be no "attempt to instruct councillors as to how they should act at group and council meeting". Gyford suggests that these

provisions have been a source of conflict between local labour parties and party groups in a number of local authorities (34).

The party group provides a forum in which general policy positions can be debated in private, differences can be thrashed out and political decisions taken. The deliberations of the group usually include discussing, and in effect predetermining, how the group is to vote on issues arising on the formal business agendas of the council and its committees. However the group serves not only to articulate specific responses but is also the channel for expressing the collective view in a more generalised way thereby providing the overall political direction to the affairs of the council. It occupies the crucial position in the decision making process and it takes on a special significance if the party has an overall majority on the council because by imposing party discipline it can vote through any proposals approved by the group.

The contribution a majority party group makes to the smooth running of the administrative machine is underlined by the recent experience of "hung" Councils. The then Chief Executive of Cheshire County Council Robin Wendt suggested that the decision making process had become much longer because "in a hung Council all party groups participate equally and actively" and at the same time the process of decision making had also become much more unpredictable because the security of majority party rule had disappeared. As a result between meetings chairmen were

unable to take urgent decisions and officers were left without positive political guidance. Wendt advances the opinion that "achieving policy success on a hung council is not related to holding office" (35) the implication being that hierarchical positions and the party group are no longer effective. Because the political processes are more complex the officer has to become involved in the "Inter-party dialogue" and has to develop "Greater political awareness and sensitivity and to take a greater interest in the political processes of the Council" (35).

However, in many ways a hung council merely accentuates existing features of the relationship because in a large urban authority with a tradition of fiercely contested partisan politics it is inconceivable that senior officials, (in the interests of their own survival if nothing else), would do other than pay the closest attention to the political process keeping an ear to the ground in order to detect the latest nuances of opinion emerging from the party caucus. The essential distinction between the hung Council and a single party with overall majority control is that in the latter situation officers have much more confidence to develop policies and to take and implement decisions being able to act in accordance with known or anticipated political attitudes.

Even with majority control we must not be carried away with the idea that the power of the party group is unconstrained. Although, it has the voting strength to impose its' will, in

practice, that power is limited. In most cases decisions of the group can only be implemented by using the officer controlled administration. These decisions almost invariably are based on officer generated reports and even those items which have been initiated by the councillors will have been sucked into the system to be processed by the officers. Councillor led initiatives are likely to be inhibited by the system because there is an enormous pressure of work on them with hundreds upon hundreds of decisions being required of them in every cycle of committees. This keeps them occupied on a never ending treadmill of servicing the bureaucratic machine and limits opportunities for extensive forays into areas not initiated by the officers.

However, the party group is nevertheless a very powerful resource especially for those who exercise control within it although as noted above it is obliged to work with and through the bureaucracy and it has of course other relationships to maintain which may constrain its freedom to act. The group's most important external relationship is with the local party organisations and this sometimes leaves the group in an uneasy position sandwiched between bureaucrats on the one hand and the external party activists on the other so that the party group is:

a setting reflecting two different but related worlds. It is a political setting. The Party's values and interests dominate openly and are referred to in a way they cannot be in formal council settings. It is also a setting related to the local authority, drawing its business - or much of it's business - from the working of the authority. The pressure upon it reflects both the party and the authority (36).

Stewart emphasises the "closed" nature of the proceedings of the party group and the greater freedom to express differences and to pursue overtly party political considerations but "because the group belongs to two different worlds and yet is relatively closed to both" its decisions are sometimes misunderstood. "especially by the officers but also by the party outside". Officers may regard decisions as misguided or even incomprehensible because they are excluded from the political debate and its associated arguments. The party outside excluded from the information and advice given to the group may consider the group to be too heavily influenced by the officers (36). However, despite these constraints the party group remains one of the most important points in the policy process and has the capacity to be the dominant decision making forum.

(d) The Leadership and the Bureaucracy

Within the party group individuals hold offices of influence and control; the leader of the majority group is usually styled "Leader of the Council" with the leader of next biggest party being styled "Leader of the Opposition". These offices and titles have no legal standing or recognition but in practice once elected by their groups the leaders can exercise considerable influence. According to Stewart "the leader or leadership may dominate using a variety of mechanisms to avoid challenge" and although in some groups the leader may be less dominant "letting decisions emerge" this will be because that represents a personal

style, or because only by the use of that style can he or they retain the leadership (37).

The majority leader will hold the chair of the principal committee - the Management Committee, the Policy Committee or whatever is the appropriate vehicle in that authority - and the chief executive will serve as policy advisor to that committee and from that base the two people at the apex of the political and bureaucratic hierarchies will work together. In some authorities the chief executive attends group meetings to give direct advice, in others the principal policy making committee is constituted as a one party committee (which is the arrangement in the Case Study authority). Other linkages between the political leadership and the officers are maintained to provide the channels for communicating political guidance to the bureaucracy and for advising them of party group and leadership decisions. Sometimes this is achieved by the simple expedient of the leader and the party group secretary meeting in private with the chief executive and at the other end of the spectrum is the corporate management system where councillors and senior officers meet in a structured setting to exchange information and to give and receive advice. Between these extremes a number of devices are adopted all of which have the aim of synchronising the political and bureaucratic processes. The leadership has the opportunity to dominate the party group and the bureaucracy by virtue of the position it holds but whether or not it succeeds depends on the relative strengths of the political and professional groups with

whom it has to treat and the quality of its leaders.

Jones and Norton (38) have described the key elements of a local authority leaderships relations as being with committee chairman, with the group, with officials, with the opposition, with the outside party, with organisations outside the council and finally with the public and the media and that the range of the tasks presented to the leadership are such that these have to be shared. They conclude that

Decision making in local government is a co-operative venture, involving departments and committees, officials and chairmen, . . . The dispersion of power . . . means that it is difficult to discover a specific decision that one person is responsible for and to unravel the contributions of particular people to the making of decisions. The complexity of government makes it difficult for one man to be the boss of his authority. Some seem to dominate with a finger in every pie, commanding the obedience of their followers for all or most of the time and directing the policy of the authority. But more commonly the leaders' influence is more amorphous and indirect, giving a push here, a pull there : setting the tone, creating a climate and suggesting a course of action (38).

(e) Conclusion

The political resource is a formidable one and at its core is the working of the party group and the strength of the leadership of that group. It controls the decision making and financial resource allocation in partisan authorities and has a degree of local autonomy with the capacity to formulate local policy. The effectiveness of the politicians in the use of these resources determines the outcomes in their critical relationship with the bureaucracy.

(5) PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Professional resources are the third of the resource areas in our framework. The purpose of this Chapter is to disaggregate this complex concept of the professional power resource into its key component parts. Three main areas of interest are considered, the local government professions, the nature of professional power and the power-dependency characteristics of the political-professional relationship. The primacy of the professions owes much to the way in which the institution developed from the embryo of Victorian concerns about public health through its subsequent incremental accretion of specific functional tasks up to the high point in the provision of services reached in the middle of this century. Since that time many functions have been taken away from local authorities such as hospitals and electricity in the late nineteen forties, water and community health in the early nineteen seventies. During the nineteen eighties legislative restrictions on municipal enterprise have further attenuated the boundaries of local authority activity and privatisation and the potential transfer of control in housing and education are further steps towards reducing their role. However, the underlying concept remains intact ie the primary purpose of a local authority is to provide services to the local community.

The role of professionalism in modern local government is a product of its history because as each new responsibility was added the local authority had to set up the organisation to discharge the new function. In making staff appointments local authorities relied on externally validated qualifications as appropriate evidence of the competence of the persons whom they were appointing and it became general for a person appointed as head of a particular function to possess relevant qualifications. Thus, the functionally based hierarchical bureaucracy with specialist professionals as the dominant force established itself as the distinctive feature of local government administration. This characteristic also provides the most remarkable of the contrasts between the civil service and local government whereas in the higher reaches of policy advice in Whitehall the generalist reigns supreme in the Town Hall it is the vocationally educated professionals who dominate. This divergence between these two essentially nineteenth century creations arises from the fact that the traditional role of central government is regulatory whilst the role of local government is that of a provider of services.

This professional dominance of functions gives the opportunity to the professionals to furnish the values and to set departmental and corporate goals. The professionals also have the capacity to perpetuate their control by appointing fellow professionals to all important positions, by having training programmes built around the professions and by structuring departments so that

promotions and enhancements of salary are dependent upon the possession of qualifications. This provides the basis for continuing professional dominance over the bureaucratic machine so that it can be said that "professionalism is so much a part of the working of local government that it can in practice if not in theory be regarded as one of the conditions of local government" (39). Concern has been expressed regarding the narrowness of view this brings because of the inherent partiality of those who are trained in specific professional disciplines. The lack of generalists with a wider based more neutral stance led Gyford:

to wonder whether the problems . . . of professional exclusiveness and of the gap between the professional officer and the politician might not be ameliorated by the development of some equivalent of the generalist civil service able to match and blend expert advice from different quarters to present it to the politicians in forms more suited to their pre-occupations and free from any single departmental loyalties (40).

In most situations the politicians are likely to have access to only one view, that of the officers, and the informational resources on which they form their political judgements are controlled by these same professionals. The generalist therefore is kept at bay because control over informational resources is a formidable power-resource where professionalism is accepted as a condition of the institution and deeply entrenched at all organisational levels. However, the individual professions are a very mixed bag possessing different sets of values having different goals and employing different strategies. Some professions exercise much more influence than others because of their standing in society generally or their relative importance

within a particular authority. The professional officer ultimately claims the support of an external body of knowledge in order to validate his position and the degree of accessibility of that body of knowledge in part determines the power he weilds the more inaccessible it is the greater his power. At the same time he may also have the means to procure specific support in furtherance of professional goals from the external world to strengthen his position viz a viz the politicians. However, the professional who reaches the chief officer posts at the top of the bureaucratic hierarachy is also a manager in a political environment who has to cope with conflicts between his own professional objectives and the corporate managerial objectives of his employer whilst maintaining credibility with both politicians and professional competitors. Reviewing each of these issues in turn we start with the local government professions.

(a) The Local Government Professions:

Given the organisational dominance of the professions two questions arise, firstly, what is the nature of professional power and secondly, how do the professions vary in the degree of power and influence they exercise? As to the nature of professional power Laffin (41) suggests that "the conditions necessary for the rise of professionalism within organisations lie in the emergence of substantial areas of discretion" where the scope for routinisation and bureaucratic controls is limited

by scale and complexity. This principle is said to apply to both the service professions (eg education, social work) and the technobureaucratic professions (eg chief executives, accountants). Professional autonomy according to Laffin is threefold

in the intermediate work situation, in the ability to be self-regulating or self governing at the level of the profession and in autonomous sources of influence on the formation and implementation of government policy (41).

The attainment of such autonomy is in Laffin's view dependent on whether the profession succeeds in establishing its claims to competence, cognitive and normative. Cognitive competence consists of a professions' ability to possess and to apply knowledge and maintain exclusiveness. Normative competence is the ability "to discern and observe the right actions in the course of their work" together with an assurance of "trustworthiness and ethical integrity" (40). It is evident that the professions are not all accorded the same status nor have the same access to the most influential positions. The dominance of lawyers and to a lesser degree accountants in the key post of Chief Executive is one indication of this and differentials in salaries is another. There are a number of reasons for these distinctions and although the status of a particular profession and the perceived importance of the function to the authority are the most obvious other factors may come into play, for example, the occupier of an otherwise influential chief officer post may have fallen into disfavour with the controlling party group or the chief officer in a less significant department may be

recognised as exceptionally able and therefore given a more important role.

One of the main characteristics of the professions which accord status is the degree of self governing control they exercise. The legal and medical professions with their "life and death" powers to impose strict ethical standards under a system of self regulatory discipline with the right to completely deprive the professional who errs from exercising his skills in any way are the most notable in this regard. With a lesser degree of control are those professions whose main body of practitioners work outside local authorities and whose qualifications and training are not specifically motivated towards local government. These professions impose professional and ethical standards of conduct with concomitant powers to discipline their members, however, disciplinary action does not wholly deprive the wrongdoer of the ability to exercise his skills (engineering and architecture are examples of this group). A third category contains those professions whose skills are primarily consumed by local government and whose training and qualifications are motivated towards the requirements of local government (planning and environmental health for example) in these cases disciplinary powers may be more limited. A fourth group a step further down the scale are occupations such as housing or parks management where the adjuncts of professionalism in terms of the first group are almost totally absent and where the consequences of disciplinary action are likely to be limited.

A second distinguishing characteristic is to be found in the standards required for entry to the profession. The professions all have different approaches to academic standards; the medical and legal professions impose exacting academic and training requirements on entrants and are able to ensure that para-medical and para-legal workers are regulated in a manner which preserves professional exclusiveness. This is achieved by exercising influence on central government and opinion forming institutions in order to secure statutory protection of their professional interests. With other professional groups there are those which require a university degree (or its equivalent) together with vocational training. Below this level are professions which accept a mix of less exacting academic standards and/or vocational training and finally there are those self styled professions prepared to accept practical experience alone as the criterion for admission. Professional groups may be further distinguished by the nature of the work they carry out. Laffin distinguishes between those professions which deliver services to clients and the technobureaucratic professions involved in the management of the organisation (41).

Taking all these factors together each professional group is capable of being categorised in relation to its academic standards, the degree of autonomy it achieves, its capacity for self regulation, the extent of its entrenchment in the decision and policy making processes of the local authority and the nature of the professional service it delivers. Each of these factors

will contribute to the "weight" that it brings to bear and the standing of its professionals with other officers and politicians. As demonstrated by Laffin's study of chief officers it is the technobureaucratic professions dominant at the managing centres of local authorities who exert most influence (41). These positions are held in the vast majority of cases by the legal and accounting professions (42). These dominant professionals have two primary sources of power, first the command of skills and the ability to access a body of knowledge on which politicians are dependent and secondly, the possession of institutional authority by virtue of holding key positions in the administrative hierarchy from which they can influence and shape the decisions of politicians through control of informational resources and the means of implementation.

(b) Professional Relations with the Locality and the Centre

It is quite common for senior professionals to have no local connections whilst those at the intermediate and lower levels of the organisation will be from the immediate locality. This is the result of the system for achieving promotion in local government where it is necessary for those seeking the top jobs to keep moving to more senior posts usually with another authority. Although they lack local knowledge these mobile officers often have a very much broader range of experience than their fellow employees and the politicians they serve. Furthermore, most professional officers will have had some or all

of their training outside the confines of local government and they are also likely to belong to national professional organisations where they are able to pursue avenues of interest on the wider national stage:

Through their activities in nationwide professional bodies and local authority associations, through their contacts with fellow professionals in other walks of life and through their dealings with Whitehall they may develop wider horizons and different perspectives from local councillors. In doing so they may bring to bear on their local council's policy making a set of assumptions about particular issues which owe more to a national level professional debate than they do to any discussion at the local level. (43)

Such activities reinforce professional values and goals and officers return to their employing authority charged with the current professional view. These officers are not isolated because central government professionals and the national professional associations will also be exerting influence at the centre. This results in top down pressure on local authorities which reciprocates the identical professional officer pressure from below so that the politicians can be caught in a web of professional power. Thus, officers as part of a national professional community are able to exercise significant direct and indirect influence on their employers the local authorities.

The most crucial of the professions' external relationships are those with central government and its agencies. A number of writers have highlighted the vertical coalitions between specialists in local and central government (44) and in assessing the role played by the Regional Offices of the Department of the

Environment relative to housing policy, (in particular to the operation of the Housing Investment Programme which is a Policy Planning System), Houlihan suggested that:

Of major importance in the development of HIP's - as with most PPS's - is the central role given to professional officers. The initially high data requirements for the statistical presentation in HIP's provides an opportunity for widening the sphere of professional competence. In housing the main professions involved - housing officers and planners - are relatively weak, but the HIP's process is often led by an officer from a stronger profession, for example, accountancy or law. HIP's provide a vehicle for the professionalisation of the policy process and whether it is local authority housing officers, planners or finance officers talking to their opposite numbers at the regional level the dialogue is essentially a professional one. (45)

Taking this example a little further whilst it is true that the HIP system is often clouded by fearsome complexities that even confuse professionals let alone lay councillors the bottom line of the HIP is the bid for resources. The politicians are likely to comprehend this in terms of the number of new houses to be built, the number of old houses to be improved, the number of mortgages to be granted and will exert pressure on the officers to adopt their political priorities and targets. However, the politician is at a serious disadvantage because if he is unable to participate in the professional dialogue it is difficult for him to challenge the recommendations of the officers. This situation is compounded by the fact that the data supplied by the officers and the form in which it is presented will at least influence, if not determine, the policy outcome. This serves to make it an officer world in terms of the technical formulation of the bid, objectives, however, may remain wholly political.

In their pivotal role between councillors and central government different professional groups achieve very different degrees of influence over the policy process and this is amply demonstrated by Laffin in his contrasting examination of the roles of engineers and housing officials which indicated that

The highway engineers were able to become such an autonomous source whereas the housing profession remained dependent on other policy actors particularly local politicians and civil servants. In highway engineering the professional community made a major contribution towards creating the modern policy community in the roads sector. The engineers' claims to cognitive competence were widely accepted as being well accredited. Thus the professional community provided the problem definitions and the policy responses as well as most of the leading participants in the policy community. In contrast the housing professional community had very limited influence within the housing policy community. That community was dominated not by professional accounts of policy but by politicians' accounts and to a lesser extent civil servants' concerns with the orderly local administration of public housing (46).

If professionals can influence central government quite independently from their politicians this has both an immediate and a long term significance. Politicians with only a local horizon can overlook the capacity of the professions to exercise influence at the centre and this is often reinforced by the well recognised tendency of politicians to opt for short term expediency rather than long term objectives. Both at the local level and centrally the professions can take the longer term view which provides the officers with the opportunity to effect changes incrementally over time and thereby re-establish professional rather than political values. The permanence of officials is therefore an extremely important factor in their

relations with elected councillors. Accordingly, officer relations with the centre may be crucial to outcomes to the extent that local officials, civil servants and the national policy communities combine to establish particular choices which are then adopted by the centre and imposed on the locality.

However, in many instances local politicians and their officers are likely to have converging interests joining together to advocate the same policy goals to central government. The politician needs to deliver services to the electorate and the more services there are to be delivered the more certain is the officers position. Increased resources from the centre will result in an expanding empire for the officer and ultimately will lead to the enhancement of his personal position. As soon as resources diminish the foundations of the professional officers empire are weakened so that, for example, the effect of a decade (1979/1989) of reduced spending on new municipal housing has particularly affected local government architects. Similarly all professions are at risk in a period of retrenchment for if there are no resources there can be no services and a reduction in services will reduce the need for professional skills.

(c) The Professionals as Managers:

The chief officer acts as a manager and in the large urban authorities he is likely to be professionally qualified and his deputy and his senior staff are also likely to be professionals.

The generalist administrator and the trained manager are relegated to subsidiary roles and as a result the business of management is usually carried out by staff who are not trained as managers. According to Stewart this is because

Management and structures reflect the dominant interest within the organisation. Professional status influences structure. Dominant professions have their positions protected in management structures and emerging professions seek to establish their position by recognition in this management structure. (47)

Professionals who achieve the chief officer positions are unlikely to have had other than occasional management training and even fewer will have had specific training to manage in a political environment so that such managerial abilities as they possess will be either intuitive or acquired by experience. Professionalism and interdepartmental competition conditions officers to conserve and consolidate professional power and departmental interests not to "manage" resources in a political setting.

The politician meanwhile remains in the grip of professional thought and analysis because if he seeks change he has use these same professional channels. As a result it takes an able and determined politician to surmount this obstacle of the professional power base. Although it is assumed that the values of the senior officers will prevail whether in fact this is the case may well depend on historical and personal factors. A long established department is likely to exhibit a significant degree of professional autonomy at all levels within the department and

therefore be difficult to manage. Thus, the quality of leadership is of considerable importance given the propensity of institutional bureaucracies to inertia especially as the chief officer has two quite separate roles which can conflict one as a professional the other as a manager.

On the professional level the chief officer may find himself at odds with the professional consensus within his own department and be faced with a formidable array of practices and firmly established attitudes. He then has a choice, of confrontation, (where he would most certainly require the politicians backing), or the alternative of a long slow process of persuasion. It is in such situations that chief officers are most at risk. Divided loyalties within departments and differences in professional views will undoubtedly be communicated rapidly to the politicians. As in Whitehall gossip is the staple diet in the corridors of power and both politicians and officers use this channel to keep a watch on the other. When there are differences between a chief officer and the politicians and he also has differences with his own department danger lurks, especially, if councillors and junior officers see eye to eye because the chief officer may then be outflanked. Accordingly, an elaborate game of internal politics is always in play.

Ethical conflicts may also arise when the chief officer does not share the same qualifications as his professional staff (or in the case of conglomerate departments a particular section of the

professional staff). Lawyers since 1974, for example, often find themselves in chief executives or administrative departments with a non-lawyer at their head. The point is well illustrated by a case where the Local Commissioner for Administration reported that the chief executive of a district council, a non lawyer, had overruled his subordinate legal officer. The result was that the legal officer in consequence of carrying out the chief executive's instructions was subject to disciplinary action by his professional body the Law Society. The Commissioner reported that "I find it particularly shocking that a chief executive ordered a subordinate officer, a solicitor . . . to act in breach of his professional code" (48). Differences such as these can set up intolerable internal strains.

Equally the managerial relationship of the chief officer with his professional staff can give rise to similar internal tensions. This is because chief officers are often under pressure to compromise departmental and professional aims on a corporate basis as part of the management task looking at the overall interests of the authority. In that role the chief officer has to adopt a wider perspective which acknowledges resource constraints and priorities between all the authority's spending programmes which may lead him into conflict with his own professionals who are not obliged to look beyond the narrow confines of their particular professional interest. Therefore, professional, ethical and managerial issues pose a risk to the chief officer's authority not only within his department but also

with the politicians. Within each professional group there are tensions and conflicts and each has its own political structure. As a result chief officers have to fight on two fronts by having to devote considerable effort to the protection of their professional rear whilst also negotiating and bargaining with the politicians. The managerial function, however, is the most difficult role for the professional because he is at his most vulnerable squeezed between political and professional expectations. However, it is a role of considerable power because the chief officer controls the resources on which the politicians depend to achieve their goals and he also controls the bureaucracy setting its professional aims and determining its policies.

(d) Individual Performance:

The standing a profession achieves in a particular authority depends on a number of factors and although the competence of its practitioners and the performance of the department are important these are not paramount. A department's ability to reconcile internal tensions and maintain political and inter-professional relationships which result in it securing the resources to implement programmes materially contributes to the influence its senior officers exercise in the authority. In those instances where a profession carries particular influence and the department performs well an able chief officer is likely to exercise greater influence than most of his colleagues. However, professional factors are not the sole measure and the political

importance of a service, for example, housing, in an inner city authority may outweigh other weaknesses. In those cases the politicians perception of the relative importance of a department notwithstanding its poor performance and low esteem could result its officers having a higher political standing.

Personal relationships within and between professional groups and with the politicians play their part as do political and professional expectations in creating personal authority. A strong personality may achieve considerable influence when organisational position and professional standing would not otherwise have indicated such an outcome. Although this is a highly subjective factor and one subject to constant change one must not underestimate the impact of individuals on the functioning of a local authority and the power they can thereby exercise.

(e) Political and Professional Values:

Laffin proposes that the essential differences between professional judgements are those which are seen as value choices and those which are not:

The extent to which professions can maintain 'technical' or 'scientific' definitions of their work depends on the type of work involved and how this work is perceived by others. Generally, if the work is seen as essentially relating to the physical or material world then presenting it in non-normative and 'scientific' terms is relatively unproblematical. However, when professional work is seen by others as relating to the social or human world, defining it other than normative terms is difficult. These differences in perceptions reflect

generally held assumptions about the world. Whereas these assumptions admit the possibility of scientific laws governing the physical world they do not readily admit the same possibility in the case of the social world. So those professions whose tasks are seen as lying predominantly in the social world are typically seen by others as involving evaluative not empirical judgements (49).

From this it is possible to postulate that there are three main groups of local government professionals. First the central managerial technobureaucracy which works alongside the politicians, secondly those able to represent their work in wholly scientific and technical terms and keep the politicians at arms length and a third group whose work is seen as susceptible to political as it is to professional value judgements. On this latter point Hampton has suggested that "The greater degree of professionalism the less the lay person feels able to challenge the advice of officers" (50) and he draws distinctions between objectives and methods, for example, the construction of a bridge where it is for the politicians to make the decision to build whilst the method of construction is for the engineer to decide. Whether in practice it is quite as straightforward as that is open to question because it is often the highway engineer who identifies statistically the need for new capacity long before it is physically evident so that he is likely to argue the case for its provision as well as proposing the technical solution.

However, even with "scientific" and "technical" issues the politicians may well take the view that any stage in the sequence of identifying a problem, determining the solution to it and

implementing that solution is as much a "political" as a "professional" task. On an issue of technical complexity (for example a question of law or the structural calculations for a road bridge) the elected councillor is most unlikely to have the expertise to challenge the officer on the details although he may express his dissatisfaction with the implications of the advice offered. In contrast on a planning application or a housing case the councillor could well believe that his opinion is as good as if not better than the professional officer's throughout and is therefore capable of being substituted for it. In relation to the expertise of councillors Newton found that in Birmingham there was a tendency for councillors to specialise early in their careers and for a proportion of them to serve for long periods on the council and he cites as an example one member with 36 years experience on the Education Committee (51). Such specialisation particularly when councillors devote much of their time to council work results in them having the opportunity to acquire sufficient knowledge to meet officers if not on equal terms at least part of the way.

The "executive" politicians working full time have over recent years been the object of some attention the most prominent example, perhaps, being Ken Livingston former leader of the GLC. The full time politician poses a challenge to the professionals because if he becomes involved as an executive in the detailed administration of the department the chief officer's position is significantly weakened. Equally, if the politician seeks direct

access to junior staff in the department whose judgements and views may not coincide with those of chief officer this will undermine the authority of the chief officer. Perhaps the most difficult situation of all is when those junior staff have political affiliations with the ruling party on the council.

Laffin and Young found that:

some instances were cited by chief officers mainly in the major conurbations of junior officers sometimes holding quite prominent positions in a local political party. For example a very senior officer in one housing department was also secretary of the local Constituency Labour Party. This means some officers can exercise considerable influence behind the scenes pursuing an internal bureaucratic battle or pushing for a favoured policy; and although this is usually associated with the Labour Party a couple of instances of officers using Conservative Party channels also came up. (52)

What is becoming increasingly clear is the change in mood in local government with elected members being less inclined to accept professional advice. A prime example is the high rise system buildings of the sixties and early seventies which have proved an almost universal failure technically and often an aesthetic and social disaster. Much of the impetus for these mistakes came from the professionals, the civil servants, academics and the construction industry and from not the local politicians with the result that:

There is widespread disillusionment among members (and some officers too) with the exaggerated professional claims characteristic of the period of growth. And the new generation of elected members being more highly educated than earlier generations is less deferential and more sceptical of professional advice. (52)

Professionals have an inherent tendency to assume that rational, objective solutions may be found for all problems. These supposedly "value free" judgements are regarded as enabling the right solution to be reached which naturally leads as Gyford noted to the situation where "it is all too easy for professional officers to believe that their own views are both correct and in the public interest" (53). Although that is a fault which it is the politicians duty to redress there is nevertheless a disturbing trend noted by a number of commentators of professional advice being suppressed at source rather than the long established practice of politicians rejecting or modifying formal officers recommendations in open committee or council. This has caused considerable strains because officers owe a duty to the whole council not merely to the ruling party and it is one thing for advice to be rejected quite another if it never sees the light of day. Traditionally the officer was allowed to put his case, tender his advice and the politicians then made the decision. Officers having control of agendas and reports were in this traditional setting always in a position to ensure that the deliberations took place largely on terms set by them. However, according to Laffin and Young these "rights are coming under threat in some authorities where members have tried to suppress items from committee agendas as well as officers reports" (54). This is a much more serious challenge to professional independence than the substitution of political value judgements for professional ones within a formal setting. As a result professionalism is at the sharp end of the changes currently

taking place in local government and it is a change being reflected in the wider world outside.

(f) Conclusions

The struggle between professional and political values is the backcloth to the local government stage. The command of skills and informational resources meets the control of the formal levers of power and which of the two sets of power-resources prevails in any given circumstances determines which of the two groups prevail. These two value systems interacting with each other is at the heart of the policy process in all local authorities. However, professional resources constitute a very powerful force to counter balance the political resources of the politicians. The officer control of informational resources and interpretive and implementary skills means that politicians are heavily dependent upon the bureaucracy.

(6) EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Beyond the confines of the local authority and its primary worlds of politics and professionalism there are the external worlds. The politicians and the professionals sometimes jointly in other cases separately maintain many relationships with these worlds interacting with them on different levels continuously or intermittently. These interactions are sources of power and of constraint and there is what Rhodes describes as a "process of exchange" in these interactions which influences the actions of councillors and officers in setting goals, assigning roles and agreeing the limits of discretionary action (55). The expectations of these external worlds are also a feature of the councillor officer relationship. Thus, what the electors expect of their ward councillors is in its turn reflected in the councillors relationship with the officers. Similarly in the officers reaction the expectations engendered by their professional training bears down on their reaction to the councillors. The ability of councillors and officers to mobilise outside support is of considerable importance to them both because in most cases the issues which centrally involve them are also likely to engage these external interests as well.

Thus, Schattschneider suggests that

At the root of all politics is the universal language of conflict. The central political fact in a free society is the tremendous contagiousness of conflict. Every fight consists of two parts: (1) the few individuals who are actively engaged at the center and (2) the audience that is irresistibly attracted to the scene. The spectators are as much a part of the overall situation as are the overt combatants . . . (from this Schattschneider argues) . . . That the outcome of all conflict is determined by the extent to which the audience becomes involved in it. That is, the outcome of all conflict is determined by the scope of its contagion (56)

In this sense councillors and officials have many audiences capable of being drawn into the determination of issues where although they are the primary actors the "audience" may be a decisive influence. These "audiences" include, interest and pressure groups, trade unions, local businesses and industry, the public as participants, the media and the national worlds of local government. In the broadest sense all of these "audiences" can become involved and be used as a resource in the policy and decision making processes. We now turn to look at each of these "audiences" and assess their role.

(a) Interest and Pressure Groups:

An interest group is a force which seeks to influence either spasmodically or by maintaining a continuing dialogue with the local authority over a broad range of issues. An example of the former would be a local chamber of trade and of the latter a local government trade union such as NALGO. Pressure groups on the other hand tend to be organised around single issues or

groups of closely related issues and usually fall into two distinct categories. The first includes those which are organised around specific issues (usually to oppose change for example a new road scheme) and such groups in most cases last only as long as the issue. The second category is organised on a broader basis either nationally (such as the housing pressure group Shelter) or locally (such as a tenants or residents association) and these adopt a succession of issues within the scope of their declared interest.

Some groups are likely to be regarded as having aims which conflict with political or professional goals and others, in contrast, may be regarded as helpful and a source of support (57). The officer contact with such groups is crucial in that the officer is in a position not merely to encourage but also to assist positively those groups he perceives as helpful but equally he is in a position to discourage or even obstruct those groups he considers unhelpful. By supporting demands from below which accord with the bureaucratic consensus and opposing those which do not and by influencing the manner in which demands on the authority are articulated the officer exercises a significant degree of control.

Interest and pressure groups will target councillors and officers. By using both political and bureaucratic channels, groups are able to sustain a two pronged attack on the local authority. The advantage held by long standing groups or those

with an informed and articulate leadership will be the knowledge of how to target the politicians and the officials in different ways to maximise the impact of their representations. At the same time established lines of communication and previous personal contacts will also give them an advantage. If particular interests establish close contacts with the officials with the intention of securing favourable decisions this creates a situation in which effective power has been "taken out of the hands of those who are in principle publicly accountable and being exercised by those who have a perfect right to influence decisions but not to take them". (58)

Demands reaching the Town Hall will be received in different ways by councillors and officials. The politician will evaluate the relative political and electoral importance of the demands. The officer will have a three fold response: first of all he will evaluate the demands in departmental/professional terms secondly, in relation to Council policy and thirdly, on the response he anticipates from his politicians. The officer is likely to ensure that demands on the system are processed through a standard bureaucratic procedure and that all possible interests are consulted or informed. If the officer identifies that the problem presented to him is unlikely to be susceptible to an easy administrative solution he will be tempted to advise that the matter must be referred to a Committee i.e. to transfer the responsibility for the delay and the onus of the decision to the councillors.

The officer therefore plays a critical role in processing demands on the authority. When presented to the politicians the form these demands take is more often than not that which the officers have given them. This is what Goldsmith describes as "their gatekeeper function" in which officers conduct a screening process letting through some but denying others (59). Newton suggests that officer involvement is quite extensive providing the unexpected evidence

that local government officers have as at least as much contact with the general public on council matters as elected representatives and probably more although council members are not aware of this fact and put themselves at the centre of the local communications network. (60)

Protest groups are unlikely to survive the immediate issue because as Stewart observes protest is shortlived and groups formed in the heat of the moment fade away as the issue cools (61). In contrast to these single-issue groups a nationally organised pressure groups such as Shelter has much greater staying power. Operating both nationally and locally it seeks to influence the formulation of policy as well as deal with individual cases. A good example of this is the defects in the system-build blocks of the sixties. Shelter mounted a co-ordinated critique of this kind of housing as well as supporting specific groups of residents in particular localities. It was pressures of this kind over a period of years which contributed to the virtual abandonment of system-build housing. However, this issue was unusual in that the problem was at the same time highly localised (with often distinctly different

causes and solutions) but also nationally significant because in aggregate these local issues were of sufficient magnitude to emerge onto the national agenda. Eventually many local politicians accepted the Shelter analysis and in that way combined against the professionals.

(b) Trade Unions:

The most important interest groups within local government are formed by the employees and their trade unions and professional associations. The white collar staff, the Purple Book employees, are usually members of NALGO (the National and Local Government Officers Association) which is now one of the largest trade unions in Britain. Although chief officers will usually belong to their own organisations (e.g. Chief Executives will be members of SOLACE - Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) it is not unknown for them to also maintain membership of NALGO. The vast majority of NALGO's members are in the lower paid ranks and differences are evident between this majority and the minority of senior officers just below the Chief Officer levels. This is particularly evident in relation to pay settlements when NALGO frequently presses for settlements biased in favour of the lower paid. One consequence of this is that the differentials of the middle rank professionals may be squeezed with catching up from below and the pay rates of the chief officers leaving them behind so causing disaffection. The emergence of FUMPO (the Federation of Managerial and Professional Officers) is perhaps a measure of

that disaffection. The policy of NALGO is significant because it dominates the employee side at national level in negotiating pay and conditions. Poole concluded that NALGO's own interest lay primarily in promoting the interests of the lower ranking officer - not least the lay administrator (62). This situation was further exacerbated by the "closed shop" policy of many Labour Councils. Although "closed shops" have been seriously weakened by the Thatcher trade union legislation of 1980s in those authorities where NALGO is very strong conflicts between the professional staff and the rest of the white collar staff further down the hierarchy are apparent (Interviews). Laffin and Young expressed a view that local authority trade unions had become more assertive and have started:

to challenge and demand participation in decisions which were formerly the prerogative of management. This has raised particular problems for chief officers in those authorities, usually Labour controlled, where the unions have a close informal relationship with the elected members (63).

Because employees are probably better placed than any other group wishing to pursue sectional interests employee action has considerable potential to influence the decision making process. It may result in chief and senior officers - the policy advisers - being squeezed between the trade unions on the one hand and the employing council on the other. When links exist between those unions and the councillors the squeeze often acquires distinctly political overtones. For the reasons discussed above these political linkages are a threat to professional power. A trade union activist within a department who has political affiliations

to the ruling party group can be a considerable embarrassment to a chief officer. The presence of such activists may become critical if the chief officer falls out with the politicians.

(c) Business and Industry:

The views of the local industrial and commercial community are of increasing importance to local authorities since the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1982 came into force which placed them under a legal obligation to consult business ratepayers. Authorities are also under a general obligation to supply information regarding the services they provide and how the money is spent. Although these measures have created a new formal relationship to the business sector for both members and officers in practice there is little evidence yet of any significant change. The most important relationships with business remain the commercial and contractual ones with local authorities being large consumers of services goods and materials.

Some areas of business activity such as the building and civil engineering industry have traditionally had considerable involvement with local authorities and as a consequence have had a high exposure to the vagaries of public sector stop-go policies. In most council areas there will be certain business ratepayers who depend on local authority contracts for a proportion, perhaps a significant proportion, of their work. The

concern of the majority, however, will probably be restricted to the amount of the rate demand as an overhead cost rather than be affected by a specific contractual relationship.

Most businesses will have some contact with their local council in its various planning and regulatory functions. Thus, for example, the withholding of a planning consent, the imposition of some requirement under the public health legislation or a decision to construct or not to construct a new road may materially affect an individual business or a group of businesses. However, the extent to which business needs are taken into account or are anticipated is not an area which has been widely researched and only Saunders' study of Croydon and Blowers study of Bedfordshire comes easily to mind. It is probable for the reasons cited above that officers are likely to be the primary source of these contacts. Accordingly, the officers will be in the intermediaries who will represent the council's position to business and that of business to the council yet again a significant role which lies in the hands of the officers.

(d) Public Participation:

The commonest use of public participation is when the local authority seeks the views of the public regarding specific proposals and in effect determines the form of the response. If much of the work on the specific proposals has already been

undertaken (and provisionally approved) before participation is invited tacking participation on to the end of the process is unlikely to lead to any changes because the local authority will be too psychologically committed to its scheme (64). In any event the form of presentation is all important and the officer role in these participation exercises is usually considerable. They will prepare the material to be released to the public, they will set the questions, meet the public and explain the issues. At the end of the process the officers will be the interpreters of the results presenting them to the Council and to the public. The role of the bureaucrat was highlighted in Dennis' Study of Sunderland where he concluded that officers used their position obstructively and stood between the people and their elected representatives (65).

Gyford suggests that the public should be involved at an earlier stage whilst the options are more numerous and before there is any commitment to a particular policy (66). However, this approach has a number of difficulties not least on the number of options to be presented to the public, who is to select them and what criteria are to be used in their selection. The politician will not be anxious to raise public expectations by putting forward schemes which are incapable of realisation and the professional officers are likely to propose only those options which they regard as being technically feasible and justifiable on rational grounds which may well exclude options the public would wish to consider. If the issues are complex presentation

poses problems because the man in the street is unlikely to have the facility to fully comprehend the proposals and in translating them into layman's language there is the inherent danger of the bias of the translator so that the layman's version may be bereft of those subtleties and nuances on which the "real" decision depends. Presentation is usually an officer function and therefore the participation process is likely to be influenced strongly by the professionals at all levels.

Genuine public participation would be of a scale and a character which would fundamentally alter the elected representational basis of local government for as Gyford points out the credentials of the councillors to take such decisions are those of elected office and that the more ambitious the claims of the public to participate in decision making the more that credential is devalued (67). In any event the councillor officer elite will be strongly disinclined to transfer power because

They are concerned to improve their capacity through more information and to reinforce their decisive power through popular support. They are not about to give power to the people . . . Of course, the decision-makers do not eliminate all external views. Rather they operate selectively so that only a limited range of views are heard. (68)

It is notable that it is the more articulate better off sections of the community who tend to participate and make their voice heard (69) so that in consequence there is a suspicion that such people are unrepresentative. However, it is these groups who are the most likely to be aware of the benefits to be derived from making contact with the officers and equally officers may use

such groups to advance their own positions rather than those of the politicians.

(e) The Media:

The media provide one of the primary channels of communication between the local authority and the local community. Of these the press are much the most important because local radio particularly Independent Radio stations usually include only very brief references to local authority decisions and of course it is a much more ephemeral medium than the daily or weekly newspapers. However, politicians often favour the radio interview as providing an opportunity for direct communication. Goldsmith on the other hand considers the press to be of major importance to the public because "without their local evening or weekly newspaper most people would know even less about the activities of this local authority than they do at present" (70). However, it is not unusual for councillors to feel aggrieved by press reporting for as Stewart has noted the media "are not likely to restrict their reporting to the issues felt or viewpoints held by actors within the local authorities" (71). Politicians view the media as a two edged sword, they need publicity, therefore, they have to rely on the media as one of the primary channels to communicate their views, their policies and their collective achievements. The local media on the other hand will be interested in "hard" news and in controversial issues which make good copy, not in in-depth analysis, background stories and

recitals of achievements with no current news value. As a result the politicians relationship with the press is often an uneasy one.

There is no doubt the media influences the way in which issues are presented by the politicians and in some cases it is possible for it to be regarded as a constraint on the limits of action. Many local authorities have produced their own newspapers to redress these perceived imbalances so that "civic" newspapers are devoted to presenting the Council, its activities and decisions to the electorate in a favourable light. A third source of printed material in some localities is the existence of an alternative press promulgating views which are unable to gain access to the more conventional media.

The officer group in contrast to the politicians has no need of the media because it is not directly reliant on public opinion to maintain its position and does not have to canvass for support from the electorate. If officers are invited to go beyond the strict limits of their formal position (usually as expressed in their written reports) they are more often than not reluctant to do so. When the issue is politically sensitive most will decline to comment. Generally officers try to stay within the confines of factual information which they believe can be freely given i.e. information to which the public has a right of access in law. There are a variety of reasons for this officer attitude but the one most often apparent is the wish to maintain in public

the convention that they do not make policy and are therefore not responsible for justifying policy. As a result officers generally avoid justifying policy to the media and also avoid being drawn into speculating about future policy. This approach maintains the convention of political supremacy and it also has the added benefit of avoiding difficult questions! If professionals suspect that it is not so much policy as their professional judgement which is being called into question by the press they are likely to remain silent and similarly, should they believe that ethical considerations forbid disclosure of information they are also likely to deny all press access.

Reporters will usually attend committees of the Council and since the (Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) came into force the reporter will have access to the same reports as the councillors. However, the journalist to a great extent reports a committee or Council debate from the officers reports because the debate itself is usually insufficient to advance his detailed understanding of the issues. As a result the journalist unless he is particularly well informed will inevitably base his story on the facts assumptions and interpretations to be found in the officer's report. The press will frequently contact officials after a meeting and ask for supplementary explanations to enable them to write up their copy. Reporters often try to build up a relationship with officers not only to follow up stories but also to obtain news. The officer if he wishes to promote some special interest of his own or that of his department may give the press

a tip-off on a non-attributable basis enabling the reporter to open up a particular issue. Although politicians and officers both rely on the press to report facts they want to be publicly known each has a different set of motives. Probably chairmen and chief officers have a desire for personal publicity to record their achievements. Beyond that the ruling politicians as a group will have a desire to establish political credibility with their electors and the opposition will wish to achieve the opposite effect. Officers as a group may wish to communicate information regarding services or physical works. Neither group is likely to have an easy relationship with the press but both will recognise its importance to the local authority as a channel for communications.

Thus, the information received by the general public in the evening paper has often been mediated through officers and always through journalists (the latter constrained by space, cost and perceived news worthiness of any particular story). Presentation will be conditioned by the editorial policy of the paper which is the product of the relationships maintained between the newspaper, the Council and the community. Proprietors and editors are likely to keep the newspapers content in some kind of broad equilibrium with the values of the local community including those of the Council. Commercial considerations probably apply as well with substantial advertising revenue being received from the local authority.

(f) The National Worlds

Stewart is of the view that local authorities "share characteristics drawn from the uniformities of national conditions and of national choice they belong to localities but are part of a national system" and he considers that local authorities share

a common national climate of opinion expressed through local authority associations or national local government journals. Above all they belong to a national economy, a national society and a national climate of ideals. National, social and economic trends are felt locally . . . There is a national world of local government as well as a local world. (72)

In many ways this national world is of much more significance than the local world. The professional officer is likely to derive the greater part of the influences which operate on him as a professional from the wider context of the national profession. This is particularly the case with those professions which are well entrenched which are for the want of a more precise expression part of the establishment and therefore, not only part of the usual round of consultations but also a contributor to opinion forming and central policy making processes. The professional officer who participates in his profession at regional and national levels is thus exposed to these national professional trends. Similarly through national journals and access to academic work the professional is taken out beyond the narrow confines of the locality. Ambitious professional officers with a career strategy involving probably at least three or four moves between local authorities will be anxious to keep abreast

of the leaders in the profession. In such cases it will be the world outside which will be the significant influence not local values.

The elected members are also strongly influenced by national trends set by the political parties either in support of or in reaction against the government currently in power. Local politicians also meet at national conferences both those organised within local government and those under the aegis of the national political parties. At such venues they discuss a wide range of matters not merely of policy but also organisational and management issues and they then return to their own authorities with new ideas and approaches to the way in which the business of the authority should be discharged.

According to Rhodes there is

a 'national local government system' - which incorporates not only the national community and the policy communities for local government services but also the territorial intergovernmental networks.... Local authority actors do not decide policies for their area in isolation; they look to the national local government system for guidance about what standard of service to provide, for ideas to imitate or avoid, for ways of tackling common problems and for justifications of philosophies of particular strategies..... Most councils most of the time follow national trends in the local government world or national trends in their kind of authority facing their kind of general problem under their kind of political control. (73)

Within the national policy network the most important relationship is with central government. Political relations depend to some extent to differences between the character of political control in the locality and at central government

level. Professional relationships have been noted elsewhere as have the with vertical coalitions between professional interests within the context of central-local relations. The question of central-local relations has been a focus of extreme interest over recent years and therefore the issues need not be rehearsed again here except to note that it is a "power-dependence" relationship with local authorities having a financial dependence on the centre but the centre depending on the authorities for the execution of centrally determined policies. Both officials and councillors are engaged in this local relationship with the centre which is crucial to the local authority policy process and both politicians and professionals have opportunities to influence the centre through the policy networks to which they belong and to secure decisions and resources which affect outcomes in the local authority itself.

(g) Conclusions

Politicians and bureaucrats have extensive links to the worlds external to the authority. These "audiences" are drawn by the "contagiousness of conflict" into the policy issues falling to be determined by councillors and their officials. Each side has the potential to attract an "audience" in support of its goals and therefore these external worlds constitute a significant resource.

(7) CONCLUSIONS

The framework for analysing the resources of politicians and officers was adapted from Rhodes and his concept of power dependence (74) which has five elements i.e. constitutional-legal resources, hierarchical resources, financial resources, political resources and informational resources. Chapter Three above was devoted to the consideration of constitutional-legal resources and in this Chapter we adapted Rhodes to suggest four other areas of power-dependence, ie. hierarchical resources, political resources (which includes Rhodes' financial element) professional resources (which broadly equates with Rhodes' informational element) and external resources.

In Chapter Three it was concluded that although the law does not provide a definite framework to either regulate the relationship of politicians and bureaucrats or to set the limits of their legitimate areas of activity more often than not it seems to offer advantages to officials rather than to the elected politicians. Officer familiarity with the legal-constitutional world, the technical difficulties of cognitive entry to that world, the officers acceptance of the constraints of the law coupled with their willingness and ability to exploit its opportunities all would seem to place officers in a relatively stronger position than politicians.

Hierarchical resources are shared between the two groups with the bureaucrats having their power base in the departmental structure of the local authority and the politicians in the political offices of the Council. Professional skills, expert knowledge, the management of informational resources and control over the implementation of decisions provides officers with a formidable number of opportunities to influence. Although they occupy the formal decision making positions the politicians have only limited entry into this world and have a high degree of dependence on the officers. Therefore, if the politicians succeed in securing their political objectives either these are identical to those of the officers or the politicians have other means of securing compliance.

Within the forum for decision making, the officers provide "facts and knowledge: politicians, interests and values", the officers "bring neutral expertise - will it work? - while politicians bring political sensitivity - will it fly? Officials thus emphasise the technical efficiency of policy while politicians emphasise its responsiveness to relevant constituencies" (75). Despite the politicians having ostensible control over the formal processes of the Council by reason of political office and voting power the agenda of committees is likely to have been strongly influenced by the officers. The reports will have been written and presented by officers and even during the consideration of the issue in Committee the officers will have had the opportunity to influence the debate although this power is counterbalanced to

some considerable extent by the power of the party group. However, in the end decisions will be influenced by both sides neither of them holding a position of unchallenged domination with each not only being obliged to accommodate the other but also having to acknowledge external demands on their internal world and responses to their actions from without.

Political resources derive from election which accords the politician a sense of legitimacy, it sets the expectations others have of him and it provides him with a position in which he can express his political ideologies and aspirations. This enables the politician to exercise a policy making role and gives him access to a network of policy communities and interests. Most important of these points of access is control over financial resources. The officer is therefore beholden to the councillor for the resources required to implement professionally inspired proposals but the application of those resources is very much an officer dominated function. However, if politicians leave a policy vacuum officers have the opportunity to fill it substituting their values and goals for those of the politicians. In such cases it is not so much that the councillors let the officers acquire too much power but it is more the politicians failure to grasp "the extent to which they themselves could exert political control over the authority" (76). As a result when the politicians fail to perform the role which is available to them then by default the officers are in a position to dominate the policy process if they choose to do so.

Yet even if political control is very tight there are limits to that power because councillors cannot physically make all the decisions. Officers have to make the vast majority of the working decisions on a day to day basis and many of these are executed outside the small group of officers who have regular contact with the politicians. The decision makers outside the councillor officers elite are the numerous "street level bureaucrats" who are effectively beyond the direct influence of the politicians (77). The politicians therefore have to rely on their senior officers to ensure that their wishes are carried out at the point of execution which is why the relationship between the chairmen and chief officers is so important for the politicians; without a reasonable degree of trust and confidence between them political objectives may be hard to achieve because however powerful the politicians are in the end they have to rely on their officers to deliver what they want. To this end the politicians have to concede areas of discretion to their officers within agreed limits, these are the "negotiated order" of Laffin (78) or Rhodes' "Rules of the Game" (79). The officers interests lie in establishing a regime which permits them the maximum discretion within that "order" or those "Rules".

Professional resources with their informational base are officer dominated and the role of professional power is perhaps the most significant feature in the organisation of local government. It presents a formidable obstacle when desired political ends conflict with professional aims but it constitutes a formidable

force when there is mutuality of interest. However, there is a substantial diversity in the extent to which the local government professions exclude the lay politician and the degree of influence they exert varies. Professional control over informational resources is far from being absolute, equally, the basis for professional judgements are not always inaccessible to the politician. Nevertheless, the balance of advantage in the control and use of informational resources nearly always lies with the officials. A further source of professional power is to be found in the national policy communities where professional influence is reflected in the agenda set for local government from the centre and in some ways the professions could be regarded here as a fifth column working from within. However, professional motivations may well co-incide with political aspirations and that mutuality of interest will result in a welcome by the local politicians for professionally instigated change from the centre.

Another important area of influence arises from the role of officers in making so many first contacts between the local authority and the outside world so that professionals act both as gatekeepers and as mediators of external demands. This is a substantial role with many opportunities to influence opinion and to mobilise external interests to support officer inspired policies as well as reinforcing officer value judgements. However, although officials have the ability to mobilise opinion in contrast to politicians they are more likely to target

specific interests than appealing to a broad communities and the gatekeeper function provides them with the opportunities to do so within the legitimate scope of their employment.

Politicians and bureaucrats have in most cases concurrent interests each of them having a long term objective to ensure the continuance of the institution within which they serve and the maintenance of its functions with the result that they have many shared "goals", so that exclusiveness of interest is the exception rather than the norm. Thus the "conflict" model is entirely inappropriate to describe two groups who spend much of their time in a state of mutually beneficial co-existence because although in this shared world political settings are dominated by the politicians and bureacratic settings by the officers neither group is wholly excluded from the others processes. The cross overs between the two worlds are as frequent and indefinable as the boundary between them and from these structures there usually emerges a group of councillors and officers primarily involved in policy and decision making. This elite constitute the "dominant coalition" in each authority, they share an "appreciative system" which evolves from the shared resources around which their relationship evolves and develops (80). This is the key relationship within the institution and as the "dominant coalition" this elite has two levels of interaction i.e. the accommodations they reach between themselves and those they reach with external interests. The "appreciative system" this elite is the result of the interface between local politics and local

professionalism and the relative contribution each group makes to that is reflected in what goals are set and in "which relationships are seen as a problem and which resources will be sought" (81).

According to Rhodes variations in the limits of discretion are a product of the relative power potential of interacting organisations and the nature of the "process of exchange". The co-existence of councillors and officers develops within "rules" they negotiate between themselves and whether or not these are dominated by political or professional accounts at any point in time is the result of the relative effectiveness with which these two groups bargain with each other. These "rules" will also reflect the complexity of the networks of interest with whom the "dominant coalition" interacts with different values, demands and expectations being brought to bear on the "coalition" to which the politicians and officers respond differentially according to their own sets of values and objectives. Through the spectrum of resources and operational settings the relative positions of politicians and officers will fluctuate within the agreed "rules" with changing margins of ascendancy. However, neither these fluctuating positions nor the "rules" which govern their relationship are fixed and the lines of demarcation will be constantly adjusted according to the comparative strengths of the groups concerned. Of particular significance is the role individual personalities within each of those groups because individuals are often an important factor in outcomes.

Given these general conclusions regarding the power-dependence characteristics of the councillor, officer relationship how should we represent this relationship? It is apparent from the forgoing review in Part I that the one group domination models are difficult to sustain on the evidence of the literature and that conflict models appear to be an equally unconvincing alternative. The evidence seems to indicate that the two groups co-exist working together with many shared goals and assumptions in which the participants minimise internal conflicts and emphasise mutually agreed objectives. This is not to say that conflict does not occur nor is to suggest that politicians and officials do not possess divergent aims but the co-existence model recognises the centrality of inter-dependence and the consequent incapacity of either group to further their own interest without the co-operation and consent of the other.

Blowers in his study of air pollution in Bedfordshire suggests that the policy process in local government can be analysed by focusing on what he describes as "mediating concepts" identifying four interacting pairs -

The first pair identify the issues in conflict which are environment and economy; the second relate to the interaction of politics and expertise. The third and fourth pair provide a broader context for the evaluation of the specific case. The third concerns the role of the state - both local and national - and the fourth introduces the dimensions of time and space (82).

Adopting this approach but equating Blowers' conflicting issues pairing with the politically and professionally originated sets of goals discussed in this and the preceding Chapter it is possible to construct a matrix which reflects the ways in which the relationship between politicians and officials is mediated through political processes, negotiated strategies and over time. This latter point is of considerable importance because although attention is often paid to the other variables in the councillor officer relationship "one of the problems with current theories is that they tend to neglect temporal and spatial factors or, at best, assume that change is continuous overtime" (83). Accordingly, the matrix (Figure 1) brings together the two conceptual approaches of power-dependence and that of mediation over time through national/local decision making strategies within the context of national and local political/professional influences.

Figure 1

Issues	Politics/Expertise Political Process	Local/National Decision Making Strategies	Time/Space Outcomes
Political Origins	Use of political and hierarchical resources to secure predominance of political values	Mobilisation of national/local "audiences" and of broad communities in support of political objectives	Outcomes reflect the effective use of the political process and mobilisation of support over time relative to bureaucratic interests
Professional Origins	Use of informational and legal/constitutional resources to secure predominance of professional values	Mobilisation of specific national/local targeted interests in support of professional objectives	Outcomes reflect the degree of influence over the political process and the effective mobilisation of support overtime relative to political interests

To conclude, of the models considered in Chapter Two it now appears that the most satisfactory overall is that of Sharpe, his "operating ideology" enables one to effect a reconciliation between a number of divergent factors less easily contained within the frameworks of the other models. Thus, local differences from national patterns, variations in the internal political bureaucratic relationship, the power of the electorate and changes in all of these factors over time are accommodated within a concept of mutual adjustment and the anticipation and recognition on the part of each of the primary actors of the legitimate interests of the other. Rhodes expands our understanding of the ways in which these adjustments are influenced by the resources each group commands and the Blowers' matrix emphasises how these processes are mediated over time and through sets of interests. Accordingly, we now turn to the five case studies to examine whether or not these theoretical conclusions are borne out in real situations.

SECTION II

CHAPTER FIVE: THE CASE STUDIES

(1) INTRODUCTION(a) The Case Study Authority

The City of Kingston upon Hull, colloquially, but inaccurately, known as Hull, is an ancient trading city and port which stands on the estuary of the Humber at its confluence with the River Hull. It was granted its Charter in 1299 by Edward I who used Hull as a strategic base for his Scottish wars. In 1440 the City was separated from Yorkshire and constituted as an independent county governed by a Sherriff and Alderman and it remained an independent all purpose authority until 1974. The City grew substantially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the development of a series of Docks. James Reckitt and Joseph Rank were among the industrialists who contributed to the nineteenth century growth of Hull as an industrial centre. Pharmaceuticals, (Reckitt and Coleman, Smith and Nephew), Aero Space, (BAe), the processing of natural products, (such as oil seeds, cocoa beans and timber), food processing and manufacture, caravan construction, transportation, docks and light engineering form the backbone of Hull's industrial employment. Unlike the single industry towns of the north it has escaped devastating closures never having had a dependence on a single industry.

Even the total collapse of the deep sea fishing industry in the nineteen seventies had a limited effect as fishing and associated land jobs represented only about 8% of total employment.

From the time of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835 the powers of Hull grew up to their zenith in the second world war with virtually all the public utilities, as well as hospitals, orphanages, houses for the old and all the public services being provided by the City. Even today it still has the unique distinction of running its own telephone undertaking now in the guise of a municipally owned company called Kingston Communications Limited. The City has an almost wholly agricultural hinterland. The nearest large urban settlements on the north bank are York (40 miles) Doncaster (60 miles). On the south bank of the Humber estuary are Grimsby and Scunthorpe now connected to Hull by the Humber Bridge which is the largest single span suspension bridge in the world. The population of Hull has been declining for several decades. In the early sixties the population was around 290,000, today (1987) the figure stands at only 252,700. However, Hull remains one of the largest shire districts and is a member of the so-called "big eleven" on the Association of District Councils along with such cities as Bristol, Southampton and Cardiff, like Hull, all freestanding port cities outside the major conurbations.

The majority party on Hull City Council since the Second World War has been Labour (with the exception of two years, 1969/70 and 1970/71 when the Conservatives held office). The current political composition of the Council (1988) is as follows:

Labour	55
Conservative	3
Social and Liberal Democrat	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	60

There are twenty wards in the City each with 3 ward councillors. Elections are by thirds. There are three Parliamentary constituencies all of which are held by Labour with substantial majorities.

(b) The Dramatis Personae and Other References

In the five Case Studies there are numerous references to the case study authority and to the actors involved in the cases. The following abbreviations and shortened forms are therefore used in the text:

- (i) "Hull CC" and "the Council" - are used to refer to the City Council as the corporate political actor

- (ii) "Kingston upon Hull" ("KUH") - is used when reference is made to the administrative district as distinct from the Council as a political body

- (iii) "The City" and "Hull" - are used in the same geographical sense as (ii) above

- (iv) "Humberside CC" - Humberside County Council is the upper tier authority responsible for education, social services, fire and highways; it took these functions over from the former Hull County Borough Council on 1 April 1974. From 1973 to 1977 the County was under Labour control and from 1977 to 1981 under Conservative Control. Subsequently it was a "hung" council with first the Conservatives and then Labour ruling with Liberal support. It is now under Labour control again (1988).

- (v) "Humberside" - is used to describe the administrative area in its geographic sense.

- (vi) "Beverley BC" - The East Yorkshire Borough of Beverley is the district local authority which adjoins the City on its western and northern boundaries. It includes many of the prime residential suburbs of Hull and most of the commuter villages.

It is under Conservative control as was its predecessor Haltemprice Urban District Council.

(vii) "Beverley" - is used to describe the administrative district in its geographic sense.

(viii) "DOE" - The Department of the Environment Marsham Street, London.

(ix) "DOE Leeds" - The Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Office of the Department of the Environment, City House, Leeds.

(x) "The Minister" - The Secretary of State for the Environment.

(xi) "CPO" - Hull CC's City Planning Officer Mr N J Taylor

(c) The Case Studies

The methodology for these Case Studies is discussed more fully in the Appendix. The approach which has been adopted is derived from the community power model of Robert Dahl (1). The intention behind the Cases is to focus on actual decisions, to find out who made them and who influenced them and whose preferences have prevailed. Outcomes are also examined for the same purpose that i.e. to discover whose interests have have been served by those

outcomes. These Cases, therefore, concentrate on hard events, on recorded positions and on the actual decisions of the participants. The Cases were constructed from documentary sources and participant observation and only where necessary for clarification is the text supplemented by interviews. However the use of interviews is limited because this is not intended to be an interview based study in which the subjective views of the participants form the basis of the cases. For the purposes of these studies the beliefs of the participants are generally disregarded and instead we focus on the decision making process and actual outcomes.

Why five cases? The reason for choosing more than one case study was discussed in Chapter One. The writer has adopted Nelson Polsby's approach that more than one issue area should be tested if one is attempting to reach conclusions about where power lies (2). The five cases involve different issue areas and different sets of actors both internal and external but as a consequence of taking this cross sectional view the five cases are of differing lengths and complexity. The most complex of the five cases is the first; this is the only case in which the writer was personally involved and even that participation was not for the whole course of the narrative. This case revolves around land use planning issues, although it developed to a point where other very important policy areas came into potential conflict. The resolution of these conflicts and the reconciliation of the associated political and professional interests is at the heart

of the study. Also involved were central government, other local authorities, public bodies and commercial interests and their influence on and relationship to the politicians and officers.

The fifth case is likewise substantial, it involves system build housing, the great disaster of the sixties in which Hull played a prominent part through its participation in the Yorkshire Development Group with Leeds and Sheffield. This case spans more than twenty years illustrating changing phases of professional and political dominance. It also shows how those in local government can become the prisoners of forces beyond their local world and has some interesting insights into the role of the media and of pressure groups.

The remaining three cases are more straight forward narratives ranging in time from a matter of months to several years. Case Two highlights the role of the councillor as both an initiator and executant of policy. Case Three provides an interesting triangle of politics, professionalism and industrial self interest. Case Four has several aspects: the officer domination of data, the deficiencies of public participation and the problems faced by politicians in controlling the technical professions.

(d) The Scope of the Case Studies

In Chapter One it was conceded that by confining the Case Studies to a single local authority this would place some limitations on the generality of conclusions which could be drawn from the Cases. In Chapter Two particularly in relation to the discussion of Hampton's model some of the characteristics of local authorities were considered. Whilst all local authorities share certain common conditions and largely operate within the same framework of legal economic and social constraints there are significant variations between them.

Therefore in order to place Hull in context we return to those distinguishing characteristics described Chapter Two. These were: functions; size; status; the character of the locality; political control and socio-economic factors; appraising each of these in turn -

Functions - Hull is a "shire" district and therefore shares the same powers as all the other second tier authorities including the smallest rural areas; it lacks functions (and the professional groups that go with them) such as education and social services which the metropolitan districts and the counties possess.

Size - Hull is one of the largest of the "Shire" districts by population and larger than a number of metropolitan districts; its size is important in terms of resources as well as income because it owns many substantial capital assets in land, buildings and other property ie it has a strong capital and income base.

Status - Hull, although a "shire" district, has a long history as an autonomous unit of local government and with it an accretion of assumptions about its proper role which belie its actual hierararchical status; this affects the things it considers it should do, the amount it spends and the size of the bureaucracy it employs to carry these out.

The Character of the Locality - Hull is a tightly confined urban area with a mixed industrial/commercial base which shapes the character of the place, the kind of people involved and the kind of problems presented eg the need for physical and economic regeneration and for environmental improvement.

Political Control - Hull is an authority with a long, (post 1945), history of partisan political control (nearly all under the Labour Party); this influences the kinds of things it does and on what and how much it spends.

Socio-economic factors - Hull is a free standing industrial and commercial city with a largely rural hinterland which it serves as the principal centre for services, shopping and leisure; it is therefore unchallenged as the sub-regional centre.

CASE STUDY NO 1HOW THE SUPERSTORES WERE LOST AND WONIntroduction

This case study describes the progress of a series of land use planning decisions over a period of about five years and illustrates the internal tensions between two competing policy areas, planning and housing, and the behaviour of the political and officer factions supporting the two competitive policy interests. It also shows that bargaining took place not only between the two groups but also within them and provides evidence of competitive cross coalitions of interest between officers and councillors. At the same time the case study illustrates aspects of external relationships; those of councillors and officers, as groups and as individuals, with central government, other local authorities and special interests such as landowners, property developers and retailers. The fluctuating roles of councillors and officers are described up to the final decisions where sharp divergences between officers and councillors are revealed. The outcomes of these clashes of preference provide evidence about the relationship between politicians and officials.

As noted above this case study concerns the interaction of two policy areas. The first of these land use planning is a regulatory function. In the second, housing, the local authority acts as a provider of services. A third area of policy interest engaged was that of the Council as property developer and promoter of economic activity and a fourth was highways and transportation. In complex interactive situations such as these individual decisions or sets of decisions cannot easily be abstracted and detached from the policy continuum of which they form part nor from other policies and interests. Although it is the description and analysis of the conflict between the regulatory and service functions which is at the core of this case there are also a number of external actors who play significant roles. These external actors include the Minister, the DoE, the DoE Leeds, Humberside CC, Beverley BC, British Rail, the prospective superstore operators and developers. So whilst the focus of the study is relationships within Hull CC these other external interests have significant parts to play in this case.

The study starts with the decisions of the Hull CC in the late nineteen seventies to oppose proposals for large out of centre retail stores. It ends in the mid nineteen eighties with a series of decisions in which the authority's planning policies were substantially modified to allow large out of centre food based superstores and large "do it yourself" and self assembly furniture stores in suburban and industrial locations. Concurrently with these changes in planning policy the possible use of the housing land-bank for non-housing purposes was debated against a background of central

government policies which were preventing its use for municipal housing. The resolution of that issue eventually led to the paradoxical result that the same housing site was successively rejected and then accepted for non-housing purposes by the politicians of Hull.

Planning Policy - The General Background

On 6th December 1972 Hull CC (Development Control Committee) adopted an Interim Policy on Shopping which included the following:

To promote the development of Hull as the Regional Shopping Centre. To ensure that all sections of the community have reasonable access to shopping facilities for all types of goods and to encourage the development of retailing in the city centre and in the district centres. (CM, December 1972)

The City Centre Policy Statement (CR, June 1973) issued by the City Planning Officer in 1973 contained 17 aims including ensuring "that all sections of the community have reasonable access to shopping facilities for all types of goods" and also "To encourage the development of retailing". In 1976 the Humberside CC published a draft County Structure Plan which relative to shopping stated:

some new large scale shopping development will be allowed in district centres as well as in town and city centres but major out of centre developments will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances where an overwhelming case for doing so can be proved and will not normally be permitted on good quality agricultural land. (Humberside CC, CR, June 1976)

In 1977 the DoE issued policy guidance indicating that :

Distribution and retailing are constantly adapting to changing economic and social circumstances and these changes in shopping habits are bringing about changes in shops and shopping centres . . . it is not the function of land use planning to prevent or stimulate competition among retailers, or among methods of retailing, nor to preserve existing commercial interest as such, it must take into account the benefits to the public which flow from new developments in the distributive and retailing fields . . . Its siting will be a crucial matter and a major factor in the important environmental, economic, transport, social and planning issues likely to be raised by the proposal . . . It is the essential task of the local planning authority when considering the planning application to form a balanced judgement of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal to the community as a whole. . . . It is clearly preferable for large new stores to be located where they can serve not only those able to travel by car . . . this share of advantage can best be achieved where the new stores can be accommodated within the existing urban area particularly within . . . (a) town centre or district centre. (3)

The Humberside Director of Planning then issued a report entitled "Structure Plan Shopping Policy: Identification of Centres" in which he defined "exceptional circumstances" as:

- (i) a rapid increase in population
- (ii) a rapid increase in consumer purchasing power
- (iii) where a developer could show that the social benefits to the community as a whole of a particular location outweighed the social benefits of the city, town or district centre location", (Humberside CC, CR, December 1977)

Subject to the proviso that existing facilities should not be adversely affected in March 1979 the Minister (Peter Shore) approved the Structure Plan, including the policy on shopping (4).

The intention of the professional planners was to promote the city centre as the regional shopping centre and to protect and enhance the district centres within the city. The economic reasoning was that there had been a substantial investment in these areas since 1945

which merited protection. This consisted not only of public assets in the form of roads, sewers, schools, but also in the distribution and location of services such as shops, commercial services, transport, post offices, health centres i.e. the whole infrastructure of a complex urban community. It was argued by the professionals that out-of-centre development would divert trade, commerce and jobs away from established centres and would jeopardise the investment in, and the cohesiveness of, those centres. The professionals were therefore against all proposals for out of centre developments and in parallel to this professional view out-of-centre development was not sympathetically regarded by the controlling Labour group; they considered such developments would benefit the more affluent sectors of the community at the expense of the less mobile and the poor depriving them of the advantages of choice and price. In a city which at that time had only 41% of households with access to a private car it was contended that out of centre developments must be contrary to the interests of the poorer, car-less majority and favour the suburban commuters living on the periphery of the City.

In addition to these political objections there were a number of other soundly based planning reasons for opposing out-of-centre developments. When located in established residential areas adverse effects on the amenity of those living nearby may be caused. Green field sites use up valuable agricultural or scarce industrial land. The local road system may not be able to cope with the increased traffic leading to considerable public expense in the form of road improvements. Public transport may suffer loss of passengers and

require diversions. The local drainage and sewerage systems may become surcharged leading to restrictions on other forms of development or impose a requirement for additional expenditure to increase capacity. In assessing the balance of policy advantage issues of this kind had to be taken into account.

However, despite the views of many local authorities and their professional planners, retailers and shoppers seem to favour the one-stop-shop where all the food and normal household items can be purchased and taken by trolley to an adjoining surface car park surrounding the store. Retailers have increased store size in order to cut costs so rationalising distribution, storage and selling space. Self service facilities have the further advantage of reducing employment costs. (5) Single level storage and sales areas with adjoining parking is attractive to both retailer and shopper by allowing the easy movement of bulky goods. When stores are located close to the main residential areas this increased accessibility with shorter journeys makes them particularly attractive to the car borne shopper. So that by offering lower prices in accessible locations retailers are able to increase market share and also achieve maximum profitability. Commensurate with changes in retailing there have also been changes in shoppers needs. Daily food shopping has been in decline; increasing female employment, home food storage in refrigerators (and latterly freezers) seem to be the main contributing factors. These taken together with the increases in the ownership and use of private cars probably accounts for the consumer element in the pressure for out-of-town developments (5).

Hand in hand with these changes in consumer habits has been the application of central government policy. The big out-of-centre retailers have the resources to take on local authorities at planning appeals and have the means to influence Government. With lobbying politicians favourable to their cause in Parliament together with the resources to influence consumers through advertising, these firms have a substantial ability to mobilise opinion in their support. When a Government comes into power which is sympathetic to the business sector, as with the Conservatives in 1979, local authority policies designed to prevent development come under strong pressure. Thus for example the concept of the Enterprise Zone was promoted politically as freeing business from local authority planning controls and rates on the assumption that these factors were hampering entrepreneurial endeavour. It is to be noted that central government's imposts were not apparently regarded as equally inhibiting until Lord Young's proposals set out in the White Paper "Lifting the Burden". (6)

Housing Policy Background

In the second policy area, housing, the principal issue raised was the use of housing land in the context of housing need and land availability. Geography and the distribution of population have played a significant role in the development of housing policy in Hull. The City is situated on a very wide estuarial river, (with no fixed crossing until 1981), with the result that it could not develop according to the usual concentric pattern of most urban areas. It therefore forms a half circle with the River Humber to the south and

is bisected by the River Hull. To the east lies the plain of Holderness which is flat and featureless and sparsely populated. To the north is Beverley, a thriving market town. Most private residential development has taken place on the western side of Hull where the land begins to climb in height away from the low lying city centre. Thus, on its western and northern boundaries the City is tightly circumscribed by predominantly owner-occupied residential areas. As a result when Hull CC began large scale slum clearance and had to provide replacement houses the highly developed western part of Hull and its residential suburbs offered little scope for new housing estates. It was, therefore, to the east of the River Hull that Hull CC had to turn when in the post-war era massive housing developments were carried out.

During the late 1960's Hull CC made compulsory purchase orders on large areas of farm land at Bransholme and Sutton (to the north east of the City). This was intended to provide for future housing needs and by the mid 1970's the Council had acquired a land bank which was sufficient to carry through the prospective housing programme for many years. Unfortunately by this time the main housing demand was west of the River Hull in the areas around the City Centre and in the south western sector. Most of this demand was generated by the slum clearance programme which by the nineteen seventies was largely concentrated in these areas. Although Hull CC had bought farm land in the 1950's on its north western boundary with a view to developing it for housing all attempts to obtain planning permission from Beverley BC (and its predecessor authority, Haltemprice UDC) within whose

administrative area it lay, had been unsuccessful. On its last attempt in 1976 Hull CC failed on appeal to the Minister with a compromise proposal to develop only part of the land, the reason being given for refusal was that the housing would constitute a breach of the "green belt policy" of maintaining open wedges between Hull and the adjoining residential area of Cottingham. So apart from slum clearance sites Hull CC at that time had no realistic prospect of finding a substantial area of land for new housing west of the river.

By the 1970's the climate of opinion was changing and people affected by slum clearance were increasingly showing a strong disinclination to move from the centre and south west to the north and east of the city. Generally, those living in clearance areas were becoming more organised and voluble and resistance to move east of the river built up. In this context the long battles on the proposed clearance of Walton Street (7) and Queens Road (8) illustrate the changing mood of the residents who were often led or assisted by educated, informed spokesmen (Interviews). As a result finding additional housing land in the west of Hull was seen as an urgent and politically sensitive issue. However, the market pressures on the private house building sector were directed to finding land in the west as well, so that the locational aspirations of the private home buyer and Council tenant coincided. This had an unwelcome consequence to Hull CC, in that it had to compete with the private sector for land in that part of the City.

Other Associated Issues

Another competitor for housing land in the west of the City was Industry. The need to allocate land for industry in the west of Hull was seen as almost as strong a pressure as the need for housing land. The objective was to maintain employment levels within the area. Thus, industrial policies and housing policies led to direct competition for the same commodity. As a forum for considering these issues a special ad hoc committee was set up with the title "Housing and Industry in West Hull" as a mechanism for reconciling this conflict. However, judged in terms of the city wide resources of housing and industrial land there was no under supply. The political perceptions of need and the localised under supply of land resources led to the creation of this Committee to satisfy the politicians rather than to resolve "real" problems as perceived by the professionals (Interviews). Other considerations were obviously in play and one of these concerns was the electoral factor; because the consequence of slum clearance is a sharp reduction in population due to the much lower densities there was a potential loss of voters. This was of concern to the majority group on the Council, firstly, because in the short term wards with declining populations were more vulnerable to change as they became less stable and more volatile. Secondly, in the longer term a reduction in total population if it were accompanied by new private residential development could adversely affect the existing political balance. Thus, the reinstatement of the displaced residents in new public housing schemes was seen as as a political priority in order to ensure the maintenance

of the electoral status quo, as well as satisfying the wish of the residents to remain in those areas.

Because of these political pressures the politicians were compelled to look again for new land for housing and industry in the western sector of Hull. There were only two significant areas left. The first was around the western docks which were still operational but in rapid decline. The second was Priory Yard, redundant railway sidings owned by British Rail. This area lay parallel to the River Humber overlapping the western boundary of Hull into the administrative area of Beverley BC. In 1979 Hull CC negotiated the purchase around 100 acres of the sidings for housing and at the same time reached an "in principle" agreement for the joint development with British Rail of another 100 acres for industrial purposes. The Priory Yard land had a number of drainage and access problems with the added complication of the imminent construction of a new urban trunk road through the site (9). Because the new road was expected to bring substantial benefits (by relieving congestion and diverting heavy goods vehicles away from residential areas and the City Centre) Hull CC did not want to take any action likely to delay the road, getting it built as quickly as possible was seen as a priority. Thus, we have yet another policy area (highways/transportation) which was to influence the decision making process.

Even though the 100 acres was not as much as the Council had hoped to obtain (or the politicians thought was needed) this was, nevertheless, enough land to provide for the construction of around 1,200 new homes.

As this went hand in hand with an agreement with British Rail to develop the 100 acres to the south of the housing land as an industrial estate a second important objective for west Hull had been achieved, i.e. new land for industry. However, the acquisition of the land at Priory Yard in 1979 co-incided with the arrival of the Conservatives and Michael Heseltine. Soon the Conservative policies on housing expenditure began to bite and Hull CC found that its Housing Investment Programme (HIP) instead of being expanded as it wished was being curtailed. This resulted in the Council having no money to start its 1,200 unit housing scheme. The extent of the cutback by central Government is illustrated by Hull's HIP Allocation for 1982/83 which allowed for the construction of only 50 new council houses in contrast to a political aspiration to build ten times that amount (CR, January 1982).

The Superstore Policy Background

In the spring of 1981 a local development company submitted a proposal for a superstore on about 10 acres of the Priory Yard housing land fronting the dual carriageway on Hessle Road. It was suggested that the sale of this site would probably produce a capital receipt for Hull CC well in excess of the amount it had paid to British Rail only two years previously for the whole 100 acres. If the offer were to be accepted it would still leave the Council with 90% of the land and a capital receipt sufficient to start the housing development. So the policy issue which then faced the councillors was should they take up this offer? If they did, what should they do with the money? A

number of councillors took the point that the land had been bought for housing not commercial development. This, of course, went to the heart of the expressed political priorities to provide more municipal housing in the western half of the city. An alternative view advocated by a few of the politicians and most of the officers attempted to rationalise this apparent conflict by arguing that the development opportunity should be taken and the money raised should be used for housing purposes in west Hull (either at Priory Yard or elsewhere, any question of a shortfall in housing land in future could be dealt with, if and when, it arose. This latter view assumed several years more Conservative public expenditure restraint with the likelihood that the resources would not be available for the development of Priory Yard for some time. It also took into account the probability that by the time the development of Priory Yard did take place conditions would have substantially changed and that, quite possibly, the loss of this area of land would be of no significance whatever. Thus it was argued that selling the site was, pragmatically, the best policy option to adopt.

However, the superstore proposal had been triggered off by other events which were to gain a momentum of their own. The key decision was that of the Minister who in August 1980 allowed the planning appeal of Association Dairies (Asda) in respect of a site at Bilton on the eastern boundary of the City which Asda wished to develop for a 60,000 sq ft superstore. In upholding Asda's appeal the Minister gave the first consent for a large out-of-centre shopping development in or around Hull. (10) Hull CC's case for opposing the appeal was that the

development: (a), would be contrary to the Humberside Structure Plan Shopping Policy, (b), contrary to the long standing City Shopping Policy, (c), the location was neither within the City Centre or a District Centre and so failed to meet the criteria set out in Development Control Policy Note 13, (d), that it did not accord with the objectives of the Government's Inner City Policy, (f), that it would seriously prejudice the prospects for securing the development of Phase 3 of the Bransholme District Centre, (g), that the proposal could be located elsewhere within the Hull catchment area in accordance with the terms of the policy and (h), that if all these contentions failed and if it were found there were exceptional circumstances then this was the wrong location to cater for them. In rejecting Hull CC's case the Minister adopted the following conclusions from the Inspector's report:

Hull is a regional centre serving a catchment area of over 400,000 population and has no superstore..... The car ownership figures were seven years out of date: I do not accept that because everyone cannot utilise proffered facilities no one should. . . . It is impossible to say that in a relatively major development such as this no one will suffer; I consider that few will be harmed materially whether as retailers or residents. . . . This is a case that justifies making an exception of the very tightly drawn Structure Plan Policy on out-of-centre shopping developments.
(11)

This decision created a situation which concerned both elected members and officers equally; for the officers it was a direct challenge to their strategy for the development of the City as a regional shopping centre as well as challenging their professional assessment of shopping needs and locational requirements. For the members the decision ran counter to their policy of protecting established centres by opposing large peripheral developments for

social and economic reasons. Although it was one of those rare conjunctions of high interest at both member and officer level when both felt that essential interests were at stake it would be a mistake to assume that there was a single view. In fact, there was a considerable diversity of opinion among both councillors and officials. These differences coalesced into two very similar standpoints within each group. On the officer side there were those who subscribed to the theory that any development was better than no development at all. These officers were sceptical of both the reality and the benefits of long term planning as against realisable development now. Other officers believed that in certain circumstances development far from being good per se could be prejudicial to longer term objectives and therefore should not be supported if the immediate or continuing benefits were unlikely to outweigh the long term dis-benefits, especially if damage would be sustained by existing centres. Some councillors, notably the Chairman of the Development and Estates Committee Louis Pearlman were anxious to secure investment in the City. They took the view that market forces would make all the necessary adjustments and that no long term harm would be caused. Other councillors considered that this type of development was politically unacceptable because it would be inaccessible to a significant proportion of the population who had to rely on public transport. These councillors also had a genuine apprehension that there would be a reduction in choice and service for those without private cars. At the start of this debate those councillors against out-of-centre superstores constituted a substantial majority. On

the officer side the contending views were more evenly balanced.

Running parallel to the Asda Bilton planning appeal was a second similar sized scheme proposed to be developed on a site at Bransholme some three miles distant from Bilton. The Bransholme proposal came forward only after the Asda application had become embroiled in the planning appeal process. The Bransholme district centre was one of the locations suggested by Hull CC as an acceptable planning alternative to the Bilton site. Asda declared that so far as their requirements went the site was unsuitable and the Asda planning inquiry closed on that basis. However, subsequent to the Asda inquiry hearings a proposal for a superstore at Bransholme emerged. This came from Chesterfield Properties who had developed the first two phases at the existing centre under a lease from Hull CC. The existing centre with 120,000 sq ft of retail and service trades provided the only retail facilities on an estate which had a population of around 40,000. To accommodate the proposed superstore the existing layout required "stretching" which would be difficult because the centre was tightly constrained by adjoining housing and roads.

The proposal for the Chesterfield scheme came through the Development and Estates Committee which secured the approval of the Housing Committee (the land owner). The Bransholme area was at this time not generously endowed with either leisure retail or service facilities apart from those located in the district centre. This was a source of some concern to the politicians

interested in housing matters. The Bransholme superstore scheme was therefore attractive to the "housing interests" for a number of reasons: first, it would provide for Council tenants those advantages of price and choice associated with superstores; secondly by providing for the car borne shopper this would strengthen the existing centre as a retail draw; thirdly it could be offered to the planning and policy interests as satisfying their aims and finally it satisfied the development faction because being on council owned land there would be a direct financial return to the Council. As a result the scheme obtained approval from the Council in its dual capacities of land owner (the Housing Committee) and as planning authority. This was despite the professional planners having serious reservations regarding both the "stretching" of the site and the concept of an add on superstore in this location which reservations were clearly shared by many of the Planning Committee politicians but the discipline of the party group prevailed because they were in a minority and the Development Committee had the weight of the housing lobby behind them (Interviews).

The reservations of the planning and policy officers were not dissimilar to those of Asda which had rejected the Bransholme site on the grounds of its physical inadequacy and its inability to meet the classic preference of superstore operators i.e. a free standing store with a large expanse of continuous, exclusive and adjacent car parking on the same level as the store. Further disadvantages were the lack of almost any private housing in the

near vicinity and the poor "image" of the area. Just before the conditional planning approval for Bransholme Phase 3 could become final the Minister used his powers to intervene by "calling it in". The reason given was "the likely interaction between the proposed development and the development at Bilton (proposed by Asda) should that Company's appeals succeed" (CF, 1979). What caused the Minister to act is not known although one could speculate that Asda may well have made representations to the DoE on the not unreasonable basis that the issue was material to the Bilton scheme which was still under appeal.

It is interesting to note that the two developers Asda and Chesterfield Properties both stated in the subsequent public inquiry that they were not concerned about the other scheme going ahead and expressed the view that both could proceed (Interviews). This evidence was accepted by the Planning Inspector who in commenting on the developers claims noted that these were "a significant indication that the Bransholme shopping centre will not be adversely affected by the Bilton proposal" (11). These conclusions were not shared by those officers of Hull CC who had expressed reservations about the Bransholme proposals i.e. the "planners" and the "policy" officers. It was their view that if the Bilton scheme received the go-ahead the Bransholme scheme would be killed stone dead. As it transpired that was the correct analysis of the situation as the superstore scheme at Bransholme has never seen the light of day, whereas, the Bilton Asda development following the Minister's favourable decision proceeded

swiftly and commenced trading in 1982.

Thus, the development which would have been accessible to the greater number of shoppers, which had around 20,000 people within one mile walking distance of it, which would have performed a dual function as a local centre and also provided for the car borne shopper, was not built and instead a green field site on the eastern periphery of the City went ahead. In this sequence of events the actors who exercised the most influence on the outcome were the Minister and his civil servants. It can also be seen that a powerful vested interest in the shape of a commercial operator was able to advance a case strong enough to override the existing planning policies and to convince the Minister to make a decision in its favour. If Phase 3 Bransholme had not been on Council owned land in the middle of a municipal housing estate whether the Minister would have intervened is something we do not know. Equally, having intervened whether these were factors the Minister took into account is a matter of speculation. Nevertheless, however it came about the Asda Bilton decision constituted a substantial breach of Hull CC's pre-existing planning and social policies.

With the decision on Bilton the Minister had knocked a big hole in what had been up to that time a relatively secure defensive wall. His reasoning appeared to be that despite the Structure Plan provisions he had concluded that the Plan was incapable of being fulfilled because the locations identified for superstore

development could not physically accommodate them. Having decided that the needs of the car borne shopper should be catered for in Hull the Asda application constituted in his view an exceptional circumstance on which he should allow the appeal. In relation to Bransholme (approved at the same time) he saw this as providing a more localised function. However, Bransholme Phase 3 had a very similar floorspace capacity to that of the Asda scheme and it was better located in terms of the distribution of population within the 15 minutes drive time (i.e. the time/distance equation within which the majority of car borne shopping trips to large food stores are generated). Thus, the distinction drawn by the Minister between the two proposals is difficult to follow. If the Minister could come to the conclusion that the Bransholme site was physically adequate, that it would meet an existing unsatisfied demand and that other planning considerations had been satisfied, how could he decide that the overall planning strategy was incapable of being fulfilled. However, he did so and justified a breach of policy at Bilton on that basis.

Although the local authority planners and policy officers were convinced that because of the proximity of the two sites it would be extremely unlikely that Bransholme would proceed, the Minister and his officials nevertheless accepted what they had been told by the two developers (Asda and Chesterfield Properties). In the inquiry proceedings the Council's officers had been unable to press this point for two reasons. First of all challenging commercial developers on an issue of commercial judgement is a

dubious tactic for a local authority. Secondly, they were constrained in challenging Chesterfield Properties because of the formal endorsement and support of the scheme by the Council i.e. it having been given "political" support for "political" reasons professional officers were not in a position in public proceedings to attack the credibility of the statements made in support of the scheme (Interviews). The Council officers dilemma was that they would have advanced a quite different case to that of the commercial property developer in any event. The reasons for the Chesterfield Properties position is a matter for speculation possibly they had to have regard to other commercial relationships. In any event superstore operators or developers are usually extremely reluctant to criticise opposing schemes. Thus, Asda went largely unchallenged on this central issue. For its part Asda merely declared the Bransholme site as unsuitable for it as an operator. At the same time Asda claimed that a smaller store on the Bilton site would likewise not be suitable. Asda did not, however, suggest that these sites would be unsuitable for other operators. Thus, Asda took an all or nothing position which was eventually conceded by the Minister who gave them everything they sought with a permission for the site they had selected and with the size of store they had stipulated. However, looked at in the cold light of day the Minister's decision is self evidently contradictory. Clearly the Inspector, the DoE officials and Minister had taken a "view" and had felt it unnecessary to attempt any sophisticated reconciliation of policy concepts with their pragmatic solutions. Whether these decisions were as

cynical as they appear on the face of it we shall never know. An interesting contrast is the decision on Asda Willerby, noted below, where the Minister accepted the Planning Inspector's view that it was undesirable to have two stores within relatively close proximity!

Following the Asda Bilton and Bransholme decisions the Hull officers began to investigate the possibility of formulating an amended policy for large stores which would bridge the gap between the previous policy and the Minister's new category of "exceptional circumstances". It was hoped that if this could be achieved it would enable the Council to resist future superstore proposals on a more effective basis. At this point, (late summer/autumn 1980), although the reaction of the councillors was one of disappointment at losing the appeal there was still a general view that Hull CC should continue to resist such applications. The protection of the city and district centres allied to the presumed social and economic disadvantages of suburban superstores was still regarded by the politicians as valid objectives. The councillors took much longer to adjust to the change in circumstances brought about by the Minister's decision than the officers. As a result the first constructive response to the decision was from the officers' side. The officers assessed both the aims and the deficiencies in the previous policy, measured them against the new "exceptional circumstances" and started to try to reconcile these conflicting elements. The factors the officers identified which caused them

immediate concern were twofold. First, that a serious imbalance had now been created in the quantitative shopping provision east and west of the River Hull. Secondly that the new "exceptional circumstances", (i.e. the needs of the car borne shopper) applied even more strongly to the west than the east (i.e. even without the quantitative imbalance the "needs" case was much stronger in the west which had many more car users). More than two thirds of the population of the greater Hull urban area live west of the River and more than two thirds of the spending power of the area is to be found here. In 1980 there were no superstores or large supermarkets in the west in contrast to the east where there were already two large supermarkets and planning permission for two superstores. The Hull CC officers concluded that sites would soon be identified by developers in locations west of the River either in Hull or Beverley. The officer view was that one or more sites would be bound to succeed on appeal because the needs of the car borne shopper would now be considered as an "exceptional circumstance". (CF 1980)

The Asda decision was reported to the Humberside CC's Planning and Transportation Committee. The County Planning Officer advised that the decision was a breach of the Structure Plan Shopping Policy and notwithstanding the Minister's action he still considered that the County Policy "was on the right lines". However, he noted the emphasis placed on the needs of the car borne shopper and advised that although this had not previously been envisaged as an "exceptional circumstance" by either the

County or any of the district councils in Humberside it would now had to be recognised as such (Humberside CC, CR, September 1980). The CPO subsequently submitted a detailed report on the implications of the Asda and Bransholme decisions, advising that "it is likely that developers will consider that the provision of further large stores in East Hull would not be feasible" and that "the pressures for large scale stores are now likely to be concentrated in the West Hull area (including the former Haltemprice UDC)" (Hull CC, CR, November 1980). The CPO also drew attention to the problem of attempting to find suitable sites for large stores within any of the designated centres to the west of the River. He also pointed out that although car ownership rates in the City were significantly below the national average in the commuter areas immediately adjoining the City, (within the area of Beverley BC), car ownership rates were well above the national average at over 70%. The implication was, of course, that the locational desire of operators would be to serve the suburban car owning fringe rather than the less affluent inhabitants of the inner city areas. The CPO concluded that if Hull CC adhered rigidly to the existing policy it would run the risk of the Minister approving one or more out of centre developments to the west of the river and he, therefore, posed a question directed to a possible compromise i.e. should the Council seek to define sites which would fulfill the basic underlying aims of the shopping policy but accepting that these could well be contrary to the locational policies of the various formal plans? The Planning Committee at that point made no decision on the report merely

resolving to consider it "further at a future meeting". (Hull CC, CM, November 1980).

The reason for deferment was clearly to enable the issue to be considered by the party group. However, in the meantime the officers were organising their own response without reference to the politicians and an informal officer team drawn from the departments of the Chief Executive and the Chief Land and Property Officer as well as the CPO had been assembled under the leadership of the Assistant Town Clerk. It assumed the task of preparing the response to the Asda decision and its initial assessment was that it was not possible to find sites within the terms of the existing policy and it therefore concentrated on compromise sites which would meet some but not all previous policy aims. The intention was to identify sites which could be offered to retailers in order to head off possibly successful appeals on sites which would be regarded by both the professionals and the politicians as undesirable. Eventually Priory Yard was identified as the best location for a "compromise" site.

The Priory Yard Superstore Proposal

At this point, (ie. the proposed sale of land), the politicians became actively interested; the issue having moved from the theoretical policy making level to the status of a "real" scheme being processed through the committee system it engaged the politicians attention. The proposed sale of the Priory Yard site

for a superstore which they now had to decided upon could yield a return in excess of £2m but there was a potential loss of about 120 houses. However, although the prospect of selling the site for development was a virtual certainty the loss of housing was not because the restraints on Council spending meant there was no likelihood of early housing development. The officer consensus at this point was that the Council should accept the offer and satisfy both the objectives of the modified shopping policy and use the money to build houses. (Interviews). However, the decision whether or not to release the housing land was for the councillor to make not the professionals and it was the politicians perceptions of housing needs and of electoral advantage favouring the maximum retention of public housing land which dominated the subsequent debate. Housing policy was now introduced as a primary consideration and the financial benefits of selling the site and the economic benefits from the new development were to be weighed against the housing issues. At the same time planning and employment policies relationships with other local authorities, with landowners, developers and other interests were also relevant considerations. As a consequence of all these contending positions the politicians interest in the resolution of these issues was very high.

When the debate moved from the officer/technical level it began to take on a highly political flavour. It appeared that within the controlling party a distinct differences of opinion were coming to the surface. There were those in favour of attracting new investment, jobs, and the kind of facilities which would boost the City's image

with the bonus of new rate income. This group regarded the superstore as an opportunity not to be missed, especially, if the development were to be on Council land as this which would provide the resources which would otherwise be denied to the Council to build new houses in west Hull. The leading contender of this faction was the Chairman of the Development and Estates Committee Louis Pearlman. The housing lobby, however, strongly believed that as the land had been acquired for housing it would be quite wrong to dispose of a scarce resource merely because short term central government policy was preventing its development. Their argument ran that the present government would eventually go and be replaced by one more favourably disposed to the Hull CC's housing policies. On that view it was contended that it would be foolish to waste this valuable asset by turning it over to commercial development (Interviews). A third somewhat smaller group focused in the Planning and Policy Committees appeared to be undecided at that stage. Whether that indecision was political and tactical or was a reflection of a genuine inability to reach a decision was not apparent. (Interviews)

A compromise between these positions which was advanced by some of the officers was to suggest that as a shopping precinct had been included in the planning brief for the proposed Priory Yard housing scheme the superstore could be substituted for that precinct. With some ancillary shop units, a public house or club it was said that this would meet the initial needs of the housing development. One real advantage would be that for once, at least, some facilities would be provided in advance of the new housing. Although the superstore site

was at the western extremity of the housing area and therefore not ideally situated, the officers suggested that the compromise was still worth making and the cost of the exercise could be met out of the proceeds from the sale of the site. The remaining balance could then be used to open up the land for housing. In the event this compromise solution did not make very much headway.

The superstore proposal was not formally considered by the Council for several months although during this time an internal political debate was being conducted within the controlling group on the merits of the alternative policy options open to them. However, this somewhat leisurely process was interrupted in March 1981 when British Rail submitted two alternative planning applications for superstores of 50,000 sq ft and 70,000 sq ft on sites at Priory Yard. Beverley BC also received two identical applications at the same time because the sites straddled the boundaries of the two authorities. However, added to the Beverley application were proposals for an industrial estate on the land adjoining the superstore which lay wholly within the Beverley area. These applications were quickly followed by one from the local development company, which had made the first approach on Priory Yard. This application was for a supermarket, DIY store and Garden Centre (with a total floor space of 93,000 sq ft) on the housing land. The British Rail sites had been rejected by the officers at an earlier stage because the proposed construction programme for the new road would prevent them being developed before 1985. However, British Rail had taken advantage of the hiatus created by the Hull CC's indecision and had pursued negotiations with the Department of Transport to pay

the additional costs of securing the advanced construction of the link road thus enabling them to bring forward the development of their land concurrently with the planning applications. It was at this point that Beverley BC approached Hull CC for discussions regarding the British Rail planning applications.

In relation to these developments the view taken by the Hull officers was that it was essential to obtain the agreement of both Beverley BC and Humberside CC on two key issues. First, agreement to the overall strategic planning and tactical advantages of allowing a superstore at Priory Yard (irrespective of the question of which site). Secondly, agreement to join the City Council in refusing and resisting all further superstore planning applications and appeals on the western fringe of the City provided that one of the Priory Yard sites was released to meet the demand. (CF, 1981). Under planning law decisions must be made by the local authority within 8 weeks otherwise the applicant can treat the inaction as a deemed refusal and appeal to the Minister. As it would be possible for British Rail to take the initiative in this way if the Council did nothing the pressure was for an early decision. Further pressures arose from the fact that these were cross boundary applications because if one authority dealt with the applications and the other dragged its feet this would place the latter in an untenable position. Accordingly, the heat was on and a response had to be formulated which meant that it was essential for Hull CC to reach an early understanding with Beverley BC in order to ensure that the wider policy interests of Hull would be protected as well as determining the narrower issue of the particular proposal.

The professionals when assessing the stance to be adopted with British Rail had regard to a wider perspective in particular the need to reach agreement with them on the acquisition of other land assets of interest to the City. Two areas were of particular interest to Hull CC at that time. The first was an area of railway sidings adjacent to the Council's Marina development (close to the City Centre) which was likely to be declared redundant. The second was the remaining area of land at Priory Yard which Hull CC was anxious to see developed for industrial purposes. Given these other objectives it would be of benefit to reach agreement on all three land holdings rather than souring relations by taking a competitive position on the superstore sites. These considerations were not decisive but were undoubtedly factors present in the minds of the decision makers when the time came to recommend the policy options. Similarly, Beverley BC had the potential industrial land "gain" to consider.

Hull CC took its first significant policy decision relative to these issues when its Policy Committee decided to adopt "as a framework for the consideration of planning applications" the following resolution:-

Having regard to the decision of the Secretary of State for the Environment on the Asda appeal in relation to the needs of the car borne shopper, the forthcoming completion of the Humber Bridge and South Docks Roads and the overriding pressure for superstore development in the West Hull area, this Committee concludes that an appropriate superstore development in Priory Yard would satisfy most of the underlying aims of the existing policy, including good access to all members of the community, with an increasing catchment population and that in this location the development can be made in a form which will satisfy environmental, aesthetic, traffic management and road safety requirements, while at the same time providing important potential social benefits and bringing into use degraded land. (Hull CC, CM, April 1981)

This resolution drafted by the C.P.O. and the writer marks a significant change in the strategic planning policy. Although it attempts to rationalise the choice of a site on Priory Yard it does not disguise the fact that this location would not have been in compliance with the requirements of previous planning policy. This decision is essentially the compromise envisaged by the officers six months earlier (i.e. acknowledging the Minister's exceptional circumstances and proposing a location which still achieves some of the aims of the pre-existing policy). Nevertheless, the new policy still ran the risk of failure if other sites could be brought forward to satisfy the Minister's "exceptional circumstances". Even though at this stage a specific site had not been selected merely a general location Hull CC had now conceded the planning principle. From this point the focus of the debate moved to use of housing land. It also became very much a political rather than a professional issue. The officers were only involved at a remove approaching and being approached by the councillors on an individual basis.

On the officer side there was by no means an unanimous view. Having been originally split between the "planning" and the "development" factions once the strategic policy decision on the general location had been accepted by the politicians the issue became for the professionals a question of a rational choice between sites. As a result the officer divisions were no longer based on "planning" or "development" positions but were concentrated on the housing issue as perceived by the politicians. At the start of this secondary debate there was a very substantial majority of officers in favour of the

site owned by Hull CC. Although the officers continued to canvass their separate views with those members with whom they had a standing relationship (e.g. Chief Officers with Chairmen) or with those members they thought it worthwhile trying to persuade or dissuade all of these efforts were directed to the narrower question of which site. However, as the issue developed over time the balance within the officer group began to change. The site on the housing land had been preferred by the "planning" and "policy" officer group because it could be released quickly with relatively low infrastructure costs. Given that the overriding tactical objective had been to get a superstore site quickly in order to head off the possibility of successful planning appeals on other unacceptable sites this was clearly a sensible position. However, British Rail's agreement on the advanced construction of the link road had changed the position with the balance of advantage now being with the British Rail Site. Although it was not as good a location as the Hull CC's housing site and had higher infrastructure costs it would still satisfy the modified planning strategy for superstores and most importantly British Rail were willing to release it immediately. The strong likelihood of approval by Beverley BC was another factor in its favour because of the potential side benefit of the release of industrial land in Beverley BC.

As these advantages and side benefits emerged the "planning" and "policy" group of officers began to support the British Rail option on its merits. However in reality its greatest benefit would be to break the political impasse within Hull CC over the housing question. As

this emerged so support for the British Rail site hardened with the majority of officers with the exception of the "development" group. However for a time the "planning" and "policy" officers continued to formally support the "development" officers who were still committed to the site in the ownership of the Council. In the meantime the political housing lobby remained implacable with the result that the benefits arising from the capital receipt and getting the development firmly under the control of Hull CC (as both landowner and planning authority) began to appear less important to the majority of officers than placating the housing interests, reaching agreement with the other local authorities and securing a positive decision rather than letting the matter drift. However, neither the "planning" group nor the "development" group of officers could resolve these issues; there was no real dispute between officers about the principle of releasing the housing land but the ultimate decision was for councillors to take and it was the politics of housing which was to resolve the matter not the merits of the case.

The Planning Committee in May 1981 approved the Policy Committee's (April) Shopping policy declaration but deferred the planning applications for both the British Rail and City sites indicating that

having regard to the overall planning strategies this Committee consider it essential that a site be released at an early state and to achieve this early release a site in the location now mentioned would appear to be required (Hull CC, CM, May 1981).

The site "now mentioned" was the Hull CC site to the east of the link road. This followed the recommendation of the Housing Committee a few days earlier which had agreed "that the use of an area of land

currently allocated for housing purposes East of the Hesse interchange link road for large scale retail purposes be accepted in principle" (Hull CC, CM, May 1981). Therefore, at this point there was an apparent general acceptance of the allocation of the land for non-housing purposes by the politicians. However, when these two decisions were reported back the Policy Committee at the end of the committee cycle it decided "that the question of considering a specific site for the location of the proposed superstore development be deferred" (Hull CC, CM, May 1981). The significance of this decision was that it clearly signalled that the internal party group debate on the issue was far from being resolved. However, the Policy Committee did decide to meet Beverley BC to consider the issues raised by the various applications.

A joint delegation of Hull CC councillors and officers met representative of Humberside CC and Beverley BC in August, 1981. The outstanding superstore applications were considered by the meeting. These were: the British Rail Priory Yard sites; the Hull CC Priory Yard housing site; the Hags Farm Site (between Willerby and Cottingham); the Lowfield Road site (Anlaby) and the Willerby Caravans site (Main Street, Willerby). All of these sites being on the western suburban fringes of Hull. Following the meeting Beverley BC gave consideration to the various applications and decided to issue refusals in respect of the planning application for the sites at Willerby Caravans and Lowfield Road. It deferred the application on Hags Farm (to await further advice from the County Council as highway authority). It also deferred the British Rail applications to enable

a further meeting to take place with Hull CC to decide which of them should be approved with the intention of ensuring that only one was built on conditions satisfactory to both Councils. A follow up meeting was held in mid-September 1981 when Beverley BC indicated that they were prepared to agree to the development of the British Rail site which was mainly on the Hull side of the boundary. Approval of any of the British Rail sites (as opposed to the Hull CC housing land site) would benefit Beverley because of British Rail's promise to use part of the proceeds for the development of adjoining land as an industrial estate. Humberside CC favoured the British Rail site because in their view it avoided the use of housing land, it opened up industrial land to the west of the interchange link, and residential amenities could be more effectively safeguarded on this site in contrast to the City site. (CF, 1981). This decision it is to be noted was made by the Labour controlled County administration which of course had strong political links with the City and had clearly come down on the side of the housing faction.

On the 8 October 1981 a Special Meeting of the Hull CC's Policy Committee was held to consider the two rival sites. Exceptionally Conservative Party opposition members were invited to attend this normally one party committee but being regarded as a particularly sensitive issue the press and the public were excluded. The CPO submitted a report indicating the planning and non-planning factors and the options open to the Council. The Chief Land and Property Officer drew attention to the future availability of industrial land in the City which could be prejudiced by granting permission for the

British Rail site (i.e. instead of the joint development of the 100 acres south of the City's housing land British Rail would give priority to the land in Beverley). Having heard the CPO and CLPO and advice from the Assistant Town Clerk (acting for the Chief Executive as policy adviser) the ensuing discussion continued at length with both officers and councillors freely participating. The Committee eventually decided that "the Council agree in principle to the development of the Council owned site for a superstore" (Hull CC, CM, October 1981). During this "debate" the officer side was dominated by the "policy" and "planning" group and to a lesser extent the "development" officers. The housing issue was not advocated from the officer side primarily because there was a consensus (including the Director of Housing) that the 10 acre plot was not critical to the housing programme. However in the written reports the officers had attempted to maintain some degree of balance because being unable to predict the likely outcome of the political debate they did not wish to go out on a limb. At the Policy Committee itself the officer advocacy of the housing site for development was much less restrained this was because as the meeting progressed and the "feeling" of the meeting clearly emerged in favour of the recommended site the officers became confident in expressing their views (Interviews).

At the subsequent meeting of the October Planning Committee no decision on the two applications was made instead it recommended that "that the Policy Committee be informed that in view of the need to maintain the Structure Plan and Shopping Policies only one of the two applications should be approved" (Hull CC, CM, October 1981). This

was an attempt (successful as it turned out) to head off the suggestion then being strongly advocated by the "development" faction (both members and officers) to approve both sites and let the "best man win". This assumed (with some justification) that only one superstore was viable in this area and that the Hull CC site still had locational and cost advantages. However, the issue was still being debated by the politicians and no formal group decision endorsing the recommendations of the Special Policy Committee were forthcoming. As a result the members of the Planning Committee had no wish to try and anticipate or pre-empt a decision of the group. Although the Planning Committee in effect sat on the fence awaiting the outcome of the debate on the use of housing land they, nevertheless, felt able to put down a marker in relation to the perennial battle between planning and opportunistic development. It was the housing lobby which was clearly perceived in these circumstances to be the one not to engage in dispute. (Interviews)

When the recommendations of the Special Policy Committee went for confirmation to the Council on the 5 November 1981 the Chairman of the Committee (and Leader of the Council) took "the decision back" for further consideration (i.e. obviously the recommendation had not been approved at the party group meeting which had taken place prior to the Council meeting). (Hull CC, CM, November 1981). As a result the stalemate continued. At the next meeting of the Policy Committee on the 24 November 1981 the "reference back" was included on the agenda. The Committee had the officers report which outlined five policy options and the benefits/disbenefits attaching to each of them. It

suggested that the most beneficial choice would be for the Council to grant permission for the British Rail site as this would firstly, maintain the modified Shopping Policy intact secondly, accord with the Council's publicly stated position on Housing Policy and thirdly, be agreed by Beverley BC Humberside CC and British Rail (Hull CC, CM, November 1981). The officers who had prepared the report had attempted to summarise fairly the various policy options but in selecting one of these and putting it forward as a recommendation, the "political" situation had been taken into account, in particular, the strength of the housing politicians. The officers had of course been keeping a watch on the internal policy debate within the group and the report had been prepared on the basis of the information gleaned from discussions with councillors and a judicious assessment of the likely outcome of the political process. In formulating recommendations the officers identified those which they judged to be politically acceptable but which also met the primary aim of the professionals in terms of securing a coherent planning policy (Interviews). At officer level the overall balance of opinion was now in favour of a solution which would be acceptable to Beverley BC for tactical reasons the argument being that as nearly all the potential superstore sites were in the residential suburbs on the western fringe of the City within the jurisdiction of Beverley BC the new planning strategy could only be effective to protect the interests of the City if it had the full co-operation and support of Beverley BC. For that reason the majority of officers were happy to subscribe to the politicians stand on the housing land despite their almost complete lack of belief in the rationale of the politicians decision (Interviews).

The Policy Committee did not debate the officers report when the agenda item was reached and it was only very briefly introduced by the officers at the request of the Chairman. Without any discussion at all the Chairman then read a prepared statement the main thrust of which related not to shopping policy but to the provision of municipal housing in west Hull. He outlined the Council's intention to build 536 dwellings by 1985 at an estimated cost of £10m subject to the reservation that this was dependent upon a number of factors not least the future allocation of the necessary resources by the government under the HIP system. Following this statement the Committee then decided against the development of the Council owned site and approved the British Rail site coupling this with a declaration that all new Council house development in the foreseeable future should be in west Hull and requesting the Housing Committee to review its programme to take full account of this policy declaration (Hull CC, CM, November 1981).

It can be seen that between the Special Policy Committee on the 8 October and the decision on the 24 November the policy choice was reversed. The argument in the party group during this six week period was, it seems, dominated by the housing issue and indeed, had drifted a long way from the limited question of the use of a relatively small area of land to the much wider question of Hull CC's house building programme in west Hull. The rather neutral responses of the Planning Committee is also interesting because this Committee sitting uneasily between the development lobby on the one hand and the housing lobby on the other obviously hedged its bets. The members of the Planning

Committee probably reflected the differences in the Council as a whole although as a Committee it was probably more disposed to accept the package of planning and development benefits which would arise from using the Council's site (as indicated by its decision in May 1981). However, the need for political caution on the one hand and on the other for the Committee to maintain its essential planning impartiality (by not importing into the resolution of planning issues non-planning factors) won the day. The only formal decision of the Housing Committee during the relevant period prior to the final decision was to approve the use of the housing land site "in principle". This would appear to have been a very narrowly won decision and although it was never rescinded those members of the Committee against the decision were able in the end to secure a party group directive in their favour. That this split and the conflict which was associated with it should be detectable in the series of decisions formally recorded in the Council minutes is itself unusual in a strongly partisan authority under the firm control of one party. As a result of the final policy decision in November, 1981 Hull CC subsequently granted various planning approvals for the development of a large retail unit on land owned by British Rail but mostly within the City boundary. The last of these approvals was in August 1982 for a scheme totalling 112,000 sq. ft for Sainsburys. This development then proceeded and commenced trading in 1984.

Post Decision Planning History

Concurrently with settling the Priory Yard issues discussions had been continuing with Humberside CC and Beverley BC in order to reach an agreed policy in relation to all the other outstanding planning applications and appeals. In January 1982 these private councillor and officer exchanges were reported to the Policy Committee indicating that agreement had been reached on a jointly co-ordinated response including contesting all the appeals. Each authority had undertaken to provide mutual assistance to the others (Hull CC, CM, January 1982). Having considered the recommendations of the joint authority meeting the Policy Committee then considered how this agreement was going to be implemented. The officers recommended that notwithstanding the joint authorities agreement Hull should independently engage professional consultants "to give preliminary advice" relative to the interests of Hull in particular (Hull CC, CM, January 1982). The officers had formed the view that there could be dangers as well as advantages in the joint approach especially as neither of the two other authorities were apparently prepared to commit the necessary resources. The officers argued that the stakes for developers were high and that they would undoubtedly invest time, skill and money in pursuit of their objectives. In order to meet this challenge Hull CC would have to respond with the same degree of commitment. The politicians accepted the advice of their officers that if the joint strategy failed the biggest loser would be Hull and not the adjoining authorities. In order to safeguard the regional shopping role of the city the Council would have to allocate the

resources the other authorities were unwilling to find. The officers of Hull CC were anxious to keep control and this was clearly one way of doing so effectively because if they held all the ammunition when the time came the other authorities would be obliged to fall in behind.

A further justification for the appointment of independent consultants was the need to resolve issues internal to Hull CC relative to out of centre development policy. This was now pressing with proposals for large out of centre superstores for food goods in such locations as Clough Road and Victoria Dock. The officers also had in mind that not only would independent consultants lend greater credibility in the context of public inquiries and appeals but also an independent voice might serve to resolve some of the internal political and professional conflicts. These internal conflicts were founded on the two concurrent strands of opinion amongst both councillors and officers. On the one hand the planning/policy approach and on the other the more opportunistic development approach. The planning/policy officers took the view that if large food stores were permitted at either of the two locations (Clough Road and Victoria Dock) then the entire edifice of rational opposition would crash to the ground and that by breaching the principle of protecting existing centres the Council would destroy the basis of its case.

Independent consultants were then appointed by Hull CC having been selected by the planning/policy officers. The consultants gave preliminary advice that -

in order to avoid dealing with these proposals on a piecemeal basis, which could result in undesirable implications for the retail pattern of the City, particularly for the City centre, it would seem desirable to present your Council with the information they require to deal with the proposals on a comprehensive and planned basis (Lichfield, CF, 1982).

Thus, the planning/policy group of officers had selected the consultants, had briefed them and as a result a not unsurprising professional concurrence emerged in favour of a comprehensive approach. At its next meeting the Policy Committee decided to invite Humberside CC and Beverley BC to contribute to the cost of the Hull Shopping Study. Being aware of further applications in the pipeline it also decided to request Beverley BC to defer the determination of any applications for large retail developments until there had been the opportunity for further discussions between the authorities concerned (Hull CC, CM, February 1982). In the following month the Hull CC request was considered by Beverley BC which decided that it neither wished to share the cost of the proposed Shopping Study nor was it prepared to delay the determination of the Willerby superstore application. Similarly in April 1982 the Humberside CC merely noted the various requests of Hull CC and declined to make any financial contribution but indicated its willingness to help with statistical information. So at this point Hull CC was left virtually on its own and the predictions of the Hull officers regarding the commitment of the other two councils had been vindicated as had the decision of the Hull councillors to accept their officers go-it-alone recommendations.

The facts were reported to the April Policy Committee which decided to proceed with the shopping study as quickly as possible but as the first of the Beverley planning appeal hearings had been set down for hearing in May it was decided that Hull should approach the DoE to seek a postponement of the hearing to enable the City's shopping study to proceed. In the event this proved un-necessary because the developers requested a postponement of their own accord (Hull CC, CM, April 1982). The DoE took the next material step by calling all the parties together to discuss the format of the three pending appeals in Beverley i.e. at Lowfield Road, Hags Farm and at Willerby (all on the western periphery of the City). The DoE sought to persuade both appellants and local authorities to participate in a joint inquiry, or alternatively to agree to a series of separate inquiries conducted by the same Planning Inspector; the local authorities were also invited to present a joint case with a view to eliminating repetition and duplication and the consequent lengthening of the hearings. The reply of the representative of Hull CC was to declare that the City would be presenting its separate independent case, a response conditioned by the rebuffs it had received from the other two authorities. The DoE were informed that because Hull CC had commissioned an independent shopping study it was not prepared to compromise the conclusions of that report in order to accommodate the other councils. Of the appellants none of them were prepared to accept a joint inquiry, although two of them were prepared to accept the concept of separate but linked inquiries. However, the third appellant opposed even that limited proposal and insisted on three entirely separate inquiries being held with three separate inspectors.

Later in the month of June a joint officer member delegation from Hull CC met representatives of the Hull District Chamber of Trade, an organisation representing the City's retailers in which a number of issues were discussed including shopping policy. The Chamber were advised in detail of the City's approach and the objectives of the consultants study. (CF, 1982). By early July the first interim report from the consultants was available and this was considered by a specially constituted Sub-Committee of the Policy Committee on the 15 July 1982. The report concentrated on two issues, the first was the appeal sites, the second was an assessment of the City wide retail development options. In order to establish these options the consultants had considered the broad national trends in retailing as expressed in Hull, compared Hull with similar cities, calculated the likely future scope for the development of new retail floor space and identified areas where it might be desirable to refine the City's retail policies (Hull CC, CM, July 1982). With regard to the provision of large food stores the report proposed a third Superstore in what the consultants defined as the north west sector of the City. Hull being a half circle geographically it now had two Superstores, one on the south western corner (Sainsbury's) and one on the south eastern corner (Asda). The proposal was to add a third on the northern boundary of the City at a point which virtually bisected the half circle. The underlying assumption was that a store located in that position would fill the gap then existing between the two stores on the eastern and western extremities and would complete a ring of superstores which should adequately provide for the "exceptional circumstances" of the car borne shopper for the foreseeable future.

The northern site would also have the benefit of serving virtually the whole of Beverley town area within the critical 15 minute drive time.

This strategy was then accepted together with other recommendations designed to protect the City centre. These decisions marked the high point of the supremacy of "planning" over a more opportunistic approach, in that, any further large store proposals on locations outside recognised shopping centres were firmly ruled out of the question. Thus, the advocates of the pragmatic view at least for the time being had lost the argument which went in favour of a planned strategy. The critical element in this planned strategy was the third superstore site on the northern apex of Hull. Having closed the door on all other out of centre superstore developments the success of the policy depended not merely on justifying that particular location but also securing evidence that there was a realistic prospect of obtaining a developer. The previous planning strategy had floundered on its inability to deliver sites within recognised centres which were acceptable to commercial operators. It was an awareness of this failure that was uppermost in the officers minds as the third phase of the superstore issue opened. The consultants had identified a general location along the main arterial road leading from the centre of Hull to Beverley and York. In this location there were two potential sites one of which was in the ownership of Humberside CC the other in the ownership of Hull CC. The Hull CC site consisted of some 20 acres of playing fields whereas the County site was unused land which had formerly been allocated for education purposes. Prior to local government reorganisation the County site had been in the possession

of the former Hull County Borough Council which was at that time the education authority. The County site fronting the road had been marketed for development as a motel but no takers had been found for that purpose.

At this point a potential superstore operator appeared on the scene who was actively investigating potential sites in the area and who expressed an immediate preference for the site in the ownership of Hull CC. The officers were anxious to establish the credibility of the Hull Shopping Study and considered that this could be best achieved by proving the willingness and ability of a known superstore operator to proceed on either one, or both, of these sites. One of the weaknesses of the Bransholme Stage 3 proposal was whilst there was an established property developer behind the scheme it did not have a committed superstore operator despite having obtained planning permission. The officers were of the view that it was vital to secure "in principle" approval from Humberside CC and from Beverley BC to this strategy because without their co-operation it could fall apart; as a result those authorities were approached and advised of the terms of the consultants' recommendations.

The officers of Hull CC in evaluating two Beverley Road locations (i.e. the Hull CC site and the County Council site) concluded that no decisive advantages could be established which favoured one site over the other. Under the new shopping strategy either site would satisfy the recommended policy but the principal drawback on the site owned by Hull CC was that it had an existing use as playing fields. However,

this was not an intensive use because these were formal playing pitches mainly used at weekends with few facilities. A superstore of the size recommended by the planning consultants would only occupy about 40% of the site, it could be located on the main road frontage well away from the existing houses and an additional benefit was the offer to extend the store to provide indoor sports and changing facilities to service the pitches together with joint user of the car park. Therefore, although there would be a reduction in the total area of playing fields the addition of the indoor amenities and car parking would result in a much more useful recreation facility. The alternative offer was to leave the remainder of the playing fields not required for the superstore (ie about 12 acres of the 20 acre site) and to apply the capital received from the sale to develop new playing fields and a new sports hall on Hull CC's Orchard Park housing estate the eastern boundary of which was only a few hundred yards to the west of the playing fields.

On the northern boundary of Orchard Park (a distance of about one mile) was an area of some 40 acres of land in the ownership of the City but within the administrative area of Beverley BC. All previous attempts by Hull CC to obtain Beverley's agreement to a housing development on this land had been refused. However, in these changed circumstances the Hull officers now surmised that a recreationally based development might prove more acceptable and so they initiated "sounding out" discussions with the Beverley officers prior to making any formal suggestions to their own councillors. The Beverley officers confirmed that proposals which maintained the "green belt"

and the break between the two built up areas would probably find favour with their Council and that even a building such as a sports hall could possibly be permitted provided that the general principle was upheld. If an agreement on these lines could be achieved the Hull officers saw this as a satisfactory land use planning solution which would also be politically attractive because the Orchard Park area not only lacked recreation and sporting facilities but also exhibited some of the highest indicators of social deprivation in the City. Accordingly, when the matter went back to the September Policy Committee of Hull CC it was decided "that without prejudice the Chief Land and Property Officer be authorised to continue negotiations with the prospective developer now mentioned of the land at Hall Road/Beverley Road for a retail food store", and "that with regard to such negotiations account be taken of the Sports Strategy document shortly to be considered by appropriate committees of the Council". (Hull CC, CM, September 1982) The officers believed at this point that they had identified solutions which fully satisfied the requirements of the new shopping policy with the additional benefit of generating cash which could be used in the wider interests of the local community.

On the 30 September 1982 there was a meeting between councillors representing the three Councils supported by officers. The meeting was informed by Beverley that the Haggs Farm and Lowfield Road appeals had been withdrawn and that the only appeal proceeding was the Willerby Caravans site. Hull CC then advised the meeting of the proposals for the provision of a third superstore at Hall

Road/Beverley Road the officers stressing the importance of the three authorities adopting a common view on the superstore location strategy. The need for an agreed policy position at the planning appeal was accepted by the member representatives from Humberside CC and Beverley BC and the latter's Planning Officer indicated his view that the Hull study had demonstrated that the suggested location would not conflict either with the City or Beverley Town centres or with the basic thrust of the policy to protect recognised centres. However, he was careful to emphasise that this was his professional opinion only because his politicians had not determined their policy position (this statement is remarkable for being made in the presence of a representative delegation of leading Beverley councillors!)

The joint meeting then agreed that all three authorities should formally endorse the principles of the Hull Shopping Study, that they should specifically agree on Beverley Road as the location for a third superstore to satisfy the Study strategy and that there should be a presumption against any further out of centre developments in the Hull/Beverley suburban fringe. The Leader of the Hull CC (Patrick Doyle) then raised the question of the cost of the Shopping Study and suggested that as this was going to be used as the basis for fighting the forthcoming planning appeal the other authorities should contribute to those costs as well as to the cost of the consultant's appearance at the Inquiry proposing that the City would meet 50% of this and suggesting that the other two authorities should bear 25% each. Thus, having seized the initiative, having ensured that that its policy would be the common basis for the forthcoming planning

appeal and having ensured that this policy would be used as a reference point for all future decisions Hull reasserted its claim for a contribution from a position of strength. It had a credible policy and the ammunition to fight the appeal and if the other two authorities did not join it they would be left in an exposed position at the Inquiry.

The outcome of this joint meeting was reported to the next meeting of the Policy Committee of Hull CC at the end of October 1982 and the various decisions were approved and confirmed. The Committee then turned to consider the question of which of the two locations, the City or the County sites, should be chosen. Although it reached an inconclusive decision the terms of the Committee's resolution clearly signalled an intention to develop its own site and to compensate for the loss of open space land by stipulating that "authority be granted for the necessary action to be taken to designate an equivalent area of land north of Orchard Park as open space" and that any playing fields lost should be reinstated as far as practicable prior to or concurrently with the development of the superstore. The Committee decided that the money from the sale should be used to provide replacement playing fields and that any balance left should be used for "new leisure/recreation facilities to complement existing or planned development in the north west sector of the City". (Hull CC, CM, October 1982)

In November 1982 the public inquiry into the Willerby Caravan site appeal opened. The proposed superstore operator for the Willerby site was Asda although the appellant was the owner of the site. The appellants were represented by one of the leading members of the Local Government Bar, Mr Gerald Moriarty QC. The City Council's case was led by the Assistant Town Clerk supported by the Council's consultants and Hull CC's planning officers. What is especially noteworthy in these proceedings was that the strategic planning authority, Humberside CC, were not represented at the hearing merely having a number of non-participating observers present. The respondent local planning authority, Beverley BC, was represented but very unusually its case was restricted to the secondary issue of environmental impact. The crux of the case i.e. the strategic shopping policy was taken by Hull CC so that the central issues which one would normally have expected to have been argued by the County planning authority and the local planning authority were in the hands of a neighbouring district. This position of dominance in the public inquiry had been achieved as the result of the officers of Hull CC formulating a strategy and executing it consistently having received the support and the resources from their politicians to carry the strategy through to a conclusion. In doing this the Hull officers had taken their politicians a long way from their original position of total opposition persuading them to adopt a new strategy which took account of the current economic and political realities. The Hull officers had seized the bureaucratic initiative, dominated the proceedings at officer level and had organised tactically to outflank the other two authorities.

Following the conclusion of the Willerby Caravan site inquiry hearings the Policy Committee of Hull CC further confirmed its agreement in principle to the use of its own playing field land on Beverley Road for the third superstore (Hull CC, CM, January 1983). Potential developers continued to express interest in the location generally. Pending the Minister's decision on the Willerby planning appeal no decisions were taken by either Hull CC or the County Council. However, during this hiatus some opposition emerged to development of the playing fields site including a number of councillors and officers who represented sporting and recreational interests. Opposition was also voiced by the local Sports Advisory Council. (CF, 1983)

In June 1983, the DoE Leeds issued the Minister's decision dismissing the Willerby appeal. The Minister generally accepted all the arguments advanced on behalf of Hull in particular the conclusion "That there is a need for a Superstore in the north west sector of Hull for qualitative improvement for the shopping facilities available there and to cater also for the needs of the car-borne shopper". The Inspector had also concluded that the Beverley Road location was better situated than the Willerby site to meet the shopping needs of the largest and least mobile sector of the population in the north western area of the City and he considered that the extra distance from areas of high car ownership was not material. It was his view that the Hall Road location would avoid concentrating superstore development in the south west sector of the City and therefore would create a more balanced provision overall. (12) Having successfully formulated a policy strategy and having had this approved by the other

local authorities and confirmed by the Minister on appeal the way was now open for the City to pursue the outstanding recommendation to proceed with the playing field site. In this both the policy/planning group and the development group of officers were agreed in urging the council to take early action to secure the development of the site. The officers took the view that if the County were in effect to be given a very substantial "gift" by conceding that the development should be on the County site north of Hall Road, then this should not be done without some reciprocating acknowledgement. However, a third set of interests was brought into play at this point those politicians and bureaucrats who were unhappy at the prospect of losing the playing fields.

Further contacts were made both at officer and member level between the City and the County, however, despite these approaches or perhaps because of them Humberside CC implemented the first stages of the planning procedures to obtain a planning consent for the development of a superstore on the site in their ownership. The response from Hull CC was to do nothing. At a meeting between councillors and officer representatives of Hull CC and Humberside CC at the end of September, 1983 the Leader of the Hull CC put forward the proposition that the income arising from the disposal of the County site should be used for social purposes in the City, particularly for playing fields and sports centre provision. In response the Chairman of the Humberside CC Planning and Transportation Committee suggested that the County would not be bound by such considerations and that so far as the use of any receipts which arose the County Council would have to

have regard to the needs of the County as a whole (CF, 1983). An outline application for deemed planning permission made by the Humberside CC was then received. Hull CC's Planning Committee decided that there were "no objections in principle" subject to detailed design and to "conditions restricting the floor space of the store and its use to limits identified in the City Council's shopping policies" (Hull CC, CM, December 1983). In January, 1984 the Humberside CC granted itself an outline permission in compliance with the requirements contained in the resolution of the Hull CC Planning Committee (with whom it was under a statutory obligation to consult but not necessarily to follow).

At this point the planning strategy embarked upon by the Hull officers following the approval on appeal of the Asda Bilton store in 1980 by the Minister had reached the point of fulfilment. They had persuaded the politicians to adopt a new shopping policy which reconciled the Minister's Asda Bilton decision (i.e. the need to provide for the car borne shopper) with the essential aims of the original policy (i.e. to preserve existing centres). The three large stores would serve the whole of the car-borne population of the Hull/Beverley area within the 15 minute drive time, all were located within the City (albeit that two were partly across the boundary) and in some measure they were also accessible to those reliant on public transport. In executing the planning strategy from the time of the Asda Bilton appeal decision the officers of Hull CC had been able to secure the support of the Council. The officers had also ensured that the Councils planning policy strategy was the one which prevailed with the other planning

authorities. Thus, in land use planning terms the outturn result was almost unqualified success.

However, the success of the planning objective is to be contrasted with the total failure of the officers to secure the release of the two development sites. The officers had offered the opportunity at both Priory Yard and at Beverley Road for a development to take place on Hull CC owned land which would have generated cash receipts which could then have been utilised to satisfy other policy objectives, in the one case for municipal housing and in the other for recreation and leisure facilities, both identified needs in the respective locations. Neither opportunity was taken up by the politicians despite the officers efforts and despite in both cases formal resolutions being passed initially accepting the advice of the officers. The reasons why the housing site was not released are described above. The reasons why the Hull politicians did not release the playing field site and why they handed, apparently unconditionally, the initiative to Humberside CC is on the other hand far from clear. Certainly it was contrary to the advice of the entire group of "planning", "policy" and "development" officers who had been engaged in the superstore policy over the preceding four years. It is extremely doubtful whether this decision could be said to be on any rational planning grounds or because of physical considerations. In that latter regard the two sites were of more or less equal merit and although the Hull CC site was used for playing fields only part of these would have been taken for development and the area lost could have been reinstated five fold quite close by in a better location from which to serve the

local population. Objections from householders overlooking the playing fields may have been a consideration for it is always more difficult to take away existing amenities even though the store could have been sited well away from the housing. Ironically new private housing has since been constructed cheek by jowl with the Tesco Store on the County site whereas on the Hull CC site a cordon at least three hundred yards wide would have been provided. Nevertheless, even if one were to concede that the Hull CC site had rather more problems than the County site on the other side of the equation the City had had a flying start which had it been taken by the politicians would have left plenty of time for any problems to be resolved.

In the event, the County site was sold at a price of £6m and in the light of that realised value the actions (or more precisely the inaction) of Hull CC looks inexplicable. Had the City released its site it could have improved the retained playing fields, it could have provided an indoor sports and leisure facility for one of the most deprived parts of the City (thereby realising a number of planning, social and recreational policy aims) and it would still have had some capital money left over for other purposes. The decisions which amounted to an instruction to take no action on the Hall Road site were not made through the formal decision making processes of the Council but rather they were of an informal nature. At the most basic level the officers were told not to market the City's site by the Chairmen of the relevant Committees (Policy and Development and Estates) (Interviews). Whether these decisions were made collectively by the party group or merely by the leadership is not known. The

officers of course could have sought to place the issue on a formal agenda in an attempt to have their case heard, however, they did not do so being aware that such a move could be highly counter-productive given such a sensitive political issue. Therefore, the Hull officers could only watch as Humberside CC which had made only a negligible contribution to the superstore planning strategy took the entire financial benefit of their four year efforts. Thus, for the second time Hull was to lose out financially (although not in terms of policy fulfilment).

The decision on Priory Yard, although satisfying planning policy aims, produced no direct benefits at all apart from a very marginal increase in the area of land available for housing. This "extra" land was the result of the planners' calculations that with such a large retail store close by there was a reduced requirement for shops of a local character within the housing development. However, this potential marginal benefit could only be realised at the cost of inconvenience because the new store was not in the best location to serve the majority of future households requiring shops within walking distance. Although the decision was taken in order to preserve intact the housing land even as late as 1988 none of the land had been developed for housing except for some limited site works. Of the 220 dwellings which were programmed to start during 1984/85 none has so far materialised and the later phases amounting to over 700 dwellings appear on the basis of present Conservative Government policies to be a less than certain prospect. In addition with restrictions on capital expenditure on housing continuing there is a risk if present

central government policies relating to surplus land holdings are maintained of Hull CC being forced to dispose of this site to a private developer. Accordingly, viewed in this context the use of the capital receipt from the disposal of the superstore site would have provided a modest tranche of housing rather than having nothing at all.

Priory Yard - A Postscript

An interesting postscript to this story is provided by the decision to allocate the disputed superstore site on the housing land at Priory Yard for the development of a Fire Brigade Headquarters. The first choice of the Fire Brigade had been a surplus education site favoured because of its proximity to the Humber Bridge and the regional road network. However, this proposal had been opposed by local residents and ultimately by Humberside CC Education Committee. In the search for an alternative site discussions took place between the politicians of the controlling Labour groups on the City and County Councils about the possibility of locating the Fire Brigade Headquarters in Labour Hull rather than Conservative controlled Beverley. The political need to relocate one of the major county services into the City arose from the decisions of the former Conservative administration at the County (1977-1981) to centralise all its administrative headquarters in Beverley. As a result of that decision all of the central departments including those of Chief Executive and the Director of Administration, moved from offices in the centre of Hull (established by the first Labour Administration 1973/77) to County Hall in Beverley. Locating

the new Fire Brigade Headquarters within the City was a means of slightly redressing the demotion of Hull as the primary administrative centre.

A number of issues were raised by the proposal to develop the Fire HQ at Priory Yard. The first was that the City's land use planning policy was to locate offices in the central area with the development of large scale decentralised offices being allowed only in exceptional circumstances. The second was housing policy which had ostensibly prevented the superstore development and the principles remained the same for this non-housing development. The proposal was instituted on the formal agenda of the City Council by means of a letter from the Chief Fire Officer to Hull CC's Chief Executive (CF 1982). In response Hull CC appointed a small delegation of councillors to meet County representatives with the remit to identify a site for the new HQ and also to identify areas of land within the City in the County's ownership which could be released for council house building to replace the Priory Yard land. Clearly the assumption on the part of the politicians was that Priory Yard was to be the agreed location for the new Headquarters and that the only issue was the one of finding sufficient housing land to replace the land to be used for non-housing purposes. Thus the politicians had determined the policy goals and the basic strategy for achieving them. In setting up this position the officers had only minimal involvement.

The substitute sites suggested by Humberside CC consisted of a list of education establishments where there was said to be a possibility of either the release of surplus playing field capacity or even whole school sites as a result of falling school rolls. The investigation of these sites by the City's officers revealed a considerable number of technical problems such issues as access, services and drainage but not least of the difficulties was how to avoid pre-empting decisions which had yet to be made by the Education Committee. Accordingly, it became clear to the officers that no early resolution of either the status or availability of these sites was possible and this analysis of the initiative was reported to Hull CC's Policy Committee. The obstacles which the professionals identified as standing in the way of the fulfilment of the bargain struck between the two sets of politicians (i.e. an exchange of an equivalent area of land) was explained and the decision which emerged was that "each authority should proceed on the basis of a mutual understanding without a definite commitment at this stage". (Hull CC, CM, October 1982) What to the the politicians had been a simple deal to the officers was beset with technical difficulties which made a watertight agreement impossible to achieve. Hull CC's officers advised that they could not provide an enforceable legal framework because the equivalent area of land to be exchanged could not be guaranteed until a large number of future uncertain contingencies had been satisfied. In consequence the Committee had no option other than to rely for the time being on a gentleman's agreement (CF, 1982).

However, notwithstanding these problems both sets of politicians showed themselves anxious to secure the development of the Fire Brigade Headquarters in Hull although the Hull CC politicians were not prepared to drop their precondition of securing compensatory housing land in west Hull. The Fire Brigade was equally anxious to resolve the issue of which site because it was under a time constraint, obsolescent tele-communications equipment had to be replaced and it was essential to have a purpose build headquarters to house the new equipment (CF, 1982). The timetable for the Fire Brigade HQ was not easily reconcilable with the timescale for the identification of suitable education sites. This was going to be a much longer process as each site had to be investigated and all the development constraints resolved. The first two housing sites investigated by the officers were found to be unsuitable. As a result Hull CC's Policy Committee received a report that "it would not be possible to proceed with negotiations based on either of the proposed sites due to these being considered unsuitable on planning grounds or for reasons of unsatisfactory access". At the same meeting it was reported that the Chief Fire Officer of Humberside CC had written indicating that "the Fire Brigade was now investigating the possibility of locating its proposed headquarters on one of the two sites previously mentioned" and the Policy Committee was invited "to give its views on the suitability of the Fire Brigade's intentions". This second site which was on playing fields attached to a school was a tactical ploy to increase the pressure (Hull CC, CM, December 1982). The issue was referred to the Planning Committee but no decision was made by that Committee it merely proposed a meeting with the County Council (Hull CC, CM, January 1983).

The next meeting between councillors from the two authorities re-affirmed the positions of the parties. The Humberside CC councillors confirmed that the Priory Yard site was their favoured location for the Fire HQ and in return they would in exchange an equivalent area of land when it became available as part of educational reorganisation or when other suitable surplus Humberside CC owned land within the City was identified. The Hull CC councillors were likewise agreeable in confirming their readiness to allocate the Priory Yard site for the Fire Brigade HQ but made known their continuing reservations about releasing a prime housing site without a definite allocation of an identified housing site in exchange. Further concern was expressed regarding the use of education sites because these had either a recreational or amenity value for local residents and it was feared that their use for housing would result in opposition.

The outcome of this special joint meeting was then reported back to the Policy Committee of Hull CC (Hull CC, CM, March 1983). The difficulty faced by the officers at this point was in translating the political assurances that had been given into a binding commitment. In political terms the members of Hull CC must have been mindful of the Humberside CC elections a little more than two years ahead and the history of alternating control between Labour and Conservative. In view of the legal advice given by their officers it was becoming clear to the Hull politicians that the gentleman's agreement would not suffice as it would be unlikely that appropriate sites would become

available within the two years up to the next County elections so that something more binding was required. (In the outcome such a change of power did initially occur with the Conservatives taking control albeit with the Liberal Councillors holding the balance of power, although later in the term the Liberals changed sides and Labour was restored to power.)

The officers in Hull were naturally sceptical about "assurances" advising that these could not be formulated in any way so as to constitute a binding agreement which could be legally enforced. The advice of the Chief Executive was reported to the meeting that "if the relevant area of land could not be specified any agreement entered into would not be legally binding". The officers appreciating the political need to reach some kind of resolution of this politically inspired deal suggested a form of option agreement which appeared to them the only viable legal basis for achieving the politicians objective. The Committee, therefore, agreed to the officers should continue negotiations on the basis of identifying a list of sites on which Hull CC could be given the first option should any of those sites become surplus to educational requirements (Hull CC, CM, March 1983).

Following a feasibility study of the Priory Yard site by the County Architect it became apparent that a larger site was required than that originally specified by the Fire Brigade increasing the loss of housing land. Humberside CC indicated that the equivalent area of additional housing land in West Hull would be made available by way of

compensation and meanwhile more than 60 possible surplus educational sites had been identified. The sale of the Priory Yard site to the Fire Brigade then went ahead with the collateral option agreement between the City and the County being concluded at the same time. The construction of the Fire Brigade HQ was completed in the summer of 1987 although the reciprocal transfer of housing land had not by then even started to take place. In the final report to the Policy Committee the Hull CC officers advised that the option agreement could only work if within the 10 years period, sites actually became available by being declared surplus to requirements i.e. the absence of goodwill could easily frustrate present intentions (Hull CC, CM, December 1983). In order to supplement this serious flaw an undertaking had been agreed which whilst not legally binding gave a formal assurance to Hull CC that Humberside CC would use its best endeavours to make available for sale land at current market value within the western part of the city with a potential for residential development of an equivalent size to replace the site in Priory Yard (CF 1983). More than five years later (1988) not only have there been no transfers of land but in the meantime the emphasis of the housing programme has changed and as a result the housing policy declaration of November 1981 noted above appears even more questionable in the light of these subsequent events.

With its acceptance of the education land undertaking Hull CC had completed the series of decisions to allocate housing land for non-housing purposes gaining in turn something falling well short of a copper-bottomed guarantee of equivalent reinstatement. The same

politicians who had refused to sell the land for the superstore for a substantial capital sum accepted much less money and fewer jobs for the Fire Brigade Headquarters in return for a promise to be given the opportunity to buy land at full market price at some uncertain future time in order to satisfy future unknown needs with future unknown resources.

Observations on the Case Study

On the evidence of this Case neither the orthodox model that councillors make policy and officers execute it nor the dictatorship of the official model are sustainable. In the progress of events described in the Study both groups exercised an influential role at various times and both were involved to some degree in policy formulation and implementation. Over the whole span of events neither group could be regarded as having total ascendancy over the other. The officers achieved their planning policy, implemented it and established its validity by first of all securing superstore developments in the two locations they had identified and secondly by successfully resisting other competitive proposals through the planning appeal system. For their part the councillors preserved their housing priorities and policy aims and imposed their will over the officers on the question of specific land allocations, one housing and the other recreation.

In relation to the planning policy element this was throughout officer dominated. At the inception the officers started formulating the

policy and investigating the options despite the fact that the politicians were not disposed to any change in policy. Through a process of "education", lobbying and formal reports the officers succeeded eventually in persuading the councillors to adopt a new planning strategy conceived and developed by them. At the same time the officers were maintaining a dialogue with the adjoining district authorities and the County Council at officer level advocating their policy stance to their professional colleagues. So that at the time the councillors of the three authorities met each other the Hull officers had sold the strategic policy approach to the officers of the two other Councils. As a result all the elected councillors received broadly similar advice. Perhaps the most successful manoeuvre of the Hull officers was to place the City in the dominant role when the first policy challenge came through the statutory planning system which ensured that the Hull policy prevailed. However, it needs to be emphasised that in order to execute this tactical manoeuvre the Hull officers had first to obtain the formal backing of their Council and also the allocation of resources. This was achieved by the officers taking the initiative and through a series of negotiations and bargaining obtaining the consents they required.

In contrast to these successes when in its detailed application the officers policy strategy came up against a powerful sectional political interest on the council (the housing lobby) they were unable to make any progress. Initial successes in Committee were nullified by political decisions made not in Council but within the party group. Thus, where strong political positions are held in a partisan

authority which is organised and disciplined it would seem that the officer cadre is unable to progress its objectives. In each of the two instances where officers had set up precise objectives (despite packaging the proposals with tempting benefits) the politicians failed to swallow the bait and the officer proposals failed. It is also an example of the strong departmental tendencies to differentiation and the absence of corporate structures to resolve issues. Thus, the "housing" politicians had very limited relationships to the "planning" and "development" officers and as a result of the absence of corporate dialogue the resolution of these issues was within the party group.

The interesting sub-plot regarding the Fire Brigade Head Quarters further emphasises not only the power of the politicians but how political objectives shift according to changing perceptions. The same housing land release of which was refused for a superstore (and a very substantial capital receipt) was subsequently released at a fraction of the price for development for public sector buildings in return for a promise to release an equivalent amount of land, a promise which was virtually unenforceable in legal terms. However, because the politicians regarded the development as having "political" significance it was accorded unqualified support and pushed through despite the fact that in terms of tangible benefits and direct returns it was a very much poorer deal than the one the officers had advocated with regard to the superstore. The second area of interest in the Fire HQ sub-plot is the role of the politicians in negotiating the basic deal, both with regard to the site and also the land swap. Only when agreement in principle had been reached were the officers told.

The formal mechanisms of the authority were initiated by a letter from the Chief Fire Officer to the Chief Executive of the City. This letter being written at the behest of the politicians. In accordance with the theoretical assumptions and models this should not happen. It therefore clearly indicates that the supposed dividing line between policy and administration has little validity in relation to the role of councillors let alone that of officers.

Another feature of interest in this case study is the evidence of coalitions between groups of officers and groups of councillors and of the changing balance within those coalitions. These coalitions appear to be founded on specific objectives and the movements within the coalitions seem to be generated by the participants changing assessments of how best to satisfy their aims. A notable point in these bargaining positions is the absence of both a corporate management structure or a strong centrally controlled officer group and that as a result the greater cohesion was achieved by the politicians through their party group. The officers were more fragmented less well organised and therefore the politicians had a much greater opportunity to achieve their aims as against those of the officers. Thus, as may be seen from the progress of the formal decisions officers made initial headway in some areas with individual committees but when eventually a common political position was taken through the party group they were incapable of progressing the matter further. On the other hand it is clear that officers were able to achieve significant policy changes in the area of planning and development policy. However, this appears to be result of the

officers leading the councillors to solutions initially they rejected by demonstrating the political and practical consequences of maintaining existing policies. Although the officers seized the opportunity the main agent of change was undoubtedly central government policy. It was as a result of the efforts of the officers that the politicians eventually got the message and recognised that this central government policy would be exploited to the council's detriment by commercial interests unless they took action to change their own position. The politicians had to rely on their officers to construct a response because they did not have the resources or the capability to formulate this response themselves or identify the strategic and tactical options open to them. The officers for their part acknowledged these political aspirations and attempted to provide solutions which satisfied at least some of the politicians expectations.

To conclude this case suggests that there are no defined boundaries between policy, politics, administration and bureaucracy. Where political aims and aspirations are clearly articulated the balance of power through the control of the formal mechanisms of the authority lies with the elected councillors. However this power is not absolute particularly in relation to technical and professional issues where the politician has only a limited capability of entry. This series of accommodations and bargains, of fluctuating coalitions of interests ending with an imperfect division of the spoils demonstrates that there are no absolutes in the relationship between politicians and professionals.

CASE STUDY NO 2PEACE POLICY AND THE BUREAUCRATIC INTERESTIntroduction

This case study spans a period of just over twelve months. It illustrates the extent to which politicians in certain circumstances are capable of operating detailed policy proposals and implementing them with a minimum of officer involvement.

The Case Study

Hull CC having declared itself a Nuclear Free Zone (NFZ) received a letter from a Councillor North Chairman of the Planning Development Committee of Leeds City Council in April 1983 (CF, 1983). This communication was directed to "all local authority nuclear free zones" and enclosed a copy of a booklet entitled "Leeds and the Bomb" together with a set of posters which had been produced by Leeds "to inform the ordinary person of the facts about nuclear weapons to enable them to make up their own minds about the bomb". The letter also indicated the general sources of the factual material used in the booklet and the manner in which it had been distributed. The letter concluded by offering permission to use any of the Leeds material no copyright being claimed in respect of it.

The Chief Executive of Hull CC sent copies of the letters to the members of the Policy Committee who had been appointed as representatives of the Council for the purpose of attending NFZ meetings. An additional copy was sent to the Leader of the Council, (who was also Chairman of the Policy Committee) for his information. As a result of this initial consultation the Chief Executive on the informal recommendation of the councillors consulted by him then sent to every Councillor a copy of the material received from Leeds. The first formal consideration of the matter took place at the Policy Committee held in July. At that meeting the booklet "Leeds and the Bomb" was discussed and the Policy Committee decided to refer the matter to those members of the Council appointed to attend NFZ meetings "with a view to the Council producing similar publications at no cost to the authority" (Hull CC, CM, July 1983). The three councillors were then constituted as an ad hoc sub-committee with a view to producing a booklet entitled "Hull and the Bomb". At the first meeting of this group in September 1983 it was agreed that the proposed publication should be non-political and be a factual illustration of the probable effect on the city if a one megaton nuclear bomb were to be dropped on the centre of Hull. It was also agreed to adopt the same practice as Leeds by selling the booklet at a reasonable price rather than distributing it free, it being thought that free leaflets might be regarded as propaganda (CF 1983).

The Councillors were assisted by an administrator from the Chief Executive's department. On their instructions the administrator approached local booksellers to find out whether or not they would be

prepared to co-operate in selling such a booklet and to ascertain the terms on which they would do so. All those approached agreed, suggesting that the usual trade terms, i.e. on a sale or return basis. Approaches were then made by the Chief Executive's administrators to each of the statutory undertakers (water, electricity, gas, fire, telephones, health services, etc) seeking information regarding their emergency planning arrangements in the contingency of a nuclear attack. Humberside CC was also approached on this same officer level and this received a prompt and co-operative response because it appeared that Humberside CC officials had been encouraged to reply in favourable terms. Agreement to this end had it seems came through political channels both local authorities being at that time controlled by the Labour Party. As a result the services of the County Emergency Planning Officer and all the relevant nuclear information in the County's possession were made available to Hull CC to assist in the preparation of the booklet.

During this period the Administrator assisting the councillors was not acting as an initiator or advisor (the more usual role of officers at a Committee) but rather as clerical support in furtherance of a proposal which had been originated by, and which for all practical purposes was being progressed by, the politicians. The normal procedure in which reports are prepared by professional officers for the consideration of the elected members and then approved, amended or rejected by them was not followed in this case. The councillors assumed the role of examining the text of the Leeds booklet in detail not the officers and it was the councillors who then produced the

draft of a proposed "Hull and the Bomb" booklet containing a substantial body of additional information specifically applicable to Hull. Much of that additional information was obtained by the councillors concerned making direct approaches to external sources seeking assistance and securing the co-operation of outsiders to assist in the process of editing and drafting. This enabled them to prepare the first draft with a minimum of assistance from the officers whose role was very much a subsidiary one of obtaining illustrative photographs, of following up various enquiries suggested by the members and of investigating the mechanics of producing the booklet. In November the Policy Committee received a report which stated that:

The members had been satisfied that sufficient interest had been expressed from all necessary sources to enable them to recommend to this Committee that the booklet could be produced on the basis of no cost to the Council provided that sufficient finance was made available to meet initial production costs. (Hull CC, CM, November 1983)

Thus, there were no officer recommendations only those of the three councillors to the Policy Committee which were accepted, the Committee agreeing that 5,000 copies of the booklet should be produced it "being satisfied that such expenditure is in the interest of the Council's area". The significance of these words is that in order to meet the production costs of the booklet the 2p rate provision (section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972) had to be utilised; this is used for expenditure for which no other specific legal power exists. However, to use this provision the local authority must be satisfied there is some general public benefit to the community or to a section of the community living in the local authority's area. It was further agreed that the booklet be sold at 50p and that other publicity and promotional measures be investigated. (Hull CC, CM, November 1983)

During the following three months the booklet continued to be revised at the direction of the three councillors who were carrying out all the editorial decisions the officers merely providing and seeking information at the councillors request. The booklet was therefore almost entirely the product of the elected members with a minimal contribution from the officers; it was published in April 1984 and launched officially with a press conference and press release which went out under the name of the councillor who chaired the sub-committee, (Cllr Mrs A Tulley). At the next meeting of the Policy Committee it was reported that leading bookshops had taken supplies of the booklets and that these were also available for sale at the Guildhall, City Information Office in Museums, Art Galleries at the Theatre. Other purchasers included various peace groups, trade unions, educational establishments and public libraries (Hull CC, CM, May 1984). Subsequently the sales and distribution did not proceed as well as anticipated and a year later in 1985 the costs of publication had only been partially recovered leaving a significant cost shortfall. The Town Clerk reported to the Policy Committee "that income had now been received from the sale of 1,850 copies . . . approximately 40 copies had been given away free . . . (and) it appeared that demands for the booklet now appeared to have diminished" (Hull CC, November 1985).

Observations on the Case Study

This sequence of events is of interest because it was originated by politicians and not by officials. The "Hull and the Bomb" booklet was inspired by a direct approach from a member of another local authority

and was adopted by the Hull councillors. Virtually all the editorial work involved in the preparation of the "Hull and the Bomb" booklet was provided by the three councillors not the officers. Thus, the elected members were able to utilise the bureaucratic machine to assist them in a proposal which was in all respects entirely under the control of the councillors themselves, the officers playing no material part whatever. Political connections had secured information and assistance from the County Council and the officer level approach from Hull CC to Humberside CC was a pure formality as the political instructions to co-operate had been issued. Much of the information in the booklet was obtained or revised on the basis of external contacts made directly by the members by-passing the departmental bureaucracy. The officers primarily involved were administrative and clerical staff in the Chief Executives department. The almost total absence of chief or senior officer input is noteworthy with no professionals being involved. Clearly the professionals perceived no threat to their professional supremacy nor were they at all inclined to seek any involvement in "Hull and the Bomb" with all its party political overtones. The perception of officers appeared to be that this was a politicians issue not a real issue which could be safely left to them without any danger to the position of professional officers. However what this sequence of events does illustrate is the ability of the politicians to encroach into the bureaucratic domain if they choose and are permitted to do so.

CASE STUDY NO 3SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND CENTRAL RESTRAINTIntroduction

The Local Government Act 1972 (the LGA) provides that a local authority "may arrange for the discharge of any of their functions - (a) by a committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the authority or (b) by any other local authority" (13). If powers are delegated to a committee the committee may in turn delegate the carrying out of those powers to a sub-committee or to a designated officer. The LGA further provides that "a local authority may make Standing Orders for the regulation of their proceedings and business and may vary or revoke any such Orders" (14). This, it is to be noted is merely a permissive power. The LGA, however, imposes a positive duty to make Standing Orders in respect of "contracts for the supply of goods or for execution of works" (15). In practice local authorities have Standing Orders to regulate most of their activities which usually cover three main areas: (a) procedural matters including the conduct of meetings, (b) delegations to committees and officers and (c) the making of contracts. By and large local authorities are free to frame their Standing Orders as they think fit within the overall statutory framework although the DoE does, from time to time, issue advice, for example, as in DoE Circular 15/83 "Model Standing Orders for Local Authority Contracts". Whilst such guidance is not mandatory failure to observe it might place the authority in a difficult position if the propriety of its procedures were being questioned for any reason.

When a local authority makes changes to its Standing Orders these are usually of a non-controversial character and do not attract a high degree of "political" attention. Many amendments are of a purely technical nature, for example, monetary limits on contracts may have to be raised because of the effects of inflation. With all new legislation which imposes additional duties on the local authority the Council has to decide how it is going to deal with the new duties (i.e. to which committees and departments the duties are to be assigned). Usually such matters are non-contentions and go through on the nod. Examining the records of amendments to Standing Orders made by Hull CC over a number of years very few appear to have aroused much interest in the politicians. Most of them were either technical amendments or were concerned with new legislation (CF, 1983). Standing Orders therefore do not usually serve as a focus for political debate or controversy.

The Local Government Planning and Land Act

During 1981 to 1983 one of the issues high on the political agenda in Hull was proposed amendments to the Standing Orders; this was certainly unusual and the reason why such a normally non-controversial matter had become so highly politicised has its roots in the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 (the 1980 Act). This was one of the first major pieces of legislation brought in by the 1979 Thatcher Government. The 1980 Act had a number of separate sets of provisions including one on Direct Labour Organisations (DLO's) which is the subject of this case study. Even the Conservative controlled

Association of District Councils (the ADC) found the provisions in the 1980 Act in relation to DLO's somewhat hard to swallow as evidenced by their representations on the Bill which included the following observations.

The ADC supports the government's proposals in principle and accepts that local authorities as public bodies using rate payers money should be more publicly accountable and subject to certain restrictions in the operation of their direct labour organisations. Whilst agreeing that DLO should be fully tested in fair and frequent competition with the private sector the association points out that the private contractor will enjoy a number of commercial advantages over the DLO especially more freedom over employees pay, operational flexibility and less cumbersome accounting. The association fears that the Bill as it stands will considerably reduce the flexibility of DLO's, tie them down with extensive formal requirements and prevent them from having a continuity of work (16).

The Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities made broadly similar objections and likewise attempted to secure changes to the Bill. Although, during its passage through Parliament a number of amendments were successfully made ameliorating some of the original proposals in the end these were largely of a minor nature. The central political purpose of the legislation was left virtually intact, i.e. to expose DLO's to private sector competition and make them comply with tender procedures and accounting systems by which the comparative performance of each DLO could be judged by reference to centrally established standards. The mechanisms of control created by the 1980 Act depend on three sets of provisions. The first was that the DLO must be treated as a separate independent unit for accounting purposes with its accounts being prepared as if these were the accounts of a trading organisation. The second was that the DLO had to show a rate of return on the capital

employed as determined by the Minister. The third was to ensure that DLOs were tested in fair and frequent competition with the private sector. The 1980 Act did not spell out the details but gave the Minister wide powers to make subordinate legislation to give effect to these principles.

The crucial power which the Minister took to himself was the right to review the performance of any DLO and to close it down either wholly or in part if it failed to meet the various performance requirements he was to stipulate. Flynn has suggested that the essential political purpose of the 1980 Act was not control of local authority DLOs as such but was rather aimed at securing the transfer of work from the public to the private sector. Flynn highlights the Conservative government's sympathy with the building employers lobby and points to the fact that the legislation adopts some of the specific recommendations of that lobby (17). Another government "ally" identified by Flynn was the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA); a set of guidance rules on accounting practice had been drawn up by CIPFA (18) which enabled government to measure the comparative efficiency of DLOs more easily. Flynn notes that as CIPFA is the professional body to which local authority Treasurers belong the government had gained a significant advantage in adopting these proposals.

After the 1980 Act became law various items of subordinate legislation were then issued by the Minister such as specifying a 5% return on capital. The purpose behind these measures was further amplified by

the DoE; Circular 10/81 stipulates a 5% return on capital on a current cost accounting basis with the "objective of calculating the rate of return . . . to help identify the true economic costs . . . in the interests of improving financial management and better use of resources" (19). The Circular also refers to the Competition Regulations under which, subject to certain exemptions, a local authority was required to ensure at least three other competitive tenders were sought prior to the letting of any contract to a DLO (20). One of the exemptions granted under the Regulations was for single contracts which did not exceed £10,000 in value. It soon became apparent that a number of local authorities had identified this as a possible way to avoid competitive tenders by breaking contracts down into a series of smaller jobs all costed at under £10,000. This potential loop-hole was swiftly closed by amending regulations (21) with an added twist of the screw being a requirement that 30% of all maintenance work below the threshold had to be competitively tendered if the aggregate of the Council's total maintenance works exceeded an annual value of £300,000.

Circular 10/81 is remarkable for its very firm not to say hostile tone; it includes declarations deploring the conduct of local authorities and threatening further legislation if local authorities failed to comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the law.

This Circular also deals at some length with the question of possible contractual conditions which a local authority might wish to try and impose as part of the competitive tendering procedures. After having referred to the code of tendering practice the Circular states:-

The Secretaries of State have noted with concern and regret evidence submitted during their review that some authorities have chosen to disregard this advice. These authorities have imposed requirements which must in their view deter contractors from responding to invitations to tender for these authorities work, reduce competition and unnecessarily inflate the price of such tenders as contractors submit. They have noted and deplore in particular union labour only requirements and contract conditions requiring performance bonds exceeding the maximum recommended by the local authority associations themselves, enforced ratios of apprentices to craftsmen, undue nominations of sub-contractors and arrogations of the right to determine breaches of contract unreasonably. The Secretaries of State believe that such practices are anti-competitive in effect and often in intention. (22)

The Circular continues in similar vein referring to pending legislation which will make void any contract conditions "which require work to be performed only by union members" and warning local authorities "of the risk they run if they impose onerous requirements or contract conditions which whilst not infringing any statutory provision are liable to challenge as representing an unreasonable exercise of discretion and resulting in unnecessary and unreasonable expenditure" (22). This Circular was the response to the actions of a number of Labour controlled local authorities who were imposing contractual conditions to bring about what they regarded as an equivalence in the conditions under which private contractors competed for work with DLOs. The local authorities believed that it was unfair for a private contractor to compete by providing lower standards of benefits and working conditions. Local authorities providing union

rates of pay, sick pay, holiday pay, pension schemes and death benefits argued that it was proper to insist that the private sector met these minimum standards. Furthermore, local authorities employing time served craftsmen and apprentices considered it essential to ensure that the competitive tenderer should do likewise. Additionally, observing health and safety and industry standards was also considered necessary. Their attitude was that it was perfectly proper for them to insist on the private sector complying with equivalent conditions because only then would the tender price be truly comparable. In a pamphlet issued by the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT) in support of DLOs UCATT gave detail of some of the local authorities imposing "defensive" contractual conditions (23) and it was actions of this kind which apparently was the object of the attack made by the Secretary of State in Circular 10/81. In effect, he was saying that the imposition of conditions which are not of themselves illegal could nevertheless still be unreasonable in his opinion with the express threat that further legislation would be brought in if practices he did not approve of did not stop whether they were lawful or not.

Hull and the 1980 Act

With the 1980 Act in force Hull CC was faced with having to amend its Standing Order procedures to comply with the new statutory requirements. As a Council Hull CC was committed to the principle of

DLOs; it was now faced with legislation which as Hull CC saw it was very unfairly weighted against them. As a result the response was inevitably highly political. When the time came for the amendments to Standing Orders to be considered by the Council not unsurprisingly the local politicians took a very close interest in the issue. Thus, amendments which were essentially technical and procedural became engaged almost wholly within the political rather than the bureaucratic arena. At this time 85% of the councillors were Labour and within their ranks were a significant number of trade union officials or active trade unionists and in addition this was reinforced by the strong links between the Labour Party generally and the trade unions. The response of the trade unions locally was two fold: first, they were concerned to protect the Council's DLO which offered their members security of employment and reasonable pay and conditions of employment; secondly, the local leadership had a political response of their own to the proposals.

At this time the Hull DLO had a workforce of around 700. The potential loss of jobs created a situation in which both the workers and their trade unions gave whole hearted support to the Council. Equally, those officers employed by Hull CC in managerial positions in the DLO had a direct personal interest in the continuation of the DLO. Thus, workers, trade unions, managers and politicians were joined in opposing the legislation. On the other hand in the central co-ordinating departments the "technobureaucrats" such as the legal and financial officers of the Council constituted a restraining influence on the aspirations of both politicians and affected

employees. The legal and financial advice given on the counter proposals which were being suggested by Councillors, trade unions and the DLO management were less than encouraging. By way of illustration, a particular irksome feature of the 1980 Act in the eyes of the Hull DLO managers was that whilst it exposed DLOs to competitive forces from the private sector it continued the legal restraints which prevent DLOs competing with the private sector for non public works and with the politicians support they wanted to find a way round this. Two areas of "private" work which the management (and the politicians) wanted to compete for were private house improvements and schemes under the Inner Area Programme. Grant aid is often a significant proportion of such schemes in some instances as much as 90%. However, local authority powers are limited by statute so that before 1970 a local authority had no power to carry out work even on behalf of another local or public authority (24). There was certainly no power to do work for the public at large. The chief officer in charge of the Hull DLO the Director of Works suggested that the Council should set up a limited company to trade as a building contractor to avoid these restrictions. The advice of the Council's legal officers was that it would not be lawful for the Council to set up such a trading organisation. This advice was accepted by the politicians although it was not the advice they wanted to hear, their sympathies were entirely with the management and against the legal officers.

In April 1981 Hull CC decided on a number of changes to Standing Orders to take account of the DLO provisions contained in the 1980 Act

including the rider that these were to be implemented "with effect from 4 June 1981 in order to allow time for appropriate consultations and procedures to be completed". (Hull CC, CM, April 1981). Although these amendments had been drafted by officials in the Chief Executive's Department the councillors had taken a keen interest in their contents. The Hull councillors were influenced by the management of the DLO, the trade unions, the actions of other local authorities and national Labour Party policies. The central technobureaucracy was therefore under no misapprehension about the task, they had to come up with Standing Orders within the law which provided as much protection as possible for the DLO (Interviews). The revisions to Standing Orders presented to the Policy Committee concentrated on compliance with health and safety legislation which had not been excluded by Circular 10/81. Tenderers would have to submit a copy of their safety policy as evidence that a safe system of working would be adopted by them. The safety policy documents were to be vetted by the Council's officers and an undertaking had to be given by the contractor that he would "provide proper facilities for training his employees" in health and safety. Tenderers had to specify those codes of safe working practice approved by the Health and Safety Executive which the contractor proposed to observe. Contractors failing to meet these requirements would not be considered for work. An associated requirement gave Hull CC's safety officer the right to enter the construction site "at any time during working hours and have free and unfettered access to each and every part of the area covered by the contract work or affected thereby". This was intended to ensure that the various requirements of the health and safety

legislation were observed. In the event of a breach of these provisions the sanction suggested for inclusion in the Standing Orders was in the following terms:-

In the event of a contractor persistently failing to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, regulations or orders made thereunder or the provisions of his safety policy or the codes of safe working practice as approved by the Health and Safety Executive, the Council's Chief Safety Officer shall report thereon to the employment committee to enable it to consider whether the contractor should be removed from the Council's list of approved contractors for such period as it may decide. (CF, 1981).

Another provision required that all contractors should be registered with an appropriate National Joint Council. However, excluded from these provisions were the Council's own DLO and Telephones Department as well as the statutory undertakers i.e. gas, electricity and water.

Following publication of these amendments the Council received representations from two organisations representing contractors, the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors (FCEC) and the National Federation of Building Trades Employers (NFBTE). Both organisations raised objections to the proposals. The FCEC's initial response was one of concern raising a number of technical and legal questions, that of the NFBTE was very much more hostile. The two organisations were at one in expressing concern about the proposed role of the Council's Safety Officer and the apparent duplication of his role with that of the Health and Safety Executive. Similarly both questioned the requirement for contractors to be registered with appropriate bodies (CF, 1981). The NFBTE considered that the new Standing Orders relating to health and safety were such that the Council was "arrogating the authority of the Health and Safety Executive and

appointing a surrogate inspector" and that generally these particular provisions were "absolutely intolerable for they run counter to the law of the land and natural justice and should not be incorporated in a contract" (CF, 1981). The FCEC on the other hand in more moderate language, nevertheless, expressed considerable concern about the new requirements because in their view they attempted to confer on the Council's Safety Officer powers equivalent to the Health and Safety Executive despite the fact that a local authority has no standing or jurisdiction in the enforcement of that legislation. The FCEC also objected to the requirement that access had to be given to the Council's officer at all times advancing the counter suggestion that this should be restricted to any "reasonable time during working hours" (CF, 1981). Neither organisations were persuaded that the registration requirement was a proper condition to impose. The NFBTE considered "the fact that a company may not be in membership of an organisation does not by itself mean that it is less worthy than a competitor". The FCEC suggested that in relation to the employment of sub-contractors these provisions would be an interference with the main contractor's discretion to choose an appropriate sub-contractor because not all sub-contractors belong to such organisations and non membership would not necessarily mean that the firm is "not competent and reliable" (CF, 1981).

Following this exchange of correspondence a meeting was held with representatives of the two organisations in September 1981. The Leader of the Council was in the Chair supported by his Deputy confirming the leading role of the politicians in what was essentially

a technical issue (i.e. negotiations on contractual conditions which usually politicians would not even know about let alone be involved in). At the meeting the contractors side rehearsed their objections to the Standing Orders. The two organisations requested that the Council should give consideration to the appointment of a Joint Working Party where any conflicts or difficulties in interpretation of Standing Orders could be considered in depth. The Leader of the Council agreed to consider this and the matter was reported back to the Policy Committee when it was agreed that appropriate officers of the Council should meet representatives of the contractors (Hull CC, CM, October 1981). Having set the scene the politicians withdrew from the detailed negotiations at this point. In part they considered that having set the agenda their initial task was accomplished. In part they also recognised that the technicalities of a detailed negotiation were best left to qualified professionals rather than being conducted by unqualified politicians. It was also the point at which the politicians began to appreciate that this legal and contractual route was unlikely to provide the panacea they had hoped. This was a further reason for leaving it to the officers and for the politicians to keep their distance. (Interviews).

At the same Policy Committee meeting in October 1981 the question of whether sub-contractors should be registered as well as the main contractor was also considered. The committee minute records that "to assist with its consideration of these matters the committee had invited the following trade union representatives to attend the meeting". It then notes representatives of the Electrical Electronic

Telecommunications and Plumbing Trades Union, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, the Transport and General Workers Union as well as UCATT were present. It is noteworthy that the employers were not similarly invited to assist the Policy Committee. The partisan political and trade union influence behind Hull CCs response could not be more clearly demonstrated (Hull CC, CM, October 1981). The minutes of the Committee records that it was agreed that all the registers which had been put forward by the contractors during the consultation should be accepted with the exception of the Federation of Master Builders. Inclusion of this organisation was deferred pending further information. This decision was as a result of questions about the standing of the Federation having been raised during the meeting and the deferment being suggested by the legal and policy advisers to the Committee.

In November 1981 the technical officers of the Council (Architects, Engineers, DLO) under the leadership of the Deputy Town Clerk, met representatives of the FCEC and NFBTE. This meeting is to be distinguished from the earlier "political" meeting in its very much more detailed consideration of the requirements of the Standing Orders. The officers of the Council considered a series of amendments to the Standing Orders suggested by the contractors side. Four examples illustrate the nature of these negotiations. The first related to the provisions in the proposed Standing Orders that every firm tendering for a contract would be required to provide a written safety policy. The second was the right of the Council's Safety Officer to enter the works site at any time. A third issue raised was

that in the event of action by the Council to remove a contractor from an approved list for failing to comply with safety requirements no reasons had to be given nor was there a right of challenge. The fourth matter raised was the question of registration with an appropriate body. The Council's officers considered these representations and in February 1982 without further reference to the Policy Committee the Chief Executive submitted a detailed response to the employers organisations. Following through the illustrative issues noted about the response was that the officers would recommend to the Council (a) that firms employing fewer than five employees should be exempted from the requirements to produce a safety policy (i.e. precisely in accordance with the statutory requirements under the health and safety legislation); (b) that the safety officers right of entry be restricted to "any reasonable time" and (c) that in the event of action to exclude a contractor he be supplied with a report on the reasons for the proposed exclusion. The Council's officers then had a further meeting with the contractors regarding the practicability of specifying codes of practice and the striking off procedures. The contractors were reluctant to accept the imposition of codes of practice and wanted the opportunity to be represented at the committee when that report was considered.

From this point onwards the level of political interest began to decline with the increasing realisation that the legislative power of central government together with its commitment to force through these competition measures would result in almost certain defeat. The key

decision taken by the Hull politicians was that they would not defy the law, they would seek to find ways round it and ways to mitigate its effects but confrontation was to be avoided. Thus, the officers were left negotiating a package of measures which became steadily watered down to the point of being relatively toothless. It was nearly a year before the issues were reported back to the committee by the officers for confirmation. By this time the politicians were prepared to accept the Federation of Master Builders as an appropriate registration body having made enquiries of some 12 similar local authorities (e.g. Scunthorpe, Sheffield) and having found that all but one of them recognised the Federation. As a result of this intelligence the idea of excluding the Federation was dropped. The officers recommendations for what were by now quite restricted changes to standing orders were then adopted with very few amendments being suggested by the politicians. However, by this time, the heat had gone out of the issue and the cycle of political interest was in a downward phase. The Council had accepted that it could take only the most marginal action in retreating before central government policy. The central-technobureacracy which had accepted the inevitability and propriety of the legislation in the end prevailed and the set of proposals which were adopted were fully within the legislative limits of discretion. The politicians had for their part been seen to take a stand and to do something, if in the end this was merely tokenism was irrelevant because they had made the right noises at the right time to the constituencies on which they drew their political and financial support i.e. the trade unions and the employees in the DLO.

Observations on the Case Study

This Case illustrates the dilemma professional officers often find themselves sandwiched between central government and local policy makers pulling them in opposite directions. With their massive majority on the Council the Hull Labour Group were in a position to pursue a policy on which they were all united ie. in outright opposition to what they saw as a politically motivated attack by the Conservatives on local authority enterprise and employment. In this they were joined by the group of managers and workers most closely involved in the direct labour organisation; the officers who raised doubts about this approach came from the central technobureaucracy in the Chief Executives and Treasurers departments. This group of officers appreciated the potential legal and financial pitfalls which lay in wait for the Council if it were to advance its opposition in any concrete way. As a group they were strongly inclined to observe the letter of the law and to co-operate with the government's legislation. However, at the beginning they were in a minority and accordingly had to fight a rearguard action.

The Labour politicians driven by the trade unionists in their ranks and the strong party connections with the unions were obliged to take a strongly partisan approach to the new laws. They were also strongly influenced by the actions and tactics of other more combative authorities. With the assistance of the DLO management various ways of circumventing the government's policies were attempted. At the same time a very high profile was taken with a large number of

meetings and statements devoted to the issue - a great deal of noise and some heat was generated sometimes with trade union representatives in attendance at the committee meetings. The leading politicians also took a leading role in the initial meetings with the employers organisations supplanting the usual officer role. Eventually all this came to nothing and the politicians had to gracefully retreat in the face of legislation which presented them with the choice of either defying the law or surrendering to it. In the end they chose the latter course and the central technobureaucracy re-assumed control. However, in the interim period the officers had to dance to the politicians tune and engage in a negotiation in which they had little belief and which they knew had no substantial benefits other than as political gesture. The position of these officers was therefore one of containment relying on a reiteration of the legal and financial consequences of acting unlawfully. When eventually the political steam ran out of the affair they were left to quietly wrap up the negotiations.

The Case demonstrates very neatly the powers of politicians and officers and their values and expectations. The politicians have the ability to take the initiative and to set the agenda but there are limits to their powers legally constitutionally. As the limits of political power are approached the room for manoeuvre becomes limited and at this point officials are able to reassert control as the politicians retreat from visible defeat.

CASE STUDY NO 4ROADS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATIONIntroduction

New road construction and traffic management issues are central to this Case. It tells the story of one aspect of a major road scheme and describes how this was dominated by the professionals for more than ten years until a political response was evoked at the eleventh hour. In addition it casts light on the comparative ineffectiveness of public consultation and scheme publicity. It also illustrates how councillors fail to pick up proposals which affect their constituents because of the volume and complexity of the material presented to them.

Hessle Road

Hessle Road is one of the four main arterial roads leading to the city centre of Hull. Until November 1985 it was a primary route to the west linking to the Humber Bridge and the M62 motorway. It was also a principal shopping area extending to about a mile in length. The junctions which now connect it to the South Docks Road (which has replaced it as the main arterial route) at Brighton Street and Daltry Street mark the western and eastern extremities of the shopping section of the road. The properties fronting this length of Hessle Road developed over the years as an unplanned shopping centre typical

of an inner city radial route. It had a wide variety of predominantly small shops situated on either side of the road with substantial areas of terraced housing behind the retail frontages. This area developed rapidly between 1880 and 1910 as a result of the growth in deep water fishing. It was where many fishermen and land based supporting workers were housed, a relationship which continued right up to the 1970's. The shops developed to serve this population and eventually it became the biggest area of shopping outside the city centre. The decline of the area as a shopping centre can be attributed to a number of causes. First the fall in the local population resulting from the decline in industry, particularly fishing. Secondly, the clearance of large areas of unfit housing. A third contributory factor was traffic congestion and limited parking.

Industrial decline and housing clearance accelerated from the end of 1960's and through the 1970's especially with the virtual collapse of Hull's deep sea fishing in a period of less than 5 years 1975/1980. The growth of traffic over the same period resulted in growing congestion. Various proposals for alleviating these problems had been on the agenda of the highway engineers and the planners for many years. The solution favoured in the 1950's was the widening of Hessle Road demolishing all the shops on the southern side. This radical solution devised by the highway engineers (but endorsed by the politicians) would have obliterated half the shops at a stroke and created a one sided shopping street over a mile long. This would have been most unlikely to prove a retail success. However, in the event this proposal was happily not implemented. The Land Use

Transportation Study (LUTS) was a comprehensive assessment of the existing and projected traffic movements in and around Hull with recommendations regarding how best to provide for these (25). The LUTS recommended a South Docks Road to provide a fast direct route to the city centre and to the dock areas in the east of the city. It was said that this road would bring about a significant reduction in the volumes of traffic on the main routes in the west of the city. The LUTS recommendations were accepted by the Department of Transport (DTp) with the announcement in August 1972 that a new South Docks Road would be included in the trunk road preparation pool. (CF, 1972) In June 1975 the DTp published a consultation document inviting public comment on a number of alternative routes with two exhibitions being held in the locality. Some 1,469 questionnaires were completed together with 4 petitions and a number of other written comments. In April 1976 the Secretary of State selected his preferred route and the Department were instructed to carry out detailed investigations.

In the meantime the trunk road proposals led the officers of Hull CC to reconsider the overall planning proposals for the area. In November 1976 the CPO reported that if the South Docks Road were to be constructed then the projected reduction in traffic would mean that the main justification for widening Hessle Road would be removed. In addition the effect of the Housing Clearance Programme would be fewer people, cars and traffic movements. It was therefore decided that the previous proposals to widen the road and demolish all the shops on the southern side should be rescinded.

The report which was approved by the Planning Committee stated that

The opportunity arises to restrict access to the area from Hessle Road to be designed to deter traffic from continuing along Hessle Road in an eastward direction by encouraging it to use the South Docks Road instead (Hull CC, CR, November 1976).

What the highway engineers and planners were, in fact, suggesting was that the existing road at the western end (at the point where the shopping begins) would no longer be accessible as a direct through route from the main residential catchment areas to the west for potential shoppers. Instead the existing road line would be swung southwards into a new junction with the South Docks Road. The effect of this would be that traffic wishing to get to the shops would then have to loop back northwards through existing side streets. The risk was that this would deter the casual shopper, the passing trade. However, this proposal was agreed and subsequently adopted by the DTP being shown in the draft Orders for the South Docks Road Scheme which were published in August 1977 (CF, 1977). This proposal emerged through a process which involved the Hull CC planners, the City Engineer, Humberside CC highway engineers, the DTP and Halcrow Fox (consultants). The collective decision had been reached as a result of detailed consideration by skilled professions over a period of years. However, these were technocratic decisions in which the political input was of the broadest kind and control of the technocrats was minimal. Implementation of the design and the criteria to be applied in that design were almost wholly in the hands of the professionals with the detailed work being originated by middle ranking highway engineers and planners. Over the years it would appear that the professional view predominated, first the City

Engineer of the former County Borough proposing road widening, then the independent consultants and their LUTS recommending a complete new road network followed by the City Planners and the County highway experts and finally by the civil servants responsible for the road programme.

Central government adopted the proposals as part of its policy and the design details of the scheme were jointly negotiated between the civil servants, the independent consultants, the officials of Hull CC and Humberside CC. Elected councillors and the local community apparently had no effective role in these decisions. The highway engineers case was of voluminous detail and of a degree of complexity which it would be difficult for laymen to appreciate. The elected members input appears to be one of approving general principles. The CPO's report was therefore "approved in principle as a basis for the planning of the area". However, the two plans which accompanied the report although showing the closure of the junction at the western end of Hessle Road were only diagrammatic and could have been misunderstood. The text taken in conjunction with the plans on the other hand makes the intention quite apparent, i.e. closure of the access at the western end of Hessle Road. Whether the point had been taken by the politicians at the Planning Committee is not clear. The Planning agendas were invariably lengthy and even an important report such as this had only a limited amount of time allocated to it. The volume of business was therefore a deterrent to detailed analysis and in-depth consideration. However, individual councillors do question points of detail but this depends on them having had the time to study the

material and identify issues of interest to themselves or to their ward. In the same December cycle of meetings the Report was considered by two other Committees, Technical Services and Development and Estates (being variously interested in the highways and shopping implications), and each Committee approved the officers recommendations without modification as subsequently did the Policy Committee (Hull, CM, December 1976).

In response to the City Planning Officer's Report the Director of Technical Services for Humberside CC in March 1977 indicated that the latest information from the DTP had confirmed that it was the intention to design the junction at the western end of Hessle Road to encourage traffic to make use of the South Docks Road and to stop through traffic into Hessle Road (CF, 1977). The Hull CC officers then produced a document entitled "Hessle Road District Plan - Consultative Report" which contained proposals for the redevelopment and improvement of the area and recommended various forms of public participation and consultation to enable the views of interested parties to be obtained (Hull CC, CR, 1977). It was decided by the Planning Committee that the report should be distributed to representative organisations to obtain their views and be made available to the public at a cost of 50p per copy. As a further measure of public consultation an exhibition illustrating the proposals in the report was mounted in a shop in Hessle Road for a period of four weeks. This exhibition was manned by officers of the Council to deal with enquiries from members of the public.

In September and October 1978 the first of two Public Inquiries were held into the proposals for the South Docks Road. The inspector's report of these proceedings runs to some 200 pages. The public hearings were extensively reported and often featured prominently in the principal local evening newspaper, the Hull Daily Mail. There were a large number of objectors to various parts of the scheme including the three local authorities within whose areas the road was to be constructed, namely, Hull CC, Humberside CC and Beverley BC. A number of large industrial concerns including a shipyard and a pharmaceutical factory were objectors as well as many smaller businesses. Home owners, residential tenants, pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth and Transport 2000 also featured. The most noticeable thing in this welter of organised and personal objection was the complete absence of any representations from the traders on Hessle Road to the proposals for the closure of the road at its western end. As a result the proposed closure to through traffic of Hessle Road at its western end was not challenged. However, Hull CCs detailed objections to the diversionary loop for drivers proceeding east along Hessle Road which required them to swing away to the south and then loop back north into Hessle Road along one of the existing side streets was considered. The first available street for this manoeuvre was Liverpool Street in which Hull CC had a bus depot. Because of its restricted width and the fact that buses had to be backed out into this street this road was not considered suitable. It was for these reasons the City Council questioned the proposed patterns of movement. However, despite the media coverage of the inquiry proceedings no response from shop keepers was aroused. In

contrast to the apparent inertia of the retailers a number of industrial companies operating in the locality did raise the problems of manoeuvring heavy goods vehicles at the new diversionary junction.

In June 1979 the inspector's report was published (26); he recommended approval of the South Docks Road Scheme as proposed subject to a number of detailed variations. In 1980 the DTP published the statutory orders for the road and issued a consultative pamphlet on each of the sections of the road where variations were being proposed. These pamphlets were circulated to all occupiers of property within a 100 metres of the proposed works. As a result of this procedure the traders at the western end of Hessele Road at the point where it was to be diverted southwards should have received a copy of the pamphlet which invited them to make objections, representations and counter proposals. The diagrammatic layout in the pamphlet indicated that the through route would not be permitted. However, no objections or representations appear to have been voiced in response to that consultation. In the following year, 1981, a further public inquiry was held in relation to the various design changes proposed for the road scheme this was linked to a hearing in respect of objections to the proposed compulsory purchase orders to be made to acquire the land necessary for the construction of the road. No objections or representations were received from the traders in Hessele Road to any of these proposals.

During this six year period the conduct of these public consultations and the two formal public inquiries had been entirely in the hands of

the officers of the local authorities concerned or the civil servants from the DTp. This was an officer dominated setting with a high level of technical content. Despite this it is evident that there had been a genuine attempt to explain the proposals as widely as possible and also to give the opportunity for interested persons to make representations or objections. On the evidence a large number of persons affected by the South Docks Road scheme became aware of the proposals and were able to make representations and objections concerning their own particular interests. In this context the failure of the Hessle Road traders to do so provides an interesting contrast. Subsequent to the second public inquiry the Secretary of State for Transport confirmed the road orders and the compulsory purchase orders. Thereafter the construction contract was let and the road began to be built in 1983 in accordance with the details of the approved scheme. As a result of late representations made by the municipal bus operator the highway engineers agreed to the construction of a bus link allowing buses to use Hessle Road as a through route in an eastward direction (i.e. towards the City Centre). When the orders were published this link was permitted but subject to the cost of this falling on the local highway authority and not on the DTp.

In December, 1984 the Hull CC's Planning Committee considered a document entitled: "The Hessle Road District - a Plan for Action". This was a development of earlier proposals and it was approved by the committee which also adopted their officer's recommendation that the report be made available to the traders in the area and any other

interested parties at a cost of £1.00 per copy (Hull CC, CR, 1984). It was also agreed that a newsletter be prepared and distributed to all the shop keepers on Hessle Road informing them of the proposals and their timing. It was also agreed that an appropriate article should be included in the next edition of the monthly "Civic News", the Hull City Council municipal newspaper circulated to all ratepayers in the city. For the first time as a result of these consultative processes objections were received from the traders and considerable opposition to the proposed closure at the western end of Hessle Road began to be voiced. Very quickly the issue hotted up. It was extensively covered by the local media. In response to this concern the ward councillors asked that a public meeting be arranged to give the opportunity for the local traders to express their views and hear a full explanation of the proposals. One of these ward councillors was the Chairman of the Development and Estates Committee Louis Pearlman. His Committee was primarily concerned with economic development including shopping. However, it is interesting to note that although Pearlman was one of the leading members of the majority group throughout the whole period of this case study and although his Committee had been specifically consulted on the proposals for Hessle Road over the years and although he was one of the ward councillors, he, like the traders, was apparently unaware of the full implications of the road scheme.

The meeting with the objectors held in June 1985 was well attended, some 150 persons being present. The mood of the meeting was unanimous in asking that the road layout be rearranged to allow private cars to

gain direct access from the west and to avoid the loop to Brighton Street. However, the traders seemed willing to accept the exclusion of heavy goods vehicles and commercial traffic. The planners argued that the reduction in traffic volumes was an essential prerequisite to environmental improvement, additional parking and for improved commercial access for deliveries. The purpose of the scheme was to help make it a pleasant and convenient place for people to go and shop. As a result the planners were against through traffic. Despite this the traders continued to express the view that the through traffic from the residential suburbs to the west was more important than these proposed improvements.

Having considered these representations from the traders and the Ward Councillors, the CPO and the City Engineer changed long held positions virtually overnight and agreed that it would be possible to allow light vehicles to use the proposed bus link to gain access onto Hessle Road. Although in their view the use of this bus link would inevitably increase the amount of through traffic they now agreed it would still be possible to implement most of the proposed measures to improve parking and the environment which they had previously put forward. By way of further justification they suggested that this additional traffic could result in additional delays which should have the effect of reducing vehicular speeds to the benefit of the environment. It was therefore agreed by the two Committees concerned, i.e., the Planning and Technical Services Committees, that the bus link should be used for cars and light goods vehicles as well as for public service vehicles and bicycles.

Thus, a policy which the officers of both the City and the County authorities had developed over a period of 10 years in close collaboration with the highway engineers employed by the DTP was reversed as a result of the eleventh hour opposition of a group of shop keepers supported by their ward councillors. This sequence of events commands attention because despite numerous reports to committees and public participation exercises over a period of years (in many instances with generous coverage in the local media) the implications of the proposals for this group of traders had not registered with them until the very last moment. In part this surprising degree of ignorance is attributable to the highly technical nature of much of the material. With matters of complex detail both councillors and ordinary members of the public may be forgiven for not being able to immediately identify issues affecting their individual interest. In part these failures can be put down to the frequent lack of interest in "policy" documents by councillors and in public participation exercises by the public. Whether this public apathy is because the man on the street believes that "participation" is not meaningful or whether the lack of interests stems from an instinctively negative attitude to local authority proposals is a matter of speculation.

Although the intention of the highway engineers and planners was expressed from the outset it required a close reading of the reports and cross referencing to sketch plans and diagrams to understand in full what was being proposed. It is also easy to see how people taking no more than a casual glance at this material may have misled themselves. As a result the technocratic solutions of the officers

and civil servants had gone unchallenged until a very late stage. The trigger for the objections was the publication of the "Plan for Action" at the beginning of 1985. This brought home to the traders the implications of the scheme. Why was it that this document was effective in getting the message across and not the preceding consultations? A number of reasons suggest themselves. The first was that the road works were well advanced on the ground with some two thirds of the work already completed. It was therefore becoming physically apparent on the ground what was going to happen. The second factor was that the detailed design was clearly shown for the first time. A third reason was the extent of distribution of the civic newspaper which is delivered to ratepayers (i.e. not merely to residential addresses but also to commercial addresses). Thus, for the first time, in all probability, every one of the traders had received specific notice of the proposals. This contrasts with the previous consultations which required some element of effort on the part of the consultees in order to seek out the information.

Observations on the Case Study

The main body of this Case describes a technocratically dominated process in which the main thrust of the technocrats aims, the construction of a dual carriageway trunk road through a dense urban area, was accomplished but a peripheral issue was lost. The logic of the officer case for preventing through traffic into Hessle Road was a sound one which had been developed over a number of years and through numerous layers of decision making and public consultation without being challenged. At the eleventh hour the municipal transport

undertaking succeeded in a late design change to accommodate a bus lane. At the fifty ninth minute of the eleventh hour a further change was made to permit the use of the bus lane by cars and light vans. The fact that the municipal bus undertaking did not submit its objections until a very late stage is evidence of the strong elements of internal differentiation in Hull CC. The absence of a corporate structure and mechanisms for reconciling various departmental objectives is well demonstrated here. It underlines one of the organisational problems arising from political decisions banning the officers from any corporate activity.

With regard to the objections from the traders three features stand out. First the near unanimity of the shopkeepers in opposing the closure; secondly the extensive media attention; thirdly, the intervention of a ward Councillor who was an influential figure in the ruling party group and Chairman of one of the important Committees of the Council. In the face of this opposition the officers backed down. The reasons for this appears to be threefold. First of all the primary objective of the road proposals had been fulfilled. Secondly having conceded the bus lane the further concession of cars and light vans was not so difficult to accommodate. Thirdly, the internal pressure on the officers from a leading member of the council made them reluctant to take a stand on an issue which by then appeared to be of subsidiary importance. By involving the media and by securing the support of an influential Councillor the traders won a concession and the officials had to amend their scheme. The officers were able to give way reasonably gracefully because they did not see it as a fundamental defeat only a tactical reverse.

This case demonstrates how the politicians leave technical issues in the hands of their officials over a long period of time with only minimal intervention. Given the volume of local authority business, having made the initial decisions to support the new road, virtually all the decisions were left to the officers. When officers did submit reports to them it is clear that the detailed implications of the proposals were either not identified at all or were not recognised as having any political significance. As soon as the politicians were aroused by electors, ratepayers and the media they took action. It was undoubtedly the political pressure on the officers which was decisive and not the external protests. Once on the agenda the politicians were able to reverse an essentially minor decision (in the context of the scheme as a whole) and take the credit for this action as well as minimising possible electoral damage from what could have been a potentially unpopular decision.

Finally this Case raises questions about the effectiveness of public participation. The shopkeepers had obviously not taken up any of the numerous opportunities to find out what was proposed over a period of years or if they had to message had not got across. Only when the closure was almost physically realised did they object. Similar failures of communication are to be observed within Hull CC as well. Clearly, technical issues have a propensity to exclude the non-professionals and this may well be a quality which the professionals nurture in their own self interest.

CASE STUDY NO 5SYSTEM BUILD HOUSING - A STUDY OF THREE FAILURES OF THE HOUSES,
OF THE PROFESSIONALS AND OF THE POLITICIANSIntroduction

At the heart of this Case is the industrialised building boom of the sixties. It provides us with insights into the roles of the professionals, the politicians, the construction industry, the media and the tenants. It highlights the extent of professional power involving the expenditure of massive capital resources with inadequate political supervision compounded by an almost total lack of understanding on the part of the politicians of the implications of industrialized systems of construction. It throws light on the conjunction of professional power with the building industry when both were operating within the milieu of a sympathetic central government. Following the realisation of the deficiencies in system build housing the Case shows how tenants organisations and the Media got the issue on the agenda. In its concluding phase it demonstrates a reversal of roles as the politicians assumed the lead in the resolution of the issue and how for the first time concern for the views of tenants became a significant factor instead of being almost completely ignored.

Conception and Implementation

In November, 1961 a meeting was held in Leeds between the Chairmen of the housing committees of three Yorkshire cities, Sheffield, Leeds and Hull together with their Chief Architects. The archive material in the City Record Office gives no indication of how this meeting came about (was it instigated by politicians or officers?). What we do know is that all three authorities had substantial slum-clearance programmes and were having to tackle very similar problems of replacing substandard nineteenth century back to back terraced housing with new homes as cheaply and efficiently as possible. One of the officers present at that first meeting was the City Architect of Sheffield, Lewis Womersley who was a leading advocate of high rise housing who has been described as "an enthusiastic publicist for the virtues of tall buildings" (27). The first tri-partite meeting was held in November, 1961 the minutes of which record that the officers were of the opinion that:-

faster, better quality, cheaper and more efficient building can result from a widening of the field of design and building activity from that of the individual Authority working in isolation to a group of Authorities with similar interests working together. The serious and continuing problems of shortages of architectural and technical staff can to a considerable extent be overcome thereby. The fundamental change in building, from a craft industry using hand tools and small building elements, to a mechanical industry using plant and factory made building elements - a change which has been taking place with increasing momentum over the last seventy five years - must be accepted as a permanent change and its logical developments encouraged instead of being misunderstood and resisted (and that) the most profitable longer term object . . . would appear to be to develop new systems of construction which will exploit the most modern methods of manufacture and assembly using a maximum of dry factory made mass produced units, and thereby rationalising the present traditional or semi-traditional form of house and flat construction. (Hull CC, CRO, 1962)

In order to achieve these ends it was proposed that the three Authorities should form a Consortium to be known as the Yorkshire Development Group (the YDG) Its aims were to be four fold. Firstly for the exchange of information between the authorities on designs, prices, materials and methods of construction. Secondly to "experiment in programme quotations - obtaining bulk quotations for standard components for the requirements of the three authorities". Thirdly, to develop new designs suitable for all three Authorities. Fourthly, to develop new systems of construction "which will give the Authorities through their Architects, the same control over design, materials and cost as they have with traditional building" (Hull CC, CRO, 1962). The officers' advice clearly assumed that the technocratic role would predominate. As for the politicians the report noted that "in addition to each City Architect keeping his Chairman and Committee informed of progress, there will be four joint meetings per annum" of the YDG. The officers also suggested that the three Councils would have to authorise their officers to attend meetings in the three Cities "and at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in London and also for visiting places in Great Britain were considered necessary by the City Architects in order to keep abreast with modern technical developments" (Hull CC, CRO, 1962).

The second meeting of the YDG took place in Sheffield in June 1962. The officers' report which was submitted to that meeting, (and the subsequent minutes of the meeting) seem to suggest that the principle of the YDG had been approved by all three Authorities. In fact, these proceedings were not formally ratified by Hull until some time later

despite the active involvement of the Hull City Architect and the Chairman of the Housing Committee. The first record in the Hull Council minutes appears in the Housing Sub-Committee held in July 1962 (Hull CC, CM, 1962). The Chairman of the Housing Committee, Alderman Hurley, who had attended both meetings reported the proceedings of the meetings to the Sub-Committee. In the event the Sub-Committee deferred consideration of the Chairman's report to a special meeting of the full Housing Committee. This was held two weeks later when the minutes of the November 1961 and June 1962 meetings of the YDG were submitted for the first time to a Hull CC meeting. Significantly the Leader of the Council (then Alderman and later Sir Leo Schultz) and also the Leader of the Conservative Opposition (not being members of the Committee) were also recorded as present at this special meeting. The invitation to the Leader of the Council and also to the Leader of the Opposition to attend the Housing Committee indicates that participation in the YDG was seen as a major policy issue in respect of which it was desirable to involve both the political leadership of the Council and also across party lines to the opposition to establish a bipartisan policy.

Apparently no questions were raised about the need for a retrospective authorisation of an eight month period of participation in the venture by the City Architect's Department. One must assume that the City Architect was working to the instruction of the Chairman of the Housing Committee with whom he had attended the YDG meetings. Clearly he took this as sufficient authority to act in the belief that the formal consent of the majority party group would be forthcoming as and

when necessary. This confidence was no doubt reinforced by the substantial Labour Party majority on the Council and the prospect of continuity of party control in the future. Having considered the minutes of the first two YDG meetings the decision is recorded as "this Committee approves the joining of this Authority in the membership of the Yorkshire Development Group on the basis in the reports now submitted" (Hull CC, CM, July 1962). The basis for membership was that contained in the minutes of the first two YDG meetings i.e. the recommendations of the three City Architects. No amendments to the officers proposals were made nor was there any apparent involvement by officers of other professional disciplines at this stage eg housing officials.

The June 1962 YDG report of the three Architects noted that they had been carrying out a "comprehensive investigation of the setting up of a development team consisting of professional staff and possibly representatives of large manufacturing firms specialising in timber and concrete components" and that they had discussed their proposals with the Cement and Concrete Association, (a meeting described by them as "extremely valuable"). It was reported that the Cement and Concrete Association had expressed great interest in the YDG and noted that the Association was prepared to give all the advice it could on relevant matters during the development stages of the YDG system. It also seems that the Association agreed to furnish the YDG with reports on systems and developments from abroad and had offered its facilities (including laboratory testing) to the Group (Hull CC, CRO, 1962). The Architects also reported on visits to six firms in various parts of

the country, all of which were involved with component manufacture and system building techniques. These six firms had been selected from a preliminary shortlist of twenty-two firms with the advice of two trade groups, the Timber Development Association and the Cement and Concrete Association. The aims as expressed by the Architects in their June 1962 report were that the YDG wished to develop a system of construction using mass produced components for two and three storey houses. To that end the YDG would "invite the selected firms to form part of a development team in which the Yorkshire Development Group would supply architectural and allied personnel". The intention being that the contractor would be given a first contract of a sufficient size to give him a fair "crack of the whip" in return for the expense and time taken by the contractor in the development of the system (Hull CC, CRO 1962). The June report concluded with these remarks:-

numerous meetings have been held between the City Architects and officers of the three Authorities and it is gratifying to report that not only has the highest standard of co-operation been achieved by them but the enthusiasm shown by the officers of the three Authorities has resulted in an exchange of information which has proved to be exceedingly valuable. This is however, only a beginning in the work of the Yorkshire Development Group. Many fresh ideas have already presented themselves and it is confidently expected that with the actual operation of the Group, many further and far reaching benefits will accrue (Hull CC, CRO, 1962).

This feeling of optimism was clearly shared by the elected members who attended the June 1962 meeting. The Chairman of the Sheffield Housing Committee congratulated the Architects on their report and the Chairman of the Leeds Housing Committee Councillor Cohen said "that he hoped that at the outset, all concerned would take the attitude that the setting up of the Yorkshire Development Group represented the best way of building houses". Councillor Cohen is also reported as stating

that the Minister of Housing and Local Government "supported the venture wholeheartedly" and of suggesting that the specification and design of new dwellings should "be as bold as possible" making the point that the Group "ought to look ahead and decide what people would be likely to want in the future" not merely consider present circumstances and requirements. This enthusiasm to push out the frontiers of municipal development was also emphasised by the remarks of Lewis Womersley who is recorded as stressing the importance of Local Authority enterprise and as suggesting that "it was very useful indeed to have a Corporation department able to do experimental work" (Hull CC, CRO, 1962).

Two interesting illustrations of the respective positions being taken and sought by members and officers during these initiating phases of the YDG are to be found in the minutes of the June meeting. The first arises from the recommendations of the City Treasurer of Sheffield who was appointed Treasurer of the YDG at this meeting. He is recorded as hoping that "the Group would have a large amount of autonomy and that once the Group was set up it would no longer be necessary to go back to each individual Council whenever it was necessary to spend money". This was agreed by those present at the meeting and subsequently ratified by the three Councils concerned (Hull CC, CRO, 1962). Taken in conjunction with the original recommendations for the organisation of the YDG (i.e. the officer dominated structure with member participation only at quarterly intervals) these financial arrangements gave the officer group a further sizeable discretion. A second proposal made by the officers was that the professional and

technical staff of the YDG should be housed and employed by Leeds City Council on behalf of the YDG with these costs being jointly shared by the three Authorities. In response to that suggestion, the Chairmen of the Sheffield and Hull Housing Committees said that they had no authority to agree to this proposal, however, they hoped "to obtain the agreement of the majority parties of their Councils in the next week or so and would let the Town Clerk of Leeds know when this had been done". Thus, the two Chairmen had to consult their party groups but were confident enough to assume that once their groups had agreed the rest was a formality (Hull CC, CRO, 1962)

Although absent from these proceedings the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) was undoubtedly a considerable influence on both councillors and officers at this time. There are numerous references in early years of the YDG to various seminars and meetings promoted by the MHLG. An early example of MHLG involvement was the development of a prototype housing system called the 5M System. Sheffield proposed to construct these houses "on designs prepared by the Development Group of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government" and "following completion of prototypes in 1962 it was hoped that a further scheme of 500 dwellings would be erected by the Yorkshire Development Group later in 1963" (Hull CC, CRO, 1962). Subsequently, Hull agreed to take 100 of these MHLG houses. This was at a special meeting of the Hull Housing Committee which was not only held at Sheffield but the Leader of Hull CC and the Leader of the Conservative

Opposition on Hull CC also attended. The circumstances in which this decision was made is indicative of the mood of the times. (Hull CC, CM, 1962)

At its inception the intention behind the YDG was to secure the benefits of industrialised building techniques for low rise housing schemes and not for the purpose of developing high-rise designs. This is clearly confirmed by the terms of the invitation to the "long" shortlist of 22 firms noted above which stipulated that "we wish to develop a system of construction using mass produced components for basically two and three-storey houses which must be capable of being erected by the smaller kind of contractor who carries out contracts for the local authorities of up to say 200 houses". (Hull CC, CRO, 1962) As we shall see these initial objectives were subsequently abandoned not only in relation to height but also the type of contractor and size of contract. Although the national housing statistics show that the high-rise boom peaked in 1967 the first YDG blocks only started that year in Leeds and in Hull YDG housing was still being built in the early nineteen seventies long after Government policy had turned firmly against high-rise solutions.

It was the Housing Subsidies Act 1967 which was the first significant reversal of the subsidy trend which had been discriminating in favour of high-rise. A mandatory system of housing cost yardsticks linked to density was introduced and schemes had to meet these requirements to qualify for subsidy. The application of these new principles made high-rise building increasingly difficult to achieve. By 1970 the

MHLG policy was firmly against high-rise. One of the main reasons for this change was the Griffiths Tribunal Report on the Ronan Point collapse of 1968. The MHLG had also been in the vanguard of encouraging industrialised building techniques and this was undoubtedly one of the factors in the creation of the YDG. Another was the success in industrialised school building systems through the use of consortium arrangements which had cut costs and achieved good design standards. This influence is underlined by the visit of the three Architects to Nottingham in January 1962 to discuss the CLASP system for schools and other public buildings. The legal and financial arrangements for CLASP were taken carefully into account by the Architects when making their recommendations on the proposed structure of the YDG Consortium. Furthermore the invitation to the 22 firms on the "long" shortlist in early 1962 started with the statement that "our Organisation is inspired by CLASP" (Hull CC, CRO, 1962). Prefabrication techniques pioneered in France and Scandinavia were a further source of inspiration. Several of the firms on the "long" shortlist with whom discussions took place during the formative stages of the YDG were utilising these systems under licence. The offer of the Cement and Concrete Association to keep the YDG abreast of overseas development confirms this influence and, of course, there were professional influences as well, for example, the City Architect of Sheffield had been part of a delegation from Sheffield which had toured high-rise schemes in Denmark, Germany, Holland, France and Switzerland and had returned persuaded of these continental high-rise systems.

Up to the June 1962 report the three Architects' activities were apparently devoted to meetings with contractors or pressure groups like the Cement and Concrete Association and to investigating successful system build consortia such as CLASP. It is also remarkable that there appeared to be no direct involvement by either housing management officials or from the planning profession but all these decisions had been taken by architects. This approach is illustrated by a report of the City Architect of Hull in November, 1961 to the Housing Committee coinciding with the first meeting of the YDG. This report concerned the development of the Orchard Park Estate on the northern boundary of the City. The City Architect described the site as:-

The 300 acres of land are quite flat. The only natural features are deep ditches, most of which will be filled. There are few trees or hedges. It is very exposed to wind. On the southern boundary there is a great extent of two storey houses.

For this site the Architect not only proposed the development of low-rise housing but also twenty storey high-rise flats, stating that:-

the height of twenty storeys is dictated by three considerations - (i) to form a dominant focal point to mark the centre of the neighbourhood, (ii) to assist the density, (iii) this is the right height to give the towers a convincing relationship to each other over the distance they are apart. (Hull CC, CRO, 1961)

Whilst the report contains a very full justification for the housing layout for the low-rise dwellings, for the segregation of traffic and pedestrians and for landscaping, there are only a few sentences to justify twenty-storey flats on a large green field site on the edge of the City. It is quite possible to achieve relatively high densities

without the necessity of resorting to high-rise so that the claim in respect of densities appears less than convincing. Perhaps, a clue to the thinking behind the proposed high-rise blocks lies in the description of the design of the houses where the report states that "as this is in the nature of a crash programme, there has been little time to design the new houses specially which would have been the ideal thing to do" (Hull CC, CRO, 1961). The report further records that the high-rise blocks were to be a modification of a design previously constructed in Leeds. This predilection for instant solutions and the use of off the shelf designs seems to have been the result of pressure for quick results from the politicians. However, it is likely that these political expectations had been fuelled by the professional advocacy of modern methods of construction. Equally politicians were aware of developments in other local authorities and in part it was "if they can do it why can't we". What is demonstrably absent from the officials report in this case was any consideration of the prospective tenants, their needs and preferences. At the same time the report appears to have no other departmental contributions to its conclusions. The predominance of the architectural profession was similarly apparent in the YDG which is emphasised by the infrequency of the meetings at which elected members were present to deliberate and determine "policy". When they did take place those meetings were usually dominated by officers who outnumbered the politicians.

Nottingham's application to join the YDG is first referred to in the January 1963 minutes when a letter from the Town Clerk of Nottingham was considered and discussed at length. The Clerk to the YDG was instructed to reply "saying how much they appreciated Nottingham's desire to co-operate with the Group and that for the moment they felt the Group ought to continue with its present membership until rather more progress had been made". Particular note was made in these minutes to the fact that at that time Nottingham did not have a City Architect in post suggesting that the technocratic contribution to the YDG was seen by both members and officers as crucial (Hull CC, CRO, 1963). At the next meeting of the YDG in October, 1963 further consideration was given to Nottingham's application. It was reported that representatives of Nottingham had met the Chairmen of the Housing Committees of Leeds and Sheffield at Sheffield in June 1963 and that subsequently the City Architect of Hull, Mr D C H Jenkin, had been appointed City Architect of Nottingham (Hull CC, CRO, 1963). By the time of the next meeting of the YDG (February 1964) Jenkin was in post and Nottingham had been admitted to the Consortium. During 1964 both the City Architects of Sheffield and Leeds vacated their posts. Sheridan Sheddon's move from Leeds to Birmingham coincided with a radical change in Birmingham's policy to the use of industrialised forms of construction (40). These changes implemented by Sheddon were certainly very effective for even during the year of his appointment the City's housing approvals rose by nearly 50% and in subsequent years at an accelerating pace. One of the most notable features of the Birmingham programme was the enormous expansion in high rise dwellings. Thus, the evangelizing role of the professionals is

clearly demonstrated. There is also evidence that the Architects who were responsible for appointments sought like minded professionals for subordinate positions. The YDG minutes of January 1963 record the appointment of a Development Architect and that the successful candidate had been employed by the London County Council (i.e. an authority strongly committed to high rise) and that his appointment was "on the unanimous advice of the City Architects of the three cities" (Hull CC, MR, 1963). The Development Architect was to have a key role in the decisions made by the YDG over the next few years. If the three Architects were persuaded of the benefits of high rise it would seem they had selected a candidate who by reason of his background would be sympathetic to that approach. However, this new appointment undoubtedly brought about a change in emphasis. Now the main forum for developing the YDG was at this professional level where the "real" work is usually executed.

During the first two years the City Architects had been engaged in discussing principles. Their subordinates were working on nuts and bolts issues such as the bulk purchase of materials and the rationalisation of existing designs. The new Development Architect, in contrast, had the time and resources to develop new design concepts. Within a couple of months of his appointment he gave a preview to the City Architects, illustrated by slides and diagrams, of the principles on which to base a YDG System. Having seen it the three Architects decided that this should be considered by the members at what was now being called the "Board" i.e. the elected members representing the four councils and the other (non architectural)

officer advisers. The principles advanced by the Development Architect were summarised "as the need, in order to tackle our housing problems, to reconcile housing demand with production methods. If this is once accepted not only could we increase production . . . but we would also be able to create good environment and building of high quality" (Hull CC, MR, 1963). The illustrative slides the Development Architect featured included the Unite and other famous high-rise developments. The final illustrations were of a London housing scheme at Hendon which was said to illustrate the ways in which a consistent method of construction design could meet social needs, not only for a particular site, but as a concept adaptable to a variety of sites.

The position of Hull in this process is interesting. Initially its sole interest in the YDG was the application of industrialised building techniques to low-rise housing schemes. At a meeting of the architects group in February 1963 the minutes, record a considerable divergence in the needs of the three authorities in a discussion of industrialised low rise: "Sheffield would be building comparatively few houses in this system but would require it for flats and maisonettes" whereas "Leeds would require about half of its programme in two-storey, the remainder in maisonettes and flats" but "Hull would require the majority of its programme to be two-storey houses with few buildings over this height" (Hull CC, MR, 1963). However, by February 1964 at the meeting of the YDG Board in Nottingham a change of emphasis is apparent.

The Development Architect had then been in post for more than a year and the progress of the development team was reported in the following terms:

The City Architect of Nottingham reminded the meeting that the team had been set up to design a system for housing building and also multi-storey development. Since the team commenced work on such a system it had been found that the Hallam and Caspon houses which had been produced for Sheffield and Hull respectively had been more successful than was originally anticipated and the urgency of designing a group house had diminished. Also many firms have in the past two years set up their own development teams and there are now coming onto the market a number of housing building systems and also systems for multi-storey development. The City Architects are therefore recommending a change of emphasis. Instead of designing a structural system it was now proposed that a preliminary series of planning elements which could be used to form such diverse types of buildings as a bungalow or a multi-storey building should be designed (Hull CC, MR, 1964).

In 1965 the YDG organisation was substantially modified. One of the principal reasons advanced was that "our organisation has so far been top heavy, too many city architects have been concerned too often with too much detail". It was therefore proposed to strengthen the YDG professional team and have an arrangement by which the Board (i.e. the elected members and their chief officers) met only twice a year and the City Architects met four times a year concentrating "more on principles". It was recommended that the detailed work should be carried out by a working party under the leadership of the Development Architect (Hull CC, MR, 1965). These organisational arrangements which took the key design decisions further down the hierarchy were agreed. Over the next eighteen months design work under this new structure advanced sufficiently for the necessary documentation to be prepared on which to invite contractors to submit tenders. These invitations to tender were issued in August 1965.

The YDG Housing Mark 1 design was a medium rise industrialised building system described as being: "intended primarily for use in high density development and is based on a form of wide continuous access galleries generally known as decks". Its advantages over a development of low blocks and high point blocks was claimed to be that:-

It permits any desired grouping of occupiers both with young families and without, in an integrated form. It makes possible the achievement of high densities without building high. All layouts are built from one set of types of components and in one constant pack. It can exploit the physical characteristics of the site. It should achieve economy in cost. (Hull CC, MR, 1965)

It was then suggested that the most economic method of exploiting industrialised housing was to place a large order spread over several years with a minimum of 4,500 dwellings to be built between the four cities and the two associates who had joined the consortium at a later stage (Scunthorpe and Chesterfield). The notice to tenderers stated that the overall design of the system i.e. dwelling types, public circulation elements, site layouts, other general requirements and specifications were the responsibility of the YDG the role of the contractor being "to translate the design proposals into his own terms as regards size of component structure jointing and material which may result in minor modifications" and also that

It is intended that the successful tenderer should work in the closest cooperation with the development team. The YDG will look to the manufacturer for the technical aspects of the design, organisation, production and construction but the responsibility for architectural design will rest with the Yorkshire Development Group (Hull CC, MR, 1965).

By February 1966 the lowest tender was selected and a letter of intent to place contracts for a minimum of 4,500 dwellings was issued. The contractor and the YDG working together then progressed the detailed design so that by December 1966 the development of the project was sufficiently far advanced to permit the heads of agreement to be signed between the YDG authorities and the contractor. The first contract entered into was for a housing development at Leek Street in Leeds, the contract being signed in March 1967. More than five years had been taken from the initial meetings to the realisation of the agreed purpose. This was probably the high point of enthusiasm and commitment to the YDG. A little over a year later the collapse of the block of flats at Ronan Point in London in May 1968 called into question the safety of industrialised building systems. As a result of that disaster the MHLG issued circulars in August, November and December, 1968 advising Local Authorities to take precautionary measures. The YDG on the advice of its Consulting Engineers recommended structural revisions to the design and the conversion from gas heating to electricity.

From this point it was downhill all the way for the YDG. In 1969 the Consortium effectively broke up. Nottingham and Sheffield withdrew negotiating their release from any further commitments to the Contractor. In the event Nottingham ended up with 674 YDG units and Sheffield 755. In contrast, Hull followed up its first contract for 558 units with a further 627 flats and maisonettes finishing with a total of 1,185 units. Leeds took the biggest slice of the YDG dwellings building 1,249 units. The surprising aspect of this is that

Hull which initially had only sought two storey dwellings in the end took the second biggest tranche of deck access blocks. Following the withdrawal of Sheffield and Nottingham the Contractor approached Leeds and Hull stating that it would be unable to carry out any further YDG schemes without an improvement in price because of the heavy losses which were being incurred in carrying out the current contracts. As a result of this approach both Leeds and Hull came to an agreement to terminate the Contractor's commitment to further phases of YDG dwellings. With that decision the YDG for all practical purposes had come to the end of its life.

The Realisation of Failure

Following completion of the final YDG deck access dwellings in the early 70's problems began to emerge. The realisation that all was not well gave rise to considerable co-operative activity by the mid 1970's on the part of Hull and Leeds (although the YDG had not been formally dissolved all its staff had by then been released). The investigation of maintenance problems at Leeds had led to the disclosure of a number of serious deficiencies in the structure. Although these had not manifested themselves in Hull the Leeds deck access blocks were several years older and it was suspected that the deterioration of the blocks could be connected with ageing. The Leeds experts were extremely concerned about the possible consequences of the structural faults they were finding. As the cost implications of rectifying these faults were likely to be very substantial the officers and the two authorities pooled their investigative resources. Concurrently

with the technical problems political concerns were growing as a result of the housing management problems. Tenant complaints were beginning to build up about water penetration, condensation, coldness, poor ventilation and the cost of heating.

Construction faults although very expensive to put right were relatively straight forward. Condensation problems were more complex, although in part attributable to deficiencies in design they were also inextricably linked to patterns of usage. The basic construction of the YDG deck access dwellings was heavy dense concrete with a polystyrene core. Although this achieved the required insulation value (U value) the walls of the individual dwellings had a very slow heat response. Structures of this kind require a large amount of heat to warm them up and therefore to avoid condensation the only practicable solution is for the structure to be heated on an almost continuous basis but the pattern of tenant usage did not meet that essential requirement. Many of the occupants were out all day returning only in the evening seeking to heat their flats up rapidly during the period of evening occupancy. Without continuous heating the walls, floor and ceilings of these dwellings remained cold. Attempts by tenants at quick heating were not successful. Tenant discomfort was further exacerbated by the cold surfaces absorbing radiant heat from the occupants themselves causing further discomfort. Although prototype YDG dwellings had been tested before the system went into production these tests had not included people living in them adopting normal patterns of usage. It says much for the design and construction professions that this crucial factor had been

overlooked completely, particularly, as this was the function for which they were providing these structures. Essential features of every day living such as washing clothes or using the bathroom created quite unacceptable living conditions with condensation streaming down cold walls.

However, these initial design errors were compounded by other events. The Ronan Point Inquiry recommended that buildings constructed like the YDG deck access blocks should be either considerably strengthened or should have limited strengthening but have the gas supply removed. The YDG decided to remove the gas and replace it with an electric storage heating system. This system distributed warm air through the ducts designed for the YDG gas fuelled system. In addition following the Ronan Point recommendations secondary forms of heating such as LPG and parafin were banned. This left only expensive electrical heating to supplement the electric storage warm air system. Soon after they were built the energy crisis of 1973 resulted in substantial increases in electricity prices which continued throughout the rest of the decade. Over the years heating costs assumed even greater relevance as the proportion of tenants living in the YDG maisonettes who could not afford to heat them properly (e.g. the young, the unemployed and the old) increased. Even if a tenant had the resources to meet the substantial heating bills for the warm air system in the larger maisonettes some of the bedrooms had no heating ducts and secondary heating of these areas had to be provided. A further problem with the system was the complexities of the heating controls. In order to obtain heat the tenant had to decide the day before whether to store

heat with a result that sometimes the tenants stored heat which they do not need (but had to pay for) and on other occasions found that they had no heat stored when they required it. Another deficiency in the design was inadequate ventilation, a particular problem in the kitchens and bathrooms. A survey of tenants found that kitchen windows were not opened when cooking or washing because there was not enough control for the tenants to let out moisture without letting out the heat as well. The ventilators in the bathrooms were switched off as tenants perceived this to be a source of heat loss and expense.

The result of all this was extensive condensation i.e. when moisture meets a cold surface and as most of the surfaces in the YDG maisonettes were almost permanently cold this resulted in more or less permanent condensation. The presence of this condensation together with water penetration arising from the structural faults (together with the effects of poor ventilation) made these dwellings particularly unattractive, not only to existing tenants but also to prospective tenants. This naturally made them difficult to let even with a huge housing waiting list. In Hull the most significant tenant factor was location. The Hull deck access flats had been built in two quite separate areas of the City with about half at Bransholme on the north eastern edge of the City and the other half at Thornton in the south west close to the City Centre. The strongest demand from both Council tenants and from private sector developers is for dwellings in the west of the City. The construction of the deck access blocks close to the City centre where land resources were scarce and demand

high is readily explicable. The use of this housing type at Bransholme with a massive surplus of land is less capable of easy rationalisation. The location issue, in the event, was at the heart of the ultimate decision on the future of the YDG blocks in Hull. The tenants in both locations were extremely dissatisfied with living conditions but those at Thornton had a very strong desire to stay in that part of the City whereas those at Bransholme were disaffected not only with the dwellings but also the location i.e. a large peripheral housing estate distant from the City Centre with few facilities.

The Architects and Engineers could find no difference between the Bransholme and Thornton blocks, noting that:

The apparent of popularity of the Thornton Estate compared with the Bransholme complex is not as a result of better physical conditions at Thornton but as a result of the geographical distribution of housing and population in the City allied to the tenants sense of community. This is underlined by the technical reports which show no significant difference in quality of design or construction between the two sites (Hull CC, CR 1982).

So far as the housing managers were concerned the Bransholme maisonettes were the source of much greater problems than those at Thornton although exhibiting the same range of physical deficiencies. One of the possible differences is that of the tenant profile between the two estates. The 1981 census "showed that unemployment on the YDG maisonettes at Bransholme was 43% in April 1981 (15% city average) and that 65% of the maisonette population was under 25 years old (39% for the city)" (Hull CC, CR, 1982).

The reason why such a large atypical population of young unemployed came to inhabit the Bransholme maisonettes was explained by the Director of Housing in the following terms:

In 1979 the City Council approved an Interim Allocations Policy which gave priority to the transfer of families with children from the maisonettes. They are then relet to single people or childless couples. Many of these in the course of time have children and transfer. Because houses are in relatively good supply in Bransholme and East Hull only a short wait is required for most people with children. The maisonettes are therefore used as short term accommodation. (Hull CC, CR, 1982)

As the awareness of both defects in construction and the inadequacy of the dwellings as homes began to build up, a legal investigation into a possible claim against the Contractor was being considered by the municipal lawyers in Leeds and Hull. Identifying the design defects and constructional deficiencies was hard enough, pinpointing legal liability proved to be nearly impossible. The complex relationship between the sponsoring Councils, their officers, the separate legal entity of the YDG and its employees on the one side and the contractor and his professional employees and advisers on the other side had created a murky ill defined legal morass. The lack of crucial documentary evidence, difficulties in finding witnesses and a lack of firm direction resulted in virtually no progress. All attempts to pursue the claim were met by a complete stonewall from the Contractors and their insurers. However these years of co-operation between Leeds and Hull were brought to an end in late 1981. Leeds without prior consultation came to an undisclosed settlement with the Contractor and merely informed Hull subsequent to the event. Thus, Hull was left high and dry, especially with Leeds holding most of the records of the YDG and also having the only employee in the employment of either

authority who had been actively involved at the time the YDG. It would appear neither Nottingham or Sheffield who had, of course, withdrawn from the YDG in the late 60's had taken any form of legal action against the Contractors.

Tenant Dissatisfaction and the Political Response

From 1982 the YDG story in Hull changes its character. The first phase of the YDG, the planning phase, was dominated by the technocrats with the politicians lending support to this brave new world of industrialised buildings and instant solutions. This was followed by the implementation phase which was, likewise, professionally dominated. The third chastening phase was the aftermath when all the deficiencies of the YDG deck access design were discovered. By the early 80's tenant dissatisfaction was steadily rising and this increasingly vocal tenant lobby coincided with growing professional concerns. These concerns were two fold, the technical professions were concerned about potentially serious structural problems, the housing managers were concerned about the tenant welfare and lettings problems. In Hull these began to be particularly apparent on the Bransholme site where the physical conditions and letting policy were each giving a further twist to the downward spiral. At this point in the story there were other factors which came into play in Hull. Changes at the top of the political and bureaucratic hierarchies resulted in policy changes. The new chairman of the Housing Committee was young and to the left of his party. He replaced someone who was both older, at the centre right of the party and with a different

attitude and relationship to officers. Not long after this a new young Director of Housing was appointed. The balance between Chairman and Chief Officer changed. The priorities of the new political leadership on the Housing Committee quickly became apparent as did a change of style.

In February 1982 the Housing Committee received a petition from the tenants of the Thornton blocks signed by some 471 people (ie. about three quarters of the occupiers of the maisonettes). The officers suggested that a full structural survey should be undertaken to investigate the remedial works acquired and the costs involved including

"improvements to the dwellings to make them more acceptable to tenants and easier for management" together with "a thorough investigation into the housing, management, social and economic problems being experienced at the dwellings and the preparation of an economic appraisal in relation to possible alternatives to remedial works and improvements" (Hull CC, CR, 1982).

Thus, the needs of tenants were being emphasised in marked contrast to the early days of the design of the YDG where both planners and housing officials had been absent from the design debate. The autumn and winter of 1981/82 saw concerted campaigns by tenants associations in Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and Nottingham to exert pressure on the four local authorities to take action over the flats.

The Sheffield Morning Telegraph reported in October 1981 that

tenants at Sheffield's Broom Hall flats have found new allies in the battle against damp and high heating bills in their council homes. The Broom Hall residents have campaigned for Sheffield Council to rid their homes of mouldy walls, leaking ceilings and large fuel bills yet nearly 12 years after the first complaints the problems persist. Now the formation of the Yorkshire Developments Tenants Action Group promises to raise the pressure of the campaign to a new high point. The Group consists of representatives of tenants associations and community groups in Sheffield, Leeds, Nottingham and Hull (Hull CC, CF, 1981).

The newspaper report outlined the grievances of the occupants. Interviews with tenants and social workers described the problems encountered by people living in the YDG dwellings. Reference was made to heating costs and the financial difficulties suffered by many tenants trying to cope with the electricity bills. A report in the same month in the Nottingham News described the activities of TOAD, (Tenants Organisation Against Damp), claimed that babies in the YDG Balloon Wood Flats were more likely to die than those in any other part of Nottingham. TOAD claimed: "that almost three-quarters of the flats suffer from damp and that two people out of every five living in Balloon Wood complained of poor health including chest trouble, continual colds and depression. TOAD says that conditions are so bad in some flats that they might qualify for being declared officially unfit for human habitation" (Hull CC, CF, 1981).

The Hull Daily Mail followed up these stories and reported an interview with one of the leaders of the Yorkshire Development Group Tenants Action Group (YDGTAG) from Leeds together with a response from the Chairman of the Hull Housing Committee (Hull CC, CF, 1981). Over the winter further reports in the local press in Hull, Leeds,

Sheffield and Nottingham continued to appear. All this helped to build up a head of steam through the media enabling the tenant organisations to publicise and reinforce their representations on behalf of tenants in all the four cities. As a result of the pressure brought about by the YDG TAG Hull which until then had no tenants organisations specifically organised around the issue of the YDG deck access flats found itself faced with TRASH (Tenants Revolt Against Substandard Housing). Subsequently this group established contact both the officials and with the Chairman of the Housing Committee and other politicians. Concurrently with these tenants campaigns Leeds and Nottingham followed later by Sheffield began to actively consider demolition. The first authority to make a decisive move was Leeds City Council when in April 1982 the decision was taken by Leeds to demolish all 1,249 dwellings in its Hunslet Grange complex. At the time of this decision the problems with the Leeds dwellings appeared to be much more severe than the conditions in Hull not only physically but also in terms of tenant management. The Chairman of the Leeds Housing Committee commenting on the possibility of improvements is reported to have said that various schemes had been considered to make the flats more acceptable but these would have cost several million pounds and suggested that in all probability this would only have been a cosmetic exercise, implying that it would be throwing good money after bad. He is then quoted as follows

I decided that to spend money on anything other than demolition would be wasted it would probably cost about £400,000 to pull the flats down and on top of that there will be disturbance allowances to the tenants. We are speeding up our efforts to get financial help from the government. There remains the problem of £4.7m outstanding debt charges on the flats (Hull CC, CF, 1982).

In May 1982 Nottingham City Council received a report on the 647 dwellings at Ballon Wood which indicated that the estimated cost of remedial work would be nearly £21m at an average cost per flat of over £32,000; it was therefore recommended that the flats should be demolished. The Broom Hall flats in Sheffield centre, did not appear to have the severity of physical defects as those in Leeds nor did the council have as many difficulties in letting them. The experience of Sheffield was similar to that of the Hull Thornton flats the similarity between them being their close proximity to a City Centre. However, Sheffield eventually decided to demolish their dwellings in contrast to the decision subsequently taken in Hull.

In the meantime the four authorities were making representations to Government and discussing joint action. In August 1982 Hull wrote to the DoE regarding the Housing Investment Programme for 1983/84 calling

upon the Government to provide an additional allocation for the Housing Investment Programme in order to fund research into the constructional problems of Yorkshire Development Group developments and also to finance the short and long term solutions. This Council believes that the Government should acknowledge that many of these problems arise from the encouragement given by successive administrations to system built housing and therefore it should make available the necessary resources (Hull CC, CF, 1982).

Hull's representations to the Secretary of State were circulated to the three Members of Parliament for the City, to Gerald Kaufman M.P. the then Shadow Environment spokesman for the Labour Opposition as well as to the three other YDG authorities. The reply from Sir George Young a junior minister in the Department of the Environment contained

the following statement.

I am of course concerned about the special problems being experienced by tenants in these maisonettes but the management and maintenance of Council owned dwellings is by law the responsibility of the relevant local authority and the decision to build them in the first place was of course made by the City Council (Hull CC, CF, 1982).

Against this background of tenant demands and an unsympathetic government the politicians were faced with a difficult situation. At the same time there was mounting concern regarding the probable cost of rectifying the faults which were being found not only in the YDG deck access dwellings but also in a number of other system built dwellings. As a result the politicians were obliged to respond to pressures both from inside and outside the authority. Their perception of the issue was of resources denied to them by central government which had encouraged them into this situation in the first place. It was therefore natural that they continued to press government on the issue indirectly through the Regional Office, through the local Members of Parliament and by direct approaches to Whitehall both individually and also in association with other similarly placed authorities.

In the meantime the officials at Hull had been assessing the future of the deck access dwellings in accordance with the February 1982 decision of the Housing Committee. However, because of insufficient manpower resources and delays in the appointment of engineering consultants little progress had been made. A number of external pressures (particularly the wide publicity then being given to the decisions of Nottingham and Leeds to demolish their deck access

dwellings) activated the officers who were obliged to respond to the politicians demands for action. The Hull politicians were naturally anxious that the City should be seen to be doing something and be in a position to justify the apparent inaction in Hull. Accordingly, in July 1982 the officers submitted a report to the politicians in response to these pressures. Not unsurprisingly this was somewhat defensive with the officers making a two pronged counter attack cautioning against a hasty decision to demolish and at the same time seeking to assure the councillors and through them the public that appropriate action was being taken, particularly, action to minimise inconvenience to the tenants. The report stated

the most significant point to make at this stage is that a decision in principle to demolish is of little value since it could not be put into practice for some time. Even then it is likely that demolition would have to be phased over some years. In these circumstances and especially since detailed reports are still required there is no justification for considering this option at present. (Hull CC, CR, 1982)

The root cause of the anxiety were opinions expressed by Nottingham which suggested that there could well be serious structural defects in the construction of the deck access flats i.e. a risk of collapse. Naturally in such circumstances neither the professional officers nor the councillors wished to be seen to be doing nothing after having had notice of a possibility of this kind so in consequence Hull's own investigations were accorded greater priority and resources. On the basis of the Nottingham estimates very substantial capital and revenue costs could be anticipated which would have to be counted against the City's HIP allocations and could only be incurred at the expense of other parts of the housing programme. To give an absolute rehousing priority to the YDG deck access tenants would mean that virtually all

other tenants on the waiting list (even those in the highest priority) would have to wait for many years to be rehoused. As a result the Committee accepted the officers recommendations and it was agreed "that no decision be taken concerning the future of the YDG maisonettes at present" (Hull CC, CM, July 1982). By the autumn of 1982 progress was being made on vacating the first YDG block to enable a full structural survey to be undertaken. At the same time the first of a series of information bulletins was issued to the members of the Housing Committee, Ward Councillors and Tenants' Associations to keep them fully aware of what was happening and what was programmed to take place. Further information bulletins were issued in October and November 1982, with a wider circulation including the other YDG authorities, the tenants' action group based in Leeds, the three Hull MP's and the Shadow Labour Spokesman on the Environment (Hull CC, CF, 1982).

In December 1982, an Interim Report prepared jointly by officers and consultants was submitted to the Housing Committee. The Report advised that "sufficient evidence of structural failure to allow your officers to recommend demolition on structural grounds alone", had not been found. The consulting structural engineers in fact "had given the maisonettes a fairly good bill of health with some specific reservations". The officers' recommended no action should be taken until the completion of the full Report. These recommendations were accepted by the Committee (Hull CC, CF, December 1982). At the end of May 1983 the report "YDG Maisonettes - An Investigation" prepared by consultants with the assistance of Officers was published and

contained a thorough investigation of the problem under four main headings, the Structure, Water Penetration, Heating and Services, and Management. The structural section of the Report advised that "the evidence obtained does not indicate any gross basic faults which cannot be remedied at a reasonable cost" and went on to suggest that the buildings as a whole were of reasonable structural design and construction (although this was qualified by a number of exceptions). In relation to water penetration the Report concluded that the external envelope of the YDG maisonettes could not be made watertight and concluded that the only long term solution would be to provide a new outer skin to the building". Associated works which were recommended included a complete overhaul of the internal services with better waterproofing of kitchens, bathrooms and WC floors. The technical judgement regarding the necessity for these measures was that they "clearly show the extent of the failure of the YDG maisonettes". As to their own solutions the experts expressed caution. The difficulties of designing measures to prevent water penetration led them to conclude "that no clear cut guarantees of success can be made". The challenge with heating and condensation was to find a system that would heat up the main fabric of the building and maintain its temperature independent of tenant control and at the same time provide tenant controlled a space heating at a reasonable cost. A reasonable cost for these purposes was assumed to be an average annual running cost of £400 per annum (1983 prices). The solution proposed was a water based radiator system served by a central gas boiler. The water would be distributed through pipes to each flat. This would give tenants control through turning individual

radiators on or off but the radiator feed pipe would be under the landlord's control and would supply a minimum amount of heat to prevent the fabric cooling and causing condensation. In addition further insulation for the dwellings was proposed together with an improved system of ventilation. On this latter point it was suggested that the bathroom should be permanently ventilated by a landlord controlled system.

The Housing Committee at its July meeting also considered a supplementary Report prepared by the officers. In relation to the issue of demolition as against renovation it suggested that four factors should be taken into account: the ability to rehouse; the acceptability of alternative housing to tenants; housing management and social problems; capital and revenue costs (Hull CC, CR, 1983). The cost of demolishing the Bransholme and Thornton blocks and replacing them with new traditional dwellings was placed at just over £30 million. The alternative of rehabilitation was costed out at £17 million. The Supplementary Report suggested that if demolitions were phased over a number of years the Bransholme tenants could be rehoused in the Bransholme area (where there was a surplus of land) in traditional dwellings. This it was assumed would be likely to eliminate many of the social problems being experienced in the maisonettes. As an alternative the tenants could be rehoused in other areas of the City with a good supply of dwellings (in the east and north of the City) but not in the high demand areas of central and west Hull.

With regard to the implications of renovation at Bransholme the Supplementary Report noted that "tenant satisfaction is very low due not only to the known physical problems but also arising from the vicious circle of low demand, high costs and management problems". The Report expressed doubt as to whether even this situation could be significantly improved because "unfavourable comparisons with surrounding traditional dwellings would continue to be made" and having regard to limited financial resources renovation of the Bransholme maisonettes was seen as "a fairly high risk low return option compared to other possible types of HIP expenditure". In contrast the Thornton blocks in the high demand central/west Hull area was seen to present a completely different picture. The Supplementary Report assumes that the tenants would inevitably demand rehousing within central and west Hull concluding that this would be impossible to achieve because the deck access tenants would be competing for limited housing stock with the families displaced as a result of the slum clearance programme in the same area of the City. As a result it was suggested that

demolition of these maisonettes would therefore require the Council to either suspend indefinitely the clearance programme or enforce a hard line policy to rehouse families from the maisonettes out of the area. Neither option appears to be feasible (Hull CC, CR, 1983).

These two reports posed considerable practical and political problem for the Housing Committee as a result and not unsurprisingly no decision was taken at that meeting. What is noteworthy is that it took a full year (July 1984) before the matter was again reconsidered by the Committee. The reason for this inaction on the part of the politicians (or rather lack of formal action) can be attributed to a

number of factors. First of all the conclusions of the structural engineers that there were no immediate dangers in the deck access blocks had given the councillors more time to make their decision. The pressure for an instant decision was off and so they felt able to stand back for a while. The main problem for the politicians was how to resolve the issue of the lack of resources against their political priorities. The allocation of resources to deal with the aftermath of the YDG would seriously disrupt existing housing programme which was already starved of resources as a consequence of central government restraints on the HIP. When they had resolved those issues they then had to decide between the options of renovation and demolition and take into account all the political and social consequences of that choice. Although the officers report had concluded that the demand in Thornton was strong, considerable tenant dissatisfaction had been expressed by the Thornton residents in the form of petitions and individual and collective complaints. Ward councillors suggested that the tenants of the Thornton and Bransholme blocks should be treated the same. They suggested that if the Bransholme tenants were to be rehoused in traditional dwellings that opportunity should not be denied to the Thornton residents. However, in the central/western area this would be almost impossible to achieve because of a shortage of sites let alone of money. The Hull CC politicians as a way out of the resources dilemma turned their minds to the possibility of taking joint action with the other former YDG authorities to try to persuade the government to come up with additional resources.

The decision of the July 1983 Housing Committee was as follows:-

(a) That the reports be received and noted; (b) that further consultation meetings be held with the ward Councillors and tenants associations; (c) that a meeting of the local authorities participating in the Yorkshire Development Group and the appropriate tenants associations be called as soon as possible, and (d) that further consideration be given to the reports after the above meetings and following the forthcoming visit by officers from the Department of the Environment. (Hull CC, CM, July 1983)

During the eighteen months or so preceding this decision there had been continuing contact between Hull CC and the other authorities and the regional and local tenants associations. The Hull tenants and other interested parties included the MP's were kept informed by the regular information bulletins. There were joint meetings with Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield and the regional tenants associations in Sheffield in December 1982 and in Hull in December 1983. In Hull a number of meetings had taken place between Councillors, officials and tenant groups. There were also a number of exchanges between Hull, Leeds and Sheffield regarding a possible joint approach to the DoE. In September, 1983 a meeting was held between representatives of the DoE Leeds and the officers of Hull CC. The discussion included the YDG problem in the context of the general issue of faults in non-traditional dwellings. A total of just under 15,000 houses and flats of non-traditional construction had been identified in Hull i.e. approaching a third of the total stock of public sector housing. The construction types included concrete construction, steel framed and timber as well as the YDG blocks and some 5,000 Wimpey No Fines system houses, together with around about a 1,000 post war pre-fabs. The defects found ranged from the extremely serious (such as in the BISF steel framed buildings), the serious, such as the YDG deck access

dwellings to the more modest problems of non-traditional low rise. However, in total this constituted a massive resource problem. The estimate of Hull CC's officials was that the cost to the City would be around £90m. (1983 prices)

Leeds City Council wrote to the Minister Patrick Jenkin on behalf of the YDG to take up these issues with him and in March 1984 received a reply from his private secretary. The letter adopted the same approach as that taken previously by the then Junior Minister Sir George Young some time before, in stating:

the Secretary of State is aware of the problems that have arisen in estates built by the Yorkshire Development Group at Sheffield, Leeds, Hull and Nottingham. He understands that your Council has begun a programme of demolition on these estates and that demolition of YDG dwellings in Nottingham is scheduled to start in the near future. He realises there will be considerable costs incurred through these developments. However the responsibility for these estates lies with the authorities that set up the Yorkshire Development Group. The system was developed on the initiative of the group and the participating authorities which must accept full responsibility for the dwellings which they themselves selected and constructed (Hull CC, CF, 1984).

The letter continued by noting that the Minister had just given Hull, Leeds and Sheffield additional allocations ranging between £0.33 m and £1.125m "to compensate for disruptions that would otherwise be caused to their housing programmes by the change from the 1 April 1984 in the prescribed proportion of most housing capital receipts on account of which authorities can increase their HIP allocations". Apart from this he was emphatic that "there is no prospect of any further allocations for next year". The letter concluded by saying that no useful purpose would be served by seeing a delegation from the YDG especially as Sir George Young had received a deputation from Leeds

only 18 months previously on the same topic (Hull CC, CF, 1984). Thus, the only comfort that the Minister was able to give was a slight relaxation in the severe restrictions he had just imposed on housing authorities preventing them spending their own capital received from the sale of Council houses. If Hull, for example, had been permitted to use its accumulated capital receipts it would have been able to accommodate the YDG deck access expenditure without serious disruption to the rest of its housing programme. This reply from the Minister marks the end of the period of involvement between the authorities and the tenants associations. By 1984 this cycle of problem identification and the enthusiasm to find solutions had run its course and contacts between the authorities and the regional tenants associations ceased.

Hull finally came to its decisions on the future of the YDG blocks in July 1984 at a meeting of the Housing Committee. Yet another comprehensive report dealing with every aspect of the problem of the YDG deck access dwellings was submitted. The report and the subsequent debate was dominated by the question of resources (Hull CC, CR, 1984). For the year 1984/85 Hull's HIP allocation was £14.5 million with an indication from the Department of the Environment that for the two subsequent years ie 1985/86 and 1986/87 an allocation of only 80% and 70% (of the £14.5 million) was likely to be made available. Thus, against a background of sharply declining resource allocation Hull CC was faced once more with shrinking resources being chased by ever greater demands. Of these demands the Housing Clearance Programme was generally agreed as a first priority which

would have the first call on resources. These resources would be spent on rehousing in west Hull the slum clearance occupiers. However, in making this the priority it was acknowledge that the inevitable implication was that underspending on renovation and improvement would lead to a backlog of disrepair in other areas of the City which would have to be tackled in future years. The officers suggested that by 1988/89 the greater part of the existing slum clearance programme would have been completed and thereafter resources could be freed to tackle the YDG dwellings but even so it was still admitted that adopting these two priorities would still prevent other known housing needs in the City being met. The officers recommendation was that most of the Bransholme maisonettes should be demolished with only two of them being considered suitable for reprieve on the grounds that these were better related to the local facilities and could therefore provide acceptable living accommodation for certain categories of tenant. Demolition would take place on a phased programme. In the meantime only minimal works would be undertaken to keep the blocks in a reasonable condition. With regard to the Thornton dwellings retention was recommended on the basis that tenant satisfaction was higher because of the attractive central location at a point of high demand. This officer conclusion was, however, undoubtedly influenced by a wider appreciation of the political realities of the situation. Practically there was no way in which the Thornton tenants could be rehoused in locations close to the City Centre at the same time the officers were aware that it would be politically unacceptable to forcibly decant tenants to the outer

periphery where housing was available. In consequence retention was seen as the only solution which the politicians would be prepared to sanction. The principal difficulty posed by retention was that remedial action had to be taken straight away. It could not be deferred. As a result a three year programme of structural works was proposed to commence immediately. The renovation of Thornton and the two blocks at Bransholme over a ten year programme would cost (at 1984 prices) an estimated as £16.3 m. The bulk of this expenditure was included in the last five years of the ten year programme. This recommended strategy was approved by the Housing Committee and the programme of demolition and renovation was subsequently implemented (Hull CC, CM, July 1984). This decision marks the end of a sequence of events which began more than twenty two years previously and although it is a story of a series of failures these are not unique to Hull because these are experiences it shares with many of the great cities and towns of industrial England.

Observations on the Case Study

This case study spans a period of over 20 years, at the inception of the YDG the technocrats were the dominant force, when it ended the politicians were much more involved. However, in many ways both the politicians and the professionals were prisoners of their time taken along on a national tide of false expectations (29). On the evidence of this Case it was the officers who were primarily instrumental in conceiving and implementing the YDG. However, this was the technocrats response to the politicians who wished to achieve large

volumes of municipal housing in the shortest possible time. The ensuing disaster is an indictment of both professional failure and political incompetence. The City Architect of Sheffield was an enthusiast for the virtues of tall buildings and was the inspiration behind the Park Hill and Hyde Park estates in Sheffield. The politicians in Sheffield were taken on a tour of high rise schemes in western Europe and "the deputation was greatly influenced . . . by the City Architect Lewis Wormersley and they ended by approving his policy of comprehensive re-development" (30).

Of the two other Architects Sheddon of Leeds and Jenkins of Hull both moved on to new employers after the YDG had been set up, Sheddon went to Birmingham where he switched the policy from traditional build and local builders to industrialised forms of building undertaken by national firms; Jenkins move from Hull to Nottingham coincided with Nottingham joining the YDG. Thus, the role of these professional advocates of industrialised and high rise dwellings is clearly established. The influence of Le Corbusier, of "the streets in the sky", runs strongly through the early development of the YDG. The three City Architects appointed as the Development Architect for the YDG a young professional who had been employed by the LCC (an authority committed to high rise) and who was convinced of the benefits of industrialised building techniques i.e. a reflection of their own professional sympathies. This was neatly underlined by the presentation made by the new Development Architect within a few months of this appointment in which high rise development featured strongly including the seminal Unite. A further notable imitative strand was

the attention paid by the three architects to CLASP not only to the design principles but also to the legal basis for the CLASP consortium. The success of CLASP and its use of industrialised building techniques to construct school buildings was clearly a significant influence on them. The legal basis of the CLASP consortium also seems to have been influential in the structure adopted for the YDG. Soon after the YDG was formed it was claimed that "our organisation is inspired by CLASP"(Hull CC, CRO, 1962). There is no record at this time whether anyone raised the question of whether there was a qualitative difference between schools and houses. A similar lack of attention was paid to this issue when the YDG prototypes had been constructed - no one apparently asked the question of what happens when people live in them. In the initial phases of the YDG the influence of the building and construction industry also comes through very strongly with two trade associations, the Timber Development Association and the Cement and Concrete Association being closely involved in the deliberations of the three Architect and the influence of European industrialised systems was also apparent.

At the time the YDG was created the Minister of Housing and Local Government was Sir Keith Joseph who represented one of the Leeds constituencies. The early minutes of the YDG record the Chairman of Leeds Housing Committee Councillor Cohen as saying that Sir Keith "supported the venture wholeheartedly" (Hull CC, CRO, 1962). Sir Keith was a leading advocate of the industrialisation campaign and that the MHLG became involved in a vast number of consultations with the building industry and with local authorities (43). It is not

unreasonable to assume that Sir Keith was influenced not only by general political sympathies with the private sector but quite specific sympathies because of his family connection with Bovis the building and construction company. An example of not merely influence but actual design input by the MHLG is the 5 M houses designed by the MHLG and adopted by the YDG. Hull took 100 of these houses and despite the provenance of their design when these houses failed (as with virtually all the system build to a greater or lesser degree) the successor Ministry the DoE attempted to wash its hands of the matter and leave the local authority to it. This attitude by central government politicians comes strongly through in the comments of Sir George Young and Patrick Jenkin. Despite their close involvement at the time the central policy makers have distanced themselves leaving local authorities to sort out the debacle of high rise and although culpable the local authorities are very far from being the principal villains of the piece. The politicians of the three local authorities Leeds, Sheffield and Hull were clearly prisoners of their time incapable of challenging the new wisdom and of breaking out of the three sided ring of central government, the building industry and the professionals. The constitution of the YDG is of itself incontrovertible evidence of professional dominance with the politicians being involved only in set piece formal meeting at first each quarter and later only twice a year. The degree of discretion which the officials had secured for themselves was considerable and the political input appears to have been minimal. The politicians were it would seem interested only in delivering new homes and clearing the slums with few questions apparently having been asked of

the professionals and with even fewer questioning the wisdom of the concept. It is doubtful whether the politicians appreciated the strong element of architectural ideology which was both elitist and determinist behind these "streets in the air". A number of local authorities were in the vanguard of this movement including the LCC and Sheffield and these influences are clearly demonstrated in the YDG with Sheffield and its high rise advocate Womersley, the LCC designs which were modified and adopted in Sheffield and Leeds and the importation of the concepts of the LCC through the appointment of an ex LCC Architect as the YDG Development Architect.

Through to the end of the construction programme the politicians had little effective control. Having made the initial two decisions to form the YDG and then to adopt its designs, agreeing expenditure programmes and receiving progress reports the political involvement in the YDG was in reality negligible. Three failures are demonstrated, the first is that of the professionals who must take a large part of the blame for the failure of system build. Whatever the pressures were exerted on them by politicians to deliver (and almost certainly pressures were exerted councillors in the big urban areas always having a competitive eye on the activities of other authorities) and whatever the pressures from the MHLG the professionals can be seen to have sold the pass to the builders. The construction industry must therefore take a significant share of the blame and in many ways it comes out of this episode the least affected by these failures having been able to walk away from them in many cases leaving the local authorities still struggling with this legacy. The third

failure is that of the politicians who manifestly failed to exercise real control, to ask the right questions and to exercise an independent judgement. At the time these design judgements would have been seen by the politicians as professional decisions. If challenged on this point the politicians reply would no doubt have been "that is what we employ professional officers for to take technical decisions". Even accepting such a response what the politicians apparently did not do was either to question the philosophy of these "streets in the air" or to consider the social consequences of high rise; least of all, it seems, did they consider what the prospective tenants wanted. This contrasts vividly with the atmosphere twenty years later when the views of tenants and the role of the politicians in making decision were much more prominent. Although there was an officer/technical awareness of the physical and social problems which were emerging with the deck access dwellings one of the main triggers for action was the tenants campaigns. In the case of the YDG the tenants in the four cities joined together in common cause using three main channels to advance their case: representations to the bureaucrats, lobbying the politicians and using the media to gain maximum publicity. The tenants therefore exercised a significant influence in mobilising opinion and in putting pressure on the politicians for action to remedy the living conditions in the deck access blocks.

In Hull pressure for action resulted not only from the tenants but also from the decisions taken first by Leeds then by Nottingham and Sheffield. Hull appeared to be dragging its feet and indeed, the response of the professionals in Hull was on the face of it rather

slow compared to the other cities. However, in a technical sense the problems were less pressing because as the then City Architect of Hull Mr E Heath maintained the better condition of the Hull YDG blocks compared to the other three cities was the result of higher standards of supervision during the period of construction which was borne out by the independent consultants report in 1983. The politicians in Hull certainly took their time (over a year) to grapple with the delicate issues of resources, housing priorities and the decision whether to demolish or renovate. During this period the officers were attempting to suggest compromise positions and to find ways of assisting the politicians out of the dilemma of balancing the housing needs of the city as a whole with the needs of the YDG occupiers. The eventual decision to demolish some of the blocks and retain others is interesting for two reasons. The first is the attention given to the preferences of the tenants by the politicians and the attention given by the officers to the social consequences of policy.

The relative prominence of the politicians in this final phase is in sharp contrast to the situation twenty years before. The result was that where political objectives and values were clearly expressed the officers had to follow i.e. in evaluating the options with an emphasis on tenant preferred locations. Perhaps the clearest evidence of political judgement is in the selective demolition decision. The technical assessments demonstrated that there were no significant physical differences between any of the blocks. Refurbishment was the cheaper option but despite this and despite the tightness of resources demolition of about half the blocks was chosen for a mixture of social

reasons, tenants preferences and the politicians assessments of the acceptable limits of action. Having delivered a failure for whatever reason the officers (although none of them were involved personally) were the discredited representatives of professionalism. This put them at a psychological disadvantage with the politicians. The politicians could believe in the superiority of their own judgement in the light of professional failure. Nevertheless in making their decisions the politicians were still reliant on the officers skills to assess the options before them i.e. that refurbishment was feasible, that it could be accomplished within the resources likely to be available and that it would meet the minimum expectations of tenants. Therefore, the change in the balance between the two groups was not total, only partial, each side continuing to participate. The officers reports anticipate the political mood and the current social values of the Council and the community whilst maintaining professional credibility.

On the evidence of this Case it would be difficult to dispute that officers make policy and take policy decisions, equally, it would be difficult to maintain that politicians are powerless eunuchs dominated by their officials. Without doubt the politicians and the officials shared power throughout although in the end it is the professionals who emerge as the key figures in creating and implementing policy and the politicians as those who were left to deal with the legacy particularly of their own failure to control the technocrats. Most of those politicians and officers who embarked on the YDG venture more than a quarter of a century ago have long departed the scene leaving

their successors a sorry legacy. Neither councillors, officers, the professions, central government nor the building industry emerge with much credit. The real victims, however, are the tenants who had and still have to live with the reality of these visions of the future and the local communities who will continue to carry the burden of debt for the next forty years or so.

PART III

CHAPTER SIX

THE PRIMACY AND LIMITS OF POLITICAL CONTROL

(1) INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter we return to the issue of how to define the roles of elected politicians and appointed officials in English local government, what are the limits of political control over the bureaucracy and how effective are politicians in achieving the democratic primacy assumed for them. In Part I councillor officer relations were examined in the context of the legal-constitutional and the resource frameworks of local authorities and a number of models of the relationship were considered. In the event each one of the models was shown to have weaknesses and none were found to be more compelling than the rest although each contributed to the overall picture of councillor officer relations. However, the case studies provide an opportunity to amplify the Part I discussion and to re-evaluate the models in the light of actual outcomes. Using the case studies in this way gives rise to the question of the extent to which it is possible to generalise from the specific Hull experience in order to draw wider conclusions about local government relationships. Accordingly, it is that question which is first addressed followed by an examination of how the models fared when measured against the cases and we conclude with a section on councillor officer relations generally.

(2) GENERALISING FROM THE HULL CASE STUDIES

In Chapter One it was suggested that the case studies were addressing topics likely to be universal to all large urban authorities and that confining the cases to a single authority would not prevent their use to demonstrate general principles because the basis for generalising from the cases was not so much their typicality as the logicity of the analysis of general principles in a defined context (1). Furthermore it was thought that there was merit in advancing general propositions even if these were based on limited data (2). However, we must start with the particular Hull outcomes and assess the policy determinants of that authority before proceeding to generalisations on the basis of the cases. As noted in the Introduction to Chapter Five Hull has specific and local characteristics and like all local authorities it operates within its own unique set of references. Nevertheless, within this diversity there are many uniformities and groups of local authorities share many similarities. Those most likely to be similar to Hull are authorities which have: a dense urban character with a population in excess of 150,000; a distinct and separate political and geographic identity; a declining nineteenth century industrial base with associated problems of urban and economic renewal; a history of Labour Party control; a large professional staff administering a substantial budget and the status of a centre for a wider surrounding population (but not as a regional "capital", eg. a Leeds or a Manchester). Hull should

have much in common therefore with local authorities having similar characteristics to these so that the cases are likely to furnish evidence of the urban policy process and working relationships in authorities of this kind. Given these similarities it is possible to advance more generalised propositions about authorities falling within this group on the evidence of only one of them.

So far as Hull is concerned the cases strongly suggest that the power sharing model is to be preferred because of the evidence that councillors and officers participate in and influence throughout all stages in the policy process. However, although both of them had a role to play the extent of their participation varied quite markedly from case to case. The most important cause of these variations was the strength with which the politicians expressed their goals and identified the means to achieve them. At one extreme was the bomb case where the politicians not only had clear aims but also had decided on the means to achieve these aims without prior officer advice. At the other extreme was the planning case where the politicians, initially, merely knew what they did not want (ie out of town stores) and the housing case where they did know what they wanted (ie more houses). However, in neither of these instances did the politicians have a full appreciation of the technical context of their aims or possess the know-how to achieve these objectives. By way of contrast the DLO case started with a very clear lead from politicians but in the event their political goals were

incapable of being achieved for legal and practical reasons. This initial phase of involvement by the councillors was followed by the re-assumption of officer control as the politicians gradually lost interest having realised that they could not succeed. In the housing and roads cases the officers enjoyed prolonged periods of very limited political supervision over their activities with the politicians only re-emerging in an assertive position when these issues were brought back onto the political agenda as the result of public and media pressures. When political and professional interests competed for ascendancy outcomes were the result of differences in the degree to which the two sides wanted and were able to influence and control events.

The policy process in Hull is a shared territory of mutual inter-dependence; the politicians need the bureaucrats both in the formulation as well as in the execution of policy and the bureaucrats need the legitimacy, the financial resources and the formal-legal decisions which are in the hands of the politicians. With both councillors and officers being organised around sets of political and professional values at the interfaces between them each group had the capacity to challenge or contest the position of the other and to modify or deflect the other group's preferences. The organisation of that interface is a crucial factor in the policy process and the absence of effective structures to reconcile these points of potential conflict is exacerbated by functional differentiation. The result is

departmental, political and professional competition in which fragmentation on the officer side is sometimes balanced by a lack of political cohesiveness amongst the politicians. This is well illustrated by the planning case where there were three factions of the ruling Labour Group, one strongly advocating development, the policy group in the centre which reflected the position of Leader of the Council and the housing lobby on the other side. The opportunity these differences provided the officers coincided with splits on their side which cancelled out any potential advantages to them but how effective they could have been had they had an agreed position is open to question. It was the absence of corporate mechanisms which had inhibited the formation of an agreement amongst the officers and it would have been the absence of those structures which would have prevented the advocacy of a common position even if they had been able to reach an agreed view. This was precisely as intended by the original author of these arrangements, (the former leader of the Council Sir Leo Schultz), his "divide and rule" approach which was the motivation for dismantling the corporate structure in the early seventies can be seen to have achieved its purpose by emasculating the officer group and creating an organisational bias in favour of the politicians.

Hull is under strong political direction with a single dominant party in control which possesses an overwhelming numerical majority over the two minority parties and this makes the Labour party group the decisive decision making forum. The

administration is organised around a series of individual, function specific, professionally dominated, departments. There is no corporate structure or other formal mechanisms for negotiating and reconciling the competing political and professional demands on the system. The inconsistencies in the operating patterns of the authority can be attributed to these three determinants ie two strong forces politics and professionalism which meet with inadequate and incoherent arrangements for the resolution of their competitive expectations. Accordingly, the three primary factors which determine outcomes in Hull are: first of all partisan politics with a dominant political party group exercising decisive control over the affairs of the authority with a comparatively weak political opposition; secondly the degree of professionalisation of services with professionally qualified officers dominating all the principal departments of the authority and thirdly the lack of any corporate structures for negotiating and reconciling political and professional expectations or for the resolution of conflicts between them.

Whilst these are the specific Hull conclusions as to the mode of operation and relationships the cases do demonstrate more general principles of the urban context and it is to these we now turn.

(3) THE MODELS REAPPRAISED

Chapter Two reviewed a number of concepts of the councillor officer relationship. The first of these was the political dominance model which relying on democratic theory and institutional position accords supremacy to the elected councillor. The second was its mirror counterpart the model of bureaucratic domination which accords with Weber's "exercise of control on the basis of knowledge" (3). The third was the power sharing model which envisages that both councillors and officers have the capacity to influence decisions and outcomes. In this Section we consider how these three conceptualisations and the models of Hampton, Collins, Laffin and Sharpe fared in the light of the Case Studies.

The Political Domination Model

As expected this model had limited applicability and only the bomb case appears to be consistent with this orthodox typology. However, the circumstances of the bomb case were atypical in that it did not involve any of the mainstream functions of the local authority or impinge upon sensitive areas of professional expertise or departmental interest. Although the case could be regarded as exceptional two features remain of relevance. The first is that the politicians did assume a leading role which the officers neither disputed nor challenged; secondly, the councillors undertook activities ordinarily within the exclusive

province of the bureaucracy. The bomb case describes a councillor dominated process in which the officials were restricted to low level tasks; in assuming the executive role and engaging outsiders to assist them in the preparation of material for publication the politicians encroached into what would normally be an officer function. The involvement of the politicians in this case therefore exceeds the usual role assignment of councillors as policy makers because here they became executives.

However, the bomb case is the only example of continuous political predominance the other four cases providing no evidence to support the theory of a permanent political hegemony. The planning case provides only very limited evidence of political domination and although it describes phases of political ascendancy these are balanced by officer dominated aspects with the outcome consisting of a series of adjustments which resulted in each side achieving some but not all of their goals. Similarly, the DLO and roads cases demonstrate a range of positions between councillors and officers. However, in the Housing Case the officers took most of the crucial decisions throughout the first ten years with minimal reference to the politicians but in the closing stages the politicians reasserted control and gave a very clear political lead to the officers regarding solutions. This second phase of the housing case is interesting not only because of the contrast to the officer dominated first phase but also because of the intervention of an

individual politician the new Chairman of the Housing Committee a young politician of the left. Intent on exercising direct control and seeking a high profile role he reversed the relative subservience of the politicians and achieved a significant degree of influence in the final stages of the case. In part his opportunity came about because of the way in which the professionals had been discredited by the failure of system-build housing and, in part, as the result of political changes. Those political changes had resulted in him displacing an older traditional centre right politician. Coinciding with these alterations to the political balance was the departure of the former Housing Director and his replacement by a younger less experienced man. The cumulative effect of all of these changes in office holders was to alter the pre-existing political, professional and personal balance of power between the Chairman and Chief Officer. The assumption of a more prominent role by the politicians in this case appears to be consistent with the view that:

Only by articulating their goals and aspirations can elected members bring a clear sense of political direction to a local authority. If they fail to do so the authority must inevitably be guided by the values and priorities of the officer cadre (4).

During the process of deciding the future of system-build housing the local housing politicians were clearly influenced by decisions being taken or contemplated in other cities, by the national climate of opinion and by the media campaign. The response by the Housing Committee Chairman was an evident desire to appear to be in charge (and for his views to be reported by

the media) and at the same time he sought to take real decisions and to exercise control over the activities of the bureaucracy. The result of this political attention was that the proposals formulated by the bureaucracy were shaped to meet the aspirations of the Chairman with the officers providing policy options compatible with his known or anticipated positions.

It seems that if the politicians or the professionals either by neglect or conscious decision concede the initiative the other side has the opportunity to take the high ground. This happened in the bomb case with the politicians and in the early phases of the housing case with the officers. Therefore the traditional model which suggests fixed roles for councillors and officers appears very difficult to sustain on the evidence of the case studies which also lend little support to the model of permanent all embracing political control. Achieving an ascendant position at any point in time appears to be the product of the relative strengths or weaknesses in the sets of political and professional resources or be attributable to the differential motivations of the key actors. The only certainties which emerge are that both their resources and motivations are susceptible to change and therefore that the permanent ascendancy of either group is unlikely.

The Dictatorship of the Official

The first phase of the housing case provides convincing evidence of the ability of professionals to reach positions of comparative domination because if politicians possess only generalised aims to evaluate the options and make choices the professionals have the opportunity to impose their preferences on the politicians. If the generalised aspirations of politicians coincide with precise professional objectives the bureaucracy are likely to penetrate fully into the areas of policy and decision making assigned in democratic theory to politicians. With an essentially technical issue, as in the roads case, despite the potential social and economic effects of the scheme most of the key decisions were professional ones. What was presented to councillors by the technocrats for formal approval was difficult for them as laymen to scrutinise because of the complexity of the subject matter, the form of presentation and above all because it was fragmented into a series of decisions over a number of years. The size of committee agendas and the number of decisions councillors have to make often leaves insufficient time for the politicians to comprehend the full significance of agenda items. As a result they may fail to identify those matters which should be of concern to them or to their constituents and in consequence the proposals of officials may pass without challenge or critical appraisal. However, the closing phases of the roads and housing cases also demonstrate that over the course of time the professionals can be supplanted by the politicians and the Bomb

and DLO Cases illustrate how, when resolute political positions are taken, officers can be relegated to a secondary position. Thus, whilst there is evidence of periods during which officers appear to dominate it is not strong enough to support the conclusion that the "dictatorship" concept is a proper representation of the relationship.

Power Sharing

Four of the five cases are indicative of power sharing and even the bomb case confirms that councillors do have a residual degree of dependence on officers. The planning case is the most interesting of the five because it shows not only phases during which politicians and officers alternatively occupied the leading position but it also demonstrates that there were concurrent substructures of professional and political dominance. It also illustrates how the relative strengths of the two groups fluctuated and that within them there was not a single cohesive view but sets of conflicting views. The housing and roads cases fall into two distinct periods of first professional and then later political ascendancy. The DLO case describes a determined political initiative matched most of the way by a professional rearguard action. Even in the bomb case the officers had both a minor supporting role and an enabling role in that they defined the permissible legal and financial boundaries of action within which the politicians had to act. Each side was therefore involved and had some degree of influence, if not, throughout

then at points in the process from inception to completion although this "sharing" does not constitute a state of equality between councillors and officers because their roles are not fixed and the extent of the variation in their respective positions is considerable. What emerged in the cases was concurrent group and individual participation across the whole spectrum of activity with degrees of inter-dependence varying between issues, within issues and over time.

Hampton's Models

Hampton identified five characteristics as indicators of the roles adopted by politicians and bureaucrats and suggested these are combined in different ways in each local authority to produce the context within which it operates (5), these were: the range and size of service provision; the extent of professionalism; the extent of party political organisation; the extent of sensitivity to public service provision and the degree of central government interest or influence. Of Hampton's role models, only two are applicable to the large urban authorities model "A", the Pluralist Partnership and model "B", Party Corporatism. Both of these models proceed on the premise that the politicians and the bureaucrats operate from a strong basis of, in the one case, a disciplined party political organisation and in the other, a professionally dominated administration and this prediction is borne out by the evidence of the Hull cases. The distinction Hampton draws between model "A" and model "B" relies principally

on the degree of central interest or influence which is probably a marginal distinction. The targeted interest in Model "A" authorities, (ie the major conurbations), is attributed by Hampton to their political and socio-economic significance in the national context. However, this has been somewhat lost in the 1980's, a decade of general assaults on local government, although the specific act of abolishing the GLC and the Metro-Counties is consistent with Hampton's analysis. If Model "B" were applied to Hull it would classify it as a Labour controlled urban area not within a conurbation with dominant politicians and a paternalistic attitude to the public. Although this is probably valid as far as it goes, Hull also exhibits a degree of central government influence and interest as an Assisted Area (Intermediate Status) and as an Inner City Authority and also because of its spending levels. In addition such factors as partisan politics, professionalisation and sensitivity to public service provision are also present in Hull, all of which indicate Model "A".

Hampton's five characteristics constituting the context of councillor officer relations were all evident in the cases including central government influence in the housing, planning and DLO cases. It is therefore possible to accept these characteristics as valid reference points of the relationship together with the additional characteristics also discussed in Chapter Two, namely, functions, size, status, political control and socio-economic factors. In constructing a model of the

relationship it is evident that one has to take account of the entire environment within which councillors and officers operate.

Collins, Hinings and Walsh

Collins et al suggest three models (6) of the relationship, the first of these is the Representative Model which has two sub-models, the Individual Representative and the Collective. In the Representative Model power is seen as resting in the hands of the councillors not merely as decision takers selecting within options but as decision makers continuously involved in the process. This is in fact the political dominance model discussed above. The Individual Sub-Model assumes a series of fragmented relationships between councillors and officers and suggests that the committee is the arena of actual decision making. This model also suggests that there will be a high degree of differentiation between committees and between departments but with the politicians in the dominant position. To a considerable extent the planning case provides evidence of this with the development faction (which comprised both politicians and officers) and the housing interests (housing politicians only) pursuing separate aims. In between these two sides the planning and policy group (councillors and officers) variously took positions relative to these two contenders. These indications of the Individual Sub-Model type are against a background of a Council which is organised around a dominant party operating in a very partisan setting and whereas one would have expected that the actions of

individual councillors in the ruling group would have been strictly controlled by the party machine in this case there appears to have been an absence of such discipline, at least, until the party group reasserted control at the end of the decision making process. The planning case also provides evidence of individual members and officers working together on an ad hoc basis in order to achieve mutually compatible goals with the coalitions between these various interests forming and changing as the issue developed highlighting the absence of any systematic organisation of these relationships. The sequence of Committee meetings in the autumn of 1981, (notably the Special Policy Committee in October 1981) accord fully with the Individual Sub-Model i.e. the committee is the arena of actual decision making. However, the subsequent reversal of the Policy Committee's decision by the party group imposing a solution subsequently implemented at both the political and bureaucratic levels of the authority is indicative of the Collective Representative Model. The planning case in essence describes the breakdown and the reassertion of discipline by the ruling party a process which was probably due to three factors: the first was conflicting policy aims which led to a political impasse mirrored by similar dissension between the officers. The second was the absence of a corporate structure to identify and resolve those differences. The third was the style of political leadership adopted by the Leader of the Council who being faced with having to lead from a very limited centre and having to accommodate substantial right and left wings within the ruling party group

chose, (probably of necessity), a consensus approach to all critical policy decisions. Thus, conflicting aims, the absence of a corporate structure to resolve them and a leadership style dependent upon consensus were factors both crucial to the development of the issues as well as to their resolution.

The Collective Representative Sub-Model which suggests that decisions are made not at formal committee meetings but at the meetings of the controlling party group would appear consistent with the usual operating methodology in Hull. Although it is a Labour controlled authority which as a type it is suggested is more likely to be corporately orientated than others (7) there is an absence of corporate mechanisms and the focus for decisions is the party group. The motivating cause for this situation had reactive political roots in the two year spell in control of the Conservatives (1969/71). They had brought in the American management consultants McKinsey & Co who recommended a corporate management structure but with the return of Labour in the run up to the 1974 reorganisation incoming administration rejected the McKinsey "reforms". However, this was only in part a tit for tat rejection of the Conservative programme by the leader of the Labour group (Sir Leo Schultz) for he was convinced on his brief experience of the system that it gave the officers too much power and this was a view widely held by his colleagues (Interviews). As a result the Baines approach which so many of the new local authorities adopted in 1973/74 was studiously rejected in Hull and from that moment corporate management in any shape or form

was out. Although Hull has a Chief Executive he is in his own words "an old fashioned town clerk because that is what the members want" (Interviews).

However, it is evident that both councillors and officers in Hull recognise that the Council could not operate if the only available forum for negotiation was during the public committees so that in the absence of formal mechanisms the interface between the politicians and the bureaucracy has to be managed on an ad hoc basis. The resulting arrangements are essentially random in character with the only notable concession to corporatism being the one party Policy Committee which senior officials attend. Otherwise links between them lack formal structure and this inconsistency in the channels of communication helps to explain differences in the methods and quality of decision taking. The most important gap is the absence of a recognisable officer group to co-ordinate the officers negotiating positions with the politicians. The Hull politicians in contrast, are organised through the party group and disciplined by the party whips and therefore the fragmentation of the officers is of benefit to them in that it facilitates the imposition of their unified will on a divided bureaucracy.

The Technocratic Model assumes that with the possession of technical knowledge together with control over the mechanisms of the bureaucracy officer domination over the amateur politician will ensue. All the cases involved technically complex situations requiring a high degree of expert knowledge and interpretive skills. On the face of it therefore the case study authority's modus operandi should accord with the Technocratic Model, however, the cases do not support such a conclusion. In the bomb case, for example, on a technically complex issue the politicians went outside the officer group and sought external advice and although it could be said that the assessment of nuclear risks was not within the normal professional scope of the bureaucracy there were officers with professional qualifications who could have either evaluated the data which was available or procured the necessary advice. However, all of them were by-passed and the politicians chose to go outside and to control the interpretive function themselves. It is notable that there is no evidence that the officers attempted to dispute the politicians right to take these interpretive and advisory functions outside the confines of the authority. The highly political nature of the nuclear issue and its marginality to the departmental interests of the professionals, (whose primary aim is to maintain a defined area of professional responsibility), resulted in an almost total lack of interest on the part of the officer group. In contrast the Technocratic Model is much in evidence in the roads and housing cases which were each officer dominated until the later stages. In the roads case the

decisions of the highway engineers and planners initially remained unchallenged until the politicians were activated by constituent and media pressure and the housing case only passed from Technocratic domination to political leadership as the extent of the professional failures emerged against a background of constituency pressure, interest and pressure group action and media coverage. Although the planning and the DLO cases have a strong suggestion of technocratic influence the existence of a concurrent but countervailing political force is to be observed throughout the progress of these two cases from inception to conclusion demonstrating not equality of influence but a fluctuating balance between the preponderance of political and technocratic values.

The Corporate Model, predicated a marriage between the Collective Representative and Technocratic models and assumes that groups of members and officers exercise power jointly as an elite. As noted above Hull does not have a corporate structure and whilst features of joint elite decision making are to be observed from time to time generally the absence of corporate mechanisms leads one to conclude that this was not the dominant mode of operation in Hull.

On the basis of the cases it would appear that Hull functioned in a manner which was at times consistent with the Representative Models and at other times with the Technocratic Model, in consequence the Collins models cannot be fully reconciled with

the cases failing to satisfy in a number of respects. First, insufficient allowance is made for the way in which the relationship between politicians and officials changes not only from service to service and issue to issue but also within services and issues. Secondly, the power either group possesses at any given point in time relative to the other cannot be assumed to be a consistent quality, it expands or shrinks and changes shape according to an infinite number of variables. Thirdly, one cannot assume that councillors and officers constitute cohesive groups with a common identity of interest which causes them to act as one relative to the other.

Laffin's Role Types

Laffin's three role types for chief officers were developed from his study of eight northern metropolitan district councils (8) which were all pre-reorganisation county boroughs so to that extent there is a direct parallel with Hull. The first of the role types Instrumental Policy corresponds generally to the political domination and the Collins Representative models in that the politicians are said to formulate clear policies instructing the officers to implement them delegating only the necessary administrative and technical authority to enable the officers to carry out specified actions. The second of Laffin's role types is where the politicians are said to hold general and vague policy objectives which they are unable to express in more specific terms because of their ignorance of the constraints and

of the possibilities. Thus, in this mode the politicians expect the officers to work out policies guided by the politicians general policy preferences. The development of the shopping policy in the planning case is an excellent example of this with the politicians starting out with a clear set of preferences, (ie to oppose all out of centre shopping) but being persuaded by their officers to recognise the necessity of adopting a new policy position. Once the officer group had secured a political consensus to a change in policy they had a high degree of discretion in its subsequent development although they exercised this with an eye to the politicians' known sympathies and general aspirations ensuring that the package of proposals which emerged provided an element of political face saving. Similarly the DLO case shows a very similar pattern of events with the central technobureaucracy acknowledging the political will and making concessions to the politicians but at the same time securing their essential aims of the observance of legal requirements.

The third of Laffin's role types is the equivalent of the "dictatorship of the official" in that it postulates that the politicians have few or no policy objectives, that they expect the bureaucracy to formulate policies and to have a considerable discretion in implementing them. However, none of the five cases can be said to demonstrate this role formulation not even the initial phases of the housing and roads studies. The technocratic dominance in the first phases of the housing case accords much more closely with the second role type in that the

politicians did have a policy objective of providing as many new homes as quickly and as cheaply as possible and were prepared to surrender considerable discretionary powers to their officers in order to achieve that political objective. The roads case was similar in that the politicians wanted the benefits the new road would bring and the officers were left, in the main, unsupervised to achieve that objective. However, in each case when the issue re-emerged on to the agenda the politicians re-assumed detailed control and took action which changed the course of events.

Laffin proceeds on the premise that the expression of political objectives sets the agenda for the officers and that the strength of that expression determines the limits of influence the bureaucracy enjoys and in general the five cases sustain Laffin's central proposition. However, as with the Collin's models the case studies do not readily fall four square into Laffin's role formulations because although the overall impression is that Hull operates along the lines of Laffin's second role type, (ie. the politicians express preferences and the officers devise the means of achieving them) certain phases of the cases are indicative of the first role type with very strong political leadership being apparent and even it could be argued of the third role type with periods of extensive technocratic domination as in the first years of the housing case. Accordingly, we cannot conclude that Hull falls unequivocally within any of these Laffin role types. The positive conclusion we can draw, however, is that the relative positions of the two groups are greatly influenced by the acts or omissions of one of them ie. the politicians.

Sharpe and the Operating Ideology

The concept of a continuing process of mutual adjustment between the politicians and the bureaucrats forms the basis of Sharpe's "operating ideology", each group is said to be aware of the context in which the other operates and each side can therefore make calculations which strike a balance between what they want and what they know each other is willing to accept. He suggests that the officer operates in a world of anticipating the reactions of politicians and that their advice is in effect preconditioned by this process (9). Sharpe's conclusion is that "power shifts over time" between the electorate, the politicians and the bureaucracy ultimately he believes that both politicians and bureaucrats are prisoners of the "operating ideology" which binds them together, thus, leading to his conclusion that "no one is necessarily controlling anyone else". Sharpe's "operating ideology" has much to commend it for by making no assumptions of constant roles the problems of the static models are avoided. At the same time this approach has the flexibility to admit differences at different points in the policy process in the relative positions of councillors and officers as well as differences between service areas whilst also allowing for changes which are a function of time or of external events. Sharpe's inclusion of the electorate as a primary context for the "operating ideology" in which he proposed that the electors are the ultimate arbiters brings a third potent force into the relationship. The suggestion that more radical changes in policy flow from the electorate (i.e. non-incremental decisions) appears

to be justified, for example, by events in Bradford Metropolitan District Council during 1988. In Bradford radical change followed the change in political control as the result of a by-election which provided a majority in the Council Chamber for the Conservatives only by use of the mayor's casting vote enabling a strong ideological leader (Eric Pickles) to implement a fundamental programme of restructuring the authority and of redefining its policies. However, given the concept of "power shifting" and internal accommodations between the two power bases the scope of Sharpe's process of adjustment needs to be widened to take account of external influences which can be political, (eg central and local parties), pressure groups, (eg tenants associations), central government and its agencies, professional bodies, trade unions, local industry and commerce, land owners or quangos (eg The National Rivers Authority). Either before or concurrently with the process of adjustment between councillors and officers each group will have modified or be modifying their positions viz a viz these external influences and it is also probable that they will have anticipated the effect of external influences on the other group in preparing their own positions.

The "operating ideology" therefore provides a broad framework for describing the relationship of councillors and officers and for analysing a given set of circumstances in a particular local authority at a specific point in time. Using the "operating ideology" to assess the five cases we find in the planning case there is evidence of councillors and officers reaching working

accommodations through a series of mutual adjustments in which each side obtained the satisfaction of some but not all of their group goals. The DLO case similarly demonstrates this process of adjustment to first political and then professional values but in the roads and housing cases the order of the precedence of values was reversed. Councillors and officers appear to be constantly aware of the others potentially divergent interests and to make accommodations to bring the general direction of policies back within the margins of mutual acceptability, for example, in the closing stages of the housing case the phase of political domination was balanced by the reliance of the politicians on the professionals for the technical solutions. In providing these solutions the officers chose not to reopen the issue on the level of professional versus political preferences but offered a choice of options they anticipated would be acceptable to the politicians whilst still retaining professional control over implementation. In this context the bomb case is particularly interesting because the mode of operation was completely atypical the officers not only surrendered all participation in the formulation of the policy but also conceded control of the administrative processes as well. However, although the officials appear to have ceded ground almost completely the situation is capable of a number of interpretations. One is that the politicians recognising the "political" nature of the task decided not to embarrass their officers by involving them in a politically controversial activity and the officers tacitly accepted this retreating to a position of minimum involvement.

An alternative interpretation of events is that the politicians decided they could not trust their officers with this work and decided not only to exclude them but also to rely on external sources of assistance. On this hypothesis the officers were content not to be involved because they neither wanted to participate in a party political issue nor did they perceive any threat to their professional and departmental interests by not participating. In either case the positions taken by each side were clearly motivated by an appreciation of the legitimate interests of the other group. Sharpe therefore provides a convincing basis for the analysis of relationships and the policy process. Each local authority has its own locally determined "operating ideology" and particular cases can only be understood in relation to the specific local context within which they are developed. However, given that, there is a need to describe in more detail the factors which are likely to constitute the "operating ideology" and this matter is further considered below.

Conclusions on the Models

The outcomes of the cases contrast with the static nature of the models by demonstrating that although the relationship between councillors and officers may have ultimate boundaries between wide margins it fluctuates and that these changes in positions are not easy to predict. In fact a lack of predictability is to be expected because one of the major inputs is political with the result that highly subjective, short term and opportunist aims

meet head-on with the longer term rationality of professional values. The resolution of the resulting conflicts is a political process which by definition will be unpredictable and each given situation will be dependent on those variables which exist in the context of the particular case. The resolution of such situations cannot necessarily be assumed to be replicated over time even if the surrounding circumstances are identical so that static models which propose an inflexible framework are bound to fail. It is not organisational factors but it is the balance of political and professional resources at any given point in the policy process coupled with the differential desires of these groups to shape outcomes which determines the resolution of particular issues. The strength of the bureaucrats position or that of the politician is relative to the degree of dependence they have on the other group, however, their ability to impose their preferences is secondary to their will to do so.

Collins and Laffin describe sets of circumstances in which the preferences of politicians or officials are likely to prevail and Hampton points to the structural and organisational factors which constitute the operating context. Sharpe places the relationship in the context of the mutual recognition by each side of the legitimate expectations of the other and provides the flexibility for inconsistent accommodations to be reached between these participants. In the ultimate analysis none of the models predicted accurately the outcomes of the cases and in order to make a judgement on those outcomes it is necessary to return to the proposition considered in Chapter One that where there are

differences of preference between actors we should accept that actors whose preferences prevail in conflicts over key political issues are those who exercise power.

In relation to the outcomes of the five cases the judgement must be that it was the politicians and not the bureaucrats who achieved ascendancy at the key points of difference. Where there was a clear choice of positions one advocated by the politicians and the other by the officers it was the politicians who prevailed. In the planning case, for example, there was an officer consensus in favour of selling part of the housing land for a superstore, however, this was rejected by the politicians. The subsequent officer proposal for a superstore on the playing field site failed not because of a formal rejection by the politicians but by the politicians refusing to allow the matter to go forward to the Committees for determination so that the politicians exercised decisive authority by keeping the issue off the formal agenda. In the bomb case the officers retreated leaving the politicians a free hand and in the DLO case although the politicians eventually failed to realise their objectives the officers had to pursue a negotiation with the building and engineering employers on a basis and in a context they themselves would not have chosen. In the roads case when the issue of access to Hessle Road blew up the officers had to bow to political pressure and abandon long held professional positions accepting proposals they had previously declared undesirable. In the final phase of the housing case the officers were obliged to offer solutions which were acceptable to the politicians not

necessarily those which the professionals would themselves have proposed.

Although this appears to point to almost total political domination the overall reality of the relationship is rather different for even though the officers gave ground at points of conflicting interest as a group they still achieved many of their group aims. The planning case was in many ways a resounding success for the officers in terms of the planning policy objectives. In the roads and housing cases the officers succeeded in securing massive expenditure which ensured the continuity of professional employment, the consolidation of professional empires and the satisfaction of officer derived proposals. Although the DLO case was essentially a process of containment the central bureaucracy eventually prevailed over the politicians and the DLO management. So that even if the officers did not win the key conflicts they in fact succeeded in imposing their preferences at many stages in the policy process. When the collective motivation of the politicians lacks cohesion officers have the opportunity to dominate. Politicians do not necessarily have a consistent identity of interest because as the planning case confirms their approach can be fragmented and disparate. Functional differentiation is often a feature of local authorities and sharp rivalries and tensions can exist. The political parties themselves are coalitions encompassing a wide range of political positions which by definition are unlikely to coalesce into a consistent unanimity. With left, right and centre, moderate and extremist, pragmatists and ideologues, in the end

compromise will result, however, this compromise will more often than not be the product of conflict rather than cohesiveness. A factor common to both politicians and bureaucrats will be personal relationships and antagonisms because individuals will always be in competitive situations generating personality conflicts and differences which will be articulated in a variety of ways. Highly competitive individuals when they have the power and opportunity to do so are likely to manipulate or use the organisation in furtherance of their own purposes. The concept of a cohesive consistency which assumes constant roles takes no account of the fact that we are looking at groups of people with all their human inconsistencies and divergent ambitions individually and collectively.

Therefore, we must conclude that the models failed to satisfy individually but collectively they point up features of the relationship which help us to understand the factors which operate to produce particular characteristics in different local authorities. The most satisfactory of the models is Sharpe's "operating ideology" and using this as the basis it is possible to draw from all the models key points which enable us to construct a broad description of the principal points of reference of the councillor officer relationship. This also enables us to reconcile a number of the conflicts between the models and to remedy some of their weaknesses.

These suggested reference points of the relationship are -

1. The sets of resources available to councillors and officers, the extent of the dependence of either group on the other relative to these resources and the degree of skill with which either group exploits these resources.
2. The extent of the concurrency or the conflict in the goals of the politically motivated councillors and the professionally orientated officers and the comparative strength of each group's commitment in any given case to shape particular policies or to determine particular outcomes.
3. The political affiliations of the councillors, the degree of control exercised by their party over them and the size of their party's majority over other political parties on the Council.
4. The number, range and character of functions carried out by the local authority, the extent to which these are organised around professional disciplines and the degree of control and authority achieved by professional groups in particular service areas.

5. The size of the local authority measured by both population and geographical area, it's income and expenditure levels, its socio-economic and physical characteristics, its communications systems and the role of central government in allocating or restricting resources to support or inhibit its policy aims.
6. The strength and competence of local interest and pressure groups, the attention of the local media, the extent of national and local professional attention and the extent to which the authority is seen as an innovative leader.
7. The decision making processes of the authority, (e.g. whether it has a corporate or a non-corporate structure), the locus for decisions (e.g. whether it is in the party groups or in committees and council) and the legal-constitutional restraints on those decision making procedures and the role of officials in that regard.
8. The functional characteristics of particular service areas of the local authority, the political sensitivity of the issues for determination and the nature of the decisions to be taken i.e. whether or not these are matters susceptible to political value judgements or are inaccessible "hard" technical issues.

9. Institutional position and the charismatic factor i.e. the existence of dominant or manipulative personalities within the political and/or bureaucratic hierarchies possessing opportunities to influence and control the policy process.

10. The relationship of the local authority to the administrative areas which adjoin it, the characteristics of those areas and the degree to which these adjoining authorities either compete with it or are dependent on it for services together with the perceived historic civic role of the authority and the extent to which there is a cohesiveness and sense of identity in the community it serves.

These factors will differ between authorities and service areas and the variations in their conjunction will create the basic conditions for the local "operating ideology" which will be unique to that body because although it will share the uniformities of the national conditions of local government with all other similar local authorities the specific characteristics of the locality will be reflected in the particular values and working methods it adopts. The "operating ideology" will also be a living, developing set of references which will change as the actors and their environment changes and develops.

(4) WHO RULES?

This concluding section addresses the question of who rules in local government, councillors or officers? We start this review by readdressing the concept of role separation, and conclude with a review of the limits of political control.

Separateness or Inter-Dependence?

In Chapter One the adherence to the role separation model was noted for both the importance participants attached to it and the regularity of its appearance as a cultural cliché. However, the concept of separateness is not sustained by the cases. Through the spectrum of a local authority's activities councillors and officers participate unequally across the full range of activities and phases of dominance and subservience can be seen. Concurrently different patterns can apply between and within services and policy issues because politicians and officials do not occupy fixed, immutable, positions and the lines of demarcation vary according to the circumstances. Each side has a substantial base and each has its hands on key points of the process but neither is in a decisive position so that outcomes are essentially the product of "negotiations" which may be on an authority wide basis, within a particular service area or restricted to a specific issue. This is confirmed by the cases where "negotiated" positions were established from the simple, as in the bomb case, to the highly complex as in the planning case.

Politicians and officers have many concurrent interests, shared goals and a high degree of dependence on the success of the other. Although there are activities indisputably political or professional between these fixed points are wide areas of negotiable interest and the outcomes of such negotiations are the result of an almost infinite range of variables coming together at a particular point in time. All local authorities are different for as much as they share a common condition each has a unique set of characteristics and they are peopled by groups of individuals who change over time. These actors normally respect the others' areas of influence so that understandings emerge from a largely tacit appreciation of where the dividing line between them lies.

The cases demonstrate that different qualities of relationship exist, that relationships change and that the "negotiated order" between councillors and officers is likely to exhibit different characteristics in different situations but a complete separation of their roles is never achieved. Outcomes are the product of both their contributions and neither councillors nor officers achieve a permanent ascendancy over the other. This accords with Polsby's view that the unspoken notion in pluralist research is that at bottom nobody dominates (10). On the basis of the cases there can be little doubt that there are a plurality of sources of influence with access to the policy process in local government. Elite domination appears as unlikely on this evidence as the view of local government as part of a national

corporate process. Although councillors and officers had spheres of permanent influence and phases of temporary domination over discrete stages of the policy process as well as links to central government and large business corporations in the event they exercised power and shared decisions with a variety of organisations and interests or accommodated external influences by recognising the legitimacy of their demands. The conclusion must be that the relationship is a pluralistic one which proceeds by power sharing in which each is dependent not only on the other but also on external organisations.

Dependence will be mediated through the "operating ideology" each side making accommodations to the other as each seeks to satisfy its aims and objectives through the use of its set of resources in the awareness of the others expectations and of the internal and external factors influencing any given situation. Thus each "side can therefore make calculations which strike a balance between what they want and what they know each other is willing to accept" (11). Councillors and officers serve different constituences, possess different sets of expectations and resources, relate to the external worlds in different ways and have a differential desire and a differential ability to shape and control policy but both have a high degree of interdependence on the success of the other. Thus, professional failures will rebound on the politicians and political failures particularly failure to secure resources, will diminish the role of the professional. Although they are very different animals at key

points their interests converge and locked into a structure with a largely unwritten constitution they operate by conventions which are in the main the product of local values. These local "ideologies" are described by Stewart (12) as "a structured combination of values assumptions and beliefs" which may not exactly correspond to their environment but mould and influence the behaviour of the actors. In each local authority the product of this mix, the resources they command and their desire to shape outcomes will determine the extent to which councillors or officers influence and control events and also the extent to which their roles achieve not separation but a minimal dependence on the other.

In the context of the processes of mediation the most useful of the conceptualizations considered in Part I was that proposed by Blowers (discussed in the Conclusions section to Chapter Five) which enables us to bring together the power-dependence model of Rhodes and the concept of the mediation over time of the two forces of politics and professionalism through national and local decision making strategies. These elements are described in Figure 1 on the next page -

Figure 1

Issues	Politics/Expertise Political Process	Local/National Decision Making Strategies	Time/Space Outcomes
Political Origins	Use of political and hierarchical resources to secure predominance of political values	Mobilisation of national/local "audiences" and of broad communities in support of political objectives	Outcomes reflect the effective use of the political process and mobilisation of support over time relative to bureaucratic interests
Professional Origins	Use of informational and legal/constitutional resources to secure predominance of professional values	Mobilisation of specific national/local targeted interests in support of professional objectives	Outcomes reflect the degree of influence over the political process and the effective mobilisation of support overtime relative to political interests

The Limits of Political Control

The Cases show that if the politicians chose to and are able to exercise effectively the resources and powers they possess they always hold the upper hand. When councillors take a decisive position the officers are forced to influence from the margins and although such a position may be very effective as demonstrated in the DLO case the initiative still remains with the politicians. The bureaucrats respond to the political power base and whilst they can in most cases influence the politicians either in the formulation or execution of decisions they cannot impose decisions on the politicians without

their consent. However, the quality of that consent may be extremely variable and only competent politicians with both access to and the skills to use the resources required to maintain an independent position can hold out against a committed bureaucracy. The line which divides councillors from officers and the extent of political penetration depends on the effectiveness of the locally negotiated working relationship. However, if the politicians fail to articulate their goals and identify the means of achieving them the officers have the opportunity to take a decisive role in formulating policy and to substitute their own preferences for those of the politicians. With regard to this dividing line between politics and bureaucracy Dunsire suggests that all administration is political to a greater or lesser degree the issue is whether or not there is a point between the minimally political to the maximally political at which policy making is pre-eminently the work of elected persons and not of appointed persons (13). This leads to the question of what issues are in this sense "political" in the eyes of the politicians and also to the equally interesting question of whether or not "political" significance is to be equated with "objective" significance. In this regard Jones suggests that:

politically important issues . . . may not be the most 'objectively' or 'intrinsically' important particularly in terms of their long run implications but they are the most contentious at the time (14)

The conventional orthodoxy assumes that "objectively" significant issues should be the domain of the politicians an approach which fails to recognise the possibility that the politicians may have no interest in such issues. The implication for democratic

theory regarding the assumed roles for the elected councillors and the unelected officials is obvious, if councillors are not interested in that which is "objectively" significant the resolution of those issues must be in the hands of officers. However, the extent of officer participation is set by the acts or omissions of the politicians because the expression of the political will or the failure to do so is a pre-condition of the officer response. So that if officers are dealing with objectively important decisions it is because the politicians have ceded these to the officers expressly or by default rather than the officers having taken these from them. So far as policy making is concerned officers usually have restricted professional objectives as demonstrated by the cases and there appears to be little evidence that officers engage in pursuing overtly political aims. In contrast to these narrower professional based concerns the politicians articulate broader aims which on occasions will be strongly partisan on other occasions more diffuse. When political aims are diffuse but are reconcilable with professional aims the professionals have the opportunity to exercise a significant degree of power over policy making. It is when political aims and attitudes fail to coincide with professional objectives and judgements on issues which are politically sensitive that conflict is likely to occur.

In the cases there are a number of points where the politicians who had surrendered the initiative re-established control. Why did the bureaucrats permit this? Two reasons appear likely; the

first is the legitimacy of office, Stewart suggests that bureaucrats accept that they are accountable to the Council as an embodiment of elected authority and the fact of election brings with it "norms that affect the beliefs and behaviour of those elected and those responsible to them" (15). The second reason is that formal levers of power and the control over finances are in the hands of the politicians who are in a procedural and legal position to prevent any proposals of the bureaucracy which require resource allocation.

If in the ultimate analysis power resides with the politicians the question which naturally suggests itself is why do they not exercise total control throughout the entire spectrum of activity. The answers to this are fourfold: the first is the volume of decisions which have to be made because part time amateur politicians do not have the time to exercise control over the full range of the business of a local authority they have to be selective and impose their political objectives in key areas and on key decisions only. Secondly, the politicians usually lack the specific knowledge and skills and the back up resources as well as the ability to exercise effective control so that they have to depend on the bureaucrats to advise and guide them. Thirdly, the execution of decisions in nearly all cases requires professional skills and control over the mechanisms of implementation which excludes the involvement of politicians. Fourthly, councillors lack interest in the total mass of detail; some councillors are interested in broad policy issues, some are

interested in specific details of a constituency nature and some have an interest in only certain services of the Council; politicians adopt distinct role models and therefore depending on which role the councillor has chosen he may find little to engage him in the totality of detail. Thus, fragmentation of purpose, lack of skills and time inhibits the politicians from seizing absolute control over the activities of the bureaucracy.

It is the recognition of these deficiencies in their collective capacity to control the bureaucracy which fuels the politicians adherence to the concept of role separation the repeated promulgation of separateness is a kind of "beating the bounds" by the politicians to restate and reaffirm the legitimacy of their position in the light of the threat to them of the professional power base. Therefore what is too often dismissed as a mere cultural cliché has in fact an important reality, it serves a significant function because it is central to the politicians understanding of their own role and of their relationship to the bureaucracy. Consequently this cliché can be seen to be a key indicator of local government relations and that the adherence to it by the politicians is an attachment to a concept which has real not merely token meaning. These realities are recognised by the officials who acknowledge political power, the sanctions politicians possess and appreciate the importance of reaching accommodations and understandings with them. As a result the bureaucracy knows it has to negotiate with the politicians, to seek approval to its proposals and to accept defeat when the

politicians refuse to treat with them. Although permanent officials frequently submit to the short term expectations of the politicians they do so whilst preserving their long term professional objectives. The politicians adhere to the myth of absolute control because this helps to maintain the delicate short term balance of power in their favour. The acknowledgement of political supremacy is essential for the politicians because it reinforces their belief in the democratic legitimacy of their position, it enables them to claim the credit for success as politicians and to provide evidence of their power to serve the electorate's needs. The officers subscribe to this because these concepts do have a reality and they know that a determined and organised political force has the means to prevail in the short term. In the longer term the professionals know that the cyclical interest of politicians wanes and that they have many opportunities to redress the balance of political power by setting the limits of choice within which the politicians act.

APPENDIX

THE CASE STUDIES - METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

This Appendix describes the methodology employed in constructing the case studies, it assesses the various sources used in the studies and considers the role of the writer as a participant observer. In addition the typicality of the case study authority as an example of a large urban council is also considered.

The Case Study Approach

The justification for the use of the case study as a means of empirical investigation to test theoretical constructs of local government relationships was discussed in Chapter One and the specific Hull setting for the five selected cases was described in the Introduction to Chapter Five. Accordingly, the purpose of this Appendix is to consider in greater detail the methodology of the development of the Hull studies within these contexts.

Each of the five cases were developed around a documentary framework the main sources of which were the minutes of the committees and council proceedings, the official reports submitted to those meetings (which formed the basis for the agendas) together with the working files of the central bureaucracy containing correspondence, memoranda, notes of meetings and other original records (eg. plans, accounts, legal documents). This documentary framework was then fleshed out by

participant observations and a limited number of interviews. The objectives behind this approach were firstly, to counteract the inevitable bias in actors accounts of events which inevitably colour the interpretation of the decision making process and its outcomes by using a documentary base for the studies. Secondly, recognising that reliance on documentary sources alone would be insufficient to provide a fully rounded narrative the opportunity to select cases where the writer had had involvement as a participant was taken which not only provided a "way in" (a problem noted by Dearlove and considered in Chapter One) but also offered the additional benefit of an officers account of local policy making occupying centre stage rather than that of politicians whose views are well represented in the literature. Thirdly, the use of interviews identified by the writer in the context of particular cases was intended to supplement documentary sources and participant observation.

Documentary Sources

The documentary sources are described in the Introduction to Chapter Five and in the References and Sources which follow; these fall into two categories, public documents to which there is a right of access and private documents which are only available on a discretionary basis. The Committee and Council minutes, Committee Reports and any other records, accounts, legal documents and the like which have been placed in the City Archive can be accessed by researchers at the City Record Office in Hull during normal working hours and in the same way the Planning Register is a public document which is also available for inspection. As a result the primary events set out in the five

narratives can be verified from these sources and in consequence the writers inferences and conclusions drawn from these sources is similarly capable of being re-evaluated against this original material.

Participant Observation

The main advantages of participant observation are that it permits ease of access and with prior knowledge of where to look, who to ask and above all of what to look for and as a result the participant is often in a superior position to the external researcher. On the other hand the participant observer is encumbered by his familiarity with the issues and the actors and because of this he may fail to note the obvious, equally the participant may well be blinded by his own preconceptions into seeing what he wants to see. As a result the view has been advanced that -

observers are so much part of their subject matter that they may fail to see it objectively; their vision may be distorted by what they are used to seeing or what they expect to see; and that they may find it hard to present a report in which observation is satisfactorily distinguished from inference and interpretation (1)

These potential deficiencies in participant observation must be conceded, however, in the particular circumstances the advantages of adopting this approach far outweigh its possible defects. Participant observation by an officer provides a rare opportunity for unrestricted access to the officer world of policy making and influencing outcomes which is seriously under-represented in the literature. Furthermore having recognised the possibility of bias the method chosen for constructing the narratives of the case studies (ie. around

documentary sources and public records) provided a disciplined framework to restrain the potential bias of participant observation.

Of the five cases the writer occupied a central position in the planning case both as an adviser to the politicians as well as the leader of the officers' interdisciplinary team engaged in developing and defending the planning policies of the Council. The writer was also involved in important aspects of the roads and housing cases but his involvement in the bomb and DLO cases was more peripheral, however, in both of these latter cases the principal actors (politicians and officials) were well known to him and he was aware of the general progress of these issues at the time. Accordingly, either by direct involvement or by virtue of his general background knowledge of the events and the actors the writers role as a participant observer has contributed to all five narratives.

Interviews

The "interviews" noted in the text were not of a formal nature and were therefore not structured with interviewees being asked the same questions in the same order nor were interviewees selected on a systematic basis. In consequence these "interviews" were very informal and are best described as "conversational" (2) being conducted by the writer to clarify documentary sources and participant observations. Although the potential bias of the interviewer in both selection of interviewees and of interview questions must be admitted this is counterbalanced by his ability to target his interviews accurately and in most instances to conduct them either

contemporaneously or not long after the events in question. In any event the interviews do not pretend to be representative sample but were used to supplement participant observation and documentary sources. Twenty persons were informally interviewed and of these fourteen were officers.

Choice of Cases

It will be noted that the five cases are of unequal length, however, this is the product of the approach adopted ie. seeking contrasting sets of issues involving different sets of actors and interests which developed over different time spans. The consequence of this was the selection of a mix of cases some of which were of much greater complexity and length than others. The long time spans of the planning and housing cases demonstrate changes over time in the comparative positions of the actors and these cases enable us to evaluate the shorter time span cases where the cyclical nature of the political bureaucratic relationship is not so pronounced.

In addition to the time dimension the subject matter of the cases was selected to illustrate a wide cross section of the activities of a local authority and its internal and external relationships. Land use planning was chosen as an issue because it is a function of virtually all local authorities and the particular case demonstrated not only the internal interactions of politicians and professionals but also the influence of central government, business interests and other local authorities. Housing was chosen because of its importance as a major local authority function and the national significance of the

system-build disaster of the sixties which involved nearly all the large urban housing authorities. The roads case was similarly chosen because it illustrated an almost universal problem of urban road planning and individual rights. The DLO case was significant because it highlighted not only the political professional relationship but also the role of trade unions in a Labour controlled authority. The bomb case was chosen because it illustrated the interface between gesture politics and professionalism. The five cases therefore provide a broad but uneven sweep across the activities of a local authority giving an overview of different issues and interests with variable levels of complexity developing over different time periods. Taken together these individual cases should in aggregate increase our understanding of the whole.

The Typicality of Hull

In considering the outcomes of the cases the question which naturally arises is how typical is Hull? In Chapter Six it is suggested that authorities most likely to be similar to Hull are those with a population in excess of 150,000, a distinct identity, a history of Labour Party control, problems of urban decline, a large budget administered by professionals and having the status of a centre for a wider area.

Using the criterion of population (3) we find that there are 36 metropolitan districts and 20 English and 2 Welsh Shire districts which exceed the 150,000 threshold. Of these 58 districts 6 rank as regional capitals (Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Manchester and

Newcastle Upon Tyne) and of the remainder 7 are predominantly suburban/rural or seaside resorts (eg. Solihull, Wycombe, Bournemouth). However, just below the threshold lie 4 districts of a mostly urban character Blackburn, Langbaugh, Middlesbrough and Rochester so that by deleting the former and adding the latter we reach gives a total of 49 potentially comparable urban authorities.

Analysing the 49 on the basis of party political control (4) in two sample years 1985/1989 provides the following results -

	<u>1985</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1</u>
Labour control	34	(70)	33	(68)
Conservative control	8	(16)	6	(12)
No overall control:-				
Labour	3	(6)	5	(10)
Largest single party) Cons.	3	(6)	3	(6)
) Lib. Dem.	0	(0)	1	(2)
Equal Lab/Cons.	1	(2)	1	(2)
	—		—	
	<u>49</u>	(100)	<u>49</u>	(100)

These figures give a general indication that the predominant political party in the larger urban areas is Labour and that therefore the parallels with the case study authority stand. By, combining the factor of political control with the requirement for freestanding characteristics the total of comparable authorities is reduced to 10 (eg. Leicester, Stoke on Trent), however, a further 10 authorities have a reasonable degree of definition with a dependent hinterland and

a history of Labour control (eg. Doncaster, Coventry). Accordingly using these criteria - urban character, being a centre for a wider area, population, political control - there is a group of around 20 broadly comparable authorities with a further 29 sharing many of these characteristics. Reviewing the information in the Municipal Year Book all 49 authorities appear to have substantial professional staffs and budgets together with urban renewal programmes. Therefore, Hull can be regarded as having characteristics generally representative of an important group of local authorities.

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CHAPTER FIVE

The Case Studies - Hull City Council Sources

The principal source of material for the five cases was the files and records of Hull CC. Most of the documentation based research work on the Cases was carried out in 1985/86 when the files referred to in the text were still in the current filing system or in "Modern Records". These files are not accessible to the public and it is not the practice of Hull CC to retain files after they cease to be "current" unless they have at least a medium term value for record purposes when they are held in "Modern Records" for a period of about 10 years. When released the City Archivist then selects material for permanent retention in the City Record Office. However, Committee Reports are retained in the City Record Office as are Committee Minutes. Committee Reports and Minutes are held in chronological order in municipal years, ie 1st April to 31st March, these are also indexed by

subject and committee. The text of the five cases cites months and years for Hull City Council references and identifies the relevant committees to enable these to be traced. All of the Minutes of Committee proceedings are available for inspection now and if a Report had been submitted to the Committee the minute attributes a number to that Report in parenthesis before the main text of the minute which enables Reports to be traced easily in Report Volumes. The City Record Office Lowgate Kingston upon Hull has a Search Room which is open to the public Mondays to Fridays. The references used in the Case Studies are -

CRO City Record Office
 CR Committee Reports
 MR Modern Records
 CF Current File
 CM Committee or Council Minutes
 Interviews The interviews were conducted by the writer when employed by the Hull City Council with politicians and senior officers of the Hull, Humberside County and Beverley Borough Councils. Additional interviews have been held with a district council chief executive and a county treasurer.

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