# A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL AGENDA 21 BY A LOCAL AUTHORITY

By

Caroline Elizabeth Morrison

A Thesis submitted for examination
For the Ph.D degree

Department of Management and Organization
The School of Management
University of Stirling, 2003

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## ABSTRACT

This thesis uses action research to investigate the organizational factors which are affecting the implementation of local agenda 21, and the accompanying necessary internal changes, in a local authority.

Following an examination of literature relating to sustainable development and local agenda 21, organizational culture and attempts to change it are identified as the important areas to be investigated. There is an examination of theory in those areas and a two-stage study is carried out. This allows for the first stage study to be assessed and any gaps, where the research questions are not being answered, to be identified and dealt with in the second stage study.

It was found that in local authorities there are sub-cultures, and that the split is along departmental lines, which affect the facilitation of sustainable development to differing degrees. Socially based departments had sub-cultures which were less appropriate for sustainable development then environmentally based ones.

The local authorities were making changes of a structural and strategic nature, but as regards human processes, it was found that although authorities were concentrating on trying to raise awareness, the strategies they were using for this were ineffective.

Two case studies were also conducted, one of a local authority similar in many ways to the one in the main study and the other of a dissimilar one, to assess whether the findings from the main study might be more generally applicable. The findings from these case studies suggested that the findings were generally applicable.

## OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

### Chapter One

This chapter provides an introduction to sustainable development and Local Agenda 21. It explains what they are and the history behind these concepts. It establishes the important role local government is playing in the delivery of sustainability goals and the areas in which work is necessary in order for them to do this effectively. It begins to form and to validate the research questions, which are addressed in this thesis

### Chapter Two

Chapter two provides a brief overview of local government and public sector management, covering topics which are relevant to this thesis, and then identifies and analyses the progress which has been made by local authorities in addressing sustainable development. There is also identification of areas which appear problematic. This focuses the research questions to a greater extent and validates them as a legitimate area of interest.

### Chapter Three

Chapter three addresses the question of the research philosophy. It provides a brief discussion of debates and different schools of thought within research philosophy. It goes on to compare the merits of different philosophical viewpoints with particular regard to the aims of the research project and ends with a definition of the philosophical stance taken by the researcher.

## Chapter Four

Chapter four deals with the research methodology. It provides a discussion of a number of alternatives and provides a reasoned argument for the selection of action research as a methodology and validates its legitimacy. It also provides a more detailed picture of the methods, techniques and tools to be used in the study.

## Chapter Five

Chapter five is a conceptual chapter which examines the theoretical aspects of organisational culture with particular reference to local government.

## Chapter Six

Chapter six is also a conceptual chapter and it examines the theoretical aspects of organisational change with particular reference to local government.

## Chapter Seven

Chapter seven provides a description of the research programme and refers back to the diagrammatic representation of the process which was established in chapter four. It describes in more detail the techniques which are used to both gather and analyse the data. It goes on to present the kind of data gathered in the first stage study and identify the areas which the first stage study addresses.

## Chapter Eight

Chapter eight contains an analysis of the data which was gathered in the first stage study. Where possible conclusions are drawn and where this is not possible, avenues for investigation in the second stage study are identified.

**Chapter Nine**

Chapter nine examines the theoretical aspects identified in chapter eight as being worthy of investigation with particular reference to local government. It goes on to detail the tools and techniques used to gather information in the second stage study.


**Chapter Ten**

Chapter ten provides an analysis of the data gathered primarily in the second stage study but on some occasions also draws on the data from the first stage. Conclusions are drawn from the analysis.


**Chapter Eleven**

Chapter eleven contains the third stage study. This involves two case studies of local authorities and examines whether the conclusions drawn from the study at Stirling are applicable to a wider arena


**Chapter Twelve**

Chapter twelve presents the conclusions from this study and makes recommendations as to action and possible areas for further investigation.

# CONTENTS PAGE

**CHAPTER THREE**

## CHAPTER SEVEN
## FIELDWORK

## CHAPTER EIGHT
## ANALYSIS OF FIRST STAGE STUDY

# TABLES AND FIGURES

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL AGENDA 21

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a general consensus that the Earth's ecosystems cannot sustain current levels of economic activity and material consumption (Wackernagel and Rees 1996). McCormick (1995) wrote that the debate over achieving a balance between environmental management and economic development was a prominent one in the 1980's, when it became apparent that greater consideration needed to be given to how to achieve a balance between the two areas. In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development published its report, *'Our Common Future'*, and catapulted sustainable development into the public consciousness as a means of addressing this area. Five years later in Rio de Janeiro, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), representatives from 178 countries gathered to review progress and decide on future action, as was recommended by the Brundtland Commission.

Sustainable development was always going to be the major theme of UNCED but events in the late 1980s made sure that it was accompanied by other more specific problems, such as global warming and the threat to the ozone layer, at the top of the conference agenda. The outcomes of the Rio summit can be summarised in five key agreements (McCormick 1995), which are summarised below:

- The Framework Convention on Climate Change

  This provided an international framework and a set of principles to guide future actions and was signed by 153 states and the European Union (EU).

- The Convention on Biological Diversity

  This was aimed at preserving global biological diversity through the protection of species and ecosystems. It was signed by 155 states and the EU.

- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

  This consisted of 27 principles guiding action on environment and development.

- The Forest Principles

  They emphasise the rights of states to exploit their forest resources but within general principles of forest protection and management.

- Agenda 21

  This was an action plan for sustainable development integrating the goals of environmental protection and economic development and based on local community and free market principles. Agenda 21 ensured that the concept of sustainable development became a permanent principle of the UN and provided a blue print for sustainability into the next century.

## 1.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Dobson (1996) argued that the first question that needed to be addressed was to determine what is meant by sustainable development. Pearce, Markandya and Barbier (1989) stated that sustainable development involved an increased emphasis on the

natural built and cultural environments, concern with both short to medium term and long term horizons and with equity in society. Moffat (1996) argued that sustainable development dealt with three interdependent areas as shown in the diagram below. Littlewood and Whyte (1997) argued that sustainable development is a holistic process requiring an understanding of the relationships and interdependencies of social, environmental and economic factors. Gossop (2001) also argued that understanding what sustainable development means requires an understanding of the overlaps and connectivity between areas traditionally viewed and treated as separate disciplines. Figure 1, below, shows the three traditionally separate components of sustainable development. The shaded area where the three converge is where sustainable development lies.

Fig 1: The Three Sphere Model of Sustainable Development
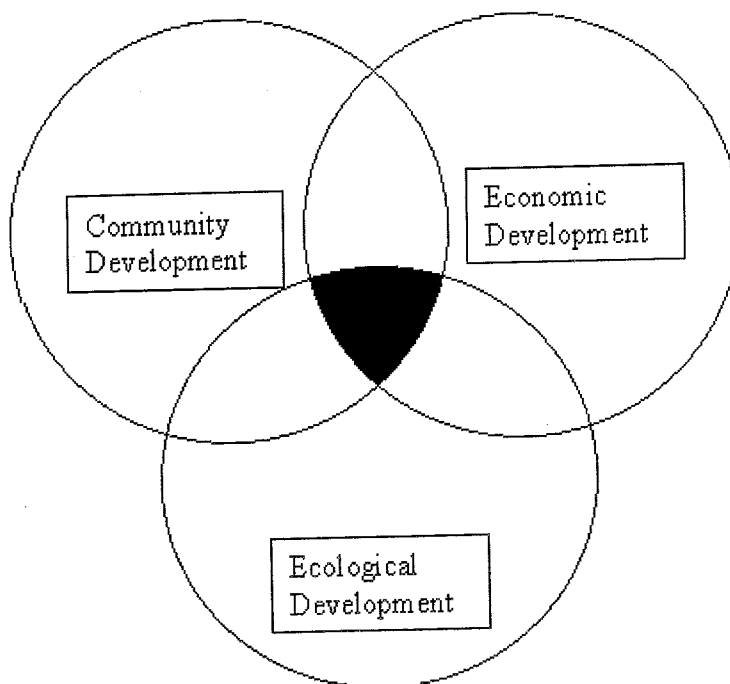


Source: adapted from Littlewood and White (1997:113)

3

The central idea of sustainable development, that economic development can occur alongside environmental protection and improving social conditions, is popular. Lele (1991:613) stated that sustainable development is a 'metafix that will please everybody; from the profit minded industrialist and risk minimising subsistence farmers to the equity seeking social worker; the pollution concerned or wildlife loving first worlder; the growth maximising policy maker; the goal oriented bureaucrat and therefore the vote counting politician.'

This popularity means that the term 'sustainable development' is in common use but Dasgupta (1997) stated that the concept of sustainable development, as commonly used, is too loose to have practical application and as such, can often confuse rather then enlighten policy makers . Dobson (1996) also argued that, as a goal for society, sustainable development raises as many questions as it answers. These questions are about factors such as the timescale under consideration, the human level (individual, community, country, global) to be considered and the aspects of human activity to be considered. Cairncross (1995) surmised that much of the appeal of sustainable development lay in its ambiguity, the fact that it can mean different things to different people and goes on to argue that it is necessary to establish in more detail what the term means before it can be used as a basis for policy and decision making.

The most commonly used definition is that given in *'Our Common Future'* (The Brundtland Report) in 1987. This defined sustainable development as

'development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs'. (p47)

However Pearce, Markandya and Barbier (1989) highlighted the fact that even the Brundtland report, considered a benchmark sustainability publication, is not consistent throughout the body of its text as to what it means by sustainable development, and that the main definition which is used is just one of many, sometimes conflicting, definitions of sustainable development to be found in recent literature.

Voisey and O'Riordan (1997a) argued that definitions of sustainable development can fall into one of three categories. The first is essentially economic, the second deals with the north-south divide and the associated inequalities and the third emphasises the local aspects of sustainable development.

Pearce, Markandya, & Barbier (1989) identified around 40 different definitions. These include anthropomorphic ones such as

'development likely to achieve lasting satisfaction of human needs and to improve the quality of human life' (p173),

as well as narrower descriptions of it as 'sustainable economic development' (p175), 'non declining utility per capita' (p181) and 'a guideline for a responsible natural resources policy' (p178). The last three definitions all place sustainable development outwith the shaded area in the diagram above as they do not cover the social, the economic and the environmental aspects which are important in sustainable development.

Therefore it is understandable if there is some confusion as to what sustainable development means. It may be that some of this confusion arises out of the many attempts to condense a wide-ranging topic into a soundbite slogan. It will be useful in trying to convey the essence of sustainability and sustainable development to look further at some of the ideas and concepts which underpin it.

### 1.1.1 Underlying Concepts of Sustainable Development

There are a number of aspects to sustainable development upon which there is a general consensus in the literature regarding their importance.

The first of these is intergenerational equity. This means that future generations should be left no worse of then current generations. This is explicitly stated in the Brundtland definition and found in many other definitions. Although there is a consensus that this means future generations should inherit an undiminished stock of capital there is debate as to what this means. O'Riordan (1995) stated that the total stock of capital available to us is made up of natural, man made and human capital. Proponents of sustainability can and do allow for differing levels of substitution between these different capital types and making this a debate which can add to the ambiguity surrounding sustainable development.

Advocates of the strong sustainability perspective approach this question from a 'deep green' or eco-centric perspective and argue that there cannot be substitution between different capital types. At its extreme this would mean that there could be no further use of fossil fuels as their loss is irreversible and could

not be compensated for by an increase in any other form of capital. There is a general feeling however, that fossil fuel use is allowable so long as some of the benefits generated by its use are used to fund research into alternatives, so increasing human or manmade capital (Moffatt 1996). Weak sustainability takes a much more technocentric approach and argues that there can be complete substitution between capital types. Again when taken to an extreme this seems implausible. It would allow any amount of environmental loss to be compensated for by an increase in one of the other capital types, but as Schumacher (1973) pointed out, the environment is the original source for the other types of capital. This thesis is not the appropriate place to determine where on the continuum between these two extremes realisable sustainability should or does lie. Suffice to say that neither extreme presents a plausible and feasible option and it is the middle ground which is most likely to present an optimum solution.

The second concept which underpins sustainable development is intragenerational equity. This requires a fair distribution of resources amongst current generations and requires that issues, such as free technology transfer, for example, of clean technology to developing countries, the North/South divide and issue of the huge debts of developing countries to those in the West, and the concentration of power and wealth in a few privileged hands, be addressed.

The final concept which is central to sustainable development is development Sustainable development requires development to be considered instead of economic growth. Development is a much wider concept then growth and implies some change leading to improvement in the quality of life, such as the preservation of, and advancement of inadequate, freedoms.

## 1.1.2 A History of Sustainable Development

Although The Brundtland Report helped to popularise the term 'sustainable development', the concept has been around for longer then the last sixteen years, although under different names. Pearce (1995) stated that the concept of sustainable development has staying power because people want to believe in it.

Traditionally in the West, mankind has seen itself as separate from nature, viewing it as something to be dominated, subdued and controlled (MacNaughton and Urry 1995). This can be seen in the development of technocentric capitalist economies where nature has often been seen as simply a source of raw materials and a free dumping ground (Schumacher 1973). Whenever there has been exploitation of the natural environment, however, there have been individuals expressing concern over the impact of damaging human activities on the Earth. Even as far back as 400 BC Plato, the Greek philosopher with a strong interest in the natural world, was writing on the problems of desertification and soil erosion.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, when the West went through a rapid period of industrialisation, there was an increase in the popularity of the more ecocentric approaches to nature, such as pantheism, romanticism and animism (MacNaughton and Urry 1995).

In the latter part of the twentieth century public opinion polls began to reflect an ever growing concern about environmental degradation (Dunlop 1997). In 1972 the Club of Rome published *The Limits to Growth* which led the debate on the pros and cons of economic growth as usual. The next year Schumacher (1973) first published *Small is Beautiful: A study of economics as if people mattered*, which espoused many of the underlying principles of sustainable development and which many current advocates of sustainability regard as a seminal work (Porritt 1997). The 1970s and the 1980s saw a number of incidents which fuelled public concern regarding mankinds treatment of the planet. These included the forced evacuation of an entire housing development at Love Canal in New York due to toxic waste and the nuclear power plant accidents at Three Mile Island in the US and Chernobyl in the former Soviet Union, the repercussions of which are still being felt today.

In 1970 the first Environmental Protection Agency was formed under Nixon in the USA, and this was also was the year of the first Earth Day. The first bottle recycling laws were passed in Oregon in the USA in 1972. In 1980 the World Conservation Strategy, a large part of which was concerned with sustainable development, was published. 1987 saw the publication of *Our Common Future*

and 24 signatories to the Montreal Protocol, an agreement to halve CFC emissions. In 1992 the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as The Earth Summit, took place in Rio de Janiero in Brazil. Among other documents, this conference produced Agenda 21, a blueprint for sustainability into the 21$^{st}$ century. Both government and non-government organisations were involved in the production of this document which covered all areas of human interaction with the planet in 40 chapters. Local authorities were to produce their own Local Agenda 21 (LA21) which would be particular to their local circumstances (Dodds 1997).

### 1.1.3 Signs of Unsustainability

As already stated sustainability is a popular concept because it can mean different things to different people. It is also popular as people see it as a tool with which to tackle the familiar signs of unsustainability which bombard our consciousness daily. Those that follow were identified by (Moffatt 1996):

- Rising human numbers and increasing consumption of resources. Human numbers have grown eightfold since the industrial revolution and mankind uses 40% of the planets most elemental resource - the energy from the sun made available by green plants on land through photosynthesis.

- Poverty. Over one billion people live in absolute poverty, without sufficient food to support them or access to safe drinking water. Millions die each year from malnutrition and preventable diseases.

- Pollution. Pollution to air, water and land have increased dramatically. Human inputs of nutrients to coastal waters already equal that from natural sources and $CO_2$ emissions have increased by 27% in the last 100 years.

- Resource depletion. In less then 200 years the planet has lost 6 million square kilometres of forest. Around 70000km$^2$ of agricultural land is made unproductive by erosion each year.

Statistics like these do not make pleasant reading and show that there is much that needs to be done to move our planet onto a more sustainable path and to iron out the inequalities that currently exist. It was to this end that Agenda 21 set out its programme.

## 1.2 THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 28 of Local Agenda 21 endorsed the proposal made by local authorities in the run up to UNCED that they produce their own Local Agenda 21s to move their local area on to a more sustainable path. Brugman (1997) observed that many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 had their roots in local activities so he argued that the involvement and co-operation of local authorities would be an important factor in its success.

Tuxworth (1996) stated that as local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructures, oversee the planning process, establish local environmental policies and regulations and also assist in implementing

national and subnational policies, they are in an far stronger position to influence the sustainability of their local area then other local organisations. Jackson and Roberts (1997) also establish the suitability of local authorities to be a force in the drive to sustainability, stating that as the main providers of public goods and services in the UK, many of their functions have either a direct effect on the environment or policy implications for the environment.

Though a Local Agenda 21, a local authority can pursue its own initiatives to achieve sustainable development in a way which supports sustainability strategies at a national and international level, but which also allows for distinctive qualities to make them appropriate to local circumstances (Morphet and Hams 1994).

Dodds (1997) identified three main areas in which local authorities will need to take action if they are to implement a LA21 successfully. These are the integration of social, economic and environmental factors in decision making, gaining public participation and making long term strategies. These are examined in more detail below.

### 1.2.1 There is a need for the integrated consideration of social, economic and environmental concerns in decision making.

This has traditionally been inhibited by the organisation of local authorities into separate and often competing departments. Tuxworth (1996) agreed that the ways in which local authorities operate, especially large ones, is a barrier to this integration. Departments often take a myopic view of their activities and are not

aware of what is happening in other departments. Jacobs (1991) and Serageldin and Steer (1995) agreed that the environment and the economy especially, need to be integrated in decision making and argue that to this end there are two considerations to make. The first is to develop practical techniques to value the environment, such as the travel cost contingent valuation methods, in all decisions which could have environmental effects. The second is to pursue institutional reform, to provide a framework which allows changes in the environment linked to changes in the economy to be reflected in accounting procedures. This would make market prices reflect the true cost of using the environment and would account more fully for the economic value of environmental impacts in the appraisal of new economic activity (Holmberg, Bass and Timberlake 1991).

This obviously has implications for a far wider range of organisations then solely local authorities, but would involve alterations to current practices within them. Miller (1997) examined areas of concern to local government and highlighted the interdependence of the three main areas of sustainable development, the environmental, economic and social factors. A degraded environment, poor housing, lack of employment opportunities and vandalism are all interdependent. It follows, he argued, that to tackle any one problem in isolation is not the most effective answer. There is a need for integrated solutions.

The UK Local Government Management Board (1994) also identified the integration of sustainable development aims in local authority policies and activities as an essential element for consideration when implementing a LA21. Sharp (1999) argued that this integration is still missing in a number of local authorities and where this is the case other non-sustainable characteristics are also exhibited.

## 1.2.2 Need for public participation and consensus building and partnership approaches to problem solving.

This is often inhibited by public/private role distinctions, lack of local authority recognition of informal community groups and the administrative culture often prevalent in local authorities. Morphet and Hams (1995) established the importance of the production of LA21 being based on consensus with the local population. Tuxworth (1996) felt that local authorities needed to enter into dialogue with its citizens and with local, civic, community, business and industrial groups and organisations, and through consensus building and consultation, produce a LA21. The UK Local Government Management Board (1994) also identified raising awareness and promoting education about sustainable development, consulting and involving the public and creating partnerships as essential elements for consideration when implementing a LA21 and promoting sustainable development.

Harris and Barber (1997) identified the benefits that an effective participation process will bring. These were greater understanding between different groups

and of sustainability, a sense of ownership of the sustainability process and a greater commitment to action They also identified a number of issues to consider in examining how participation can be gained. Specifically these were how to raise awareness of the issues involved so that people can become informed participants, how to motivate people so that they want to get involved and lastly establishing the role that the local authority should play.

Harris and Barber (1997) observed that many local authorities set up public fora in an attempt to gain participation, but ultimately a large number of these fora fail. They point to a need to identify sources of conflict, that could arise from bringing together different people with different interests, which could contribute to these failures. They also believe that effective management and design and the sharing of power and responsibility in fora can reduce the amount of energy and resource sapping conflict and improve the chance of creating a successful fora.

Sharwood and Russell (1997) go on to look at some of the points involved in setting up a fora to gain participation. These can be summarised as:

- Local authorities oversee the process but do not have complete control.

- High level of commitment from local authority.

- Should be wide representation, including those not normally represented. This may be difficult to do, as in many cases existing groups simply broaden their remit to include participation in the process of sustainability and new people are not involved (Matthews 1997).

- Fora should be focused with clear established and agreed goals.

- Members should be kept well informed of progress .

- It should be run by a team not by an individual. This ties in with point made by Harris and Barber (1997) that there is a need to share power and responsibility within public participation groups.

Chilton (1997) expressed concern that the participation process tends not to reach industrialists and other members of the business community. There is a general consensus that environmental groups are dominating the proceedings, community groups, though involved, are less represented and business groups are currently having the least input into the process (Sharwood and Russell 1997).

### 1.2.3 The need to implement long term strategies.

Often it is found that there is a lack of integration between long-term sustainability strategies and the statutory development, land use and other plans which influence the short-term behaviour of local authorities. Sharp (1999) argued that an overriding concern with the short term is a key characteristic of the 'non sustainable' local authority. Operating within the political arena means that often the short-term goal of re-election takes precedence

## 1.3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY.

Section 1.2 identified three broad areas which have been identified as being important for a local authority to consider for a successful Local Agenda 21 process.

1. The integration of environmental, economic and social factors in the decision making framework.

2. Gaining the participation of stakeholder groups within the local community and creating partnerships within them

3. The 'greening' of the local authority itself, in terms of day to day acts up to long term strategies. A sustainability ethos needs to permeate all levels of the local authority.

Most local authorities have stated a commitment to Local Agenda 21 (Tuxworth 1996) and now there is a need to move beyond words and on to action and this appears to be proving problematic. In terms of the integration of economic, social and environmental factors, Jackson and Roberts (1997) found that in many local authorities relatively little attention has been paid to the social dimension of sustainable development and long term strategies in this area tend not to take sustainability into consideration. Tuxworth (1996) looked at the extent to which Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development was a consideration in non-environmental local authority departments and found that it was of minor or no influence in most departments towards the social end of the spectrum. This also suggests that there are problems with the third point, developing a sustainability ethos in the local authority.

As mentioned above in 1.2.2, Harris and Barber (1997) observed that many local authorities attempts to foster participation and partnership fail.

Few researchers have attempted to explain why, so long after Agenda 21, local authorities are still experiencing difficulties in achieving the goals of public participation and the integration of sustainability throughout their activities. Much has been written on the link between organisational goal achievement and organisational culture and O'Riordan (1995) wrote that sustainable development can be seen now as a political and ideological issue rather then an ecological one. Wright (1997) wrote that there are no real technological barriers to sustainability any more, only human and institutional ones and Shrivastava (1995) wrote that the goal of sustainability or sustainable organisations culminates with the question of profound change of organisational cultures. Therefore an area of interest in investigating the progress of sustainable development will be the human and organisational factors within local authorities which have been charged with delivering sustainability.

## 1.4 IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ATTAINABLE?

One other area to consider before going on to assess the success or otherwise of local authorities in moving themselves and their communities onto a more sustainable path is what they can realistically be expected to achieve. There is a need to question whether sustainable development is an achievable goal or an impossible ideal.

Pearce (1995) wrote that the notion of a sustainable society is still radical because sustainable development confronts modern society at the very heart of its

predominantly capitalist purpose. Modern economic growth all too often still fails to meet human needs and often destroys and degrades the resource base. O Riordan (1995) goes on to question whether sustainable capitalism can ever be anything more then a contradiction in terms. Pearce (1995) provides a framework, shown below, with which to examine the position which society is at in the transition process to a sustainable state and presents evidence that at the time he was writing the UK was barely into the ultra weak sustainability stage. Pearce goes on to argue that any shift towards sustainability will be slow, taking generations rather then years and the current evidence still suggests that the UK is in the ultra weak or weak sustainability stage.

It could reasonably be argued that progression has now taken us into the weak sustainability of Stage 2. Some micro economic incentives have been introduced to support sustainable development. These include congestion charging, road tax based on engine size and emissions, landfill tax, although in the face of huge public protest the fuel tax escalator was abandoned. There are also concerted efforts to raise awareness and educate the public about sustainable development, with advertising campaigns on television and in the press. There is less to report in terms of progress towards policy integration and the setting out of targets and plans for their delivery. Voisey and O'Riordan (1997a) demonstrated that there were institutional tools and mechanisms emerging in many policy areas which represented the beginning of the kinds of institutional adjustment necessary for sustainable development to be implemented. These developments were occurring in areas such as policy integration, performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms, but there has been

little that could push this aspect from ultra weak to weak sustainability since Voisey

and O'Riordan made their argument. They acknowledge that there are still

institutional barriers in place which are preventing policy realignment and the

development of new administrative cultures.

**Table 1 Stages of sustainability**

|  | Policy | Economy | Society | Discourse |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stage 1** **Ultra weak** **sustainability** | Lip service to policy integration | Minor tinkering with economic instruments | Dim awareness and little media coverage | Corporatist discussion groups; consultation exercises |
| **Stage 2** **Weak** **sustainability** | Formal policy integration and deliverable targets | Substantial restructuring of micro economic incentives | Wider public education for future visions | Round tables; stakeholder groups; parliamentary surveillance |
| **Stage 3** **Strong** **sustainability** | Binding policy integration and strong international agreements | Full economic valuation; green accounts at business and national level; green taxes | Curriculum integration; local initiatives as part of community growth | Community involvement; twinning of initiatives in the developed and developing world |

Source: Pearce (1995:289)

Full sustainable development involves a serious cultural shift, not just some economic and political tinkering. The current political incentives are such that politicians at all levels are more concerned with generating policies that secure the short term goal of re-election rather then tackling the transition to sustainable development (Kirkby Keefe and Timberlake 1997). Pearce (1995) argued that it is probably democracy itself which is the greatest political barrier to a truly sustainable future. Nothing can be achieved without some people losing out and they can readily block some of the changes required for sustainable development. There is conflict between what people want now and the interests of future generations, which can only be reduced through the persuasion of the majority that sustainable development is the right development path..

In conclusion it would be unfair and unrealistic to expect local authorities to be delivering strong sustainable development in a society which is still run along technocentric and unsustainable lines and indulges in countless examples of unsustainable behaviour. But it is both fair and realistic to expect them to be taking steps along this path. If sustainable development is viewed not a destination but a journey then we can expect this journey to have been started.

From this initial examination of sustainable development a broad research agenda can be established. It can be seen that whilst much has been written about sustainable development and it is undoubtedly an idea which has been taken onboard by politicians and policy and decision makers, actual concrete progress to move along the path towards sustainability is conspicuous by its absence. It has been established that

sustainable development needs to be addressed at a local level and that local authorities are the organisations best placed to promote it. It was further established that human and organisational factors are aspects of the equation which have been under investigated. This suggests that an examination of the current situations of local authorities is needed in order to further refine the research aims and objectives.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITY PROGRESS TO DATE ON LOCAL AGENDA 21

## 2.0 OVERVIEW

In chapter one it was suggested that local government was an ideal institution for promoting local sustainability for a number of different reasons. This chapter will examine the structure, function and processes of local government in the light of the goals of sustainability and then go on to identify the progress made by local authorities in promoting sustainability in their areas. This will lead to the production of more detailed research objectives, following on from the identification of the main area of interest in chapter one.

## 2.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Chandler (1996) argued that local government is a unique and valuable institution, as it is the only organization, aside from Parliament (Scottish, UK & European) which is subject to election by all registered voters. Local government has been subject to much reorganization since the early 1970s, Gibb and Knox (1998) stated that there have been over 40 major Acts of Parliament relating to the powers, responsibilities financing and administration of local authorities since 1979 and since 1996 unitary authorities have been in place, meaning that there is single tier local government throughout the UK.

## 2.1.1 Role and Function

One of the main roles for local government is to lift a burden off the shoulders of central government. Elcock (1994) wrote that local government ensures that central government is not overloaded with responsibility for a large number of policies and public services which are all necessary for public well-being, but which need to reflect local needs and circumstances. Local authorities have responsibility for education, housing, social services, highways, transport, museums and art galleries, libraries, planning, strategic planning, economic development, recreation, refuse collection and disposal, weights and measures, food and health inspection, cemeteries and markets. Local authorities thus have a degree of control or influence over a large number of functions which they can use to promote sustainable development.

However, the web of agencies which supply the needs of local communities, as identified by Elcock (1994), range far wider then just the local authority. For example, quangos such as health trusts and enterprise and training councils also play an important role in meeting the needs of communities. This emphasises the need for local authorities to work in partnership with other agencies in the pursuit of sustainability and development of their Local Agenda 21s. The duty that local authorities have to promote Community Planning also places an obligation on local authorities to work together with such agencies in providing services to their communities.

Stewart (1995) wrote that local government can ensure economy in resource utilisation in a society that cannot afford to waste resources by establishing national standards that are unrelated to local perceptions of need. This means that another role of local government is to ensure effective service delivery at a local level. As stated in chapter one (1.2) many of the issues in sustainable development have their roots in local problems which means that being able to develop plans at a local level is useful.

Taking some of the administrative load from central government and ensuring the effective delivery of services at a local level do not in themselves require elected as opposed to appointed officials. This leads Chandler (1996) to argue that another essential value of local government is its capacity for enhancing democracy and self-government in a society which can not afford to entrust control over bureaucracy to 21 ministers and 650 Members of Parliament. Local government therefore, allows a more pluralist system then would otherwise be the case.

Local democracy and the principle of subsidiarity, where decisions are made at the lowest appropriate level, are important in sustainable development. On the surface this appears to indicate that local authorities are in a strong position to promote sustainable development, using the principles central to sustainable development. They represent people at a local level and they have the power to take action there and so they can implement the wishes of the local electorate. However Stewart (1995:80) points out that the turnout of the electorate at local

elections is often less then 50% meaning that a large proportion of people are choosing not to participate in local democracy. He goes on to state that many local authorities do not see low turnout as a problem that they can do anything about and many even see it as an indication that the electorate must be satisfied with the current stated of affairs or else they would be voting for changes. So whilst local authorities fulfil the principle of subsidiarity they are less effective in delivering local democracy as the majority seem unwilling to identify and address the reasons behind voter apathy.

Chandler (1996) also adds a note of caution, stating that local democracy and subsidiarity are less commonly cited as arguments in favour of local government in Britain, which, he argued, is never valued as being important in itself. British justifications for local government commonly lack any reference to its importance in upholding basic human rights and values. He wrote that the European Charter for Local Self-government establishes a right for local authorities to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of their local population. It considers the right of citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs as one of the democratic principles shared by all member states of the Council of Europe, and it is at the local level that this right can be most directly exercised. Britain is one of very few European nations which is not a signatory to the European Charter of Local Self-government. This may indicate that local government in Britain is not fulfilling the principles of subsidiarity and pluralism to the same extent as local government in other countries. This idea

gains credibility when an examination is made of the populations served by the lower tiers of the local government systems in different countries. The average population served by the lower tier of local government is 139,300 in Britain compared to 1,500 in France, 9000 In Germany and 29,200 in Sweden (Chandler 1996)

## 2.1.2   The Powers of Local Government

Acts of Parliament provide a legal framework and assign responsibility for certain services to local authorities and an authority acting outwith these areas (*ultra vires*) can be ordered to stop these activities. Some statutes impose a duty on local authorities, for example, to provide an education for all school age children in their boundaries, while others stipulate what local authorities can, but don't have to, do. In the UK local authorities can do less then in some other countries. German local authorities can do anything provided it is not expressly forbidden, whereas in the UK, local authorities can only act only in designated areas (Elcock 1994). However, the Local Government Act 2000 (and now the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003) does bestow on local authorities the 'Power of Well-being', which allows the pursuit of activities, not explicitly allowed by statute already, which local authorities consider likely to improve the well-being of their area. However it remains to be seen whether this power will be used to promote sustainable development. It may be that this restricted freedom, relative to other European nations, could have an effect on the drive for sustainability. In Chapter One, one of the reasons given for the appropriateness of local authorities to promote sustainability was that they can

include distinctive measures to reflect local circumstances. It would be more realistic to say that they can include distinctive measures in certain boundaries if they are to act legally.

### 2.1.3 The Structure of Local Government

Local government is a democratic institution. In principle the policies and actions of a local authority are determined by its council which is composed of elected representatives, the Councillors. Therefore the decisions of a local authority come from a body representative of the larger population. This point supports the idea of local democracy but Chandler (1996) recognised that increasingly over the last 10 years, local government has been accused of representing not the majority of the electors but small self-interested elites. This accusation is not particular to local government however, but can also be levelled at national government, as it was over such issues as BSE, cash for questions, and genetically modified food crops but Stoker (1999) argued that local government is striving to reach new levels of transparency and accountability. However, a recent MORI poll found that 48% of people still did not trust local government (Jameson 2003), indicating that there still is work to be done.

Local authorities consist of officers who work for a Council and Councillors who are not Council employees but who are directly elected by the residents of the local area to take decisions about services provided by the Council and on a whole range of other issues affecting the area. Most operate with a committee

structure with committees composed of Councillors and appropriate officers. The sovereign body in a Council is the meeting (full Council meeting) of all the elected members (Elcock 1994). These meetings must be held at least once a year but other then this statutory stipulation their frequency is determined by the full Council. The frequency of the meetings has implications for the pace of local authority work as decisions must be ratified by the full Council before they can become the policy of the Council, although they can be delegated to a sub-committee or office.

## 2.1.4    Local Government as a Political Institution

Management in local government is set in a political system and must support the legitimate political processes of the authority. There is no common pattern of politics in local government and political attitudes vary sharply between authorities. An election and/or a change in leadership can bring about sudden and sweeping political changes. Stewart (1995:17) identified some broad trends which can be identified in the political part of local government. The first of these is the growth of party control, as increasingly over the last two decades local elections have been fought on party lines and party discipline on Councils has tightened. Secondly the parties have become more divided over policies such as expenditure, contracting out and decentralisation. Other changes identified by Stewart (1995) included changing styles of leadership, the increasing influence of local political parties, appointments of political aides or advisers, a wider range of political concerns and communication across the Officer-Councillor divide.

As stated in chapter one sustainable development is an ideal that appeals to everyone, even across political divides. All political parties in the UK support it and all local authorities are required to produce a Local Agenda 21 to detail how they will pursue sustainable development. However national government has not imposed a statutory obligation on local authorities with regards to sustainable development and it must compete with other commitments, such as Best Value and Community Planning, which do have a statutory requirement to be pursued. Despite this, the stated commitment from all the main political parties is there and the influence that the political situation of a local authority will have is likely therefore to be revealed in the different steps taken to try to realise the goal of sustainable development.

## 2.1.5 The Evolution Of Local Government Management

It is also important to examine the context in which people in local government may need to work to bring sustainability to fruition. The traditional view of local government is that of organizations which are hierarchical bureaucracies. The large numbers of changes that local authorities have gone through over the past two decades have understandably changed the ways in which local government and local authorities operate. It is widely believed that in response to this pressure, which came from such measures as the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering, measures to increase consumer choice and accountability, the externalisation of services and increasingly stringent financial constraints, local government adopted approaches more commonly

seen in private sector management (Stewart and Welsh 1992). Gibb and Knox (1998) reported that this has seen a general flattening of the organizational structure and public managers adopting private sector management methods. They also stated that this trend has been described as 'new public management', managerialism, or 'accountancy culture.' Clarke and Newman (1997) listed features of old and new management styles with the implied assumption that that moving from the old to the new is beneficial to the organization.

Typical characteristics of 'old' style management include centralisation, producer orientation, uniformity, hierarchy, and monopoly whilst 'new' management characteristics include decentralisation, customer orientation, empowerment, diversity and competition. Lowndes (1998) argued that there is not one 'new management' which can be seen in practice in local government, but rather it is more likely that there are different and also potentially conflicting or contradictory streams of ideas and practices which exist. She goes on to demonstrate that that many local authorities will fall into neither category entirely by pointing to research which demonstrates the persistence of 'old' cultures and practices. In conclusion it is argued that local authorities operate with management recipes or mixes rather then strictly adhering to any one model of management.

## 2.2  LOCAL AUTHORITY PROGRESS

The next part of this chapter will investigate the progress made by local authorities on sustainable development through LA21. There have been a number of surveys which have dealt with this subject over the past three to four years and therefore it is comprised of an examination of secondary data sources rather then a study by the author.   This section is necessarily based on historical information and will represent a stated of affairs that lags behind the present time.   It is based predominantly on:

- Report by COSLA (1999) on the progress made by each Scottish Local Authority

- Survey of Scottish local authorities carried out by Kirsten Robb (1997) as part of MSc Environmental Management thesis.

- Survey by Friends of the Earth in 1995 of all Scottish local authorities (Marston 1996)

- Survey by Worthington and Patton in 1995 of  47 English and Welsh  county councils, 36 metropolitan district councils and 32 London Borough councils.

- Survey by Local Government Management Board of selected local authorities in 1994-95 and 1995 (Tuxworth 1996)

Tuxworth (1996) wrote that Local Agenda 21 (LA21) is the main driver for the development of local policies and programmes for sustainability and, in general, the main thrust of the work relating to LA21 is being carried out by local authorities, rather then any partner organizations.   According to the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), hundreds of local authorities globally have made a strong commitment to the LA21, process indicating an intent to take action,

and Whittaker (1995) and Robb (1997) found that UK local government commitment to LA21 was amongst the highest in Europe.

## 2.3 ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK

As mentioned above, there are a number of different studies that are being examined in order to produce a snapshot of the current situation in local authorities with regards to sustainability. It is necessary, because of this, to establish a common framework in which to place the information that is presented in these studies. Some of the studies are general and cover a wide spectrum of issues relating to LA 21 and sustainability, and others look more specifically at particular factors. Therefore it was felt to be inappropriate to adopt the framework used by any of these studies.

Whittaker (1997) produced a diagram (Fig 2 below) detailing the steps necessary for an effective LA21 process. It groups the steps into those that require action in the local authority and those that require action in the community. This provides a useful framework with which to look at the local authority responses to LA 21, as it covers all the areas which the individual studies examine and also all the areas identified in chapter one as being essential for the LA21 process and the successful pursuit of sustainability.

| Figure 2: Steps in Local Agenda 21 Process |
| --- |

TECHNICAL
(requires
organizational
change)

INTERNAL
ACTIONS

1. Improving the Authority's
   Performance
2. Integrating Sustainable
   Development into the Local
   Authority's Policies
3. Measuring and Monitoring
   Performance

'DIALOGUE'

ACTION IN
THE
COMMUNITY

4. Partnerships

5. Consultation and Participation

6. Awareness Raising and
   Education Demand
   Management

MORE
DIFFICULT

Source: Whittaker (1995:7)

Whittaker (1995) stated that the diagram does not imply any kind of hierarchy or imposed order on the steps represented. They can be carried out simultaneously or in any combination in any order by local authorities. The local authorities' own performance on sustainability will be examined through looking at the levels of awareness and commitment and at projects in progress. The integration of sustainable development into the authorities policies will be looked at, as will the measurement and monitoring procedures being used. Relevant action in the wider local community will also be examined.

In the 1999 COSLA report on the progress of Scottish local authorities very few, if any, local authorities are taking action in all the areas shown above. Most do

mention plans for taking action in the future in all areas. For instance, Aberdeen City Council stated that the concept of sustainable development is *to be* made central to policy formulation and the Councils activities and *they will* take action to simultaneously benefit the local community, economy and environment. It highlights projects involving community involvement, integration of economy, community and environment perspectives and partnership action. It then goes on to say that Aberdeen City Council has therefore agreed to make an explicit commitment to preparing a LA21. It goes on to highlight the need for measurement and monitoring and lists some specific environmental targets. It stated that the Environmental Strategy is at the heart of decision-making and that it permeates all Council operations, activities and Services.

Aberdeenshire Council stated that community involvement and sustainable development are an integral part of Aberdeenshire Councils Corporate Plan. This report is written in the future tense stating how we will work and what we want to do and so on. It mentions community involvement and some specific projects for waste management and safe routes to school, biodiversity action plans and also education and health promotion as current projects which come under LA21.

All but three local authorities stated that they had drawn up a LA21 document and give details of work or projects which is being done, or which will be done, under LA21. However most indicate that they are in the very early stages of implementation and that most of the work remains to be done. This is positive in

that it means that LA21 is seen as an ongoing project but negative in that it means

progress to date has for the most part been relatively slow.

## 2.3.1 AWARENESS OF AND COMMITMENT TO LOCAL AGENDA 21

This is a basic but important area, as the level of support which a

commitment to the LA21 process creates will be very important for the

successful delivery of any programme of action (Tuxworth 1996). Internal

awareness of sustainability and commitment to LA21 will be necessary for

improving the performance of a local authority on sustainability criteria.

### 2.3.1.1 Awareness

Worthington and Patton (1995) found in a survey of 115 local authorities

(63% response rate) that 98% of them were familiar with the term

sustainable development and chose the Brundtland Commissions definition

of sustainable development which was adopted by both the Earth Summit in

(1992) and the UK Strategy of Sustainable Development (1994) when asked

what they understood by the term. The 32 (100%) Scottish local authorities

in the 1999 COSLA report are all obviously aware of sustainable

development but just over a half actually give a definition of what they mean

by sustainable development. Of these, a few still give the Brundtland

definition but most do go further and attempt to explain what sustainability

means to them. For the most part, though, these remain vague. They

include

'taking action which simultaneously benefits the local community, economy and environment (p6)'

'balance diminishing resources and promoting sustainable development (p30)'

'enhance quality of life and health (p66)'

However there are a number of local authorities who have obviously thought more about what they mean by sustainability and give more detailed definitions of what they wish to achieve. These include:

'maintain and improve the quality of life......by delivering first class public services; protect and improve.....the environment [for all] now and in the future; sustain and develop our communities by encouraging a wide range of successful economic activities (p10)'

'eliminate poverty, deprivation and unemployment; protect the weak and vulnerable in the community; secure a quality environment; strive for a society based on equality (p38)'

Of those in the COSLA report (1999) which give some definition of sustainable development, the most Brundtland definition or some variation of this was, which does not go in to much detail. In total, only six go in to much greater detail about what sustainability meant to them. It appears that some local authorities are working at establishing exactly what they mean by sustainable development whilst others rely on Brundtland and others fail to define what the mean by sustainable development to any extent at all.

As established in the previous section, the Brundtland definition, and by extension, others like it, are too vague to be of much use in formulating policy and procedure which support sustainability and section 2.2.2 below shows that many local authorities equate sustainable development with environmental issues and that they do not consider fully the economic and social implications. This indicates that although there is a general awareness of sustainable development, a deeper understanding of many of the important concepts behind the term may be lacking in many local authorities. It appears that local authorities may have to go beyond the definition used by the UK Strategy of Sustainable Development and establish exactly what sustainability means to them.

Tuxworth (1996) found, however, that nearly 61% of responding authorities had arranged awareness raising or sustainability training for their members/officers. Robb (1997) also found that most (75%) were organising some training on sustainable development, but very few included this as part of their corporate induction programme for any incoming member of staff. Only two local authorities in COSLA (199) made any mention of staff training but this may not represent the true picture as they were not explicitly asked about this. Given this it does appear from the other earlier studies that attempts are being made to increase awareness and understanding of sustainability in a significant number of local authorities.

## 2.3.1.2 Commitment

In the 1999 COSLA report, all the local authorities mention that they have a commitment to LA21 and sustainable development but three actually stated that they have a commitment to produce a LA21 at some point in the future.

Tuxworth (1996) found that, based on the 1996 LGMB survey, 38.5% of local authorities had a strong commitment to change in the authorities operations to support LA21 and 49.1% had more tentative support. Only 2.5% had no support at that time for LA21 in the authority. The same survey found that the most common reason for non-involvement in the LA21 process was local government reorganization, although this was followed quite closely by lack of staff time. Robb (1997) found that 76% of respondents stated that their local authority had a corporate commitment to LA21 while only 14% were signatories to the UK Local Government Declaration on Sustainable Development.

Worthington and Patton (1995) found from their study that whilst LA21 had been discussed at officer level by over 95% of respondents, it had only been discussed by the full council in 30%, with fewer then 50% of all respondents claiming to have established a formal co-ordination mechanism for developing a local sustainable development strategy. These findings tie in with those of other studies. Tuxworth (1996), identified a survey carried out by the Local Government Management Board in 1996, which found that 90.6% of local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales stated that they

were committed to the LA21 process. Marston (1996) however, points to a different survey, carried out by Friends of the Earth in 1995 which found that only 18% of Scottish local authorities had begun to seriously address the task of sustainability at the local level. Only seven councils were then implementing LA21 in a practical sense, most of which revolved around awareness-raising exercises, and two councils were still working on increasing political support for the adoption of a LA21. Even allowing for local government reorganization into unitary authorities in 1996, this is a large difference.

There is obviously a difference between being committed to the LA21 process and actively addressing the necessary tasks. Miller (1997) summarised the situation by concluding that the majority of local authorities are aware of and committed to LA21 but their work may not yet be starting to have an effect on the thinking and the actions of local government. In the 1999 report by COSLA on LA21 in Scotland it was reported that most local authorities mention LA21 Officers and 15 mention groups which have been set up to address sustainability issues. Again though this may not represent the actual stated of affairs as the local authorities were not asked explicitly about this.

It appears that there is a difference between a commitment in words or writing, which most local authorities appear to have made, and a commitment which goes beyond this into necessary action, which has

occurred to a much lesser extent. This is examined in more detail in the sections below.

## 2.4 LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO LOCAL AGENDA 21

As established in chapter one, local authorities need to take action to 'get their own house in order' for the implementation of a LA21 to be successful. There need to be internal changes in local authorities to 'green' the authority and help the sustainability ethos to permeate all levels and areas of the authority . This in turn will aid in the necessary integration of environmental, economic and social factors in decision making.

### 2.4.1 Internal Changes in Local Authorities

The studies by Worthington and Patton (1995) and the LGMB (Tuxworth 1996) led to the emergence of a number of interesting facts relating to changes in the structure of local authorities to accommodate groups or individuals promoting sustainable development.

Where a new mechanism had been created it tended to take the form of an interdepartmental committee, task force or steering group. Generally these groups had a membership greater then 20 and both officer and member representation. Tuxworth (1996) found that only 15% of respondents did not have such a group. Robb (1997) found that 60% of respondents had cross departmental working groups and 33% also had an officer/elected member group in addition to the cross departmental group. COSLA (1999) has 12 out

of 32 specifically mentioning cross departmental working groups. This appears to be less then those in the earlier studies but again it must be remembered that in the COSLA study local authorities were not asked specifically about any part of their LA21 Process

The majority of any new structures for developing LA21 had only been recently put into place and a significant number of local authorities had yet to establish any formal structure (Worthington and Patton 1995). Some authorities had used existing structures and mechanisms rather then establishing a group specifically dedicated to LA21 and only a minority of authorities had an individual(s) working permanently on LA21. In addition, very few had outside representation by voluntary, business and/or community groups (Worthington and Patton 1995). Most had allocated responsibility for A21 to an *in situ* officer with environmental credentials, but again this indicates that sustainability is seen as an environmental issue (Tuxworth 1996). Robb (1997) found that most LA21 officers were from environmental or public protection departments but although environment or planning departments mostly led LA21 groups they did have representatives from most other departments. In COSLA (1999) 6 out of 32 mentioned that they had a specific officer in charge of LA21 and promoting sustainable development.

Registration with some form of Environmental Management System, such as BS7750 or Eco-Management Audit System (EMAS) is used by Tuxworth (1996) to indicate if action was being taken for sustainability, although again

this is emphasising the environmental aspect of sustainability and so could not stand alone as any indication of a commitment to action for sustainability. It was found that very few local authorities were actually accredited to either scheme in 1996 (1.8% and 7.3% respectively) but a much larger proportion (4.0% and 25%) claimed to be adhering to the principles of a scheme without becoming accredited to it, with 31% considering accreditation at some point in the future. Robb (1997) found only 6% of respondents cited an Environmental Management System as an innovation they had carried out to support LA21. In the 1999 COSLA report only 2 out of 32 mention an Environmental Management System as part of their sustainability programme.

Only 37% were working on developing indicators to measure movement towards or away from sustainability and only 17.5% had completed a Stated of the Environment Report (Tuxworth 1996). Robb (1997) found that the development and use of sustainability indicators was very limited with only 3% carrying out work in this area. 4 out of 32 indicate that they have carried out work on developing sustainability indicators in the 1999 COSLA report and nine more mention Stated of the Environment reports.

Worthington and Patton (1995) found that 60% of authorities had decided to review their structure and less then 50% had already undertaken an environmental audit as part of their planning and decision making process.

## 2.4.2 Integration of Sustainable Development into the Authorities' Activities

Jackson and Roberts (1997) found that in many local authorities relatively little attention has been paid to the social dimension of sustainable development and long term strategies in these areas tended not to consider the sustainability argument. Robb (1997) found that not all local authorities considered social welfare and education to be an integral part of sustainable development and so do not consider these areas in their LA21.

Tuxworth (1996) also found that LA21 and sustainability had minor or no influence in the majority of non-environmental local authority departments. It is apparent that there is a tendency to view sustainability and LA21 as purely environmental issues, and to ignore the social and economic dimensions of them. This is probably hampering the integration of sustainability into all areas of an authorities activities. Robb (1997) wrote that the rapid uptake of LA 21 in planning and environmental departments can be attributed to significant pre-existing levels of environmental activity in these departments. Action for sustainability in these areas is building on capacities already in place which do not exist in other departments towards the social end of the spectrum.

COSLA (1999) also shows that some local authorities regard sustainability as an environmental issue. This can be seen from an examination of the projects

and issues each local authority highlights in their reports. Some examples of those that present an environmental bias are shown below.

- Environmental Communications Plan, Environment Trust, Air Quality and Traffic (p58-59)

- Air Quality, Recycling, Safety, Environmental Improvements, Energy Conservation (p14-17)

- Environment Strategy, Friends of the Earth Resolution on Climate Change, Moving Forwards and Greenways Transportation Strategy, Home Energy Conservation Report, Planning and Development, Biodiversity Action Plan (p52-55)

- Recycling (p48-51)

- 'Our LA21 Document is our Environmental Charter..' (p132)

Local authorities appear to be beginning to take action to try to turn their commitments to sustainable development from words into action. Many are establishing cross-departmental sustainability working groups, but there still seems to be a problem in integrating the principles of sustainable development into all areas of a local authority and integrating environmental, social and economic factors in decision making. The fact that sustainable development still is viewed as an environmental issue to quite a large extent is hindering this process.

## 2.5 CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

LA21, as established in the previous section (chapter 1), requires that sustainable development be based on democratic participation of all members of the community. Robb (1997) found that the activities of most (58%) local authorities to encourage participation has been limited to seeking the public's opinions on already decided council strategies. This indicates that participation strategies tend to stick to the 'Top Down Strategy' or 'Limited Dialogue Strategy' identified by Freeman (1996) where the local authority dominates the participation process, sets the agenda and determines the direction of policy and the choice of priorities. This contradicts with the opinion of most (80%) local authorities, also identified by Robb (1997) who see their role in the participation process as facilitators. It is apparent that in this area, there is a gap between espoused theory and theory in use.

**Table 2**

Existing participation structures being adapted to fulfil the requirements of LA21

| Participation Structure | 1994-95 (%) | 1996(%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Community Forums | 16.2 | 39.6 |
| Area Local Service Committees | 3.2 | 9.5 |
| Planning Consultation Procedures | 8.7 | 25.8 |

Source: Tuxworth (1996:287)

Tuxworth (1996) presents the information shown in the table 2 above. This shows how local authorities are using existing participative structures in LA21.

Using existing participation structures will allow the authority to benefit from the past experiences of these structures but Tuxworth (1996) found that fewer than four mentioned any use of using existing consultation mechanisms in housing, social services or education in relation to LA21. Yet again, the social aspect of sustainability appears to have been overlooked.

Tuxworth and Carpenter (1995) stated that out of all UK local authorities only one in three had engaged in new consultative methods as a part of LA21 in 1995 and Table 3, below, shows an increase on this in 1996. Although, as mentioned above, using existing participation and consultation mechanisms has advantages, they will not reach members of the community not already involved in them and as LA21 requires the participation of as wide a section of the community as possible then it will probably be necessary to implement some new participatory mechanism.

**Table 3**

New participation structures being adopted to fulfil the requirements of LA21

| Participation Structure | 1994-95 (%) | 1996(%) |
|---|---|---|
| Public Consultation Exercise | 10.7 | 35.6 |
| Questionnaires | 11.0 | 28.0 |
| Focus Groups | 7.8 | 25.5 |
| LA21 Forum or Similar | 20.1 | 44.7 |
| Working Group/Round Table with Local | 13.9 | 34.2 |

Organizations

| | |
|---|---|
| Planning for Real Exercises | 12.0 |
| Parish Maps | 13.8 |
| Visioning/Future Search Exercises | 18.5 |

Source: Tuxworth (1996:288)

Worthington and Patton (1995) found that only 25% of respondents claimed to have had direct consultation with local business, only 30% had spoken to local voluntary groups and just 16% had engaged in face to face consultation with local citizens. Sharwood and Russell (1997) found that generally industry and commerce were hugely under-represented in the LA21 process and that this was largely dominated by environmental groups.

COSLA (1999) found that nearly 31 out of 32 authorities make some mention of consultation with, and the participation of, members of the community and partnerships with groups in the community but over half talk in terms of plans to get people involved in the future. Tuxworth (1996) wrote that the real test for participatory action structures will come when their ability to bring about practical action is assessed, but an extensive search failed to uncover any literature relating specifically to this area.

## 2.6 BARRIERS TO LOCAL AGENDA 21

Worthington and Patton (1995) pointed to a number of difficulties being faced by authorities faced with developing a LA21. These included funding, the establishment of a formal culture and the development of consultation processes and partnerships with the community. Whittaker (1995) examined a different study carried out by the University of Kent which suggested that the main barriers to sustainable development are lack of will and resources and uncertainty about what needs to be done. McCormick (1995) stated that there is a lack of political will behind sustainability and Robb (1997) found that 82% of respondents felt that budgetary constraints would be the main impediment for future progress on LA21, although 80% also felt that those responsible for LA 21 in an authority were unable to spend sufficient time promoting it due to their additional responsibilities.

It appears that the main barriers to LA21 are now institutional rather then technical and it is these institutional factors which will need to be addressed for the commitment of local authorities to LA21 and sustainable development to translate into effective action. Voisey and O'Riordan (1997a) also stated that it is institutional factors which must be tackled to take sustainable development forward.

## 2.7 ESTABLISHING THE FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

As can be seen from above, much of the literature regarding local authorities, sustainability and LA21 takes the form of reviews of surveys which asked local authorities how they were progressing in terms of what actions they had taken, but there is little assessment of the success of these actions. To a much lesser extent,

these surveys also covered barriers which the local authorities were encountering. However, at the outset of this research project there was very little literature which attempted to explain why, six years after Agenda 21 and two years after local authorities were supposed to have their own LA21s, they were still experiencing such difficulty in achieving the goals of the integration of sustainability throughout their activities and public participation. In the course of the research project some studies emerged which did address the possible institutional factors which were affecting the development of sustainability. (Voisey and O'Riordan 1997a, 1997b),

As the technical barriers to sustainability have been overcome, and it has been established that the existing barriers are human and institutional, it would be legitimate to go on to examine the role of organizational culture in the success or failure of local authorities in implementing LA21. This is because in any organization, the culture is the product of the human and institutional factors which existed, or previously existed in the organization. Given this the following research aims have been developed.

- To assess the extent to which the 'sustainability ethos' has permeated local authorities and identify organizational factors (e.g. culture, decision making processes) which either facilitate or provide a barrier to this.

- To determine the extent to which this influences the success or failure of Local Agenda 21 implementation.

- To examine the effect of changes in organizational factors on the above.

This will require the examination of the institution of local government and diagnosis of organizational factors, some of which may not be immediately apparent, and following attempt to bring about institutional change in the organization.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

## 3.0 OVERVIEW

Ghauri, Grohaug and Kristianlund (1995) argued that there was a need to understand the basic methodological approaches to management research, but also to realise that there is no one best approach. The best approach is contingent on the research focus and questions, the available resources, in terms of time and money, and the abilities of the researcher. Gill and Johnson (1991) stated that an understanding of the philosophical and epistemological debates which surround research methodology is essential as a basis from which to understand methodological approaches in organizational and management research.

There are a number of approaches to research and several ways of classifying them. The first of these involves classifying research according to its purpose from solving widely applicable theoretical problems to solving a very specific practical problem in one company. The second is to classify approaches according to the broad approach taken to the research along a continuum of increasing rigour from ethnographic methods based on single cases to laboratory experiments. Thirdly approaches can be classified according to whether the emphasis is on induction or deduction and lastly, they can be classified according to whether quantitative or qualitative methods are favoured (Gill and Johnson 1991).

This section will examine the most prominent epistemological divisions through the identification of the basic characteristics of different paradigms, that is the basic belief system which guides the researcher, and assess their suitability as a basis from which to address the given research aims established in the previous section and shown below.

- To assess the extent to which the 'sustainability ethos' has permeated local authorities and identify organizational factors (e.g. culture, decision making processes) which either facilitate or provide a barrier to this.

- To determine the extent to which this influences the success or failure of Local Agenda 21 implementation.

- To examine the effect of changes in organizational factors on the above.

This will require the diagnosis of organizational factors, some of which may not be immediately apparent, and the study of attempts to change the organization.

## 3.1 WHAT IS A PARADIGM

Barnes (1982:17) described the paradigm as the single most important concept to come out of the work of Thomas Kuhn and defines it as 'a specific concrete problem solution which has gained acceptance......as a valid procedure'. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined a paradigm as the basic set of values which shape the way in which the researcher views the world. According to Hollis (1994:85) a paradigm has two main aspects. It contains a set of guiding rules about the character of the world and how it is to be studied and also represents the social situation in which it exists. Gill

and Johnson (1991) wrote that it is a perspective from which distinctive conceptualisations and explanations of phenomena are proposed. Guba and Lincoln (1994) elaborated on this. They stated that a paradigm is composed of three important parts. These are:

- **Epistemology:** This defines the nature of the relationship between the would-be-knower and what can be known. It relates to whether or not they are considered independent of one another.

- **Ontology:** This defines the nature of reality in terms of whether there is a 'real' world about which absolute truths can be determined or if there are only 'subjective truths'.

- **Methodology:** This defines how the would-be-knower can go about finding out whatever needs to be known. There is a degree of confusion surrounding the term methodology as it has been used to refer to an individual data gathering technique and also to define a whole approach to research (Guba and Lincoln 1994). This distinction is important as it has been argued that methodology as an overall process can be aligned to a particular paradigm, but methodology as an individual data gathering technique can fall into many different paradigms depending on how it is used and interpreted (Cassell and Symon 1994). It is the way in which the necessary information is gathered, examined, interpreted, used and presented which reflects the research paradigm of the researcher.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) highlight a range of alternative paradigms such as postpositivism and participative inquiry which can and have been used to carry out research, but Barnes (1982) argued that acceptance of any one particular paradigm

can indicate problems for research because of the perceived inadequacies of any selected paradigm, such as unsatisfactory predictive power or limited scope. Despite this many researchers adhere to one particular paradigm and will defend its philosophical stance from attack with almost religious fervor (Barnes 1982).

Those research paradigms which are perhaps the most diametrically opposed in their view of the world, with others lying on a point on a continuum between the two, are positivism and phenomenology and these are examined in more detail below.

## 3.2    POSITIVISM

- **Epistemology**: The epistemology in positivism is dualist and objective. The investigator and investigated object are assumed to be independent entities and therefore the investigator can study the object without influencing it or being influenced it by it. Values and biases are prevented from having an influence on the outcomes of research.

- **Ontology**: An apprehendable reality is assumed to exist independently of those seeking to uncover it and research can uncover the true stated of affairs.

- **Methodology**: The dominant methodology in positivism is experimentation. Hypotheses are stated and then subjected to rigorous tests to verify them. The main difference between positivism and postpositivism is that postpositivism uses experiments to falsify rather then verify hypotheses (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

The positivist tradition is generally considered to have originated from the work of Comte and Saint-Simon in the first half of the nineteenth century (Bryant 1985). The positivist paradigm assumes that there is an objective truth which exists in the world and this can be revealed through the scientific method of systematic and statistical measurement of the relationships between variables. This has been the largely dominant paradigm for the past century (Susman and Evered 1978). The positivist approach emphasises the use in social science of the methods which are used in the natural sciences, and applies the scientific method to human affairs which are conceived as belonging to a natural order open to objective inquiry (Hollis 1985)

### 3.2.1 Characteristics of Positivism

Although not all those who subscribe to this approach will agree on exactly what this approach consists of, Bryman (1992) identified the following characteristics of positivism

1. The belief that the methods and procedures commonly seen in the natural sciences are appropriate also to social sciences. That people (the subject matter of social science) attribute meaning to their environment and because as individuals each could be unique in their interpretation of this environment, is not seen as an obstacle to the implementation of the scientific method.

2. The belief that only that which can be observed and measured can become knowledge. This rules out the inclusion of highly subjective areas such as 'feelings'. Positivism asserts the claims of experience as the ultimate

foundation of human knowledge and denies the possibility of meaningful

discourse concerning supersensible objects (Bryant 1985:3).

3. Scientific knowledge is arrived at through the accumulation of tested and

verified facts which add to the theories in the area concerned. Theory

expresses the findings of empirical research and research is carried out to

test theories.

4. Scientific theories provide the backcloth to further empirical research.

Causal connections between entities can be postulated and then tested.

Theories are important in the identification of significant experience and

the selection of objects for observation (Bryant 1985:3).

5. There is a need to purge the researcher of their own values which may

impair their objectivity and undermine the validity of the research.

Broadly, it can be said that positivism reveals itself in the emphasis on facts

which are the products of observation, and on devising valid and reliable

measurement procedures for these facts (Cassell and Symon 1994).

### 3.2.2 Criticisms of Positivism

Susman and Evered (1978) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) argued that this

approach has deficiencies which limit its use in generating knowledge for use

in solving problems that organizations face. Their main arguments are that:

1. Positivism assumes that its methods are value neutral but knowledge and

human interests are interwoven. Bryant (1985) adds that positivism needs a

neutral observation language for the recording of experience without adding

anything to the experience and follows a chain of evidence which strongly suggests that this does not exist.

2. Human behaviour cannot be understood fully without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by humans to their activities.

3. Positivism treats humans as objects of inquiry when they are initiators of action in their own right with the capacity for self-reflection and the ability to collaborate in the diagnosis of their problems and the generation of knowledge.

4. Positivism eliminates the role of history in the generation of knowledge but present patterns of behaviour may have evolved from the unique history of a particular organization.

5. Positivism assumes that a system is defined only to the extent that a language exists to describe it, but a representational system is always less then the actual system. It necessitates stripping some variables from consideration which, if allowed to exert their influence could alter findings.

6. Any number of theories could be supported by the same set of established facts. With a coherent set of facts it is not possible to arrive by induction at a single definitely correct theory.

### 3.2.3    Suitability of Positivism as a Research Paradigm

Point 2 in 3.2.1, Characteristics of Positivism, stated that only that which can be observed and measured can become knowledge, although Bryant (1985:4) stated that it is difficult to be sure just what is accessible to observation in principle.    As was noted in chapter two, the research aims require the

examination and diagnosis of organizational factors which are not always visible or tangible, such as organizational culture.

Cummings and Worley (1993) stated that much of organizational culture lies below the surface in the organization so is intangible, and that means that it is not observable. They go on to state that an organizations members are often only aware of the organizational culture at a subconscious level and propose that identification of corporate culture requires subjective interpretation and again this is unacceptable under the positivist paradigm. Susman and Evered (1978) established that the positivism has deficiencies when it comes to dealing with problems in organizations. It would appear that in this case, the positivist paradigm indicates that the research questions cannot generate data that can be translated into knowledge because the research would not fulfil the positivist criteria of what can become knowledge. The research agenda necessarily entails the examination of subjective areas where interpretation is necessary to establish meaning. It is evident, therefore, that positivism would not be an appropriate paradigm with which to approach this research.

## 3.3   PHENOMENOLOGY

- **Epistemology:**   The epistemology of phenomenology is subjective. Knowledge is created in human interaction and the investigator and the investigated object are seen to be interdependent.

- **Ontology:** There are multiple, apprehendable and sometimes conflicting realities that are the product of human intellect and they may change as their

constructors do. Reality is therefore a social construction rather then something which exists independently.

- **Methodology:** The dominant methodologies in phenomenology are interpretative. They consist of exercises focused on subjective meaning and experience. They are emic, that is examined from the inside, and idiographic, that is focused on the individual (Holstein and Gubrium 1994)

Phenomenology is considered to have originated early in the twentieth century with the work of Husserl who proposed a programme of study of structures of peoples' understanding and interpretation of the world (Bryman 1988:51). Phenomenology gained popularity among social scientists in the 1970's as at this time there was a backlash to positivism. It was felt that by ignoring the subjective dimension of all human action and the internal logic and interpretative processes accompanying it, the approach reduced it to the status of automatic response to external stimuli (Bryman 1992). Filmer, Jenks and Seale (1998) write that phenomenology assumes that the social world is intrinsically meaningful and Gill and Johnson (1991) argued that human beings attach meaning to events and phenomena which surround them. The phenomenological approach assumes that it is this subjective process which is important and that it is through understanding how people make sense of the world that knowledge can be created.

### 3.3.1 Characteristics of Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach can be exemplified by four main themes identified by Bryman (1988), Guba and Lincoln (1995) and Cassell and Symon (1994).

1. People and their social reality are fundamentally different from the subject matter of the physical and natural sciences.

2. Any attempt to understand social reality must be grounded in people's experience of that reality. The researcher must try to understand the interpretative processes of different individuals and to see things from the point of view of others

3. Social action must be examined by social scientists in terms of the subject's own interpretation of their action and motivational background.

4. It emphasises an approach with no clear-cut objectivity or reality and where social reality is seen as emerging from the shared creativity of individuals.

### 3.3.2    Criticisms of Phenomenology

Most criticism of this paradigm for social research, arise when it is judged on a positivist criteria, such as that established in 3.2.1, whereupon it is accused of lacking internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity, and so of being ascientific (Guba and Lincoln 1995). Bryant (1985:178) wrote that the phenomenological method of attending to experiences precisely as they present themselves, that is, as a structure of many layered intentions, is not and cannot be one of the conventional methods of social science. It is

described as more radically descriptive then any method of an empirical science could conceivably be - or could ever want to be.

There are criticisms which do not arise from the phenomenological failure to meet positive criteria. Bryman (1988:52) writes that if the researcher fails to recognise and encapsulate the meaningful nature of actions and cannot interpret them, then they run the risk of constructing a fictional, non-existing world from their observations.

### 3.3.4 Suitability of Phenomenology as a Research Paradigm

'Ordinarily human beings respond to one another...by interpreting one another's actions or remarks and then reacting on the basis of the interpretation. Responses, consequently are not made directly to the stimulation but follow rather upon interpretation.' Blumer (1946:170) cited in Somekh and Thaler (1997:144)

This quotation suggests why phenomenology is a more suitable paradigm with which to approach the research then positivism. It shows how interpretation of stimuli is important in social situations as a basis for further actions. Cummings and Worley (1993) placed this in an organizational setting and wrote that it was how members of an organization interpret its culture, either consciously or unconsciously, that contributes to their behaviour, and further actions, in the organization. The research agenda requires that aspects of the organization such as culture, how organizational members interpret this and

how this affects behaviour in the organization, are investigated. The socially

constructed reality in the organizations is of interest in the research.

Phenomenology is not concerned by the fact that much of what is addressed

by the research questions is intangible and unobservable. It allows for it to be

uncovered through the interpretation of what happens in the organization. It is

a research paradigm which allows for a subject matter which is open to

subjective interpretation to be investigated and to generate results which

constitute knowledge. Given the evidence, phenomenology appears to be an

eminently more suitable paradigm with which to approach the research

questions.

## 3.4   QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

There has long been debate as to whether the difference between qualitative and

quantitative research is an epistemological or methodological question (Bryman

1984). Cassell and Symon (1994) argued that epistemologically the qualitative

approach is analogous to phenomenology and the quantitative approach analogous

to positivism although Denzin and Lincoln (1994) pointed out that although this

may be the situation now, historically qualitative research was defined in the

positivist paradigm and it is still possible to see qualitative research used in the

positivist paradigm and quantitative research used in the phenomenological

paradigm. This indicates that quantitative and qualitative research can be just data

gathering techniques rather then a complete epistemological standpoint and as stated

in section 3.1 it is the way in which the data are interpreted, analysed and presented which reflect the epistemology and ontology of the researcher.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argued that the word qualitative implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not able to be rigorously measured. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality and the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being studied. Quantitative researchers emphasise the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables. They go on to note five major differences between qualitative and quantitative research. These are:

1.  The Use of Positivism.

    Although many qualitative researchers report with statistical measures they seldom use the complex statistical methods or measurements which quantitative researchers are drawn to. It is not anticipated that this programme of research will lend itself to complex statistical interpretation. It is envisaged at this early stage that the data generated by the study will not lend itself to easy categorisation. Indeed, as demonstrated in chapter 2, much of the research conducted in this area of local government and sustainability has been done in such a manner so as to allow categorisation of results to allow for statistical analysis, and it was demonstrated that while this was showing that there were problems, it was inadequate in examining why these problems existed.

2. Acceptance of Post-modern Sensibilities

Qualitative researchers reject the positivist methods and assumptions on the grounds that the criteria used are irrelevant to their work. Instead they are attached to alternative postmodern methods for evaluating their work , such as personal responsibility, multivoiced texts and so on. As established in section 3.2.3 the positivist paradigm was rejected as being irrelevant for this research

3. Capturing the Point of View of the Individual

Qualitative researchers can get close to the subjects' perspective through detailed interviewing and observation whilst quantitative researchers have to rely on more remote and inferential empirical materials. Section 3.3 established the need to understand the viewpoint of the research subjects.

4. Examining the Constraints of Everyday Life

Quantitative researchers abstract from the world and seldom study it directly. Qualitative researchers see the real world in action and embed their findings in it. Section 3.3 established the need to look at the real world.

5. Securing Rich Descriptions

Qualitative researchers believe that securing rich description of the social world is valuable whilst quantitative researchers do not usually attach such a high degree of importance to it. It is considered necessary to able established the importance of gaining a full picture of the social order that is the focus of the research.

This research aims to look at organizations through the eyes of people who work in them and derive a picture of the social reality in the organization. Positivism has been rejected as a research paradigm and the research requires to be carried out in the real world. Therefore for this research project the research will be qualitative rather then quantitative, which ties in with the albeit not entirely accurate analogy, made at the start of this section, of qualitative research representing the phenomenological viewpoint.

## 3.5 MULTIMETHOD RESEARCH

As shown in this chapter, there are different philosophical bases for research and there are also a number of research methods which can be employed, such as participant observation, interviews, surveys, action research, experimentation and ethnography (Brewer and Hunter 1989).

In choosing an approach to research, both the nature and content of the problem and the available resources will have to be considered. Very often it is not enough to choose between a positivist and a phenomenological approach. Trow (1957) argued that different kinds of information about man and society are gathered most fully and economically in different ways, and the problem under investigation properly dictates the methods of investigation. This view seems to be implied by Sharp and Howard (1996) in their discussion of the social sciences 'kit of tools' to which researchers turn to find the methods and techniques most useful to the problems at hand. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) also wrote that often there is a need to work

between competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms. Cassell and Symon (1994) argued that researchers should be pragmatic and adopt whatever 'tools' are available and seem appropriate, and Brewer and Hunter (1989) add that this also affords opportunities for triangulation.

The implication is that in the real world of carrying out research the philosophical arguments for and against different paradigms can seem less relevant and the researchers should be adopt a pragmatic stance and use the methods and tools which are the most appropriate for any given situation .

## 3.6   CONCLUSIONS

Having established that positivism was an unsuitable paradigm from which to approach the research it was rejected. Phenomenology was established as a suitable paradigm and so this philosophical stance will underpin and guide the research. The research will be carried out with phenomenology as an underlying philosophical base, but this will not be allowed to prevent the use of the most appropriate research methods, tools and techniques for any given situation which is encountered. An examination of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research established that qualitative research would be more effective at gathering the data required to effectively address the aims of the research.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 4.0 OVERVIEW

Having established the philosophical underpinning of the research in the previous chapter it is now necessary to select the research methodology and methods which can be best used to address the issues raised in the research questions. Ghauri, Grohaug and Kristianlund (1995) stated that there is no one best method for management research and that the choice will depend on the research problems and the purpose of the research. Cassell and Symon (1994) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994) also argue that the final choice of research method will depend on the research questions. This chapter will identify the research tools and methods that are available and decide on an appropriate methodology and the data gathering techniques which can be used in this methodology.

## 4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the need to derive an appropriate research methodology from the research questions, it will be useful to restate the research questions, established in Chapter Two, at this point. These are shown below:

- To assess the extent to which the 'sustainability ethos' has permeated local authorities and identify organizational factors (e.g. culture, decision making processes) which either facilitate or provide a barrier to this.

- To determine the extent to which this influences the success or failure of Local Agenda 21 implementation.

- To examine the effect of changes in organizational factors on the above.

## 4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

It will be useful to distinguish at this point between research methodologies and research methods. Sarantakos (1998) wrote that opinions of what constitutes a methodology and when a method can become a methodology can be confusing. In deciding on a research methodology a framework for carrying out the research is being formed. In this framework any number of tools or techniques, or research methods, could be utilized and these tools and techniques are not limited to being used only in one methodology. Some research methodologies could also be research methods in other research methodologies. For instance case studies can be a research methodology using methods such as interviews, surveys and participant observation or they can be a tool used in a methodology such as action research.

Gill and Johnson (1991:147) cite the practice employed by Mintzberg (1973) of reviewing the research methods of previous similar studies as useful in the justification of a research approach. A quick examination of recent literature revealed that different techniques have been used to examine organizational culture and change. For instance, Boak, Martin and Thompson (1997) in an examination of the role of senior managers and Potter (1995) in an investigation into attitudes and levels of customer care in an organization, employed questionnaire surveys. Kitchener and Whipp (1997) used case studies in an examination of change in

hospitals, and Boon and Ram (1998), in investigating quality implementation, and Somekh and Thaler (1997) in investigating organizational cultures in an educational setting, used action research. Lee (1999) felt that an examination of literature on organizational research between 1984 and 1994 showed a narrow range of qualitative designs being used. The most common were based on Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory or Eisenhardt's (1989) or Yin's (1984) work on case studies. From this a number of methodologies, and methods, can be identified which could be considered for use in this research project. These include surveys, case studies, grounded theory and action research.

Examining the research aims and identifying the issues that they raise, and comparing these with studies in recent literature makes it apparent that adopting a survey methodology would be inappropriate. As can be seen from the studies cited above this is an appropriate methodology when the area to be studied is clearly identified and defined and the results relatively easily measured or categorized. Guimarares (1997), in an investigation into the effect of Total Quality Management on whether employees intended to leave the organization, used questionnaire surveys. In order to address the research questions it is necessary to examine such phenomena as organizational culture, which are not easily identified or measured. In Chapter Two, section 2.2 the main method used in the numerous studies was questionnaire surveys and it was concluded that while this methodology successfully identified what the problems were it was not able to address why they existed or how they could be addressed. Therefore this would not be a suitable research methodology.

Case studies, grounded theory and action research are methodologies with which the research questions could be successfully addressed. Lee (1999) suggested that case studies are suited to an examination of how and why real life phenomena occur under conditions where researchers have little control. They are, by nature, in depth studies with the emphasis on the processes and relationships which are embedded in the situation being studied (Gill and Johnson 1991). Grounded theory provides theory that is grounded in reality and gives explanations of events as they occur. It allows researchers to explore rich data in relatively uncharted waters and allows for interpretive understanding of what is going on (Field and Morse 1985). In grounded theory reality is socially and culturally based and the aim of using the grounded theory approach is to understand the nature of human behaviour by generating theories about social and psychological phenomena (Chenitz and Swanson 1986). Both these methodologies are compatible with the phenomenological philosophical underpinning of the research and would allow for a sufficiently detailed study of the factors identified in the research questions.

However on examination of the action research methodology it was felt that this offered beneficial aspects above those found in grounded theory or case studies. It is a methodology developed specifically to deal with situations where action and change are integral to the research project, as they are here. Zuber-Skerritt (1996) argued that its strength comes from its recognition of change as a continuous process. There is a strong framework with which to approach the research and importantly there are build in periods for reflection, where the results of the research

already carried out can be considered. This will allow for an assessment to be made of the effectiveness of data gathering techniques and whether new areas of investigation should be considered. There are also several research methods which can be employed under action research, including case studies (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead 1996). So whilst it is a close competition between the research methodologies, and case studies or grounded theory could also be used to address the research issues adequately, action research offers slightly more and so it is action research that will be used as the research methodology

## 4.3 DOING ACTION RESEARCH

In action research the researcher is involved in conjunction with the members of an organization in dealing with a problem that is recognised and agreed on by both parties (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead 1996). It is a collaborative process between the researcher and the organization, and following mutual agreement on the problem, there is a planned intervention by the researcher and/or the organization. Information on advisable lines of action are fed to the organization by the researcher, who then observes the effect of their implementation on the problem (Bryman 1992). Somekh (1995:340) describes it as a methodology which bridges the divide between research and practice as it combines these two normally separate processes.

### 4.3.1 A Definition of Action Research

Somekh (1995:340) goes on to state that it is a methodology which has been broadly defined and can take widely different forms as a 'right and proper

consequence of action research being grounded in the values of individuals or groups carrying it out'. Eden and Huxham (1995:1) also recognised that the term is rather loose but go on to define action research as 'involving the researcher in working with members of an organization over a matter which is of genuine concern to them and in which there is an intent...to take action...'. Elden and Chisolm (1993:124) defined it as 'aiming to produce new knowledge that contributes both to practical solutions to immediate problems and to general knowledge.' One of the most frequently cited definitions is 'action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration in a mutually acceptable ethical framework' (Rapoport 1970:499).

It is clear, therefore, that action research has a dual purpose. It aims to simultaneously address and resolve specific organizational problems and also contribute to the stated of scientific knowledge in the area.

### 4.3.2 A History of Action Research

Kurt Lewin is credited with the introduction of action research in the 1940s and early action research grew from a desire amongst researchers to discover new ways of dealing with social problems (Elden and Chisolm 1993). Eden and Huxham (1995) wrote that work began on action research in the UK which led to an approach to organizational interventions aimed at simultaneously addressing theory development and creating change in organizations. Susman

and Evered (1978) highlighted the deficiencies of traditional research methods in generating knowledge for use in organizational problem solving and argue that action research is a suitable method for correcting these deficiencies. They then go on to establish its potential for understanding and managing the affairs of organizations. Somekh (1995:345) described how action research has been used in disciplines and practices ranging from education, health and social work through to business and industry, and goes on to stated that this is the result of the commonality of problems arising from change initiatives in any social organization.

### 4.3.3 Characteristics of Action Research

Peters and Robinson (1984) analysed the work of eleven practitioners of action research and found a number of features common to most if not all. These are:

- Action research is focused on a defined organizational problem.

- The aim of the research is to take action to resolve this problem.

- Action research is a cyclical and ongoing process.

- There is a high degree of collaboration between the researcher and the 'client' from defining the problem through to assessing the effects of change.

Susman and Evered (1978) also identified what they regarded as the essential characteristics of action research. These are shown below:

- It is future oriented in that it is concerned with creating a more desirable future through resolving a problem.

- Interdependence between the researcher and the client system is an essential feature.

- It encourages the development of a system to facilitate, maintain and regulate the cyclical process of diagnosing, action planning, action taking, evaluating and specifying learning.

- It generates theory grounded in action. Theory provides a guide for what should be considered in the diagnosis of an organization and possible courses of action to deal with the problem. There needs to be ongoing evaluation of theory whereupon it can be revised or be supported.

- The relationship between people and events and things are a function of the situation they find themselves in.

McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) argued that action research requires:

- Informed committed and intentional action to resolve a problem.

- Systematic critical enquiry made public.

- To have a worthwhile purpose.

Somekh (1995) examined the characteristics of action research which differentiate it from other forms of research and puts forward that action research differs in that:

- Findings are fed straight back into practice to create further change.

- It explores the multiple determinants of behaviour, interactions and relationships in different situations in order to generate wisdom.

- It emphasises a cyclical process of collection, reflection and analysis.

- It has a highly pragmatic orientation.

- It is grounded in the culture and values of the social groups whose members are participants in the research process.

It can be seen that there are a number of similarities between the lists, put forward by these writers, containing the characteristics of action research. A problem must be addressed, there is a need for a strong relationship between the researcher and the organization in which they are operating and the process must be systematic and cyclical. It is foreseen that the researcher will concentrate more on uncovering the effects of action decided upon and implemented by the organizations being studied rather than choosing the actions to be taken.

## 4.4 THE SUITABILITY OF ACTION RESEARCH AS A METHODOLOGY WITH WHICH TO ADDRESS THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

To establish beyond doubt that action research is an appropriate methodology to approach the research questions with, these questions will be considered with the characteristics of action research established above.

### 4.4.1 The Underlying Philosophy of Action Research

It is necessary to show that action research has a suitable underlying philosophy with which to approach the research topics. In section 3.2.3 it was established that positivism was not a suitable philosophical basis from which to approach the research and that an underlying phenomenological approach was much

more appropriate (section 3.3.3). By examining the characteristics given in 4.3.3 above it is clear that action research exhibits many characteristics which indicate that the underlying philosophy is essentially phenomenological. For example, it is recognised that there is interdependence between the researcher and the investigated, and that the research is grounded in the culture and subjective values of the research group (participants and researchers). There is also a requirement for the researcher to interpret behaviour and this is necessarily subjective in at least some respects.

**Figure 3: The Philosophical Position of Action Research**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prescriptive<br>Deductive<br>Obtrusive<br>From the outside | *I*<br>ANALYTICAL SURVEYS AND EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH DESIGN<br>(concerned with precision) | *II*<br>ACTION RESEARCH<br>(concerned with utilisation) |
| Descriptive<br>Inductive<br>Unobtrusive<br>From the inside | *III*<br>DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY RESEARCH DESIGN<br>(concerned with generality) | *IV*<br>ETHNOGRAPHY<br>(concerned with character of context) |

General
Extensive

Particular
Intensive

Source: Adapted from Gill and Johnson (1991:146)

Figure 3 above shows the philosophical position of action research in relation to other commonly employed research techniques. Box I represents the most positivist position on the matrix and Box IV the most phenomenological. The broken line around the action research box indicates that action research can be legitimately

positioned at any point on the vertical continuum, depending on the role of the researcher in the organization and tools and techniques used by the researcher. This shows that action research does have a stronger phenomenological underpinning than many other research techniques. Therefore it is evident that action research has, and supports, the philosophical basis established in the previous chapter.

### 4.4.2 The Focus of the Research Questions and Action Research

Chapter 1 examined the meaning of sustainable development and the role that local authorities played in moving communities on to a more sustainable path through Local Agenda 21. It was established that improving the environmental performance of local authorities and ensuring that sustainability was an integral part of an authorities activities was an important part of the Local Agenda 21 process. Chapter 2 examined what local authorities are doing to try and make this happen. This led to the research questions shown in section 4.1. From these it can be see that there is a focus on a defined organizational problem, can changing organizational factors impact on the success of LA21 implementation, and as local authorities are already implementing change programmes to try and resolve this problem, there is a focus on action. These are important characteristics of action research and indicate that it is a suitable research method to employ.

### 4.4.3 The Research Process and Action Research

Carrying out the research will require close cooperation with the target organizations in order to further define the problem, to gain and then maintain

access to the subject of research, to witness the implementation of any change program and to allow assessment of the results. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) argued that other techniques such as surveys or case studies do not allow for enough depth of study or understanding of the situation, where action is an integral part of the research. Again this points to action research being an eminently suitable technique.

From the evidence presented above it can be seen that, given the research questions and the focus of the research, action research is an appropriate method to employ.

## 4.5 JUSTIFYING ACTION RESEARCH AS A VALID RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Having justified the choice of action research as an appropriate research technique, it is necessary to go on to justify its validity as a research method. Action research has many vociferous critics and it has been argued that action research runs the risk of sacrificing rigour for relevance (Argyris and Schon 1991). However, Whyte (1991) retaliated, arguing that it is only when judged by 'conventional wisdom' that the method appears to lack rigour. Susman and Evered (1978) tested action research against the criteria of positivist science and found that it did not meet its critical tests, but they question the appropriateness of positivist science as a basis for judging the scientific merit of action research. Eden and Huxham (1995) also stated that one of the main criticisms of the methodology is that it lacks rigour but argue that it has the potential for rigour and go on to establish criteria for assessing

the validity of action research. This is shown below together with a brief explanation of how the planned research will fulfill this criteria.

1. Action research demands an integral involvement by the researcher in an intent to change the organization, although they may be unsuccessful or the change may not be as expected.

   The intent is to change organizational factors in the selected local authorities and observe the effects on the permeation of a 'sustainability ethos' and Local Agenda 21 implementation. Most local authorities are already implementing programmes of action in an attempt to change and so the researcher can become involved in this process

2. The action research must have some implications beyond those required for action or generation of knowledge in the domain of the project.

   Sustainability is an important issue and one which all local authorities and many other organizations will have to address and continue to do so into the future, so the research has implications for other organizations than those involved in the study.

3. Action research demands valuing theory, with theory elaboration and development as an explicit concern of the research process, as well as being usable.

As this is primarily an academic investigation, albeit with practical implications, the development and elaboration of theory is seen as vital time will be spent considering the wider theoretical implications.

4. The design of tools, techniques and methods to express the action research must be explicit and related to the theories which inform the design.

The outcomes of the action research will be expressed in terms of tools, techniques and methods and the link between these and theory will be explicitly stated.

5. Action research will be concerned with a system of emergent theory, which develops from a synthesis of that which emerges from the data and that which emerges from the use in practice of the body of theory which informed the intervention and research intent.

Adhering to the process shown in Figure 4 below will ensure that the emergent theory comes from data and from theory in practice.

FIG 4: The Cyclical Process of Action Research

DIAGNOSING
Identifying or defining a problem

SPECIFY LEARNING
Identify general findings

EMERGENT THEORY

ACTION PLANNING
Consider alternative courses of action

EVALUATING
Studying the consequences of action

ACTION TAKING
Selecting a course of action
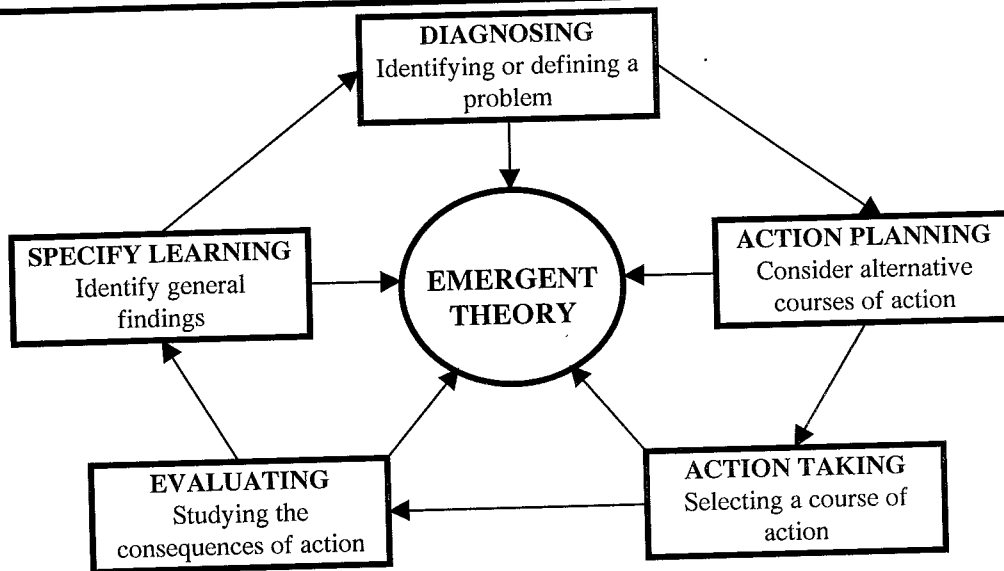
Source: Adapted from Evered and Susman (1995:588)

6. Theory building as a result of action research will be incremental, moving through a cycle of developing theory-to-action-to-reflection-to-developing theory from the particular to the general in small steps.

Using the stages for an action research project shown in Figure 5 below will ensure that this criteria is fulfilled. It can be seen that this has an inbuilt circular relationship between theory, action and reflection. This will ensure that the research is incremental.

82

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ FIG 5: The Stages of an Action Research Project  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

┌──────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────┐
│ IMPLICATION OF       │ ──── Informal ───▶ │ APPLICATION OF       │
│ PREUNDERSTANDING     │                    │ EMERGENT THEORY      │
└──────────────────────┘                    └──────────────────────┘

              informal

┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
│ EXPLICATION OF       │   │ THEORY               │   │ ACTION FOCUSED       │
│ PREUNDERSTANDING     │   │ EXPLORATION AND      │   │ INTERVENTION         │
│                      │   │ DEVELOPMENT          │   │                      │
└──────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘

    formal      formal            formal        formal

┌──────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────┐
│ WRITING ABOUT        │ ◀─── formal ─────  │ METHODICAL           │
│ RESEARCH OUTCOMES    │                    │ REFELCTION           │
└──────────────────────┘                    └──────────────────────┘
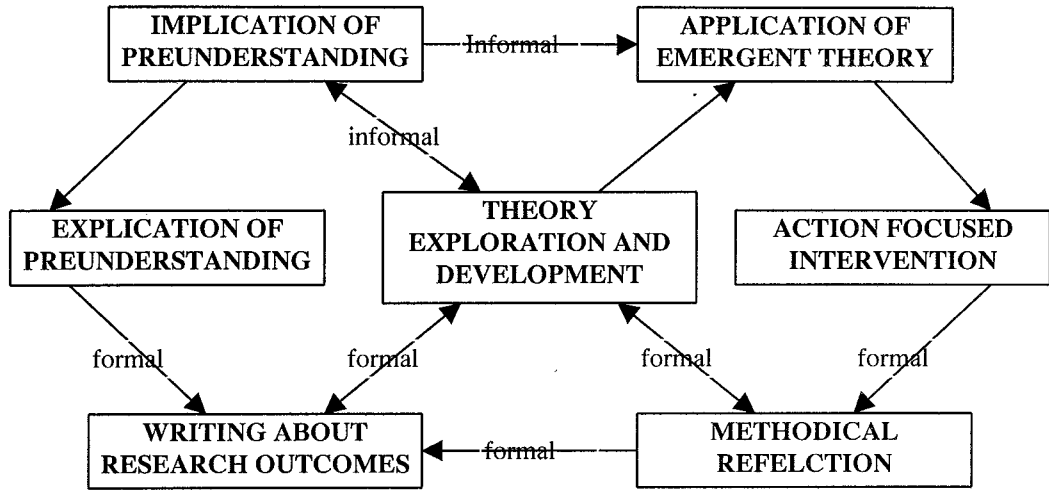
Source: Eden and Huxham (1995:22)

7. It is important to recognise that description will be prescription, even if just implicitly so, and action research should be presented in a manner and style appropriate to what the consumer expects to take from it.

The importance of descriptive theory in highlighting important factors is accepted and careful consideration will be given to the style of presentation of the research.

8. There will be a high degree of systematic method and orderliness in reflecting about and holding on to the research data and the emergent theoretical outcomes of each episode or cycle of involvement in the organization.

There will be sufficient time built in to the research design to allow regular reflection, which will be systematically recorded.

9. For action research, the process of the exploration of data and in the detecting of emergent theories should be repeatable or at least explainable to others.

As recommended by Eden and Huxham (1995) a record will be kept of all observation, methodological, theoretical and personal notes to ensure that this criteria can be fulfilled.

Adhering to the above nine characteristics is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the validity of action research.

10. Action research should not be used where other approaches, such as survey or experimentation, could satisfy the same aims.

It has been established that the research question could not be addressed in sufficient depth by other methods. This is largely due to the anticipated importance of cultural factors which are mostly intangible and subconscious.

11. The opportunities for triangulation that do not offer themselves with other methods should be exploited fully and reported.

A number of data collection methods will be employed to afford sufficient scope for triangulation which are detailed below:

### 4.5.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation involves the immersion of the researcher into the organization, or other context to be studied, allowing first hand knowledge to be gleaned through the observation of individuals going about their business, listening to their conversations and engaging them in conversation. This method allows the curtain to be drawn back to reveal the informal as well as the formal organization. There are three chief types of participant observation, identified by Bryman (1992), each of which have advantages and limitations.

1.  Covert Participant Observation

    Entry to the organization and observation is done without anyone else inside it having either given permission or having being made aware of the participant observation. The researcher assumes a work role in the organization. This negates the need to negotiate entry and also removes the potential for problems such as reactivity and wariness. It does however curtail the possibilities for using some data collection techniques such as interviewing and recording observations can be difficult due to the need to do this surreptitiously. There are also questions about the ethics of carrying out this form of participant observation

2.  Full Participant Observation

    The researcher again assumes a work role but in this case everyone is aware of their research interest. There may be some difficulty in gaining access to an organization and there may be some degree of wariness and reactivity.

3. Indirect Participant Observation

The researcher in this instance is often in or around the organization but does not have a work role in it. This is analogous to the social anthropologists study of tribes of which they are not part of. As in full participant observation there may be difficulties with access and with wariness and reactivity.

Participant observation is usually used in conjunction with other methods such as unstructured interviewing and document analysis, both of which are acceptable in action research (Bryman 1992).

## 4.5.2 Unstructured Interviewing

This a way of uncovering how respondents think and feel about issues and is not guided by any pre-existing interview schedule, although the interviewer does usually have a number of points to be addressed which are kept in mind There is a great degree of latitude and flexibility in the direction that the interview takes. After some general questions the researcher largely follows the drift of the conversation wherever it heads (Ghauri, Grohaug and Kristianlund 1995).

## 4.5.3 Document Examination

This a method which is rarely used in isolation but which often proves useful in providing additional information unavailable from other sources, checking on findings from other sources and also to uncover the gap between policy and

practice (Bryman 1992).

### 4.5.4 Diaries

McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) established the benefits of keeping a diary to regularly record factual information on events dates and people to give a chronological record and to also to record personal experiences, thoughts and feelings. This can then be used later for reflection and as an analytical tool. Collaborative diary keeping with participants offers an additional opportunity for triangulation.

### 4.5.5 Case Studies

McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) stated that case studies can be a useful method in action research, as they allow for a detailed analysis of any given situation.

Adopting a number of different methods of data collection will ensure that the research question is approached from different angles, allowing triangulation and so allowing the validity of the research data to be assessed more thoroughly.

13. The history and context for the intervention must be taken as critical to the interpretation of the likely range of validity and applicability of the results of action research.

A thorough investigation of the historical and contextual setting of the

organizations will be undertaken so that validity and applicability can be established.

**14.** Action research requires that the theory development which is of general value is disseminated in such a way as to be of interest to a wider audience then those integrally involved with the action and/or the research.

Any opportunity to present at conferences and/or publish work will be vigorously pursued. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) also stated that making research public is a necessary part of the validation of action research, but that this does not have to be done in academic journals or in conferences. It can be very helpful for action researchers to share their findings with others to check if their perceptions are fair and accurate.

Fulfilling the above 14 points will enable the chosen methodology to be defended against its most likely criticism, that of lack of scientific rigour. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) add that the cyclical approach of action research is a way of structuring and disciplining the investigation rather then simply the best way of representing the research.

## 4.6 ACTION RESEARCH PROGRAM

The research program is based on Figures 4 and 5 above. There are a number of stages which will be carried out.

### 4.6.1 Stage One

Eden and Huxham (1995:9) suggested that there is a need to be aware of the research aims and also to be aware of any pre-understanding of the nature of the outcomes of any intervention in order to be a credible action researcher. The understanding of the topic gained in the preliminary investigations has been used to establish the problem to be tackled and also to guide the theoretical investigations. Also at the onset of any intervention, any preconceived ideas will be identified in order that they do not influence the interpretation process.

### 4.6.2    Stage Two

Before undertaking the program of action research, theory exploration and development is a desk-based exercise and is solely influenced by the pre-understanding of the topic.  This influences the initial diagnosis and identification of the problem. It can be seen that following a cycle of theory – action – research will allow new topics to be uncovered which will lead to further theory development and exploration.

### 4.6.3    Stage Three

Stage three will involve carrying out research to establish the initial stated of

affairs and follow the effect of interventions to try to change the organizations.

### 4.6.4    Stage Four

Stage four will involve analysis of the data gathered in stage three and the identification of general findings from the research

### 4.6.5    Stage Five

Stage five will be a period of reflection on the research process and the findings of the research. This will allow the contributions to theory development and areas where further research is required to be identified. Research outcomes can be written about and the research cycle will then return to stage one.

The cyclical research process means that there will be a two stage study carried out on one local authority in order to get a very vivid picture of the situation in that authority. In each stage the action research cycle will be repeated a number of times. A third stage study will be carried out on other local authorities to test whether the results can be found outside the initial authority being studied.

Before doing this there needs to be an examination of the conceptual areas which will be addressed in the research and the identification of the researchers preconceptions in these subjects. This is done in the next two chapters.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

## 5.0   OVERVIEW

The previous chapters establish the need to examine the concept of organizational culture by identifying it as a potentially important but under investigated subject, in relation to sustainable development, which could influence the success or failure of the development and implementation of a LA21 and the implementation of sustainable development by local authorities.   This chapter examines what is meant by organizational culture and why understanding it is seen as important especially in attempts to make changes to an organization.   It examines different perspectives on organizational culture and determines what kind of culture would support sustainability.

## 5.1   DEFINITIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Schein (1985) wrote that the concept of organizational culture has taken hold since the late 1970s.  Organizational culture has been a dominant theme of management literature in the 1980s and 1990s, as demonstrated by special journal issues devoted to it such as, Administrative Science Quarterly (1983), Organizational Dynamics (1983), The Journal of Management Studies (1986), and Organization Science (1995).  This has led to the development of a wide range of definitions.  Williams (1993:2) identified 164

definitions for organizational culture, and so a starting point in examining this topic is to first define what is meant by organizational culture.

Brookes (1997) wrote that organizational culture can be defined as a set of processes that binds together members of an organization based on the shared pattern of basic values, beliefs, and assumptions in an organization. This defines what organizational culture is composed of but gives no indication of how these values, beliefs and assumptions come to be held. Schein (1985) elaborated and stated that organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions that is developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. This definition adds to our understanding by indicating that a certain culture arises in an organization as a result of a shared history between the people in it as they deal with each other and outsiders. It defines organizational culture as something which is organic and has the potential to evolve and change over time, rather then as an aspect of an organization which is constant and unchanging.

These definitions demonstrate that there are two considerations to look at, both of which are important in understanding organizational culture and attempts to change it. The first of these is to understand the components of organizational culture, as only by being able to do this can the it be diagnosed. The second is the process by which organizational culture is developed or grown by an organization. An understanding of this is necessary for attempts to change organizational culture.

Schein (1985) established that organizational culture had more then one level. He identified artifacts, which are the tangible organizational structures, processes, which can be hard to interpret, espoused values, as indicated by strategies or goals, and basic underlying assumptions. Cummings and Worley (1993:524) similarly accept that different levels of organizational culture exist and define it as 'consisting of subconsciously held basic assumptions and values, which are rarely discussed, and the more tangible and observable norms and artifacts'. This definition shows that organizational culture consists of a number of different levels, some of which are unconscious and intangible and this has implications for study and research in this subject. Anthony (1994) wrote that this layering can make organizational culture hard to diagnose and study and this problem is further compounded by the possible existence of subcultures in an organization, each of which could differ in the their norms, values and basic assumptions.

Hawkins and Miller (1993) stated that 'it is important to recognise that only the top level of the culture is fully visible and conscious. The behavioural norms may operate without people being aware of the conventions they are acting in. The mind sets may be sub-conscious for we see not the spectacles that we see through. The emotional ground may be fully unconscious.' Again this definition indicates that study in this area may pose problems, as a large proportion of organizational culture is not consciously known by those that belong to it.

They go on to propose a four-level integrative model of organizational culture to illustrate which aspects are tangible and which operate at a deeper level in an organization and the people who work in it. This is useful as it provides a concise reminder of what aspects make up organizational culture and the degree of ease or difficulty with which they can be seen or interpreted. It also provides an initial framework with which to examine any organizational culture, starting with the visible aspects and moving down to the least visible.

**Table 4: Hawkins & Miller's 4 Level Model of Organizational Culture**

| ARTIFACT | The rituals, symbols/logos, mission statements, building, organizational structure. |
|---|---|
| BEHAVIOUR | The unwritten rules which constrain how people behave, what is and is not talked about and how people relate to each other |
| MIND SETS | The spectacles through which members of an organizational culture view themselves, the environment with which they interact and problems that arise. |
| EMOTIONAL GROUND | The collective feelings that underlie and influence the other three levels of culture; the emotional mood and feeling in an organization. |

Cummings and Worley (1993:527) also propose a similar four level model of organizational culture which is shown below:

**Table 5: Cummings and Worleys 4 Level Model of Organizational Culture**

| ARTIFACTS | At the highest level of cultural awareness are the visible manifestations of the other levels of cultural elements. These include the observable behaviour of members, structures, systems, procedures, rules and physical aspects of an organization. |
|---|---|
| NORMS | Just below the surface of cultural awareness are norms guiding how members should behave in particular situations. These represent unwritten rules of behaviour. |
| VALUES | Values tell members about what is important in an organization and hat they need to pay attention to. |
| BASIC ASSUMPTIONS | At the deepest level of cultural awareness are unconscious, taken for granted assumptions about how organizational problems should be solved. They tell members how to perceive, think and feel about things |

Norms, in Cummings and Worley's model, can be directly equated to behaviour in Hawkins and Miller's model, and values to mindsets. There are also similarities between Hawkins and Miller's emotional ground and Cummings and Worley's basic assumptions. They both stated that collective unconscious feelings about an organization are included in the deepest level of organizational culture but Cummings and Worley also include perceptions on how an organization operates and the way in which issues are approached. It may be that Hawkins and Miller include these under the general heading of feelings but they do not explicitly state this.

## 5.2   WHY IS ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IMPORTANT

Williams (1993) pointed out that organizational culture is no longer seen as the universal panacea for organizational ailments that it once was but it is still a subject of interest to many researchers. Cummings and Worley (1993) found that perspectives on organizational culture either view it as something that has resulted from the history of an organization and changes slowly and inevitably over long periods of time or as something which can be changed by management for the good of an organization. Similarly, Smircich (1983) categorized approaches to organizational culture into those which treat it as an internal variable and so as something which can be managed and changed, and those which treat it as an external variable, brought into an organization by its members from outside and so as something which is not available for manipulation.   Current interest in corporate culture derives from its perceived effect on organizational effectiveness and a belief in the latter of these perspectives.   There is a recognition that changing organizational culture is not a quick or easy task and Williams (1993) argued that it is a process which can last for years.

Those who adhere to the belief that organizational culture is something which cannot be influenced by management instead adopt a reductionist approach and concentrate on individual aspects of an organization such as leadership or structure.  Louis (1983) argued that it was the deficiencies of this approach in examining organizational dynamics which led to the development of the concept of organizational culture. However Anthony (1994) argued that sometimes a change in a particular behaviour

may be all that is desired or needed and in those cases a reductionist approach can be effective.

There have been many studies which have examined organizational culture and organizational effectiveness. Many writers have produced studies that are linked to the interests of management and which promote the idea that culture is the collective consciousness of an organization owned by the management and available for manipulation by them for their own ends. Examples of studies, which have focused on culture and its relationship with other aspects of an organization, include Pool (2000) who looked at its relationship with job tension; Stott and Simpson (1996) who focused on culture and empowerment; and Vermeulen (1997) who investigated culture and Total Quality Management.

Golden (1992) also highlighted a number of studies that demonstrate the importance of organizational culture. This includes studies where a culture that aligned an organizations' internal and external environments resulted in improved financial performance, where culture created consensus on strategic direction and where culture increased employee productivity. It is defined as the 'normative glue which holds together the different components in an organizational system and maintains its equilibrium' (p2). However, as will be seen, this glue may be problematic if the aim is to alter the equilibrium in an organization.

It is apparent from the sheer number of studies which have been carried out that organizational culture is of interest to researchers and also that the dominant view, amongst those investigating it, is that it is available for manipulation in order to improve organizational performance. There is also evidence that in local authorities organizational culture is seen as available for manipulation. This is primarily seen in attempts to change an organizational culture from bureaucratic to one which supports new public management (Gibb and Knox 1998)

## 5.3 PERSPECTIVES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Frost (1991) wrote that researchers do not all agree about what culture is or why it should be studied. They neither study the same phenomena nor approach the subject from the same theoretical, epistemological or methodological viewpoints. Martin and Meyerson (1994) identified the three major perspectives which have come to dominate research on organizational culture and Frost (1993) summarized the important differences between these, in Figure 6 below.

**Figure 6: Defining Characteristics of Three Perspectives on Organizational Culture**

| | Perspective | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Features** | Integration | Differentiation | Fragmentation |
| Orientation to consensus | Organization wide consensus | Sub-cultural consensus | Lack of consensus |
| Relation Among Manifestations | Consistency | Inconsistency | Not clearly consistent or inconsistent |
| Orientation to Ambiguity | Exclude it | Channel it outside sub-cultures | Acknowledge it |

Source: Frost (1991:9)

### 5.3.1   The Integration Perspective

The integration perspective portrays culture predominantly in terms of consistency across the various manifestations of culture and organization-wide consensus about the appropriate interpretation of these. Consistency refers to the pattern of relationships among the various cultural manifestations included in a cultural portrait, identified in tables 4 and 5, such as informal norms, rituals and stories. There is no room for ambiguity and members agree about what they are to do and why it is important to do it. As the cultural manifestations reinforce one another, the result is organization wide consensus. Welford (1997) wrote that founders of organizations often impose their own attitudes and assumptions on an

organization which results in a homogeneous culture until such time as it became

unworkable or the group broke up. As new members and leaders came into the

group, the original beliefs and assumptions would be modified, but they would

always have a big impact on the ultimate culture of an organization. Gregory

(1983) stated that much of the early work on organizational culture supported this

perspective and emphasized homogeneity and its uniting influence rather then its

potential to divide.


Adhering to the integration perspective may leave a study open to the accusations

of ignoring conflict in an organization and Cummings and Worley (1993) stated

that, especially in large diverse organizations, which local authorities certainly

are, there are likely to be several subcultures and perhaps even counter cultures

which go against the wider corporate culture. Gibb and Knox (1998), Goddard

(1995) and Stott and Simpson (1996) in studies in local authorities found that

there was not a homogenous culture in them. Based on this it is evident that this

would not be an appropriate perspective with which to approach the research.


### 5.3.2. The Differentiation Perspective

The differentiation perspective portrays cultural manifestations as predominantly

inconsistent with each other, for example when a formal policy is undermined by

informal norms. In an organization, differentiated subcultures may exist in

harmony, conflict or indifference to each other. From a differentiation point of

view, subcultures are islands of clarity and ambiguity is channeled outside their boundaries.

This is a more realistic view of large organizations as it recognises the existence of informal sub cultures in organizations. Gregory (1983) stated that most organizations are made up of a number of different groups and Goddard (1995:208) stated that local authorities are characterized by multiple occupational groups as well as separate departments. This also fits in with the finding, in chapter two, that some groups in local authorities seem to be developing more of a sustainability ethos than others.

Given this, the differentiation perspective is a better perspective through which to view organizational culture in local authorities than the integration perspective.

### 5.3.3    The Fragmentation Perspective

The fragmentation perspective views ambiguity as an inevitable and pervasive aspect of organizational culture. Clear consistencies or inconsistencies are rare, instead consensus and dissent co-exist in a constantly fluctuating pattern that is influenced by organizational events. Any cultural event can be, and is, interpreted in any number of ways. No clear organization-wide or sub-cultural consensus exists when culture is viewed from a fragmentation point of view. Under this perspective organizational culture becomes something exceptionally difficult to diagnose or examine because of the ambiguity and fluctuations.

Goddard (1995) found that definite multiple cultures existed in local authorities and in them there was consensus on norms and values. Therefore this perspective also appears unsuitable.

Given this, the differentiation perspective will be used in carrying out the research. This means that the researcher will be looking for the existence of sub cultures and conflict in an organization. The action research model requires that this preunderstanding of the situation is noted and care should be taken to ensure that the interpretation of evidence is not biased by adopting this perspective on organizational culture

## 5.4 TYPES OF ORGANSIATIONAL CULTURE

There has been much work done to try and define the 'types' of organizational culture which can be seen in organizations and also to define aspects of organizational culture which can be identified, so allowing classification of the culture.

Petrock (1996), for instance, identified four kinds of culture. These were firstly the clan culture which is characterised by a friendly, almost familial atmosphere and where loyalty between an organization and its employees is high. Secondly there is the adhocracy culture where an organization maintains a high degree of flexibility and individuality. There is a commitment to experimentation and innovation and an organization is dynamic and creative. Thirdly there is a hierarchical culture, which values stability and control and where the actions of the employees are governed by

very formal and structured procedures. Lastly he identifies a market culture which is also concerned with stability and control but differs from the hierarchical culture in that it is very results orientated. There are other classifications to be found in literature as well.

Pool (2000) investigated job tension using stress in constructive, passive defensive and passive aggressive cultures. The constructive culture reflects a beneficial balance between people and task-related activities. It promotes the fulfillment of an employee's higher-order needs, namely achievement, self-actualization, encouragement and affiliation. An organization's culture is associated with the accomplishment of organizational goals and these are reached by actively promoting the development of people in an organization. Constructive cultures enhance synergy and explain why certain individuals, groups, and organizations are particularly effective with respect to performance, growth and work quality. The aggressive/defensive culture emphasizes tasks over people. Employees believe they must interact with people in ways that will not threaten their own security. This insecurity leads employees to focus on their own needs at the expense of the team. Although sometimes temporarily effective, the aggressive/defensive styles induce stress. Decisions are based on status, rather than expertise and this prohibits team collaboration. The prevalent styles of this culture are oppositional, competitive and perfectionist and power is highly valued. The passive/defensive orientation represents an unduly strong orientation toward people as opposed to tasks, fuelled by and reinforcing individual insecurity. This culture is

characterized by people who subordinate themselves to an organizations but, in the process, end up creating stress for themselves and allow an organization to stagnate.

However categorization such as this are of limited use under the differentiation perspective because they imply that there is one homogenous culture throughout an organization. This is compatible with the integration perspective which has already been established as inadequate when examining organizational culture in local authorities. It may be useful to keep these classifications in mind, however, as they may appear as sub cultures. It may be more useful to look at organizational culture in terms of the separate aspects which combine to create a culture. This would allow for differences in these aspects in organizations to be recognised and so for sub-cultures to be identified. This is compatible with the differentiation perspective.

Perhaps the best known study which identified the separate dimensions of organizational culture is that by Hofstede (1980). He argued that there are four separate dimensions of culture and based this on analysis of 88 000 responses to a questionnaire survey of employees of IBM in 66 countries. The first dimension that he identifies is individualism, and this is the extent to which people are oriented towards self interest as opposed to being orientated towards the wider interest of the group of which they are part. The next dimension is uncertainty avoidance, the extent to which people seek to minimize uncertainty versus the extent to which they are tolerant of ambiguity. The third dimension is called power distance and this is the extent to which relationships between superiors and subordinates are formal and distant versus close and informal.

The last dimension identified by Hofstede is masculinity and this is the extent to which success is defined in terms of assertiveness, challenge and ambition as opposed to terms of caring and co-operation.

Hofstedes work has been challenged in a number of areas, such as its reliance on questionnaire surveys and using employees of only one organization (Robinson 1983, Sondergaard 1994) but despite this, between 1980 and 1993, 274 published studies used Hosftedes dimensions of culture as a conceptual framework for studying organizational culture (Sondergaard 1994)

Pool (2000) used an inventory of twelve measurable normative beliefs and Wallace, Hunt and Richards (1999) also identified other inventories. Cummings and Worley (1993:532) identified twenty eight standard norms for culture which are used in the Kilman and Saxton Culture-Gap survey. Wallace, Hunt and Richards (1999) surmised that the roots of most of these inventories are in the work done by Hofstede (1980) and merely present a more detailed division of the dimensions of culture. They do add that these are useful in establishing questionnaires to diagnose culture however this emphasis on measurement is incompatible with the phenomenological underpinning of this study, so the inventories, as used in the studies mentioned above, will not be applicable in this case. However, again it will be useful to keep the aspects of culture identified in mind so that they can be looked for in the studies which are to be carried out.

### 5.4.1 Organizational Culture In Local Authorities

Before going on to look at ways of diagnosing organizational culture it will be useful to investigate the work done into classifying cultures in local authorities. Gibb and Knox (1998) felt that there has been a move away from a traditional bureaucratic culture in local government and a move towards 'managerialism'. They go on to add that this has involved a flattening of the hierarchical structure and more decentralization, but that different parts of an organization may be at demonstrating different behaviour as they are at different stages of the move away from bureaucracy. Goddard (1998) found that there were different cultures in local authorities which related to professional group and managerial level.

### 5.4.2 A Sustainability Culture

This study is concerned with whether the local authorities exhibit a culture which supports sustainable development and, if not, then what are the problems. Chapter One (section 1.2) showed the important issues for local authorities to consider in developing a Local Agenda 21 and Voisey and O'Riordan (1997b) also highlighted important aspects of culture for the development of sustainability. These can be translated into desirable cultural attributes. There is a need to consider the language surrounding Local Agenda 21 in the local authority (Voisey and O'Riordan 1997b). This involves the definition of sustainable development and how it is discussed and dealt with. The cultural

commitment to sustainability will be revealed by the definitions used, in whether there is a vision for sustainability and whether there is a strategic commitment to sustainability. Ambiguity and/or vagueness would indicate that the culture was not facilitating sustainable development. This will be a relatively tangible aspect of an organizational culture to investigate through examination of artefacts.

Policy integration is another issue that must be examined. This involves all departments of a local authority considering sustainable development in their decision-making processes, taking a holistic overall view and working together on areas of common interest. For all areas to consider sustainable development in their day to day work and in their decision making would require a strong cultural commitment. A culture which supports sustainable development will exhibit mechanisms which facilitate communication between different areas of an organization, such as inter departmental working groups. It could be demonstrated in the use of environmental valuation techniques and green accounting (Voisey and O'Riordan 1997b). Conversely, a culture which exhibits characteristics such as departmentalism is unlikely to be supporting sustainable development. Investigating this will involve the examination of artifacts but will also require investigation of the norms and the values of an organizational members with regard to cross-departmental working and communication.

The ability to measure and monitor progress towards to was also seen as important for the development of a Local Agenda 21. A culture which supports this will be revealed in artifacts such as lists of sustainability indicators. The attitudes of members of an organization to measurement and monitoring will also be important.

How a local authority is improving their own performance on sustainability was also seen as important and so needs to be examined. A culture which supports this will encourage members to look for ways to improve their own or their departments' performance, have channels to communicate ways to improve performance and also exhibit the other cultural characteristics described above. This aspect of culture may be seen in artifacts, such as plans to discourage car use, but will also require an examination of the attitudes and beliefs of an organizational members.

The aspects of organizational culture which will be investigated therefore are:

- The way in which the commitment to sustainable development is revealed through the definition and vision of sustainability and the way in which it is discussed.

- The extent to which interdepartmental communication is encouraged and facilitated and the extent to which departmentalism exists.

- The extent to which measurement of sustainability is encouraged and the attitude of members of an organization to this.

- The values and beliefs of organizational members about improving their departments and the authorities sustainability performance.

In examining these aspects of organizational culture it should be remembered that the differentiation perspective means that there will be differences in an organization and so it is not expected to find uniformity across an organization. In examining artifacts it should be remembered that they are likely to give a picture of a whole organization and so should not be relied upon entirely to give a picture of a sub-cultures which could exist.

## 5.5 DIAGNOSING ORGANSIATIONAL CULTURE

Anthony (1994) argued that there are some important issues to be considered in an examination of organizational culture. These are the meanings given to culture and the uncertainties and contradictions that are likely to follow hidden ambiguities and also misunderstandings as to its depth and complexity in an organization. The intensely practical question as to whether the real intention is to change culture and values or whether, for the most part, change in the behaviour of people is sufficient for an organizations purpose is also an important consideration.

The implication of this is that there is a need to establish whether there is a need to diagnose organizational culture and if so then there is a need to be aware that it can be a difficult thing to do.

Schein (1985) and Cummings and Worley (1993) highlighted several competing approaches to the study and diagnosis of organizational culture. The first of these is a survey research approach. In this approach the passion to measure and quantify leads to the definition of culture as something that is measurable and this is done through questionnaire survey of individuals. Proponents of this method start with conceptual definitions of culture as 'mental models' or 'underlying assumptions' but their subsequent attempts to measure it by questionnaires and the forcing of data into dimensions derived a priori or by factor analysis implies that culture is definable at the surface attitude level. There are a number of questionnaires developed for researchers to use if they are taking this approach to diagnosing organizational culture. Using this method implies a positivist approach to the research as it is defining culture as something which is measurable and produces results which lend themselves to statistical analysis and so it would not be in line with the philosophical underpinning of this research.

The next method to consider is an analytical descriptive approach. This approach involves examination and analysis of documentation and other artifacts accompanied by an iterative interviewing process. An outsider from an organization can interview insiders from an organization and share their findings with them. The two parties can

then jointly explore their meanings. This is more in line with the philosophical basis of this study then the survey research approach, but there is a further approach to consider before a choice can be made as to what is appropriate and likely to be effective.

The final approach which could be considered is the ethnographic approach. The ethnographic approach involves diagnosing the culture from the inside by actually experiencing it and taking part in the life of an organization and recording the reality as it appears to be seen by the members of an organization. This also involves examining the artifacts produced by an organization as well as uncovering the norms and values. This method sits well with the phenomenological philosophy and so also matches the philosophical basis of the research. However it should be remembered that it might not always be possible to gain access to an organization to utilise this method.

Based on this the most appropriate method to diagnose cultures in an organization in this study could be either an analytical descriptive or an ethnographic approach. Either approach should be effective in gathering the required data and both are also compatible with the underlying philosophy of the research. A pragmatic approach should be taken as access will determine the extent to which an ethnographic approach can be taken.

## 5.6 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: PRECONCEPTIONS

Having investigated the concept of organizational cultural it is now necessary to note the preconceptions that have been identified in order that they can be accounted for in the actual study and so not be an unconscious cause of bias.

The preconceptions taken from this study are:

- It is expected to uncover the existence of multiple culture and that these are likely to relate to hierarchical position and professional/departmental in an organization.

- A combination of an analytical/descriptive approach and an ethnographic approach will be sufficient to uncover the aspects of organizational culture that are of interest.

- The examination of artifacts will reveal some information about an organizational culture at an organization wide level

## 5.7    CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of conclusions which can be drawn from the this chapter. It can be expected that the study will uncover the existence of sub cultures in an organization and that these are likely to be related to departmental/professional divisions and/or hierarchical divisions. There have been a number of previous studies which have examined organizational culture and attempted to categorize different types and these will be referred to when necessary. There have also been a number of studies which used inventories and questionnaires to measure culture but it was established that these were incompatible with the philosophy behind the research.

They did identify different aspects of culture, and when these were compared to what was deemed necessary to support sustainable development, the aspects of culture which relate to sustainability and which therefore will be investigated, could be determined. These  are the way in which the commitment to sustainable development is revealed

through the definition and vision of sustainability and the way in which it is discussed; the extent to which interdepartmental communication is encouraged and facilitated and the extent to which departmentalism exists; the extent to which measurement of sustainability is encouraged and the attitude of members of an organization to this; and the values and beliefs of organizational members about improving their departments and the authorities sustainability performance.

The most appropriate way to investigate these is to use a combination of the analytical/descriptive and the ethnographic methods.

# CHAPTER SIX

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

## 6.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter follows on from the previous one in that in the former one organizational culture was examined and it was established that it can, to some extent at least, be influenced. In this chapter different strategies for achieving this change need to be examined. Chapter Two established that local authorities are attempting to change their organizations in order to make them more supportive of sustainability. This chapter will examine planned organizational change and theories concerned with this topic, especially in relation to organizational culture. Factors that trigger organizational change are identified and examined from the point of view of local government. Following on from this, different change strategies are assessed and then different change models are examined

## 6.1 ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Cummings and Worley (1993) stated that global, economic and technological development makes change an inevitability for organizations and Beeby and Simpson (1995) wrote that the pressures for change in the public sector organizations had never been so great. There is a distinction between change that happens to an organization

and change which is planned by members of an organization and so can be useful for problem solving and moving forward. Burnes (1997) argued that there are a number of different approaches to managing change in an organizational setting. He goes on to further argue that no one approach can claim supremacy over the others. Instead the suitability of an approach to change is dependent on the situational context. Cummings and Worley (1993), Genus (1998) and Evans (1996) also identified different approaches to change and the management of change and argue that their effectiveness is dependent on the situation. They go on to argue that there can be a number of reasons why organizations undertake to go through a process of change and this is a further aspect which can influence the suitability of any approach to change.

Moran and Avergun (1997) described change management as the process of renewing an organizations' direction, structure and capabilities. Nadler (1993) recognised that bringing about change, and managing it effectively, is difficult. In any large and complex organization it can be difficult to do.

### 6.1.1 Types of Change

Genus (1998) argued that planned change could be characterised as falling at any point along a continuum ranging from small or incremental change at one extreme, to drastic or quantum changes, which entail fundamentally altering how an organization operates, at the opposite extreme. Cummings and Worley elaborated on this and produce Figure 7 below:

**Figure 7: Types of Change**

Degree of Change

|  |  | Incremental | Quantum |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scope | Total System | Large Scale | Reorientation |
| Of | | | |
| Change | Sub-System | Adaptation | Fundamental |

Source Cummings and Worley (1993:522)

The quadrants identified in this diagram, which illustrate the degree and scope of change involved can be elaborated upon. Large scale organizational change involves incremental changes to most or all of an organizations structures and processes. Adaptation involves incremental changes in only parts of an organization. Fundamental change involves a quantum change in part of an organization and lastly reorientation is the most drastic form of change and involves significant alteration of the entire organization.

## 6.1.2 Types of Change in Local Government

The examination of data gathered to date, through a review of literature, indicates that the change required, and being aimed for, in local government, is large scale. Sustainable development, by definition, has an effect on economic, social and

involved. As the Council also has a number of other important focus areas and still has a statutory obligation to provide certain services to the community, the degree of change which needs to be considered cannot be large scale. From this it is evident that it is change in the large scale quadrant which is necessary. However the data gathered for chapter two also suggested that local authorities did not all recognise the need to involve the whole organization, so it may be that this study finds that it is change in the adaptation quadrant which is being pursued.

## 6.2   TRIGGERS FOR CHANGE

There is a variety of approaches that seek to explain why change is a necessity in most organizations at some time. These will be examined in order to gain a picture of the possible reasons for change relating to local agenda 21 and determine the sense of urgency these impart. Genus (1998) and Burnes (1997) both examined the debate on whether organizational strategy is a trigger for change or is a result of it and Genus goes on to propose that there is a continuum along which any trigger for change can be placed. It ranged from voluntarism at one end, where change resulted from the desire of employees to change, to determinism, where change is the result of the influence of the external environment. Torrington, Weightman and Jones (1989) elaborated and distinguished between four types of change which represented different points on the voluntaristic/deterministic spectrum. These first of these is imposition. This is where the impetus for change comes from an external scource and an organization has to alter the way that things are done to comply with the external environment. An example of

this would be when an organization has to react in order to comply with new legislation. This would fall towards the deterministic end of the spectrum. The next one is adaptation. This is where attitude and behaviour needs to be changed at the behest of others. It still requires that the organisation react to its external environment. An example would be an organization having to implement change as a result of public pressure. Again this would fall towards the deterministic end of the spectrum. The other two types fall more towards the voluntaristic end of the spectrum, and the first of these is growth. Here the impetus for change comes from the recognition of opportunities that can be acted upon by an organization. It is more proactive then those previously mentioned. The last one is creativity. The impetus for change comes from individuals who instigate and control the process of their own change.

### 6.2.1 The Influence of Organizational Strategy

Burnes (1997:755) examined the issue of why change occurs and considers the impact of organizational strategy. He then proposes four alternative approaches to change and organizational strategy. The first of these is the classical approach. This approach is based on change being the outcome of a pre-ordained plan in an organization. In this approach organizational strategy provides a trigger for change. Change occurs to support an organizational strategy. Therefore it falls towards the voluntaristic end of the spectrum.

The second approach to consider is the evolutionary approach. This approach is based on organizations operating in hostile environments and change being the

The second approach to consider is the evolutionary approach. This approach is based on organizations operating in hostile environments and change being the result of an organization having to align itself with the environment. Again this assumes that strategy is a trigger for change, but allows for a more reciprocal relationship between the two. Organizational strategy determines a desirable position in the external environment and change is used to maintain or achieve that position. Change in the external environment will influence strategy. As with the classical approach, this falls towards the voluntaristic end of the spectrum.

The third is the processual approach. This approach is based on the assumption that organizations are composed of warring factions and change arises out of a complex and pragmatic compromise between the needs of the market and the objectives of the warring factions. In this situation change does not arise as a result of an organizational strategy and this approach falls towards the determinstic end of the spectrum.

Lastly there is the systemic approach which is based on the assumption that change is a reaction to an external environment but that a deliberate planning process can mitigate undesirable outcomes. It differs from the classical approach in that it is change that happens to an organization rather then change that is planned by an organization. This would also fall to the deterministic end of the spectrum.

### 6.2.2 Strategic Fit

The concept of strategic fit underlies much recent writing on change and strategic management. Genus (1997:16) defined strategic fit as establishing 'a match between the external environment of an organization and its internal capabilities'.

Genus (1997) went on to distinguish between two aspects of strategic fit, or what he called 'consonance'. The first concerns the basic scope or mission of an organization and may be viewed as being connected to the breadth of its activities and boundaries. The focus is on the relationship of strategy with macro economic, technological and socio-political trends. The second aspect refers to the fit between organizational strategy and factors at play in a more narrowly defined industrial or competitive scene. As in Porter's (1980) five force model, the actions of, and relationships between, existing and potential competitors, suppliers and buyers are important.

From both viewpoints, change results from managements exercising strategic choices based partly on their analysis of the external environment, although each focuses on different aspects of this. It does mean that, for both, change is seen as falling towards the deterministic end of the spectrum as it is the result of external triggers.

### 6.2.3 Structural and Cultural Fit

Genus (1997) argued that a view has emerged in recent years that contrasts with the viewpoint given above. This alternative view emphasises the development of better organizational capabilities and has become known as a resource-based perspective, rather then a positioning once as developed by the concept of strategic fit above. The cornerstone of this approach is that the performance of an organization is governed by the resources, be they physical resources or capabilities and competencies, that it possesses, develops and co-ordinates. The quality of the management of such resources and their translation into competencies distinguishes good performers from bad.

The trigger for change comes after an examination of the internal capabilities and strengths and weaknesses of an organization and identification of opportunities. This falls towards the voluntaristic end of the spectrum as change does not occur merely as a result of external pressures.

### 6.2.4 Alternative Triggers For Change

The concept of 'fit' is the conventional explanation of the need for change in organizations, however there are some less conventional explanations. There are approaches, in economics and organizational theory, which adopt an institutional view of the management of change, where an institution may be seen as a bundle

of conventions that take on rule like status in thought and action. These can be used to provide alternative explanations of why change occurs in organizations (Genus 1997).

For example, 'transaction costs economics' (Williamson 1981) considers that decision makers in organizations will choose a structure which minimizes transaction costs, for instance, by examining whether it is more cost effective for an organization to employ its own staff or outsource certain functions. The application of this theory was originally aimed at explaining the growth of large, vertically integrated organizations, but is now being used to explain the opposite, the restructuring of organizations and why de-integration or outsourcing may occur. It puts forward the idea that change is the result of a desire to alter the mode of governance for a transaction . In a capitalist system organizations will seek to minimise costs but this explanation offers none of the breadth seen in the categories identified by Torrington, Weightman and Jones (1989) and does not allow for change to be a result of activities other then those which seek to reduce costs, such as complying with legislation. It is very narrow examination of change and so is unlikely to be of use in this study.

Another alternative view, in the arena of institutional economics, is proposed by Nelson and Winter (1982). Evolutionary economics looks at an organization as a 'repository of knowledge, and explains organizational change by looking at the knowledge bases and organizational routines. Routines govern the ways in which

repeated activities are performed and an accumulation of experience from various sources leads to learning how these tasks can be performed better, and so to change. The practice of institutional isomorphism, or the tendency of organizations in the same field to adopt similar practices, means that organizations will see how others in similar sectors operate and change to the best practices that are being used in the sector. It may be that local authorities look to each other and share best practice, but again this is a narrow way of looking at change and so unlikely to be of use. It will be useful however to examine the extent to which local authorities do communicate with each other.

## 6.2.5 Triggers for Change in Local Government

Over the last twenty years local government in the UK has been the subject to rapid and profound change stemming from political, economic, technological and social developments (Martin 1997). Most of this change has been legally required such as when powers have been redistributed, the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering, and now best value, and conformity to and implementation of EU legislation. This means that change has historically been in response to external triggers and so has been deterministic rather then voluntaristic. However, there is no statutory requirement for the implementation of a Local Agenda 21 and all that this entails, although there is increasing external pressure for good environmental performance that is an important part of sustainable development. Sustainable development has been written into the strategic plans of many local authorities (Whittaker 1995) and this may be

providing the trigger for changes to promote sustainable development by local authorities.

Brookes (1997) pointed out that in public service organizations, historically change has always followed a top down, invasive model, inspired by political agendas and the prevailing socio-economic and technological conditions. This model of change contradicts the principles of participation and democracy which are very important in sustainable development and Local Agenda 21 and Sharp (1999) argued that local government needs to become more proactive and anticipate rather then just react to changes.

## 6.3   WHAT CHANGES TO MAKE

Burnes (1996) argued that organizations had choices regarding the changes that they undertake and the choice that they make is the result of three interdependent organizational processes. The first of these is called choice. This is the process whereby an organization makes decisions regarding change. These choices are outcomes of the context in which an organization operates, the focus of its decision-making attention and its trajectory. The changes that are desired need to be defined. The second is called trajectory. This process is, in effect, an organization career path. It is comprised of an organizations past actions and proposed future direction and is the outcome of the combined effects on an organization of its vision, strategy and past changes. The clarity and acceptability of an organization's trajectory are related to the consistency and success of its past actions and the support for and compatibility of its

future plans. There is a need to define exactly where an organization wants to be in the future and how in wants to get there. The last process is called change. This covers an organization's approaches to, mechanisms for achieving, and experience of change, especially in terms of objectives, planning and people.

These processes are interdependent because the change process itself is both an influence on and an outcome of the trajectory process. This in turn has a similar relationship to the choice process. All three are heavily influenced by past experiences and future plans.

Cummings and Worley (1993) also examined different areas in which changes can be made. These are shown in the figure 8 below and cover human process, strategic, human resource and technology and structure issues. This could be used to expand the model put forward by Burnes above. Under choice, when an organization makes decisions regarding change, Cummings and Worley's framework provides an elaboration on what choices are available. Human process issues involve how people work in an organization in terms of how they communicate, make decisions and so on. Strategic issues deal with the general direction of an organization and its guiding values. Human resource and human process issues involve the people in an organization and technology and structure issues deal with the design of an organization. Changes can be made in any or all of these areas.

**Figure 8: Organizational Areas Available for Change**



HUMAN
PROCESS
ISSUES
- How to communicate
- How to solve problems
- How to make decisions
- How to interact
- How to lead

STRATEGIC
ISSUES
- What functions, services, markets?
- How to relate to the environment
- What values to guide organizational functioning

TECHNOLOGY &
STRUCTURE
ISSUES
- How to divide labour
- How to co-ordinate departments
- How to design work

HUMAN
RESOURCE
ISSUES
- How to attract competent people
- How to set goals and reward people
- How to plan and develop careers

Adapted from Cummings and Worley (1993:165)

It is useful to relate these issues to organizational culture. Strategic issues and technology structure issues deal with the more visible aspects of culture. They lead to the production of artefacts such as strategy documents, mission statement in support of strategic aims, departmental structure and so on. Over time they could influence the less visible values and beliefs of organizational members. Human process issues can deal with a more intangible aspect of organizational culture, as can human resource issues However, they can both also lead to the production of artifacts such as induction programmes, employee handbooks and so on. It should be remembered that these aspects are often overlapping and attempting to make changes in one will often affect the others.

### 6.3.1 What Changes Are Being Made in Local Authorities

From the evidence in Chapter Two (section 2.2) it is apparent that changes are being made in some of the areas identified by Cummings and Worley (1993). It showed that many local authorities are making a strategic commitment to Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development, and there are also some dealing with technology and structure issues by introducing mechanisms such as cross-departmental working groups. However in terms of human resource and human process issues, changes were less apparent. Some are bringing in new members of staff to deal with sustainability but for the most employees human resource issues such as training are not being used to improve their awareness and performance on sustainability. It also was evident that there was little being done to address human process issues directly. There was a desire for people in local

authorities to change the way decisions were made to include the sustainability argument but it appeared that there was a hope that making changes in strategic and structure issues would result in changes in human process issues. It may be that there is a need to address change in human process issues directly. This is an area that can be addressed in the research, although it is not anticipated that changes in the human process area will be found, the need for them could be examined.

Local authorities have defined the change that they want, which is to become more sustainable but it is not apparent if they have gone further and defined in more detail the position that they want to be at and worked out the details of how they want to get there. There may be a problem here because as was shown in chapter one, section 1.4, sustainable development is a journey rather then a destination. Moran and Avergun (1997) argued that all change is non-linear, with no clearly defined beginning or end. Rather there is a series of goals which become increasingly ambitious and are embraced by more and more organizational members. Garvin (1993) argued that to deal with continuous change an organization should become adept at learning.

Given that the move to sustainability is unlikely to ever be something that it can be said to have been completed the concept of the learning organization should be considered further.

## 6.3.2 The Learning Organization

Argyris and Schon (1978) developed the idea of the learning organization and identified different types and levels of learning. They demonstrated that organisations learn through the agency of individual members and learning can be classified as either single or double loop. In single loop learning, errors are detected and corrected in a continuous improvement process which may fail to question and challenge taken for granted assumptions. In double-loop learning, the success formulas and theories of the organisation are questioned and challenged, leading to a deeper level of collective understanding of values and assumptions in the organisation. Other models of organisational learning also adopted this concept of different hierarchical levels of learning. For instance, Altman & Illes (1998) added a third level, which includes the questioning of the essential principles on which the organisation is based, and where the organisation's mission, vision, market position and culture are challenged. They also go on to distinguish between adaptive and generative learning. Adaptive learning is concerned with developing capabilities to manage new situations by making improvements and amendments where as generative learning focuses on developing new perspectives, options, possibilities and definitions.

Garvin (1983:80) identifies a number of definitions of learning organizations and summarises it as 'an organization skilled at creating acquiring, and transferring knowledge to reflect new knowledge and insights.' He then added that this must be accompanied by changes in the way in which work is done, and that this ruled

out many organizations. Learning organizations were skilled at systematic problem-solving, experimenting with new approaches, learning from their own experiences and transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout an organization.

It would benefit a local authority, in terms of being able to promote sustainable development, if it exhibited the characteristics of an organization which is adept at double loop learning. This will be more effective then single loop learning in attempts to change culture as it involves questioning the underlying assumptions of an organization. In the first stage study it will be investigated whether or not these conditions exist and if not, is there the potential for them to develop.

## 6.4  RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Change can have both positive and negative attributes. It means the creation of something new and this requires the discontinuation of something old and familiar. Certo (1983) argued that resistance to change was a common and natural phenomenon, in fact it is as common as the need for change. In organizations change can generate deep resistance, making it hard, and sometimes impossible, to implement a planned change. Therefore it is useful to examine the reasons for resistance and plan for ways to overcome it.

### 6.4.1 Why Resist Change

There are a number of reasons for resistance to change. Cummings and Worley (1993) stated that resistance existed at two levels, that of the individual and the organization. Change can arouse considerable anxiety in individuals as it involves letting go of what they know and moving forward into an uncertain future. Many will experience anxiety over whether their skills will have a place in the future or whether they can obtain the necessary new skills. Atkinson (1990) also identified a number of reasons to explain why individuals resist change. These include a need for security and a fear of the unknown, being unable to see a need for change and a feeling that position or status would be threatened by change. Baines (1998) added that not fully establishing the need for change can lead to resistance, as can failing to communicate the vision of what the change will result in. At an organizational level, resistance to change can arise from the ingrained habit of following common procedures and comfortable familiarity with the status quo, or from a perceived threat to the position of stakeholder groups in an organization. Cummings and Worley (1993) added that lack of resources to make or cope with the change can lead to resistance.

Cummings and Worley (1993) also put forward reasons why it is important to address the issue of resistance to change. They identify four different behavioural reactions that could result from failure to tackle resistance to change. The first of these is disengagement, where organizational members remove themselves from

the effects of the change and so lack motivation and commitment. The second is dis-identification where organizational members feel threatened by the change to the extent that stop feeling that they are part of an organization. Disenchantment is a third possible result and involves the expression of anger through active opposition to the change, such as sabotage or spreading rumours. They last possible result is disorientation, where organizational members show confusion over their role in an organization is and how they should relate to others. All four possibilities lead to falling effectiveness.

Asquith (1998) also examines resistance to change and comes up with reasons for its existence. The first possibility he identifies was parochial self interest. This is where people are worried that they will lose something of value through the change being implemented, and so they resist it even if it is for the greater good of an organization. A second possible reason identified was possible misunderstanding and a lack of trust. As with all organizations it can be expected that local authorities will experience some degree of resistance to change. Therefore it is necessary to go on to look at different ways to overcome, or deal, with the expected resistance.

### 6.4.2 Overcoming Resistance to Change

Cummings and Worley (1993:148) identified three strategies that are commonly used to overcome resistance to change in organizations and these are shown

below. Other writers have also identified strategies for overcoming resistance to change and these are summarised in the sections below.

### 6.3.2.1 Empathy and Support

A first step in overcoming resistance is to understand how people are experiencing change. This can help to identify who is having trouble accepting the changes, the nature of their resistance and possible ways to overcome it. Understanding how people experience change demands a great deal of empathy and support. It needs a willingness to suspend judgment and to try and see the situation from the point of view of others. When people feel that those managing the change process are genuinely interested in their feelings and perceptions they are likely to be less defensive and more willing to share their concerns and their fears. This more open relationship provides useful information about resistance and helps establish the basis for the kind of joint problem solving needed to overcome barriers to change.

### 6.3.2.2 Communication

People tend to resist change when they are uncertain about its consequences. Lack of adequate information fuels rumours and gossip and adds to the anxiety generally associated with change. Effective communication about what the changes are and what their likely consequences will be can reduce this speculation and allay unfounded fears. It can also help people in an organization to prepare for a change.

### 6.3.2.3 Participation and Involvement

One of the oldest and most effective strategies for overcoming resistance to change is to directly involve people in an organization in planning and implementing change. Participation can lead to the design of high quality changes and overcome resistance to implementation. People working in an organization can provide a valuable source of ideas and information which can help to make the change effective. They can also identify any pitfalls that need to be avoided and possible barriers to successful implementation. Involving those to be affected in the planning of change increases the likelihood that everybody's needs and interests will be accounted for. Consequently, participants will be more committed to ensuring that change is implemented.

All three of these strategies would be useful in local authorities to overcome resistance to change. They are also compatible with the ideals of sustainable development.

Huczynski and Buchanan (1991) also identified two further strategies which appear to bulldoze through resistance to change rather then overcome it. These were 'manipulation and co-option' and 'explicit and implicit coercion', but they admit that there use can lead to more problems then they solve and do not generally lead to acceptance of the change.

Resistance to change is natural and to be expected but involving people who will be affected, through the first three strategies identified above, can go a long way to overcoming this resistance.

## 6.5 CHANGE STRATEGIES

As was shown in 6.1 above, there are a number of different approaches to change. In this section the work of various writers who have identified broad categories of change strategy is examined.

Chin and Benne in Cummings and Worley (1993) group change strategies into three main groups. The first of these is the empirical rational process. Strategies which fall into this groups are based on the assumption that people are rational and will act in their own self-interest. Therefore they will accept change it appears advantageous to them to do so. The second is the normative re-educative process. Strategies which fall into this group are based on the assumption that peoples' behaviour is based on their norms and so change must come from a re-educative process which replaces old norms with new more desirable norms. The last one is the power coercive process and strategies that fall into this group are based on the assumption that change is the result of the compliance of those with less power to the wishes of those with greater amounts of power.

Anthony (1994:40) groups change strategies into four main groups, which can be aligned with those identified by Chin and Benne. These first of these is strategies that

contain a process of normative change brought about by education and persuasion and this matches Chin and Bennes normative-re-educative process. The second grouping is strategies that contain a process of coercion where people with less power come to do and believe what others with more power tell them. This matches Chin and Bennes power coercive strategy. The third grouping, and the last one which has a match with Chin and Bennes groupings, consists of strategies which contain a utilitarian process where people act in their own self interest and are influenced by goals determined by their organization and those who control them. This matches Chin and Bennes empirical-rational process. The last grouping is strategies which contain a conditioned process in which peoples attitudes and values are determined by an organizational environment, which itself unconsciously reflects the prevailing values and expectations of society. This does not have a immediate match with Chin and Bennes categories and there are a number of options available for consideration Firstly, it could be reasonable argued that this last strategy, that people change to reflect the prevailing attitudes of society, represents unplanned societal change over a long time period rather then a planned organizational change, and so should not really be included as an organizational change strategy. Secondly, it could also be argued that any planned attempt by the management of an organization designed to realign itself more favourably with the norms of society, for example, to reflect the ever growing concern for environmental matters, would require the adoption of one of the other change strategies. Thirdly and lastly, this could be considered somewhat analogous to Chin and Bennes' normative re-educative strategy, as it involves changing attitudes and values.

These strategies will be examined in more detail but the last of Anthony's (1994) strategies will not be considered as it has been demonstrated that it can be interpreted in different ways, either as not a planned change process at all or as analogous to one of the other identified strategies. This leaves three strategy groupings.

### 6.5.1 Empirical Rational

This strategy can be used to attempt to sidestep possible resistance to change. Proposals for change that are put forward will deliberately appeal to the specific interests, sensitivities and emotions of the key groups who will be involved in the change. The benefits that will accrue to them are emphasised. This strategy is based on the neo classical economic theory that people are rational and will act in a manner that maximises his utility (Anthony 1994). Huczyinki and Buchanan (1991) warned against the dangers of using this strategy where the benefits may not materialise. This can lead to disillusionment and loss of trust in those who promised the benefits.

### 6.5.2 Normative Re-educative

Under this strategy the many of the issues relating to resistance to change are addressed head on. Members of an organization are involved and given information about the changes that they are facing, such as what they are, why they are needed and what they will mean for an organization and for individuals. Through the re-educative process the aim is to change the norms and values of an

organizational members (Anthony 1994). Beer, Eisenstat and Spector (1990) argued that this approach, that changes in attitudes lead to changes in behaviour, is fundamentally flawed. They put forward the idea that, in organizations it is the roles which people play that shapes their behaviour. Therefore, the most effective way to change people's behaviour in an organization is to alter their role in that organization, so imposing a new set of responsibilities and relationships upon them. This argument is legitimate but it does not address what should be done if the aim is to change the whole organization or if the desired behaviour is not exhibited anywhere in it. Clarke (1994) suggested that the essence of lasting change is to understand the culture of an organization and if no attempt is made to address culture in an organization, as Beer, Eisenstat and Spector (1990) suggest, then you might change what people do but would not change how it is done.

### 6.5.3 Power Coercive

Under this strategy any attempts at consensus are abandoned. This may happen where there is profound disagreement over the nature of, or the need for, change with little or no chance of anyone being persuaded to alter their views (Anthony 1994). The result is that the change can only be forced through by the use of coercion, such as the threat of disciplinary action. Needless to say this strategy does not engender support at all levels of an organization.

### 6.5.4 Change Strategies in Local Government

Stewart (1995) wrote that traditionally change in local government has followed a top down model with little consultation. It has been classified under the power-coercive strategy, although at the gentler end of this strategy. Change has tended to be imposed on local government and accordingly has often been met with resistance. It is expected, therefore, that this will may be a change strategy which is see during the study. However, this strategy is incompatible with the tenets of sustainable development that advocate participation and grass roots involvement. A normative – re-educative process would be more in line with the principles of sustainable development and so this study will investigate if this is the strategy is being used, and if so, is it proving effective.

## 6.6    MODELS OF CHANGE

Cummings and Worley (1993) identified a number of different change models through which planned change may be implemented and which have been widely used by organizational development consultants.

### 6.6.1 Lewin's Change Model.

This broke down the change process into three stages and is based on the premise that before new  behaviour can be adopted, the old has to be discarded (Burnes 1992). The first stage is unfreezing. This stage involves reducing those force's, both physical and cultural,  that are maintaining an organizations current behaviour, and establishing the need for change The second stage is moving. This involves

analysing the situation, identifying alternative courses of action and then selecting the most appropriate. The final stage is refreezing. This stage seeks to stabilise an organization in its new stated to try and ensure that it does not regress back to its pre change stated.

## 6.6.2 Planning Model.

Burnes (1992) argued that this planning model, as developed by Lippitt, Watson and Westley is simply an elaboration of Lewin's three-stage model. The two main principles of this model are that all information must be freely available and that information is only helpful when it can be translated directly into action. It is a seven stage model involving the following steps and proceeds on the assumption that there is a change consultant working with an organization.

1   Scouting: In this stage an organization and the change agent jointly explore the problem.

2   Entry: In this stage the development of a mutual contract concerning expectations, goals, roles and actions of those involved in the change process, and mutual expectations occurs.

3   Diagnosis: This stage involves the identification of specific improvement goals based on the perceived problems of the client. It is comprised of the problem, goals and available resources.

4   Planning: This stage involves the identification of action steps and possible resistance to change. There is a need to set goals and examine the data gathered in the diagnostic stage.

5   Action: In this stage the implementation of the action steps occurs. If the previous steps have been done well then theoretically this should proceed smoothly.

6   Stabilisation and Evaluation: This stage involves evaluation to determine the success of the change or the need for further action. Ideally this should be conducted throughout the change process to determine if and what further work is required.

7   Termination: The final stage involves leaving the system or stopping the project and beginning another one.


Although these steps appear straightforward they are seldom followed in practice, and it is frequently a modified version of this model which is used. It can be seen that the first three stages, scouting, entry and diagnosis, equate to Lewin's unfreezing stage, action equates to moving and stabilisation and that termination equates to refreezing. These change models are useful but have a shortcoming in this situation in that they approach change as something that is finished once all of the appropriate stages have been carried out. As already argued sustainable development and becoming more sustainable is an ongoing process.

### 6.6.3 Action Research Model

As in the action research model detailed in the research methods chapter, action research as a change model is a cyclical process. Initial research provides information to guide action and the results of the action are assessed to provide further information to guide further action. It consists of eight main stages. These are the initial diagnosis of the problem, internal and external consultation to further assess the situation, data gathering and preliminary diagnosis, feedback, diagnosis, action planning, action and data gathering after the action. These stages occur in a cycle as shown in figure 7 below:

**Figure 7: Action Research Model**

```
Perception of              Joint action
problem by key             planning (set goals        New action
 individuals               and objectives)
     |                           |                          |
     v                           v                          v
Consult with                                          New data
behavioural                   Action                  gathering as
science expert                                        result of action
     |                           |                          |
     v                           v                          v
Data gathering            Data gathering             Rediagnosis of
and initial               after action               situation
 diagnosis                                            
     |                           |                          |
     v                           v                          v
Feedback to               Feedback to client              Etc.
key client                group by consultant
     |                           |
     v                           v
Joint diagnosis           Rediagnosis and action
 of problem               planning with client
                          and consultant
```

Source: Cummings and Worley (1993: 56)

Zuber-Skerritt (1996) noted that a key element in the action research change model is the reflection on the whole process and this gives it a continuity missing in other change models

## 6.6 PRECONCEPTIONS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

The preconceptions which are apparent from the investigation of organizational change are as follows. It is expected that local authorities will be making incremental changes throughout the whole organization, that the triggers for change are predominantly external and that change efforts are not being directed at human process issues. Resistance to change is expected to be evident and research will have to be done to uncover the strategies to deal with it which are being used, if any. It is expected that the change strategies which will be seen in local government will be power-coercive, although this is incompatible with the principles of sustainable development.

## 6.7 CONCLUSIONS

Having completed an examination of organizational change theories there are a number of conclusions which can be drawn in this area. Changing an organization and changing culture specifically, can be a difficult process and it was useful to identify the different scope and degrees of change which could be made. It was concluded that the whole organization would need to change but that this could not be a large scale reorientation due to the duties local authorities will still need to carry out. Different possible triggers for change were identified and classified on a continuum which ranged

from deterministic to voluntaristic. The debate on strategic fit was examined as were transaction cost economics and institutional isomorphism., but it is considered that these are too narrow to be of great use in the study. Instead the categories identified by Torrington, Weightman and Jones (1989) will provide a framework with which to examine triggers for change in this study.

The reasons for resistance to change were examined and it was determined that resistance is likely to be encountered. Chin and Benne identified strategies for dealing with resistance and this will provide a framework to use in the study. There were also a number of strategies identified for the implementation of change which again can be used as a framework for the study. Sometimes changing behaviour is sufficient but in this case local authorities need to change their values and beliefs in order to become sustainable organizations and fulfil the internal aspects of LA21. A normative/re-educative strategy was identified as appropriate for this but the other strategies which were also identified provide a strong framework to use in the study. The benefits that an organization with the characteristics of a learning organization could expect were examined and this was identified as a further topic to be examined in the study.

Different change models were examined and the similarities between them were clearly identified. The main difference was in the detail they went in to and the number of steps which the process was broken down into. Lewin's model will be a useful tool initially and if necessary, the other models can be used to provide a more detailed framework for this study.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

# THE FIELDWORK

## 7.0   OVERVIEW

This chapter will explain the data gathering part of the research carried out in the first and second stage studies and relate the studies to the action research cycle. It will detail the data collection methods employed, the way in which the data were recorded and also the way in which they were analysed.

## 7.1   FIRST STAGE STUDY

The first stage study aimed to examine Stirling Council in terms of the concepts examined in chapters five and six and to address the research questions established at the end of chapter two and which it will be useful to restate at this point.

- **To assess the extent to which a 'sustainability ethos' has permeated local authorities and identify organizational factors (e.g. culture, decision making processes) which either facilitate or provide a barrier to this.**

- **To determine the extent to which this influences the success or failure of Local Agenda 21 implementation.**

- **To examine the effects of changes in organizational factors on the above.**

It will also establish whether there are sustainability subcultures within the organization and along what lines these exist. It will examine the extent to which the culture facilitates sustainable development and will begin to try and identify

differences that exist between any subcultures. Attempts to change the organizational culture will be identified and followed. They will be classified according to the change strategy and model which they follow, and their effectiveness as perceived by those taking part in the first stage study will be examined. At various stages there will be periods of reflection on the outcomes of the first stage study to allow topics which need further investigation to be established and assess whether the research questions are being addressed adequately.

The first stage study involved attendance at meetings of the Member Officer Group on Sustainability (MOGS) at Stirling Council and interviewing 12 members of the group. The aim was to gather information to allow examination of the council given the theoretical framework for LA21 established in Chapter Two and the theoretical concepts surrounding change and culture which were identified in Chapters Five and Six. Jones (2000) showed that to achieve the aim of a study into change in local government, it was appropriate to obtain information through detailed interviews, participant observation, site visits, attendance at management meetings and examination of council documents. Before starting the fieldwork the preconceptions of the researcher relating to local government and change and culture were identified and recorded in Chapters Five and Six.

### 7.1.1. Data Sources

### 7.1.1.1 MOGS Meetings

The Member Officer Group on Sustainability (MOGS) is a cross departmental Working Group of Stirling Council. It contains members and officers of Stirling Council and was set in 1997 with the remit of promoting sustainability

in the work of the Council. Working Groups are started with the premise that their lifespan will be limited. MOGS members felt that, before the 1999 local elections, their work was important and there was still a role for it to play.

The author attended MOGS meetings in a purely observational capacity from November 1997 onwards. Access was gained through the author's supervisor, a councillor at Stirling Council who sits on MOGS. Two records of the proceedings were kept. The first is the official minutes and agendas and the second, personal notes of the meetings made by the author. These recorded items not included in the minutes, such as the atmosphere of the meetings, interactions, comments from participants and so on.

The group meets monthly at Viewforth in Stirling. In addition to the researcher being granted access and being permitted to attend these meetings, there were also other interested parties from outside the Council in attendance at various times. This included representatives from local schools, Stirling Women and the Environment and local action groups. An example of one such meeting is shown below.

Wednesday 19th August 1998

2.00 pm

Green Room, Old Viewforth

1. Note of Meeting

3rd June 1998

2. Matters Arising

   Sustainable Employee Transport Study

3. Stirling Sustainable Living Fair

4. Stirling Council Local Agenda 21 Program - Taking forward 'Towards a Sustainable Stirling' Report 2.

   Report by Local Agenda 21 Officer - for discussion

5. Landfill Tax Update

   Response from Forward Scotland

6. Establishment of Stirling Council Sustainability Forum

   Discussion

7. Year Planner Update

8. Europe's Environment - European Environment Agency

   Press Release

9. Date of Next Meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair who welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. As always there were refreshments available in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits, as well as jugs of water. Before the start of the meeting there was some informal chatting and discussion. The meeting got underway at 2.11pm when all who were due to attend had arrived and taken their places.

The minutes were quickly dealt with and it was established that the Employee Transport Study was going to be presented at the next meeting of the policy executive. While discussing the Sustainability Living Fair, a number of positive suggestions were made as to how the event could be improved in the future and

these are to be incorporated into the plan for the next year's Fair. There was a high degree of interest and enthusiasm shown by those in attendance.

Following agreement of the minutes the LA21 Officer presented a report on the Stirling Council LA21 programme 'Towards a Sustainable Stirling'. The need for commitment to the process was discussed and it was established that there was a need for more support for the Green Office Group amongst officers of the Council and for a stronger commitment to sustainability throughout the Council in order to fulfil one part of the proposed strategy, that is to manage and improve Stirling Council's own environmental performance. Discussion at this time made it clear that environmental should be read as sustainability. The reason for it stating 'environmental performance' was that most of the areas identified as ones where improvements could be made, were indeed environmental, such as recycling. It was agreed that this would be looked at to see if it could be changed as there is a need to communicate that sustainable development is not just about environmental issues. It was also established that there was a need to set targets and to decide who was responsible for each part of the sustainability strategy.

The next item dealt with the Landfill Tax Trust. Due to their experience in examining funding applications, Forward Scotland were keen to enter into a partnership with the Council on the Landfill Tax Trust. This was met with general agreement that this would be a good way forward. There was then discussion on the format of the sustainability forum, with the aim being to choose a form which would get as a wide a representation as possible. The Year

Planner was also discussed as a possible way of disseminating information on sustainable development and so raising awareness on the topic. The last item covered was a press release from the European Environment Agency. This was covered only briefly as it covered issues which could only be dealt with at a national or international level. The date of the next meeting was decided and the meeting finished at 4.36pm.

The atmosphere of the meeting was relaxed and friendly. There was a free flow of conversation between the participants, and also of the refreshments, throughout the duration of the meeting. The representative from Housing was not present but other then that there was full attendance.

### 7.1.1.2 Interviews

Oppenheim (1993) stated that no other skill is as important to a research worker as the skill to conduct good interviews. He distinguished between exploratory interviews and standardised interviews, each of which are appropriate in different situations. The purpose of the standardised interview, he argued, is essentially data collection in situations where research objectives and hypotheses are already formulated. The purpose of the exploratory interview is to develop ideas and hypotheses and is concerned with trying to reach an understanding of how people think and feel about the phenomena being investigated.

The exploratory interview, therefore, is seen as more appropriate for use in addressing the research questions and is also compatible with the underlying

phenomenological research philosophy as this technique helps the researcher to understand the experiences of others and how this has created the social reality surrounding the interviewee. It is also consistent with the aspect of action research which encourages exploration of new ideas and hypotheses. However it perhaps not the most appropriate technique with which to meet a further criteria of action research, which is to investigate previously established area as well. Therefore, it seems appropriate to instead carry out a series of semi-structured interviews, a hybrid of the two types identified by Oppenheim and a recognised interviewing style in its own right, (Ghauri, Grohaug and Kristianlund 1995, Bryman 1992, Gill and Johnson 1991).

Members of MOGS were interviewed and the questions asked were based on the theory covered in chapters five and six and also on the issues which were being raised through the MOGS meetings. After a small number of basic, icebreaking questions, there were a number of areas which were covered but interviewees were allowed to concentrate in which ever areas they felt were most knowledgeable or were more important or relevant. They were also able to bring up new avenues of discussion if they felt it was necessary. In an attempt to gain frank responses, an assurance was made that comments would not be directly attributed and it was felt that while one or two respondents were quite guarded, most were very open and honest. The interviews were recorded with the interviewees permission and then transcribed.

A sample interview structure is detailed below to show the areas which were covered in all interviews. In deciding on the questions to the interviewees a

division was drawn between the members and the officers of the Council. It was felt that the two groups may perceive situations differently and be able to offer different information. This was noted as a preconception and in order to ensure that it was not allowed to introduce bias the same interview structure was used for both.

The interviews started with a series of introductory questions relating to their positions in the Council, their length of service, their role and their attitudes to their jobs. They were asked of all participants and were designed to break the ice. There were then a series of questions relating to sustainable development, which asked them about it on a personal and a professional level. These included asking what sustainable development meant to them and whether their knowledge came from the Council or from a personal interest. After this the interview moved to address such points as whether or not they perceived that there were differences in the way sustainable development was viewed in different parts of the Council, whether they were aware of, or involved in, any initiatives to try and raise awareness of sustainability and create a sustainability ethos within the Council, how these were being implemented and how effective, or likely to be effective, these were perceived to be. Questions were also asked about the aspects of culture, shown in Chapter Five, which were identified as important for facilitating sustainable development. They were the asked about resistance to sustainable development, possible reasons for this and if there was or was not homogeneity throughout the Council in this area. Questions were then asked about what further steps they would like to see taken to try and

develop a sustainability ethos and lastly interviewees were asked if they were confident about the future of sustainable development under local government.

The interviews were, as already stated, open-ended and relatively unstructured, with some areas were covered in more depth then others by the different interviewees.

### 7.1.1.3 Other

Attendance at MOGS meetings and the following interviews were main sources of data for the first stage study, but they were not the only ones. Information was also gained from visioning meetings, a council run sustainability conference, sustainability living fairs and also informal conversations. Where data comes from a source which is not MOGS or an interview then it will be clearly labelled.

## 7.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered in the first stage study were qualitative, that is of a descriptive nature. Qualitative data analysis is a term that is applied to a wide range of methods for handling data that is relatively unstructured and inappropriate for reduction to numerical data.

Cassell and Symon (1994) noted that different research methodologies require different ways of handling and interpreting data. Some, such as grounded theory and discourse analysis, seek to create new understanding and theory from data, whilst others, such as ethnography and action research seek to present a rich descriptions and

vivid presentation of a new understanding. Bryman (1988) argued that analysis of qualitative data requires sensitivity to the detail and context of the data which has been gathered, so that the themes can be identified and followed and that this is common to all qualitative research.

Qualitative research is, therefore, a time consuming task, In this case there was a considerable amount of paper and electronic files which contained the data gathered in the first stage study. Organising and analysing this proved to be long and often frustrating , so when the opportunity arose to use a computer-based qualitative analysis package it was taken. Despite having to learn how to operate the package, the use of the computerised package QSR Nud*ist, undoubtedly simplified and sped up the process of data analysis.

### 7.2.1 QSR NUD*IST

Nudist was the computerised package available at Stirling University for the analysis of qualitative data. There are other packages on the market but they were not available to use at the university. The name Nudist is an acronym of Non-numeric, Unstructured, Data, Index, Searching and Theorising and like the other packages available packages it creates an environment which makes it easier to store and explore data in a way which minimises clerical routine and maximises flexibility.

Nudist allowed al the data to be inputted or imported directly into it. Transcribed interviews could be imported as text files and most other data was also easily imported if it was already stored as an electronic file. Time was

154

spent to enter as much data not already held electronically as the expected time savings in the analysis stage were such that this was judged worthwhile. One concern of the researcher was that by having the data in the computer package and using this to do the analysis, was that some of the intuitive element of interpretation might be lost. This was especially the case for the MOGS meeting data, where personal notes were held in separate files from the minutes and agendas. There was a feature of the software which mitigated this concern as once data was in Nudist additional notes and thoughts could still be added to it.

The data were organised into two interlocking systems, the Document and Index systems, and these are linked by a search procedure. The Document system contains all the data gathered in the first stage study and imported and entered into the package. The Index system is made of nodes which contain all the different categories under which the information in the Document system is to be examined. The information is then examined and appropriate parts are assigned to the different node categories which results in the information becoming coded.

For the analysis in the first stage study the nodes on the index system which were used are shown on in Figure 9 below. The majority of these were determined prior to the analysis starting, but there was a facility to add extra nodes as new areas were found in the documents.

Figure 9: Subject areas explored in data analysis of first stage study
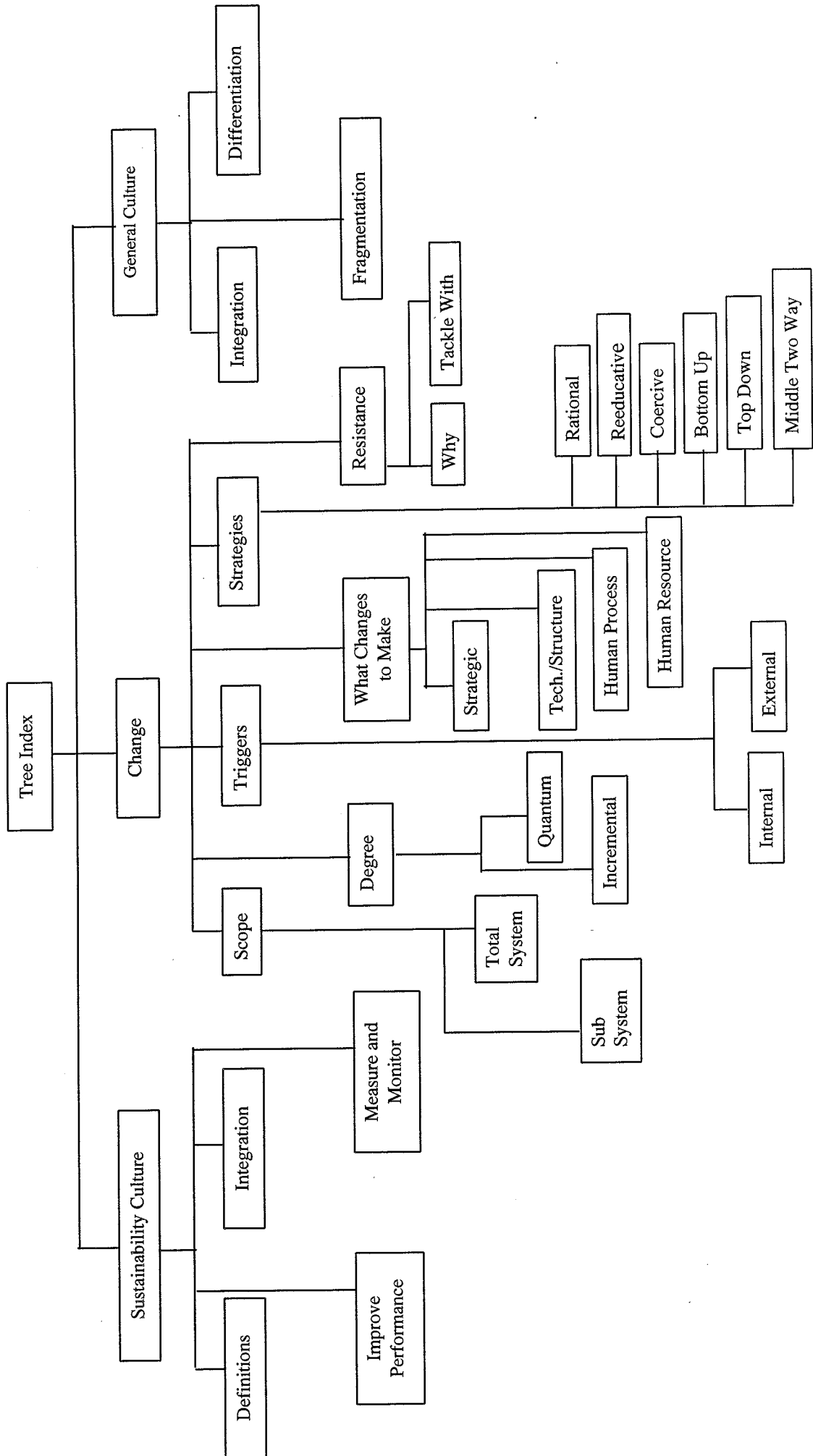
Once coding was completed it was simple to request that all the evidence relating to a certain category be presented in a report.

### 7.2.2 Other Analysis

There were some documents which it was not possible to examine using Nudist as they were unable to be either imported or inputted due to either time or technical constraints. In these cases the documents were examined manually using the same categories as those being examined using Nudist. Notes were kept on the results of this analysis and were added to the bodies of evidence being produced by the computer program.

### 7.2.3 Recording Results

The results of the first stage study are recorded in Chapter Eight and the follow the same framework in which the theoretical concepts were examined in and upon which the analysis was based.

## 7.3 REFLECTION

Following the recording of the results of the data analysis from the first stage study there was a period of reflection in order to best establish what the aims of the second stage study should be. Any gaps which existed in relation to the research aims and objectives were identified so that these could be addressed in the second stage study. Areas of interest and relevance raised in the first stage study and but not fully explored were also identified so that they too could be covered in the second stage study. Where theoretical gaps were uncovered there

organization. The questions then moved to examine the culture they perceived within the organization and how they felt about change. This was covered in more detail than the in the first stage study.

### 7.4.2 Data Analysis

The second stage study generated a smaller volume of data then the first stage study due to its shorter duration and more focused approach. This meant that the analysis could be carried out without the aid of the computer package used in the first stage study. The analysis and the results are presented in Chapter Ten.

### 7.4.3 Reflection

Following the completion of the second stage study there was again a period of reflection to assess whether the research aims had been addressed effectively. This is also covered in Chapter Ten.

organization. The questions then moved to examine the culture they perceived within the organization and how they felt about change. This was covered in more detail than the in the first stage study.

### 7.4.2 Data Analysis

The second stage study generated a smaller volume of data then the first stage study due to its shorter duration and more focused approach. This meant that the analysis could be carried out without the aid of the computer package used in the first stage study. The analysis and the results are presented in Chapter Ten.

### 7.4.3 Reflection

Following the completion of the second stage study there was again a period of reflection to assess whether the research aims had been addressed effectively. This is also covered in Chapter Ten.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

# ANALYSIS OF FIRST STAGE STUDY

## 8.0  OVERVIEW

This chapter examines the data gathered in the first stage study in the light of the culture and change theories identified in previous chapters. This analysis identifies and examines a number of threads and is used to support or suggest modification to theoretical ideas. The findings made at this stage will be used as a basis for further studies and data gathering exercises so starting another loop of the action research process.

## 8.1  DATA SOURCES

For more detail see chapter seven.

The data used in this section came from two main primary sources. The first is the Member Officer Group on Sustainability (MOGS) meetings. This includes minutes, agendas, participants comments and researchers impressions. The second is interviews with MOGS members. Other data came from Council events such as conferences and visioning meetings, and also information disseminated to householders in the Stirling area.

What follows in this chapter is an analysis of how the data gathered relate to culture and change theory. Where primary evidence is used to support or reject an assertion it is labelled either MOGS (date) or Interview (Number.). Data from any

other source will be fully labelled in the body of the text.

## 8.2   EXISTENCE OF SUBCULTURES

Chapter Five determined that there were likely to be sub-cultures existing within the organization so in the interviews, and in attending meetings, evidence which either supported or rejected this was sought. There is some evidence from the first stage study to support this differentiation perspective.

Interview 6

'It definitely varies from department to department. Environmental Services for instance are much more into the sustainability thing then say Housing or Education are'.

Interview 8

'There's not much of a sustainability culture in this department I'm afraid. Day to day it is something which is just not thought about by anyone'.

Interview 7

'Sustainable development is a consideration, although probably not as much as it should be. It is part of the decision making process with us though'.

The evidence supports the supposition that there are sub-cultures in different departments of the local authority and that they have different norms and values when it comes to the consideration of sustainable development. The attitude to sustainability is seen most simply in representation and attendance at MOGS meetings. For instance the Housing representative only occasionally attended the

meetings and input was minimal. The representative was at a high level within

the organization and so leadership and support on sustainability issues, necessary

for change, for that department was likely to be low.

In the rest of the study it was remembered that it was not a homogenous culture

which was being studied and efforts were made to uncover distinctions between

subcultures.

## 8.3   WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ?

Chapter One showed that there are a myriad of definitions of sustainable

development, and it also established that there is a need for a fairly tight and

explicit definition if it is to be used as a basis for policy making.  Therefore it is

interesting to note the definitions and meanings attached to it by Stirling Council,

and its individual members and officers, and to determine whether it meets this

criterion.  This will also show whether there is a cultural commitment to LA21

and sustainable development as the level of its existence in organizational

artefacts will demonstrate give an indication of whether there have been attempts

to introduce it to the organizational culture   Shown below is the definition found

in Stirling Council LA21 Programme: 'Towards a Sustainable Stirling'.

MOGS 23 January 1998

Page 11 'Sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present without

compromising (the ability to meet) the needs of the future by: reducing our use of

raw materials and cutting down on pollution and wastes; protecting fragile

ecosystems; and sharing fairly between different groups within each country,

between developed and developing nations and between future and present generations'.

This does cover the three interconnected aspects of sustainability, namely environmental, economic, and social aspects. There is further evidence that Stirling Council is attempting to address all the aspects of sustainability. At a number of MOGS meetings there were representatives from Stirling Women and The Environment, Stirling Local Enterprise Trust, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and local secondary schools, amongst others groups. This demonstrates that there is an understanding of the issues involved in sustainability and also a willingness to work in partnership with other community groups, as further shown in the extract below which relates to the desired composition of a Landfill Tax Group.

MOGS 18 November 1997

Page 4 'A group drawn from the Council, partner organizations and members of the community working as an informal body [or] A legally constituted Trust comprised of appointees of the Council, partner organizations and members of the community)'.

However, returning to the definition of sustainable development given, this is, in essence, a vague statement. There is no more detailed corporate definition of sustainability as it relates specifically to Stirling Council and its wider community. Rather it appears as more of a 'soundbite', and as a generic and comforting definition of an ideal state. The drawback identified in chapter one to this type of definition is the resulting confusion amongst those expected to promote

sustainable development. There was some evidence to support this assertion found in the first stage study.

The interviews threw up a number of different definitions when respondents were asked what they understood by sustainable development and how they would define it within the context of the local authority and their jobs within it.

Interview 6

'Sustainable development is looking after future generations by what we do today'.

Again, this is a vague definition of what sustainable development is.

Interview 5

'I see sustainable development as a huge, wide ranging concept and that is something that I don't think is particularly appreciated all through the Council. We need to include environmental, economic and social aspects when we are thinking about sustainable development. Leaving any out, or concentrating on just one means it isn't sustainable development any more and I think probably a large number of local authorities, and I would maybe include Stirling here, might have a tendency to do this'.

This interviewee in this instance is voicing an opinion on what should be and not what is and indicating that they find the current situation inadequate.

Interview 3

'My opinion on sustainable development is that in reality it is quite unclear what

we actually mean by it. A lot of things come into it. In terms of this context [my job] sustainable can mean financial or budgetary sustainability....or environmental sustainability....It is an absolute minefield working through what all the different definitions are and I don't think that we as a Council do it'.

This shows some of the confusion surrounding the issue of what exactly is meant by sustainable development. There is recognition that it means different things to different people and an uncertainty about which definition should be used. The interviewee was undoubtedly aware of the issues surrounding sustainable development in a general sense but was less sure about what it means for the local authority in particular.

What is apparent is that there is not one definition of sustainable development that applies throughout the whole Council and this has the potential to lead to problems.

MOGS 3 June 1998

Participant Comment 'In Education there is a bit of confusion about what exactly is meant by sustainable development'.

Interview 10

'I am not really sure what sustainable development is about. I mean I read all the MOGS stuff obviously because I have to produce the minutes and agendas but I am still not sure about it. No-one has ever sat down and explained it to me'.

This comment raises the idea that perhaps a failure to communicate effectively has

contributed to the confusion surrounding what sustainable development is.

MOGS 16 December 1997

Participant Comment 'We will all have to make an effort not to speak in jargon or abbreviations, not just for the visitors but for a lot of the rest of us as well. Some of us aren't all that familiar with what sustainable development is all about and even I get a bit confused by some of the terms. And it can be embarrassing to keep asking what this or that means'.

This acknowledges that the technical jargon often associated with sustainable development can add to the confusion surrounding it, and that people on MOGS are not necessarily completely au fait with sustainable development. It also shows a willingness to address these issues to try and ensure greater understanding.

These comments reinforce the idea that there is some confusion over what exactly is meant by sustainable development but also raise the possibility that poor communication as well as a confused message could be a major part of the problem. Interestingly there appeared to be little in the way of differences between the responses of people from different departments, other than the extent to which they felt their colleagues knew what sustainable development was. However it should be remembered that this study dealt with members of MOGS, who by their very affiliation with this group are going to be relatively knowledgeable about sustainable development. They would be able to provide a picture of the culture that surrounded them in their department but the researcher would not gain first hand experience of it in this stage of the research.

Sustainable development is found in the artefacts of the organization and in this case the most obvious is that it is a stated strategic aim of the organization. This indicates at least the beginning of a corporate commitment to sustainability. The vision had obviously not been communicated throughout the organization as evidenced by the perception of the interviewees about their colleagues awareness. This question, whether the general vagueness and differing opinions found in the Council over the meaning of sustainable development is due to an inability to communicate effectively, or communication of a confused message, is a topic that could bear further investigation in the next stage study.

## 8.4 MOVING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Chapter Two identified three areas which need to be addressed internally by a local authority trying to promote sustainable development and a LA21. These were the need to improve their own performance on sustainability, integrating sustainable development into all its policies and measuring and monitoring its own performance. In Chapter Three it was surmised that progress on these three fronts would indicate the level to which the culture is supporting sustainability.

### 8.4.1 Improving Performance

There is evidence in the first stage study which suggests that the Council is making a concerted effort to try and improve its own performance.

MOGS 27 October 1998

Page 37 'We recognise that no one single mechanism can achieve this across the

organization. Accordingly we have designated a Spokesperson for the Council, established a Member - Officer Group and a Green Office Group'.

This shows some of the new mechanisms put in place by Stirling Council to address sustainability and improve their performance in these areas. In comparison to the results shown in chapter two, on the progress being made by local authorities nation-wide, this represents a fairly advanced state of affairs and proves corporate commitment exists. These mechanisms involve people from throughout the organization so allow no distinction between different departments.

In addition there are also Council-wide initiatives planned to improve the Councils own performance.

MOGS 31 January 1998

Page 25 'Council employees should be trained on how this [sustainability] relates to their own area and level of work. The general principles of working more sustainably should be a normal part of both induction and in house training'.

This is an idea to help improve performance but as yet it is not a reality. As part of a change program it would fall into a participative and also a normative/re-educative strategy.

MOGS 24 April 1998

Sustainable Employee Transport Study was discussed with the aim of eventually persuading employees to adopt more sustainable means of travelling to and from

work.

Comment from Conversation with MOGS member 13 September 1998

'Council members and officers are encouraged to use public transport where possible rather then private cars when travelling on Council business'.

These indicate the local authority is willing to lead by example and not just ask its community to do as they say and not as they do.

MOGS 03 March 1998

'Undertake a sustainability appraisal. Sustainability criteria are being developed .....further work will be required to ensure these are applied by Services in decision making'.

There is evidence that there is a very real attempt being made to try and improve the Council's own performance with regards to sustainable development, or at least there are plenty of ideas on how to do this. However without procedures for measuring and monitoring performance (see below 8.4.3) they will be unable to see how far they have come or areas which need more work. Without this they will be unable to determine their success in improving their own performance.

## 8.4.2 Integrating Sustainable Development Into All Policies and Activities

In attempting to integrate sustainable development into all its activities and policies, the Council claims to have undertaken a number of actions. These

include:

MOGS 27 October 1998

Page 37 'an environmental charter and action programme in addition to the Sustainable Stirling strategy. An employee transport study. Provision of a major public transport interchange in Stirling. A local Biodiversity plan for Stirling. Redevelopment of Forthside in Stirling. Several sustainability projects in the New Deal project'.

Whilst these are all commendable they are examples of individual outcomes with a sustainability slant rather than evidence that sustainable development has been integrated into all activities. As evidence presented in 8.3 showed, there is still confusion over what sustainable development means and this means that it is very unlikely that the concept could have been integrated into all the organizations' activities. As established in Chapter Two, doing this is going to require that sustainable development be build into the very fabric of the organization and be an integral part of its culture. This will mean that it becomes an automatic consideration in the decision making processes in all the Council's activities and sustainable development will be felt in all the Council's policies. Currently the perception amongst MOGS members which is emerging from the first stage study appears to be that there is still some way to go before it can be said that sustainability has been well and truly integrated into all the Council's policies and activities. This is shown in the extracts shown below.

Interview 6

'No, I don't think that we claim that sustainability is an integral part of everything we do'.


MOGS 03 June 1998

Page 59 'sustainability criteria need to be progressively incorporated into tendering procedures. There is not yet sufficient weight given to these. Best Value, as a strategic aim of the Council should also include sustainability aims'.


Page 60 'In summary there is still a need to operationalise the council's strategic aim of working towards sustainability and ensuring it is built into the work of all council services'.


However a respondent from Environmental Services stated that:


Interview 7

'Sustainable development is a consideration , although probably not as much as it should be. It is part of the decision making process with us though'.


This indicates that perhaps this department is a bit further ahead in integrating sustainable development into their decision making then others.


## 8.3.3 Measuring and Monitoring

There is not much evidence that measuring and monitoring their own progress towards sustainability is a priority for the local authority. There is

evidence that there has been attempts to measure the sustainability of the wider community through 'Stirling by Numbers'.

MOGS 27 October 1998

Page 39 'Stirling by Numbers contains a number of indicators which reflect the sustainability of the Stirling area.....The Green Diary publicises these in news and progress'.

When it comes to measuring and monitoring its own performance there is less to report and the perception is that this is an area where more needs to be done.

MOGS 23 January 1998

Participant Comment 'It would be nice to know just how much paper we are all sending of to recycling every week. It might have a motivating effect it we told people this and then said Thanks'.

MOGS 03 June 1998

Page 63 'We do need to be more rigorous in our monitoring if we are to make the best use of resources, apply the correct policies and undertake the most effective activities. There needs to be further work however to monitor the Service Planning process to ensure that plans and the work programme reflect the strategic aim of working towards sustainability'.

MOGS 24 February 1999

Participant Comment 'We still need to do more to develop mechanisms to monitor what we are doing'.

evidence that there have been attempts to measure the sustainability of the wider community through 'Stirling by Numbers'.

MOGS 27 October 1998

Page 39 'Stirling by Numbers contains a number of indicators which reflect the sustainability of the Stirling area.....The Green Diary publicises these in news and progress'.

When it comes to measuring and monitoring its own performance there is less to report and the perception is that this is an area where more needs to be done.

MOGS 23 January 1998

Participant Comment 'It would be nice to know just how much paper we are all sending of to recycling every week. It might have a motivating effect it we told people this and then said Thanks'.

MOGS 03 June 1998

Page 63 'We do need to be more rigorous in our monitoring if we are to make the best use of resources, apply the correct policies and undertake the most effective activities. There needs to be further work however to monitor the Service Planning process to ensure that plans and the work programme reflect the strategic aim of working towards sustainability'.

MOGS 24 February 1999

Participant Comment 'We still need to do more to develop mechanisms to monitor what we are doing'.

## 8.4 TYPE OF CHANGE

Stirling Council is committed to a LA21 process and this necessarily entails change. An examination will be made of the data gathered in order to determine the scope and degree of change being envisaged by Stirling Council and the model shown in chapter six and shown again in figure 10 below will be used to classify the change. Having decided on which quadrant the data best fits into, this will be compared to what is expected.

**Figure 10: Types of Change**

Degree of Change

|  | | Incremental | Quantum |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scope Of Change | Total System | Large Scale | Reorientation |
| | Sub-System | Adaptation | Fundamental |

### 8.4.1 Scope of Change

Theoretically two different possibilities were presented with regard to the scope of change required to integrate sustainability into the Councils activities. These were total system change or sub system change. An examination of literature covering local government and sustainable development indicated that total system change was required.

An examination of the remarks made by interviewees supports this view, as does data from MOGS meetings.

Interview 2

'Sustainable development is a wide concept. It covers all the social areas as well as environmental ones. That means that every department in the Council can play a part and they need to'.

Interview 5

'You can't treat sustainability as an add on and expect things to happen. Everybody, no matter what they are doing, needs to consider how what they are doing affects sustainability'.

Interview 3

'Sustainability is not just an environmental issue. It is as much about what Housing and Social Services or Education do'.

MOGS 16 December 1997

Page 5 'Within Stirling Council itself, it was highlighted that sustainability should be an integral part of all services and that this needed to be embedded in the culture of the organization'

MOGS 23 January 1998

Page 17 'this is a corporate issue and cannot be regarded as a function of a particular service'

These comments indicate that there is a perception that sustainable development is relevant to every part of the Council's activities and that the whole organization is going to have to take this on board. There appears to be overwhelming evidence that, within Stirling Council, there is a belief that the whole organization needs to be involved for successful integration of sustainability into Council activities. This supports the idea that total system change is required. This rules out the change types seen in the quadrants representing adaptation and fundamental and leaves the alternatives of large scale or reorientation.

However, further examination identifies concerns that this has not yet been recognised by all areas of the Council.

Interview 6

'It can be hard to see where or how your job impacts on sustainability or why it is relevant to what you're doing'.

Interview 4

'I think that in some areas there is a belief that sustainability is an environmental issue and not relevant to their department'.

This provides evidence of a discrepancy between the desired and the actual state of affairs, or espoused theory and theory in use. This area could be worthy of further investigation in the second stage study in order to

determine the extent of this discrepancy.

## 8.4.2 Degree of Change

Theoretically there was a choice between incremental and quantum changes. It was recognised that there would also be intermediate points between these two extremes but that they were useful in representing a simple dichotomy. An examination of literature appeared to suggest that quantum change was inappropriate, as the basic aims and statutory requirements of a local authority were unchanged. The change required was to get all areas to consider the sustainability arguments while continuing with their activities. This indicated that the degree of change should be nearer the incremental end of the continuum.

An examination of data from the first stage study appears to suggest that there is a general feeling that the local authority cannot be expected to make quantum changes and that smaller, uncomplicated incremental change would be more appropriate and effective.

Interview 3

'When it comes down to it, we all still have our jobs to do. I don't think we can go around altering peoples job descriptions or whatever. I think it is more a question of changing they way people think about what they are doing rather then trying to change what they do. I think that will be far more effective then just turning round and saying 'right - now you have to do this, this and this as well as what you're doing now'.

This indicates a perception that it is a cultural change which is required and that people within the organization would not respond positively to having their job responsibilities extended.

Interview 7

'Sustainability issues already are part of a lot of people's work but quite often the connection isn't made that what they are doing is promoting sustainable development. There is quite a lot being done on sustainability that isn't being recognised as such'.

This comment indicates a perception that because some work is already being carried out which relates to sustainability, the changes required will not be huge.

Interview 4

'Obviously changes are needed, but local government in Scotland had to deal with huge reorganization in 1996 and to be honest, I think that if you start telling people we are going to make big, big changes you are going to encounter a lot of opposition'.

Interview 2

'Some of the changes needed might be quite large but on the whole I think that the whole process will be easier to manage if they are made on a smaller scale'.

These comments show that there appears to be stronger support for smaller rather then larger changes.

Evidence can also be found in MOGS minutes and agendas that local authorities are not legally in a position to fundamentally alter what they do but that they do have some discretion in the way in which things are done.

MOGS 20 February 1998

Page 17. A local authority needs to operate 'within the requirements of various pieces of planning and roads regulations' but 'can define its own priorities with regards to Green Space'.

There also appears to be a feeling that the degree of change needed in the Council is not going to be uniform across all departments. This is supported further by the evidence that subcultures exist within the organization which are at different stages in becoming more sustainable.

Interview 4

'As the situation is at the moment, some departments have integrated sustainability into their activities far more then others. To be fair it is perhaps easier for Environmental Services, for instance, to see how sustainability issues relate to them and to incorporate them into their work, then, say, the more socially based departments. They will have much more work to do to in this area'.

The evidence above appears to rule out the quantum changes that would

place the type of change required in the upper right 'reorientation' quadrant. However, it appears to be simplistic to classify the degree of change required as merely 'incremental'. Rather it appears, based on the evidence, fairer to conclude that the degree of change required would fall towards the incremental end of a incremental/quantum continuum, and also that the degree of change required will be different for different areas of the organization.

If the evidence gathered and presented above is used to determine a position in Figure 11 below, then the result is shown below with different degrees of change, although all towards the incremental end of the scale, required throughout the whole organization.

**Figure 11: Type of Change Exhibited**

Degree of Change

| | | Incremental ←————————————————→ Quantum | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scope<br>Of<br>Change | Total System | Large Scale     ⊢◄——►⊣     Reorientation | |
| | Sub-System | Adaptation | Fundamental |
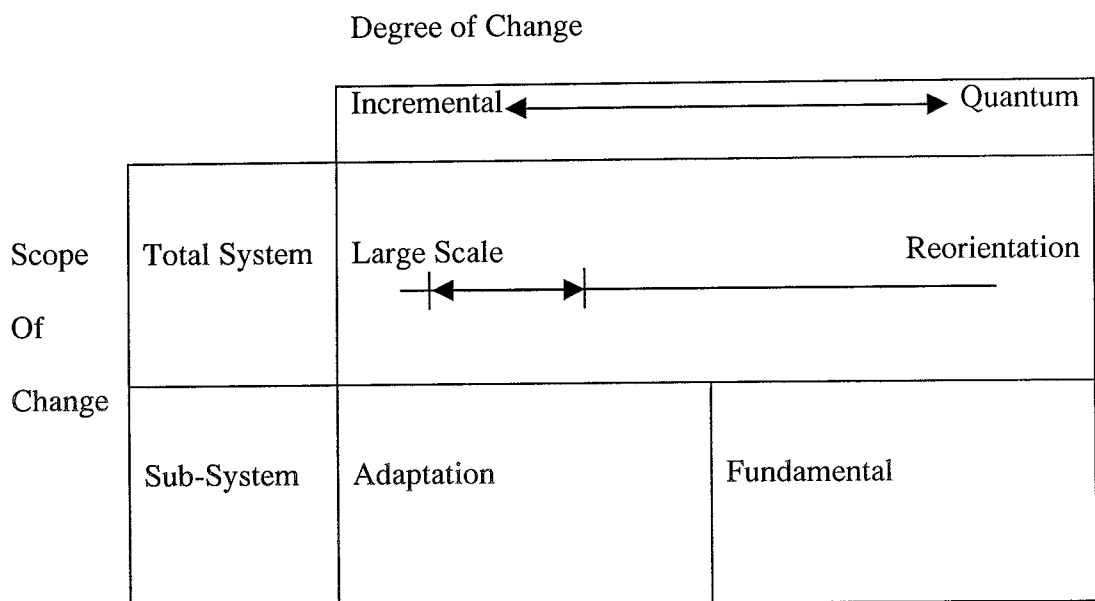
In chapter six it was concluded that the change required and being aimed for by

local government would fall into the large scale quadrant. The evidence supports this supposition and allows for a greater amount of detail in this quadrant.

## 8.5 TRIGGERS FOR CHANGE

An examination of theory identified a number of possible triggers for organizational change and allowed them to broadly grouped into either reaction to external stimuli or proactive action on the part of the organization. Four groupings that represent different positions are those identified and explained in chapter 6 and are imposition, adaptation, growth and creativity, which can be place at different points along a continuum ranging from determinism to voluntarism

Figure 12: Triggers for Change
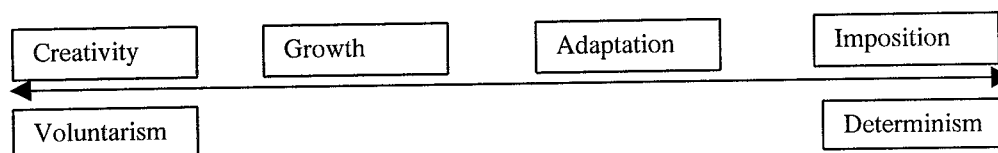


An examination of literature in this area suggested that the prominent triggers for change are external to the organization and so would appear under Imposition. For example, the Rio Summit in 1992 stated that local authorities should develop a LA21 to move their area towards sustainability and the UK Government stated that all local authorities should produce a LA21. Further investigation showed that many local authorities already had activities in place which fell under the umbrella of LA21 and the triggers for these varied from authority to authority, but there was often an internal member of staff who was the 'champion' of these causes and who provided an internal trigger for change.

An examination of the evidence from the first stage study appears to show that there have been a number of triggers which have instigated the drive for sustainability.

There is evidence to support the assertion that the trigger for adopting sustainable development as a strategic aim and developing a LA21 was external to Stirling Council. It can be seen that there was and is:

- pressure from national government

  MOGS 23/1/98

  Page 14 'I want all local authorities in the UK to adopt LA21 strategies – Tony Blair'.

- pressure from Europe

  MOGS 23 January 1998

  Page 14. 'Sustainable development is now a specific objective of the Treaty of Union, agreed...in 1997'

  MOGS 03 June 1998

  Page 53 'The UK is committed to implementing many international and European agreements relevant to sustainable development'.

- pressure from society

  MOGS 20 March 1998

  Participant Comment 'I think as well, we are having to recognise that people are much more aware of environmental issues nowadays and want to see the

environment protected as much as they want to be economically healthy if you like'.

It is summed up as the extract from one interview below puts it:

Interview 6

'We do obviously have a requirement to produce a LA21 and also a moral obligation to pursue sustainable development strategies because it is what people expect'.

This suggests that it is external pressure which has led to the development of a strategy for sustainable development. So rather than strategy being a trigger for planned change, it is a result of unplanned changes.

However there were activities going on before the advent of sustainability as a strategic aim of the authority and the establishment of a LA21 that fit the criteria of action to support sustainable development. This would suggest that it is too simple to say that a strategy for sustainable development is only in existence because of external pressures.

MOGS 03 June 1998

Participant Comment 'A lot of what we were doing already fitted in with what we understand sustainable development is about'.

Interview 4

'We have always pursued some policies which are really fully compatible with sustainable development in that we are trying to protect the environment, which is something that is much more important to people then it used to be'.

As well as demonstrating that there was already activity occurring which was supported sustainable development, this comment also suggests an environmental bias towards sustainability by the interviewee.

Interview 5

'Environmental, social and economic issues are what the Council is all about so even if it hasn't been made explicit an awful lot of what we have always done can be related to sustainable development. There have been times obviously when they conflict with each other but we just try to translate into action what the political side of the Council – which supposedly represents what the people want – asks us to'.

Interview 7

'We are quite lucky here. There have always been very capable people in this Council who have been supporters of what is now coming under sustainable development'.

It would be interesting to examine the extent to which sustainable development was being addressed prior to its establishment as a strategic aim to more fully examine the relationship between strategy and change. Some more consideration would have to be given as to whether this would by a suitable area to examine in

the second stage study, as it may not help to answer the research questions.

In summary, it appears as if there has not been a strategic approach to change in this area. Rather change is occurring because of external forces acting upon the Council, with which there is either a need or desire to comply. Local government in general was instrumental in drawing up Agenda 21 and giving local authorities the responsibility for developing their own LA21 but for any particular local authority this cannot be viewed as an internal trigger. There is no legal compulsion to comply with the external triggers which were identified above but they are still exerting a strong influence. There is also a degree of adaptation visible, as attitudes and behaviour are beginning to change in line with a general shift in the attitudes and behaviour of wider society. This aspect appears to suggest that changing external environment influences strategy which then results in an additional force for internal changes, but this is a slow process.

## 8.6 WHAT CHANGES TO MAKE

In Chapter Six four general areas in which action may be necessary to bring about change were considered. These were human process issues, human resource issues, strategic issues and technology/structure issues. The initial examination of theory and literature led to the supposition that change would be required predominantly in human process and strategic issues in order for a local authority to support sustainable development. This would certainly be the place to start if there is currently not a great deal of support for it, and to increase support for it. In particular it would be important to look at the values which guide organizational functioning under strategic issues and a wide range of human

process issues such as how people within the organization communicate with one another and how decisions are made. Human process issues are important to ensure that people understand fully how sustainable development affects them and how they in their organizational role affect it and to try to ensure that they function in a way compatible with the principles of sustainable development, such as democracy and participation.

There was evidence from the first stage study which supports the idea that these areas need to be considered. There was certainly a universal recognition in the first stage study that strategic issues are important.

Interview 7

'I think that it is important that we have sustainable development as a strategic aim. It gives the whole thing a legitimacy that it might not otherwise have'.

Interview 6

'By having sustainable development as one of our strategic aims I think we are demonstrating that there is a commitment at a senior level here and I think that's quite important'.

MOGS 20 March 1998

Participant Comment 'Ideally I'd want everyone to automatically think about sustainability when they are making decisions and having sustainable development as a strategic aim certainly is a step in the right direction, but I will admit that we still have a long way to go with that'.

MOGS 23 January 1998

Page 19 'adoption by the Council of 'working towards sustainability' as one of only four strategic objectives [puts in place the foundations for a LA21 process]'.

Interview 3

'I think that the strategic commitment is hugely important'.

These comments indicate a consensus and perception that the strategic support for sustainable development is vital. It will be useful to determine the full extent of strategic support in the second stage study to assess if there is any gap between the actual and desired position of the organization. It appears that there is a strategic commitment as is demonstrated by the establishment of sustainable development as a strategic aim of the council but further investigation will be needed to uncover the depth of this commitment in different parts of it.

There was also a consensus of opinion that human process issues played a part that should not be overlooked.

Interview 7

'I suppose that we want to change the way that people work in all areas of the Council. We want sustainability to be a part of what everyone does'.

MOGS 23 January 1998

Page 25 '...guidance states that an approach is needed which ensures the [sustainability] process involves all parts of the local authority.....The need to

work cross service is probably accepted and practised at more senior levels, but at other levels this is less common'.

Interview 8

'Generally I think that there is not a lot of talking goes on between different departments, the exception being groups like MOGS or the Green Office Group'.

MOGS 24 February 1998

Participant Comment 'A lot of people who work here are doing there jobs without really knowing or caring about what sustainable development is even if is one of our strategic aims. We need to get people thinking about how they make decisions for example and what criteria they base their decisions on and we need to get sustainability in there somehow.'

Interview 6

'I don't think that sustainability is at the top of priorities when it comes to decision making'.

These indicate a recognition of the importance of human process issues. These comments show that there is also a perception that there are currently weaknesses in the human process issues which are undermining sustainable development. It may be that structural and technical issues could also be considered here as the set up for inter departmental working is perceived as needing improvement.

There were also some further comments made on human resource issues and

technology and structure issues.

Interview 3

It's going to take time. Short of getting rid of people who aren't into sustainability and replacing them all with people who are, which would never be possible, we just have to accept that it will take time. I think that it [training on sustainability] should be part of the induction process for all new staff though'.

This comment shows that human resource issues may play a part but that it is not feasible to concentrate on them alone.

Interview 6

'The way we are set up now lets us fulfil all our statutory obligations so what we need to do is build sustainability into what we already have'.

This indicates that there is a limit on what can be done with structural and technical issues.

What has emerged from the first stage study is that both strategic and human process issues are important in trying to promote a sustainability ethos throughout the local authority but, further than that, not a great deal has been learnt in this area. Organizational culture was identified as a central issue in both human process and strategic issues and therefore is an important area to investigate further in the second stage study. There is an introductory assessment of organizational culture within the local authority based on the evidence from the first stage study below, but it was established early in the analysis that the scope

of the first stage study has limited the extent to which an examination of organizational culture can be made. It seems that there is also a realisation that there are some aspects where it is either impossible or infeasible to make changes. This provides another topic for investigation in the second stage study. It would be useful to further examine human process issues, which particular ones are important and the best ways to address these issues.

## 8.7 CHANGE STRATEGIES AND MODELS

Chapter six examined a variety of change strategies and models. The change strategies examined included the power-coercive, the empirical-rational and normative-re-educative strategies. An examination of literature concluded that in the public services sector, the predominant change strategies were power coercive and top down. It was also concluded that these approaches were incompatible with the principles of sustainable development and LA21 which emphasise democracy and participation. Therefore it was without any preconceptions as to what would be uncovered that the researcher approached this issue.

From the first stage study it appears as if the dominant strategy being employed to try and change the organization to a more sustainable stance is one of a normative-re-educative nature, which, it was established in chapter six, was an appropriate model as it did not contradict the principles of sustainable development. Within this strategy, change is approached with the assumption that behaviour is based on the norms and values that people hold and change arises from processes that replace existing norms and values with more desirable ones. Education and persuasion are used to bring about normative change.

Interview 5

'It is definitely going to have to be a case of educating people. Not many people are going to disagree with the principle of sustainability so we need to make an effort to pass on all these principles in a way which doesn't mean that they are forgotten the minute something else comes along'.

This comment also has an implicit suggestion that an empirical-rational strategy could be employed. This is where people act in a rational manner and so will act in their own self interest. A more sustainable planet appears to be in everybody's interest but it requires action from everyone. As established in chapter six, self interest is usually selfish and people pursue that which improves their lives.

Interview 8

As I have said before I don't think that forcing it on people is helpful. We really need to concentrate on getting people to think about their jobs and seeing how they affect sustainability'.

MOGS 24 February 1999

Page 37 'Means are required to raise awareness in a wider audience or to interest those not interested in green issues. A number of different approaches may have to be adopted, taking into consideration effectiveness, available resources and so on'.

These extracts are indicative of the attitude of the majority of interviewees who feel that a re-educative process is the best way to make a lasting difference in

moving towards sustainability. The second one does again reflect a bias towards the environmental aspects of sustainable development.

There is no evidence that a power coercive strategy has been considered or would be favoured to promote sustainable development in the first stage study. This relies on a process of coercion where people with less power come to do and believe what others with more power tell them to do and believe. Besides its incompatibility with the principles of sustainable development this approach would require that all those in senior positions in the organization to support sustainability and it has been seen and there is more evidence below, that some parts of the organization value sustainability less then others. There is more evidence to be found of initiatives that follow re-educative approach.

Interview 6

'Take our Green Christmas Quiz. It is good fun and I know for a fact that the teams enjoy it. It's well attended and we have prizes and so on. But it also has a more serious purpose. I'd like to think that it does get people thinking about sustainability issues and people will maybe learn one or two things which they didn't know and which they can take away with them'.

MOGS 16 December 1997

Participant Comment 'I'll be going round to all the departments and talking to them about waste minimisation. I'll explain what we want to do and why we want to do it and answer any questions or queries that they might have about the Plan'.

Interview 6

'The Green Diary is another example of how we are trying to get the message across. It lands on the desk of everyone who works here and is full of stuff about sustainability and is written in a very user friendly way. By that I mean it is at a level that is accessible to everyone. The articles are short and to the point and the language is understandable. Sadly I think that quite a few reach the bins without ever having been read which I think is a terrible waste. So I think that with this we are sometimes just preaching to the converted'.


MOGS 24 February 1999

Participant Comment 'Everyone will be getting these sustainability bookmarks and wall planners. Hopefully they will raise the level of awareness and help get some of the sustainability message across'


It would be useful to use the second stage study to follow the re-educative process further. Other examples of the re-educative process could be identified and examined and an assessment made as to whether this is an effective strategy to promote changes in attitudes and behaviour.


There is also evidence from the first stage study that the council is employing both bottom up and middle up and down approaches to try and promote sustainability.


The Green Office Group is an example of what can result from trying a bottom up approach.

Interview 6

'The Green Office group came into being around the same time as MOGS. It has a membership which is mainly from the lower levels of the Council and it looks at ways in which we can improve our own sustainability performance. So it looks at the resources we are using and what we do with them once we have finished with them. Things like that'.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Green Office Group 17 June 1998

Page 3 'Green Office Group - deals with [sustainability] issues at an operational level'.

One of the benefits associated with this approach is that the people are aware of how people at the same level as them feel.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Green Office Group 15 July 1998

Page 2 'Group discussed changing the name of the fair as it was felt that people may not understand what is meant by sustainability'.

One of the shortcomings associated with this kind of approach is that it may not be recognised as important and lack senior level support.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Green Office Group 17 June 1998

Page 3 'Group noted with disappointment memo from _ Director of Community Services, advising that the service would not be represented on the Group following their representatives departure'.

In contrast the socially based services are well represented on MOGS, although attendance has sometimes been sporadic, and the level of commitment varies. When a representative on MOGS from Housing and Social Services left to take up a new post, there was a new representative at the next meeting.

It is felt that it would be useful to use the second stage study to further examine the bottom up approach and the Green Office Group in particular, and determine its strengths and weaknesses in trying to promote sustainable development in the Council.

The Member Officer Group on Sustainability can be viewed as a middle up down strategy. This is certainly the perception amongst its members which emerged from the first stage study.

Interview 5

'What we take away from MOGS and also I suppose what we take to it doesn't just stop at us. I and I think most people in MOGS get ideas from people around us about what to bring up at MOGS and I get help on papers or ideas that I am presenting at MOGS. Then if people are interested I can pass on anything that I've learned'.

Interview 8

'What we decide at MOGS goes forward to other committees and some of the things that come out of it go of up and down the whole Council. I think that that is one of the great things about it. We don't just send an occasional report up to the top and never see or hear of it again - we actually can see things happening'.

Interview 6

' I think that we are at about mid level in the council. The Leader of the Council

is a member and we've the odd head of department or Service but as you've

noticed it is only at some meetings. So on the officer side I would say that on the

whole we are mainly about the middle. I think that helps because we are close to

the operational end if you like but we are not too far from the senior levels that

they can ignore us and being a working group helps with that as well'.

From the evidence it appears that the authority is using a combination of

approaches to try and bring about change, but these fall mainly into the normative-

re-educative strategy.

## 8.8   RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Chapter six highlighted a number of reasons why barriers to change exist in

organizations and why people within organizations will resist change.

Interviewees were asked whether they were aware of barriers to the promotion of

sustainable development and to give their feelings on resistance to change.

The literature on resistance to change has made a division between resistance

which exists at an individual level and that which exists at a group or

organizational level.  An examination of literature surrounding local government

and sustainability provides no indication that resistance is occurring at one level

and not the other.  Rather it appears that groups within local government are

uncertain of what sustainability will mean for them and are worried that

workloads will increase.  The fear of change also appears to be manifested in

individuals who worry that they may not have the skills or the opportunities to acquire the skills to allow them to function effectively in new roles. The literature suggests therefore, that there is resistance to change at both an individual and an organizational level.

There appears to be evidence to back this up from the data received in the first stage study.

Interview 7

'Traditionally the public sector is a bit slow and reluctant when facing change. I do think that people worry that perhaps they don't know enough about sustainability so they will be anxious when sustainability starts cropping up all over the place'.

Interview 8

'Its not just this department, all departments feel they are stretched as it is and we are all working in tight budgets. I think that there is a legitimate worry that LA21 and sustainability could add to already heavy workloads. Nobody really expects extra bodies or money to deal with any extra work which does arise'.

Interview 6

'Here, as anywhere else, people will approach any sizeable change with a certain amount of trepidation'.

Interview 3

'Not everyone who works here is aware of LA21 and sustainable development so it will be worrying if it suddenly becomes a part of everyone's job'.

Interview 4

'I think that some areas in the Council find it much harder then others to see how sustainability is relevant to them. That I think has to do with it still being seen as an environmental issue and so the responsibility of environmentally orientated departments. I can imagine that it would be quite intimidating to suddenly be told to show how you are working sustainably or promoting sustainability when you are not even sure of how it is relevant to what you are doing'.

The evidence supports the idea that resistance to change exists at both an individual and organizational level, and it also seems to highlight the fact that it results from fear over the unknown and uncertainty over what the future will hold. There were however, other reasons posited as possible explanations for resistance to change. There appears to be evidence to support the idea that resistance could be the result of change fatigue. Some individuals spoke of feeling beleaguered by the sheer amount of change they have had to cope with in the past few years.

Interview 4

'You have to remember that it has not been long since reorganization. That meant some huge changes and things are just settling nicely now'.

Interview 12

'It really was a very stressful period, working in local government in the run up to and following local government reorganization. There was a great deal of uncertainty and even almost suspicion and this carried over into the new organisation. Things have settled down now but it was really not a particularly

pleasant time to work through and I know that it is still very fresh in my memory'.

In Chapter six different strategies for overcoming resistance to change were also examined . Different strategies for overcoming resistance to change were identified and examined and these included empathy and support, communication and participation and involvement. It concluded that effective two-way communication was vitally important in implementing change. An examination of literature determined that traditionally change in public service organizations has usually followed a top down, invasive model, inspired by political agendas and the prevailing socio-economic and technological conditions. There has historically been little effort made to ease the path of changes made under a power-coercive strategy. However, as evidence above shows, there has been an effort to use other change strategies to push for more sustainable organizations and therefore it may be that efforts have been made to address resistance to change actively.

There are two issues to examined in this area using the information which was gathered in the first stage study. They are, firstly, what strategies appear to be being used to overcome resistance to change and, secondly, what do people within the organization feel would be effective in overcoming resistance to change.

Interview 5

I am aware that some people are a bit worried about having to include thinking about sustainability in what they do and that is something that we need to address'.

Interview 6

'We certainly need to take some action to promote sustainability in the non-environmental departments. I know that the people I work with really don't have much of an idea about it. I don't think that anyone has got to the stage yet of worrying that it will give them more work to do, but that will be the next thing'.

These comments show that there this a recognition that there is resistance and that action needs to be taken to address the situation.

The fact that all departmental areas are represented in MOGS and The Green Office Group offers evidence that there is an effort to get groups within the organization involved. This would fall into the participation and involvement category as it gives the groups the chance to help set the agenda.

Interview 7

'I feel quite able to speak up at MOGS meetings with any questions or ideas that I or people in my department have thought of and I am happy that they will be considered seriously'.

Interview 6

'A good thing about MOGS is that every department is represented and even though there are usually more environmental people, if you like, at each meeting I don't think that the agenda is dominated by environmental issues to the extent that social or economic issues never get a look in'.

The limited attendance of the socially based departments at MOGS, and evidence from Green Office Group shown above, is evidence that action to address resistance to change is not as effective as it could be. It appears that more use could be made of MOGS and the Green Office Group to get more involvement of those groups which are yet to take on board the on the relationship between themselves and sustainability. It may be that there is a lack of top level support and commitment for sustainability in some areas of the organization, and this would probably have an effect on the likelihood of acceptance of different ways of thinking about working, to include sustainability. It has already been established that top-level support is seen as important and so this would an interesting area to examine further in the second stage study.

The first stage study also examined the perceptions of those on MOGS on what approaches they felt would be effective in ushering in a different set of attitudes and ways of thinking. What emerged was a feeling that there was a need for better communication about sustainability, what it means and how people will be affected by it.

Interview 4

'I think that more will need to be done to establish exactly what we mean by sustainability and to let people know. At the moment most people see sustainable development as one the strategic aims and are none the wiser as to what exactly it is. '

Interview 9

'Nobody has told me about what sustainability means and I would like to know

more'.

Again there appears to be feeling that there is a need for non environmental departments to get more involved in the process.

Interview 5

'I know that the people I work with will have heard about sustainable development but I know as well that for the most part they don't see it as being something that has that much to do with them. They see it as something for environmental services to deal with. I think that somehow we need to get departments like ours more involved. Mind you I'm not sure what could be done'.

The second stage study should therefore examine whether a process of communication and participation and involvement is in place and having an effect.

## 8.9 FINDINGS FROM FIRST STAGE STUDY

The first stage study generated a large amount of data which was then analysed within the theoretical framework established in chapters five and six. The main findings from the first stage study can be summarised as:

- Sub-cultures exist within the organization which are facilitating the development of sustainability at different levels. These sub-cultures appear to be aligned to department, with environmental departments being having a more facilitating culture. It is seen as an environmental issue rather then a social one and this is reflected, and reinforced, by the extent to which different departments are considering and taking action in relation to sustainable

development.

- Stirling Council itself has a clear vision of what sustainable development means generally but this has not been translated into more specific definitions. Also this has not been communicated throughout the organization with the result that there is some confusion and vagueness surrounding sustainability. Some steps have been taken to try an improve its sustainability performance but progress is not uniform across the organization. There is little progress apparent in terms of integrating sustainable development into all policy areas or in measuring and monitoring its own performance in this area.

- There is a consensus that there is a need to change the entire organization in small ways to enable it to work more sustainably and that the triggers for change have been mainly external.

- There is a consensus that there need to be changes in the area of human process issues and also that strategic issues are also important. There is little evidence that changes in the human process issues are being tackled. This was established in chapter six as an area where change is vital for changing an organizational culture.

- A normative-re-educative strategy is being used and there is a consensus that this is appropriate. The perceived lack of awareness amongst colleagues indicates that currently this is not an effective strategy. It is recognised that there is likely to resistance to change and a strategy of participation and involvement is tackling this. However only parts of the organization are participating.

## 8.10 REFLECTION

A great deal of interesting information came out of the first stage study but there are some things that were not addressed fully and consideration needs to be made as to whether these are areas which need to be considered in the second stage study so that the research questions can be answered. The first stage study dealt inadequately with the issue of organizational culture within the local authority although it did provide some evidence and insights. It was limited by its scope which included only members of MOGS. More information is certainly required in this area so that the research questions can be more fully addressed and so this is therefore an area which should be investigated further in the second stage study. The Green Office Group was useful in this study and could be utilised further in the second stage study as they are representative of a different level of the organisation than the MOGS members and had indicated that they would be happy to facilitate access, not only to their group but too their colleagues.

The first stage study established that there was a vision within the Council regarding sustainability but that this was not being communicated effectively to the wider organization. Effective communication is a vital part of a successful normative/re-educative change strategy and so this is an area that will also be investigated in the second stage study. There is a need to establish what communication models are being used and why they are ineffective. This involves examination of human process issues which were identified as being of interest in the first stage study.

These are the most pressing areas which the second stage study needs to address

as they are vital in order that the research aims be met. There was another area which was raised during the first stage study and this was determining the extent of sustainability work which was being done outside the sustainability umbrella. After evaluation it was considered that this be time consuming to do and contribute very little to meeting the research aims and so this is not included in the second stage study.

Reflection on the first stage study allows for a much more focused second stage study which can address the gaps left by the first stage study. The next stage is to explore further theory in the areas identified above and this is done in chapter nine.

# CHAPTER NINE

# FURTHER THEORY EXPLORATION AND

# DEVELOPMENT

## 9.0 OVERVIEW

The first stage study, which is presented in the previous chapter, dealt inadequately with some areas which had been established as being of interest and it also identified some new avenues for research which had not been considered at the outset of that study. The topics dealt with inadequately in the first chapter were primarily in the field of organizational culture. There was not sufficient information to determine the prevalent organizational culture so that the suitability of the change strategies and techniques could then be assessed. The existence of sub-cultures was established but their influence on efforts to change were not determined. This was due, in part, to the design of the first stage study, where participation was restricted to members of the Member Officer Group on Sustainability. The theoretical framework for examining organizational culture from Chapter Five and Six also had limitations, in that it did not examine culture in local authorities as much as was needed. The new avenue for research was to assess why there was a problem in communicating the vision of sustainability throughout the organization. This chapter provides a theoretical grounding from which to proceed with an investigation of these subjects. It examines the theoretical aspects of them and, in particular, how they relate to local government.

## 9.1 TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

During the first stage study the comment such as 'that is just the way that the council works' or 'local government always...' were heard many times during the attempted examination of organizational culture. It was felt that this area was inadequately dealt with in the first stage study and that it would be useful to continue to examine this area in the second stage study.

Before undertaking the first stage study an examination of the general theoretical issues underpinning organizational culture was made. At that point an examination of relevant literature uncovered a number of articles which dealt with organizational culture specifically in local government. These were used to provide background information and assess what was likely to be found in the first stage study. It may be they can be further utilised and provide a stronger framework for the continuing study of organizational culture then the more general one used in the first stage study, which came from the original literature review. These articles were by Asquith (1997, 1998), Littlewood and White (1997), Goddard (1995), and Stott and Simpson (1996)

Asquith (1997) carried out an investigation into a number of local authorities and found that they could be grouped according to their characteristics and management approaches, in to what was termed transactional, community leader or business culture organizations. Goddard (1995) examined the dominant culture in a council and identified and characterised a number of sub-cultures. Stott and Simpson (1996) examined organizational culture in a Council and the way in which a process of cultural

change was being managed. Littlewood and White (1997) investigated the differences between the organizational culture of local government and the ideals of sustainable development.

All the authors approach the subject from different directions and with different tools but there is a consensus that understanding an organization in terms of its culture is an important step in understanding why it works as it does and why some change initiatives succeed and some fail.

Asquith (1997) started from the supposition that not all local authorities have the same culture and that different change initiatives will have differing effects in different cultures. Given the differences in the sizes, political orientation and working practices that are found in British local authorities the existence of different organizational cultures appears to be a reasonable assertion. The local authorities are grouped according to their dominant management approach, which are a traditionally bureaucratic approach, a corporate management approach or a strategic management. Authorities which demonstrate these approaches are classified as having transactional, community leader or business cultures respectively.

### 9.1.1 Transactional Authority

Transactional authorities exhibit the characteristics associated with bureaucracies. These characteristics are identified by many writers and need not be examined in any detail here. The characteristics, which were prevalent in most of the

authorities of this type, as identified by Asquith were departmentalisation, with very little in the way of cross departmental communication, co-operation and co-ordination. Boundaries would be clearly defined and rarely crossed by organizational members. There would be a lack of a clear vision of the aims of the authority. Workers would have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities and would not be made aware of the wider picture which existed outside these roles. There would also be a lack of strong and clear managerial and political leadership.

Any authority exhibiting these tendencies is likely to encounter problems in implementing Local Agenda 21 and promoting sustainable development. Most obviously, as sustainable development has been proven to be a relevant part of all services of local government, due to its concern with social, economic and environmental issues, a lack of inter departmental communication and co-ordination will limit the effectiveness of any initiatives. There are more likely to be gaps and/or duplication of effort with regard to them (Welford 1997). Equally, problems will be encountered if an organization does not have a clear vision of what it wishes to achieve (Cummings and Worley 1993) and if it lacks leadership any planned change process will be problematic (Moran and Avergun 1997). Therefore it is reasonable to assume that an authority which Asquith characterises as having a transactional culture will be encountering problems in the Local Agenda 21 process.

### 9.1.2 Community Leader

Local authorities which exhibit the characteristics of Asquith's (1997) community leader culture demonstrate a corporate management approach. They typically displayed a strong corporate framework, common managerial and political purpose and a pronounced 'enabling slant'. There is tight control by a central executive core and little in the way of decentralisation. There is however more scope for cross-departmental working than with the transactional authority model. This, combined with the stronger leadership evident in this model make it likely that an authority exhibiting the characteristics of the community leader model would find it easier to make changes to promote sustainability.

### 9.1.3 Business Culture

Local authorities which exhibit the characteristics of Asquith,s business culture demonstrate a strategic management approach. They typically exhibited strong strategic frameworks and were forward-looking, commercially driven organizations, having adopted the traits of 'new public management' fully. There is a desire in authorities with business cultures to try to deliver low-cost statutory services and departments operate as separate business units, and decentralisation is pursued (Asquith 1997). Again an authority featuring the characteristics of this model would find it easier to implement changes to promote sustainability than the transactional authority would. However, there would have to be mechanisms to facilitate cross-departmental working practices to allow for the holistic nature of sustainable development to be accounted for.

Littlewood and White (1997) examined some of the ways in which Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development are being held back by the existing institutional framework in place at a local level. They considered the possibilities for adapting the culture in local governance to one which supports the 'holistic, strategic, co-ordinated and democratic processes envisaged in Local Agenda 21' (p118). Barriers to the development of Local Agenda 21 are identified, and are similar to those identified in Chapters One and Two, and the institutional framework is cited as a factor which will make these barriers hard to overcome. The aspects of the institutional framework to which they are referring, such as a reluctance to devolve power to departments, match the characteristics of the transactional authority identified by Asquith. This supports the idea that the prevailing organizational culture can make it difficult to facilitate the Local Agenda 21 process and the move towards more sustainable behaviour.

Stott and Simpson (1996) examined an authority which had moved away from the transactional authority model and falls more in the community leader model. There is decentralisation but it exists in a strong corporate framework. They do not use Asquiths (1997) model but it is easy to spot the attributes described by him in his classification. Goddard (1995) differed from the other writers and the philosophical stance of this thesis in that he takes a functionalist view of organizational culture, in that he believes it to be a phenomenon which can be objectively determined and measured. Much of the paper is taken up with the presentation and explanation of correlation coefficients and other statistical analysis but again it is interesting to note

that many of the areas of interest to the author are those identified by Asquith in his paper. These include management practices, formality, officer-councillor relationship and so on. The paper is concerned with identifying the differences in cultures in the organization rather than the overall organizational culture. The recognition of the existence of sub-cultures in this article is consistent with the differentiation perspective identified in chapter five

These papers give an interesting overview of organizational culture in local authorities. As stated above they approach this area from different angles and with different goals in mind. They do place emphasis on different areas but they all cover areas which are identified by Asquith in his study, demonstrating that his typology considers all the elements which could be of importance. Therefore it will be useful to look at organizational culture in the second stage study using the framework which was established by Asquith. The results will give a picture of where Stirling Council is placed and also how this is influencing them with regards to sustainable development and local agenda 21 implementation.

## 9.2  SUB-CULTURES

Chapter Five dealt with the theoretical issues surrounding sub-cultures in organizations so there is not a need to do so here. The first stage study did not uncover much evidence to allow the influence of the sub-cultures on sustainability to be identified, due to the limited scope of participants, and so this can be investigated in the second stage study.

## 9.3 COMMUNICATION

The first stage study also identified communication as a topic which required further investigation. Chapter Eight raised the question of whether the general vagueness and differing opinions found in the Council over the meaning of sustainable development was due to an inability to communicate effectively, or communication of a confused message. In order to be able to examine this issue in the second stage study it is necessary to look more closely at organizational communication.

### 9.3.1 Definitions

Communication is the key to the functioning of organizations, so its importance cannot be overlooked or underestimated. There are numerous definitions of communication to be found in an examination of relevant literature. Fisher (1993) lists a number of definitions and then surmises that a useful one is:

'an evolutionary, culturally-dependent process of sharing information and creating relationships in environments designed for manageable, goal-oriented behaviour.' (p12)

This definition is useful given the arguments above because it recognises the role that organizational culture can play in influencing how people in an organization will communicate with one another. Communication also falls into the human process issues category of areas in which change can be made, and this was deemed worthy of further investigation after the first stage study.

Frederic (2001) and Harris (1993) both studied the different roles that communication can play in organizations. It can be used to spread information throughout an organization, to allow people to work effectively together and to facilitate decision-making. From the point of view of this study, it is its potential role as a disseminator of information which is of the most interest. This is because Chapter Two demonstrated that the dissemination of information was of primary importance in developing a sustainability ethos, and, as was established in Chapter Eight, it may be that there is a problem with the dissemination of information in Stirling Council. The first stage study established that some people in the organization were very clear about what sustainable development meant to them and to the organization, and that others were much less clear on both counts.

### 9.2.2. Communication Models

Communication is the transfer and exchange of information and understanding between groups and individuals. There are six elements to the communication process. These are the sender, the receiver, the message, the channels, feedback and perception. The sender is the source of the information and the initiator of the communication process and they will choose which message to send and which channel or channels to use. They encode the message into any of a number of mediums after consideration of the relevance, degree of simplicity, organization, repetition and focus of the message. The receiver of the message

must use their perception to interpret what they receive from the sender in a way which makes sense to them. Feedback can be used to ensure that this perception is correct (Frederic 2001).

Harris (1993) writes that when organizational communication was first being examined the models of communication used were linear in nature and involved tracing a one-way flow of messages with the sender developing a message which was sent through a channel or channels to the receiver. While these models were simple in form and effective in drawing attention to certain aspects of the communication process they do not consider feedback and so are of limited practical use in an organizational setting when it is essential to ensure that the message is being received as was intended

These limitations led to the development of 'interactional' models of communication (Oliver 1997) which took account of the critical importance of feedback and focused on reciprocal message exchanges between senders and receivers. By accepting the importance of both participants in the eventual success or failure of the communication process these models were much more adept at explaining the dynamic nature of human communication. Fisher (1993) offered some interesting ideas to use as a starting point for examining communication. He dealt initially with ways in which models of communication in organizations can be diagnosed, and also goes on to look at how communication barriers can be identified and overcome. He argued that there are

a number of different communication models which can be seen in organizations.

The first one that he identifies is the one-way model. This is probably the oldest model of communication and envisages successful communication as being composed of a sender using the right techniques to send the right message to the right audience. Though perhaps too simple to be a useful model of communication in modern organizations it is useful in that it illustrates the importance of being aware of the receiver and the message. This communication model appears inappropriate for promoting sustainable development as it takes no account of the principle of participation and involvement.

The next model which is identified is the interaction model. The interaction model adds another four elements to those identified in the one way model. These are the channels and media used to send the message, the encoding and decoding of the message and noise which can detract from the message and feedback. Perhaps the most important addition is the feedback loop, as the sender can then learn of the reaction of the receiver and see if further clarification or other action is required on their part. This model seems more appropriate but an examination would have to be made to determine the mechanisms in place to facilitate the feedback process in order to determine whether it supported the principles of sustainable development.

The next model which is identified is the two person relationship model. This model adds in the perceptions of the sender and receiver and allows the process to appear in a non-sequential manner, but rather as an ongoing mutual relationship. This model and the two further models which are detailed also go a stage further then those previously mentioned as they take account of the context in which communication takes place.

The communication in context model is another model which is identified and examined. This model deals with the fact that all communication happens in a contextual framework and that understanding this leads to better understanding. The context can be the decision making process, the organizational culture, or its structure. The group and task characteristics, which the communication process operates in, are also part of the context. The final model which is identified is the strategic model. This model is employed in dealing with communication with outside agencies and so it is not relevant for the second stage study.

These models provide a solid framework which can be used to examine the communication process in the organization. The separate components of a effective communication process have been identified and these components can be investigated in the second stage study. This can be used to place the communication occurring in the organization in the correct model. As the likely success of the different models in communicating successfully about sustainable development has been examined, this will be a useful exercise.

The second stage study will, therefore, identify the communication models in use in the local authority and determine whether these are the most suitable for sending the desired message in a way which is in tune with the principles of sustainable development.

## 9.4   COMMUNICATION IN DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

There are a number of different perspectives or contexts in which to view communication.   Oliver (1997) and also and Harris (1993) examine the different models of communication contained in different organizational perspectives.

The first perspective is the classical one.  From this perspective, communication is an instrument of command and control.  Most communication should be vertical, moving mainly downward from the authority residing at the top of the organization.  Lateral communication, between those of equal status is seen as a threat to efficiency.  Formal communication is ideally limited to carefully formulated, concrete and specialized task planning and task execution.  In a classically run organization, communication derives its character from certain organizational characteristics, such as formalisation and centralization, and in an organization displaying these characteristics there is little oral, lateral or unscheduled communication.  The characteristics of an organization match those identified by Asquith in the transactional authorities.  An organization operating along these lines and communicating in the classical perspective will not be effective in developing a successful LA 21 and in promoting sustainable development because there

will be little opportunity for the cross-departmental communication and cooperation necessary and for participation in decision making.

The next perspective identified is the human perspective. Unlike the classical perspective, the view of communication in the human perspective supports information ascending from lower to upper levels of the organization, as well as lateral flows of information. It facilitates participative problem-solving, planning and organization and values decentralised decision-making. Communication taps the full potential of those who work for the organization. This perspective is more supportive of the aims of sustainable development and is more likely to result in a successful LA 21 program.

The final one is the integrative perspective. This perspective implies that communication patterns may vary greatly from one organization to another or with in one organization at different times. There is no one best way proposed for communication to occur, instead it is contingent on the particular situation. This would require an organization to be flexible and also be aware of its environment and able to act proactively. Under this perspective the communication process relating to LA21 and sustainable development would be required to be open and participative, with plenty of scope for lateral communication, but it would allow for more closed and formal horizontal communication procedures to exist at the same time.

From the literature it would appear that the integrative perspective would be most likely to be appropriate. Due to the many functions and activities carried out by local

authorities different models and methods of communication may be apt at different times and in different areas of the organization. Therefore it can be expected that more then one communication process could be in use in attempting to communicate the sustainable development message and this will be borne in mind during the second stage study.

## 9.5    ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Barriers can be in place to hinder hierarchical or lateral communication and they can also affect the communication process, or the amount of information being transmitted successfully (Oliver 1997). It is essential to examine the potential for these barriers in order to maintain effective communication in an organization. Fisher (1993) and Harris (1993) both identified possible barriers and look at ways of overcoming these.

### 9.5.1    Barriers to Downwards Communication

Barriers to downward communication can arise in a number of ways. The first of these to consider is if communication is only one way. Downward communication is often a one-way message from superiors with no opportunity for feedback. This is especially apparent in written communication In examining the one way model it was established that the lack of any feedback mechanism meant that this was unlikely to be an effective model to use. The use of face-to-face communication can limit this barrier.  The next potential area to consider is that differences in values and perceptions can potentially be a barrier to downward communication.  At different levels of an organization,

people tend to be committed to different groups, hold different goals and this can lead to parts of downward messages being filtered out. Chapter Two showed that there was some degree of resistance to taking on board the whole range of issues which make up sustainable development from some of the more socially-based departments due to a perception that sustainable development was an environmental issue. The final area in which a potential barrier can occur in downward communication is if there is mistrust between levels of an organisation. Employees who mistrust a superior may misunderstand or block the relay of downward messages. Reasons for such mistrust can include lack of frequent contact and a feeling that the superior offers a biased source of information.

Harris (1993) and Fisher (1993) also identify ways in which downward barriers to communication can be overcome. To improve downward communication supervisors should maintain adequate contact with subordinates and pursue feedback rather then rely on the one-way communication model. They should employ multiple communication channels and keep people below them informed. Attempts should also be made to build trust by involving subordinates in decision-making and the supervisor should keep a sense of their own identity.

### 9.5.2 Barriers to upward communication

There were also barriers to upwards communication identified by Graham (1997) and also Harris (1993). The first one to consider is the attitude of the subordinate. There can be a tendency for lower level employees to distort the information they pass up the organization especially if they have an interest in advancement or promotion. They may also be reluctant to pass on bad news or pass on only what they think that their superior wants to hear. The attitude of the superior can also be a potential barrier to upwards communication. If superiors maintain mistrustful, intimidating relationships with their subordinates, this can contribute to the distortion of information. Equally, if they are too familiar and friendly, distortion can occur. The physical structure of an organization can also be a barrier to upwards communication. Highly formal organizational structures and procedures can block upward communication if there is not a formal channel in place specifically for this purpose. Physical distance can prevent it as well, if an organization is geographically dispersed.

To improve upward communication Harris (1993) and Fisher (1993) again have a number of suggestions. Subordinates should increase their willingness to build relationships with their superiors and in superiors can develop their interpersonal skills, increase informal contact and take action on upward communication which they receive.

### 9.5.3 Barriers to Lateral Communication

Barriers to lateral communication were also identified. The first, identified by Garvin (1993), is that increased specialisation can reduce the extent to which employees share common interests but also increases need for co-ordination, which requires lateral communication. The influence of professionalism means many specialists are trained to exclude areas of knowledge and skills and attitudes throughout their training and professional lives. There is a need to consciously stop the inbuilt tendency to label, compartmentalise and exclude. Fisher (1993) argues that there are further potential barriers to lateral communication which need to be considered. Lack of recognition and reward for lateral communication is one potential barrier. While vertical communication is often encouraged and rewarded in an organizational setting, lateral communication is often ignored and unrewarded. There is therefore no incentive to communicate in this manner. Suppression of difference can also be a barrier if there is culture where organizational members are reluctant to express disagreement with their peers.

Harris (1993) and Fisher (1993) also look at different ways in which lateral communication can be improved. These include raising awareness of the organizations goals and of other departments, setting up mechanisms like cross-departmental groups to aid co-ordination, explicitly encouraging lateral communication and encourage a culture of constructive disagreement, where it is considered acceptable to disagree.

## 9.6 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Most of the communication models which were examined at the start of this chapter recognized that the choice of channel, or medium of communication, was an important part of the communication process. There are many different channels available and the choice of which one, or ones, to use can have a bearing on how effectively the message is received, how accurately it is interpreted. The opportunity available for feedback also differs according to the channel being used. Harris (1993) looked at different communication channels and ranked them according to their effectiveness in upward and downward communication and these are shown in table 6 below.

**Table 6: Communication Channels**

| Upward communication techniques | Downward communication techniques |
|---|---|
| 1. Informal discussion | 1. Small group meeting |
| 2. Meetings with supervisor | 2. Direct organization publication |
| 3. Attitude surveys | 3. Supervisory meetings |
| 4. Grievance procedures | 4. Mass meetings |
| 5. Counselling | 5. Letters to employees homes |
| 6. Exit interviews | 6. Bulletin boards |
| 7. Union reps | 7. Pay envelope inserts |
| 8. Formal meetings | 8. Public address system |
| 9. Suggestion boxes | 9. Poster |
| 10. Employee newsletter | 10. Annual report, manuals |

Oliver (1997) argues that consideration of which channel to use is important and that the effectiveness of any one channel will be dependent on the context in which it is being used. The second stage study can investigate which of these mechanisms are being used in the upwards, downwards and lateral communication processes.

## 9.7 THE SECOND STAGE STUDY

The second stage study is therefore going to examine the type of organizational culture exhibited by the Council and so assess whether the change initiatives are appropriate and also investigate to a greater extent the role of sub-cultures in the organization and so be able to determine whether there is a need to tailor change initiatives depending in the target of the desired changes.

Raising awareness of sustainable development is one of the primary requirements for an authority to improve its own performance and the first stage study showed that there was a problem in this area. Therefore the study will also investigate the way in which communication is being used in the organization and assess whether it could be used more effectively. This is done in chapter ten.

## 9.8 CONCLUSIONS

The results from the first stage study left a gap in relation to organizational culture which has to be addressed in the second stage study, and also identified an area which required further investigation. The framework developed by Asquith (1997) will be useful to use as a base from which to analyse the data gathered in the second stage

study. This was demonstrated to be a more suitable framework then those used by Littlewood and White (1997) and Goddard (1995).

The models of communication identified will be useful, as the likely success of these models has already been examined. Identification of the individual components of the communication process means that second stage study can examine these and use the results to determine the change models in use. Acceptance of the integration perspective means that different models of communication can be used and the second stage study will recognize and look for evidence of this.

The opportunity for further theory exploration, following a period of initial research and then reflection has proved to be useful and provides a strong framework to take forward to the second stage study.

# CHAPTER TEN

# ANALYSIS OF SECOND STAGE STUDY

## 10.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an analysis of the data gathered in the observation process and from interviews carried out in the second stage study. A fuller description of these is contained in Chapter Seven. Where it has been useful and relevant to do so, there are occasions when data from the first stage study is used to provide additional evidence. Where this occurs it has been labelled appropriately, however the primary source of data for this chapter remains the second stage study. It starts with an examination of culture using Asquith's model, goes on to examine sub-culture and then communication models and channels which are in use.

## 10.1 THE SECOND STAGE STUDY

Chapter seven contains a fuller description of the methods used to carry out the second stage study. At this point it is necessary to state that on occasion it has been useful to include some information or evidence gathered in the first stage study but which serves to provide evidence for the points raised and issues examined in this study. This is usually used in conjunction with additional evidence from the second stage study. Where this has occurred the data is labelled as it was in the first stage study (e.g. Interview number or MOGS meeting date). The data from the second stage study have been labelled differently. All interviews start with 2:, so the first interview is 2:1. It has also been necessary to

distinguish between the area of the organization the interviewee was from so, Environmental, Community, Housing or Education follows the interview number.

The interviews are broken down into department as follows:

| Interview No | Service area |
| --- | --- |
| Interview 2:1 | Environmental |
| Interview 2:2 | Environmental |
| Interview2:3 | Housing |
| Interview2:4 | Housing |
| Interview2:5 | Community |
| Interview2:6 | Community |
| Interview2:7 | Community |
| Interview 2.8 | Education |
| Interview 2:9 | Education |
| Interview 2.10 | Education |

Where the information is from another data source such as a meeting, mainly of the Green Office Group, this is labelled with the meeting name and date. Any other data sources used are also labelled appropriately

## 10.2 TRANSACTIONAL, COMMUNITY LEADER OR BUSINESS CULTURE

As noted in Chapter Nine, local authorities can be grouped according to the management approaches identified by Asquith (1997), each of which has certain cultural characteristics. These management approaches were bureaucratic, corporate management and strategic management. These correspond with transactional, community leader or business cultures respectively in a local authority. It was established that this was a useful framework and it would be helpful to determine which model Stirling most resembled in order to more fully understand its internal processes relating to change and sustainable development. The question as to what the predominant culture is in terms of Asquith's (1997) model can partly be addressed with data from the first stage study. However this framework was not in place during the first stage study and the additional data from the second stage study allows for a more complete analysis to be made

### 10.2.1 Transactional Authority

Even from an examination of the data gathered in the first stage study, it was apparent that Stirling is not a typically bureaucratic and transactional authority. This is primarily evident because the transactional authority exhibits very little in the way of cross-departmental co-operation and co-ordination, and the first stage study involved attendance at the cross departmental Member Officer Group for Sustainability which drew its members from across the organization. The Green Office Group, which was involved far more in the second stage study than the first, was another example of cross-departmental working.

The second stage study provides additional evidence that Stirling Council is not bureaucratic/transactional. Attendance at meetings of the Green Offfice Group, added weight to the assertion that Stirling does not fulfil the criteria of the transactional authority, because of the way, witnessed by the author, in which co-operation and communication between departments is encouraged by the Green Office Group. This also appears to be recognised by those in it.

Comment from member of GOG 25 January 2000

'This group [The Green Office Group] allows for more communication and interaction between people from different departments then there would otherwise be at our level'.

Comment from member of GOG 13 February 2000

'There is much less interaction between people in different departments at our level then there is higher up and that is why the green office group is useful'.

There is strong evidence that Stirling Council cannot be considered transactional because of the amount of cross-departmental work in place, but there are other aspects of a transactional authority to consider before it can be concluded whether or not Stirling Council could be placed in this category. These include a lack of a clear vision and also a lack of either clear managerial or political leadership.

In examining these aspects it is also useful to refer back to the first stage study as a starting point. On the point concerning clarity of vision, the first

In examining these aspects it is also useful to refer back to the first stage study as a starting point. On the point concerning clarity of vision, the first stage study identified that there was some confusion over what exactly was meant by sustainable development as regards the work of the local authority, despite a clear vision appearing in some artefacts. However, everyone involved in the first stage study was aware of the term and its general meaning. There was also awareness that this was one of the strategic aims of the council. The evidence from the first stage study indicated that there was some clarity of vision of the aims of the Council and the evidence from the second stage study supports this.

Interview 2:1 Environmental

'At the moment I seem to have the councils strategic aims printed on about four or five things on my desk, so it would be quite hard to forget them'.

Comment from participant GOG 13 February 2000

'People are aware of social inclusion, local democracy and sustainable development as the strategic aims but maybe don't see the first two as being part of sustainable development. But that is understandable because sustainable development is down as a strategic aim as well'.

This comment indicates that there is wide knowledge of what the strategic aims of the Council are but some confusion may exist about what they mean in terms of practical translation to action. It is interesting to note that there is an acknowledgement that the implication that the strategic aims are separate and distinct contributes to confusion about what sustainable development is.

The second stage study goes on to look more closely at where this confusion arises from, but it became clear in this study that there was a clarity of vision amongst employees about what the general aims of the authority were. It is in their interpretation that the vision loses its clarity and becomes clouded. Despite there being fairly wide recognition of the strategic aims of the authority, there was some evidence that social inclusion is prioritised in some areas and that sustainable development was prioritised in others, along a social-environmental division. There was very little recognition that these are two sides of the same coin and that social inclusion is very much an integral part of sustainable development.

Interview 2:4 Housing

'I think that social inclusion is a huge part of what the local authority wants to achieve. Having people marginalised and cut off creates a whole host of social problems which then have to be dealt with. I think that is something that we can have a more direct impact on'.

Comment from participant LA21 officers meeting 26 January 2000

'When you look at our strategic aims I think that they are all part of sustainable development. Local democracy and social inclusion and are most certainly important aspects of sustainability. I think that there is a tendency to forget to look past the environmental aspects of it'.

Another aspect of the transactional authority which is not apparent in Stirling from the evidence gathered in the second stage study is the break down of

the political/managerial interface leading to a situation arising where elected members become involved in the running of individual departments. Evidence for this is shown in the interview extracts which are shown below.

Interview 2:5 Community

'We have been quite lucky with Councillors. There has always been at least one or two who have been quite committed and have been able to push politically'.

This comment shows that councillors are valued for their political rather then practical involvement.

Interview 2:3 Housing

'The day to day working of the department is down to us. The general direction is comes from the political part but they generally stay out of the nitty grittty bits'.

There is sufficient evidence to surmise that Stirling is not a transactional authority featuring strongly traditional and bureaucratic features. This is not to say that it does not exhibit some features of the bureaucracy but it does not satisfy the requirements needed for it to be deemed a transactional authority.

## 10.2.2   Community Leadership Authority

Community Leadership authorities were characterised as having a strong leadership, a clear vision, common managerial and political purpose and a pronounced 'enabling' slant. The evidence gathered in the second stage study suggests that Stirling could be classified as falling in this category, to some extent at least.

Interview 2:8 Education

'I think that yes there is fairly strong leadership - most of the time'.

Interview 2:3 Housing

'I certainly am and I think that most people are aware of the strategic aims of the Council. It would be quite hard not to be. They sound the right kind of aims to have, they kind of reflect a bit more then simple delivery of services, you know'.

These comments indicate that there is a perception that Stirling does fulfil the criteria of having a strong leadership and a clear vision. Further evidence of a clear vision was presented above when determining that Stirling did not fulfil the criteria of the transactional authority.

Another aspect of the community leadership authority is that there is a common purpose driving the strategic actors on both sides of the political/managerial divide. There is also recognition and appreciation on both sides of what the other was doing to try and achieve the organization's goals and objectives.

Interview 2:7 Community

'I think that both councillors and officers recognise that our strategic aims are worthwhile and achievable and on both sides there is a drive or determination to see results from say our strategy to improve social inclusion. Its not any radical political agenda but simply a desire to improve life in the community'.

Interview 2:10 Education

'On the whole councillors and officers agree, especially about the big things'.

These comments from the second stage study indicate a perception that there is a common purpose in the organization which unites the political and managerial aspects of local government. Further evidence of this perception can be found in the first stage study from comments made by officers and members.

Interview 2

'I certainly think that we are working towards the same goals. I am not aware of any Councillors feeling that they were having to fight the Council'.

Interview 8

'There is a good working relationship between us and the Councillors. We all want what is best for Stirling'.

There was also evidence in both the first stage and the second stage studies that councillors and officers both appreciated the role of the other.

Interview 2:3 Housing

'Most councillors do have good relations with the officers and do realise what we can do for them in terms of implementing their ideas or perhaps shaping them into something a little more feasible'.

Interview 5

'People usually become councillors because they have a genuine desire to try and make things better by getting involved. We have to appreciate that very often they probably have the strongest personal commitments to our aims of anyone in the council'.

Interview 2:7: Community

'In translating ideas into action and also pointing out possible problems and ways around them councillors have to rely on officers'.

These comments show that there is an appreciation amongst officers and councillors not only of their own roles but also of each others'. More than this there is recognition of how they complement one another in working to achieve the aims of the organization. From this evidence Stirling Council also fulfils the requirements for this aspect of the community leadership authority.

The community leadership authority also exhibits wide spread ownership and support of its aims amongst middle manager and operational level workers. The evidence presented above to show that Stirling Council was not a transactional authority, also showed that there was clarity of vision and general awareness of the strategic aims of the authority. This was apparent in both the first and second stage studies, which cover both middle level and operational level employees. This does not necessarily reflect a wider sense of ownership but there is evidence of support for the aims of the authority.

Interview 2:3 Housing

'Something like social inclusion can only be good can't it. You have to know that it is something worth supporting'.

From the evidence in both the first and second stage studies in is apparent that the community leadership model describes many of the aspects of Stirling Council

### 10.2.3 Business Culture Authority

Business culture authorities had a strong strategic framework and the management agenda was commercially driven. One of the main characteristics of these authorities was that the public are viewed as customers rather then as citizens. From the evidence in the second stage study, this does not appear to be the case in Stirling.

Interview 2:5 Community

'Our main role is to provide certain services for the public, the people who live in the area covered by the Council. They have a right to expect that this is our first and foremost concern'.

Comment in Meeting of LA21 Officers 26 January 2000

'We are trying to get the public involved, get them to have some feeling of ownership and control about Local Agenda 21, so that they are part of all that the Council is doing and not sat at home just waiting for whatever we have decided and done without them'.

This evidence backs up the general impression of the author during the first and second stage studies, that the general public were not seen as 'customers' by the local authority. Rather they were viewed as 'citizens' with a right to participate and get involved in issues which affected their lives.

Another characteristic of the business culture authority was the styling of the departments in the authority into independent business operating units, which emphasised the commercial nature of the organization. There was no evidence of this kind of organization in Stirling Council. It operates on a much more traditional structure. This also is indicative that there is no trace of business culture in Stirling Council

From the evidence it is clear that the community leadership model best describes Stirling Council, although there are one or two areas of inconsistency. Asquith (1997) proposed the models as stages in a progressive development which represent distinct times in organizational evolution. Given this, it is understandable that inconsistencies will be apparent in an authority moving between stages. Stirling is not completely into the box labelled transactional authority but it shares more characteristics with this than with the others.

Therefore we can look at the actions of Stirling Council as the actions of a community leadership authority. Having established this the requirements for change under this model can be identified. Many of these are common to

all change efforts such, as ownership of the change and strong committed leadership. There also needs to be flexible change management agenda and support from the managerial and political elites. This model of organization should support the normative-re-educative strategies of change, which were identified in chapter eight, section 8.7, as being used in the local authority being studied. Therefore the problem of the lack of effectiveness of the change program is not due to the overall change strategy being incompatible with the organizational culture. Those aspects which are required for a successful change program need to be examined from the perspectives of the subcultures in the organization so the next stage of this study is to investigate these cultures.

## 10.3 INVESTIGATING ORGANIZATIONAL SUBCULTURES

### 10.3.1 Proving the Existence of Sustainability Subcultures

The evidence from the second stage study made it clear that there were certainly sub-cultures in the organization and that they had different attitudes to sustainable development.

Interview 2:1 Environmental

'Yeah sustainability is supposed to be a big part of what we do here. We are supposed to be supporting the strategic aims and most people here do know a bit about sustainable development'.

Interview 2:2 Environmental

'I can see how what I am doing has an impact on sustainable development for the community. I think as well that the Council could be a bit more sustainable in how it goes about its business'.

This shows that there is an awareness of sustainable development and also that people in this area are considering the Council's own sustainability performance. This compares with responses from Housing and Education such as:

Interview 2:3 Housing

'Well it is a strategic aim. I do know that much but beyond that I am pretty much lost. It doesn't seem to be a big thing with us'.

Interview 2:10 Education

' Its an environmental thing, all about protecting our wildlife and habitats'.

'I can't see that we'd have much to do with it, unless you count teaching it to kids'.

This division was further revealed when the environmental respondents stated that they recycled 'pretty much all their paper – and printer cartridges'. Two community respondents stated that they were 'usually pretty good' and the other community interviewee and the education and housing interviewees admitted that they 'quite often didn't' recycle their scrap paper.

There was also evidence of differences in the other cultural areas identified in chapter five, such as the attitude to the measurement of sustainability.

Interview 2:1 Environmental

'There are a set of indicators which are for measuring how sustainable Stirling is, yeah. Couldn't tell you what they all are mind you'.

Interview 2:9 Education

'Mmm.. I'm not really sure. I wouldn't know [if there were indicators to measure sustainability]'.

The evidence from the second stage study definitely supports the assertion that there are sub-cultures in the local authority in which there are different attitudes to sustainable development. It appears that the culture found in Environmental Services is more facilitating than that found in Education or Housing. Community Services appears to lie somewhere between the two. The evidence also points to these sub-cultures as matching the departments in the organization. This is backed up by the evidence from the first stage study where Housing demonstrated a lack of commitment to the MOGS group. This lack of managerial commitment is reflected throughout the service.

### 10.3.2 Awareness of Sustainability In the Subcultures

Creating awareness is the first stage in establishing the vision of the desired state which is a necessary stage in any change process. As can be seen from the evidence in section 10.3.1 above, some departments of the organization

have developed much more of a vision then other areas. This indicates that some (Environmental Services) are more ready to accept change than others (Housing, Education).

### 10.3.3 Managerial Support for Sustainability In the Subcultures

The second stage study also looked for evidence of the level of managerial level support for sustainability in the different departments and subcultures. There was an indication in the first stage study, from the low attendance of the managerial level Housing representative, that this was another area of difference in the subcultures.

Interview 2:1 Environmental

'Oh definitely. The people in charge here love sustainable development. Its like been their favourite buzz word phrase for a while'.

Interview 2:2 Environmental

'It has come up when I am talking to my boss and it does get bandied about the department a fair bit'.

Interview 2:5 Community

'I think that it is quite a popular idea with the guys high up. I get bits of paper with it written on it now and again'.

This is evidence of a perception amongst these employees that sustainable development is a popular concept at a high managerial level. The same is not evident in the responses from the interviewees in Housing and Education.

Interview 2:4 Housing

'I' m not aware of it being an issue for the bosses here at all really'.

Interview 2:9 Education

'I think that social inclusion is more the hot topic round here'.

This demonstrates that, in terms of top level managerial support, which is also a necessary precursor for a successful change process, there are substantial differences between the departmental sub-cultures with Environmental Services appearing to be the most prepared for changes. This means that any planned changes will be the most effective in this area, making this department operate more sustainably and reinforcing the idea that sustainable development is an environmental concern.

This part of the second stage study has established that different cultures exist in the organization and that they are at different levels when it comes to the extent to which they facilitate sustainable development. Based on this it may be that the local authority should adopt different strategies, tools and techniques to try to instigate change rather then the organization-wide changes which were identified in Chapter Eight.

## 10.4 COMMUNICATION AND THE CLASSICAL / HUMAN / INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Chapter Nine examined the classical, human and integrative perspective in some detail and surmised that in some cases communication was used primarily as a tool for command and control, in others it was used to facilitate problem solving,

planning and organization, and in others it varied depending on the situation. It also came to the conclusion that the classical perspective was inadequate for dealing with Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development. The integration perspective appeared to be the most likely to be found, due to the fact that it allows for different communication methods, depending on the situation. Determining which perspective is most prevalent in the organization with regards to communication will aid understanding of the communication process and its problems in the organization. The first stage study determined that there was a problem with communication in the local authority. This was primarily indicated by the confusion and misunderstanding concerning what was meant by the term sustainable development at lower organizational levels.

The evidence from the second stage study points to the integrative perspective being the one which is followed in Stirling Council. Under this perspective communication patterns and models vary according to time and setting. From the first stage study we have evidence that the perception is that the integrative perspective is in place.

Interview 2

'There is not only one right way to communicate. Sometimes people are just told what to do and they just have to get on and do it – no questions asked. But then there are also times when additional input and ideas are welcomed'.

Interview 4

'I think that for a lot of employees there world doesn't ever get to reach past their department but there are opportunities at different levels to get involved in working

with other departments. There are a number of ways in which we can communicate with each other and work together.'.

This perspective matches the placing of Stirling as a Community Leader type of authority. The second stage study will investigate whether this is the perspective with which the local authority approaches communication.

In this section we will go on to examine the data gathered in the second stage on organizational communication. It looks at upward, downward and horizontal communication processes in the organization and the communication models and channels which are being used in these communication processes. Chapter Nine examined these three communication processes and identified likely barriers to communication and strategies for overcoming them.

### 10.4.1 Horizontal/Lateral Communication

There is evidence in the first and the second stage study that there is lateral communication in the organization. This was established as vital for the LA21 process and the promotion of sustainable development, as it is an issue which affects all parts of the organization and there are areas of common interest in different departments.

### 10.4.1.1. Mechanisms

MOGS, which was one of the primary sources of information in the first stage study, is an example of a formal lateral communication mechanism as it provides a forum for discussion by different departments on areas of

common interest. In the second stage study it was apparent that the Green Group fulfils a similar role, albeit at a lower organizational level, in allowing cross-departmental communication. In attending meetings of the Green Group it was noted that it appeared to be an effective mechanism for lateral communication in the organization.

Comment from participant GOG 12 March 2000

'The Green Office Group does actually get things done. Today we have spent a good part of our time organising the Quiz, which has been very successful in previous years'.

During one Green Office Group meeting the new system for collection and recycling of waste paper was discussed. This was an issue which affected every department in the organization as they all generate large amounts of paper waste. There was a wide-ranging and lively discussion of a number of options and potential problems associated with them. Representatives of particular departments raised issues of concern and found they were also issues of concern to other departments, such as the siting of the new recycling bins, and that these concerns had already been considered by others. It appeared to the observer that effective lateral communication was achieved at GOG meetings.

However there was very little evidence that there were any mechanisms in place which facilitate informal lateral communication in the organization

## 10.4.1.2 Communication Models

The communication model which was employed in the Green Group and its members dealings with one another outside the allotted meeting times followed the Interaction Model. Face-to-face and e-mail were the popular channels for communication to flow through. Both these make it easy for feedback to occur. During the actual meetings the communication process also followed the interaction model. When information was being presented at the meeting there was always the opportunity for feedback and questions. This was also found to be the case with the Member Officer Group on Sustainability during the first stage study. There was always the opportunity for feedback on information presented at the meetings.

The media employed for sending the information in the interaction model varied. In MOGS it was more formal then in the Green Office Group. MOGS made more use of formal or semi formal presentations, slides and occasionally Power point presentations. However there were also examples of information being communicated through informal 'chatting' or conversations during the meeting. This informal media was the predominant one in the Green Office Group. This could reflect the organizational level at which the two groups were operating. People on MOGS came from higher up the organization then those on the GOG, dealt with more strategic issues then the GOG, which dealt with operational issues, and MOGS quite often had attendees from outside the organization. A member of MOGS made the one semi formal presentation witnessed during the GOG. This indicates that

the communication media chosen reflects the context in which the communication is taking place and supports the integration perspective.


### 10.3.1.3 Barriers

The possible reasons for problems with lateral communication, identified in section nine, are a lack of common interests, clogged communication channels, lack of recognition of it as an important communication channel and fear of expressing a different viewpoint.


The researcher saw little evidence that lateral communication channels are being used to such an extent that they are becoming clogged. Whilst there is lateral communication it very often takes place in very formal channels such as cross-disciplinary groups or scheduled meetings. Stirling council operates out of a relatively compact location. However the physical barriers between departments appear to make informal contact between different departments the exception rather then the norm, except for in the canteen


Interview 2:6 Community

'It is very rare to just bump into someone from another department unless you are up at the canteen. Even then most people go up with people from their own department and stay with them'.


There was no indication that any of the common barriers to lateral communication which were identified in Chapter Nine were presenting a barrier. There were sufficient areas of common interest such as paper recycling and dealing with cleaners to allow for communication to flow

easily. There was no suppression of disagreement, in fact the debate was often lively, as it was when there was discussion on when and how to implement the new paper collection scheme. Attendance at the Green Office Group meetings tended to be quite high and this also helped to facilitate the communication process. There was however a general feeling that outwith the formal mechanisms, horizontal communication was not being encouraged.

Interview 2:6:Community

'You'd become very unpopular if you were forever wandering of to see what other departments were up to'.

As already seen the formal lateral communication channels that are in place in Stirling Council are, from the evidence presented, effective. However it appears that outwith these there is less in the way of lateral communication at the lower organizational levels.

Interview 2:3 Housing

'I would say that there is not a great deal of communication goes on between departments at the opposite ends of the spectrum if you like, but we'd not have much to talk about would we'.

This is evidence that departments felt that they have little in common with some of the other departments. This lack of apparent common interest is already stated as being on of the more common barriers to lateral

communication. Unfortunately this is a vicious circle, as it will take communication to establish a common interest.

## 10.4.2 Downward Communication

Downward communication is traditionally the prominent form of communication in local government. The second stage study provided evidence that there is a lot of downwards communication through both formal and informal channels and also that this comes down very departmental lines with very little in the way of cross-over between departments.

### 10.4.2.1 Mechanisms

From the second stage study it appeared that there were a number of different mechanisms being used to facilitate communication down through the organizational hierarchy. These included small group/team meetings, posters/noticeboards and publications, e-mails and memos. These techniques are amongst those included as effective by Harris in his ranking of communication channels.

### 10.4.2.2 Models

It is interesting to note that only the group/team meetings technique afford an immediate opportunity for feedback. The other mechanisms appear to only fulfil the criteria for the one-way model of communication. This can be effective if due consideration is given to the message, the recipients and the way in which the message will be encoded and the channel it will travel

through. The evidence from the second stage study suggests these aspects have not been considered enough and that this has resulted in these communication mechanisms being ineffective.

Interview 2:3 Housing

'People very rarely go off to check what is on the noticeboard on anything like a regular basis. Usually it is only if you have very little else to do so are a bit bored, then you might have a look on your way for a coffee or something'.

Interview 2:5 Community

Everybody gets the Green Diary and you usually end up with emails you've printed out and memos coming out your ears. I think in fact I know that a fair bit ends up not getting read properly and then dropped in the nearest bin'.

The mechanism of group/team meetings in departments appears from the evidence to be a much more satisfactory mechanism for downward communication. It allows for instant feedback which cannot simply be overlooked or ignored.

Interview 2:7 Community

'The way that information gets shared around in our department is by meetings with other people in the department. They can be the proper weekly group get togethers or just an informal chat or discussion over coffee'.

Interview 2:4 Housing

'Attending team meetings is useful because it gives you the chance to ask other people questions. Otherwise one or both of you is usually too busy and getting an answer can take quite a long time'.

It is interesting to note that the channels and mechanisms for communication which the second stage study is identifying as being less effective are the ones which were identified in the first stage study as being the ones through which the messages on LA 21 and sustainable development were being sent.

Whilst this still adheres to the integration perspective in that different models are being used in different situational contexts, it appears that the most appropriate is not always being used. The one-way communication model was identified as one which was used in bureaucratic organizations, and this type of culture was exhibited by transactional authorities. It was also established that whilst Stirling demonstrated many of the characteristics of the community leader, the evolution was a process which took time and some aspects of the organization may still exhibit transactional authority characteristics.

### 10.4.2.3 Barriers

The barriers to downwards communication which were identified in Chapter Nine included one-way communication, differences in values and perceptions, mistrust and conflicts of leadership. As has already been seen, there is a problem with one-way communication, as there is often inadequate opportunity for feedback associated with the mechanisms being used for

downwards communication. This is leading to ineffective communication as the message is being lost. It sometimes does not reach the intended recipient, perhaps as a result of the notices on the board or copies of the Green Diary not being read and so on, or the message is being lost or changed in the communication process.

Another potential barrier is differences in values and perceptions. This can arise where people at different levels of employment are committed to different groups or hold different goals. There is evidence in the second stage study that this might be a problem in some areas of the organization

Interview 2:8 Education

'For a lot of us this is just a job, something to do that gives us a pay packet every month. We just want to do what we have to leave the rest to people who get paid more. Sustainable development and the environment might relate to the work of the department but not to what I do, so of course I am not going to be reading my Green Diary end to end'.

Interview 6

'Whilst I might be interested in sustainable development and know how it is relevant to my job, not everybody is, especially in lower levels of the organization. So when there is a whole pile of papers needing your attention, I might look at the sustainable developments ones first but for a lot of others these are going to take second place to all the others that you know are important to what you are doing'.

These statements provide evidence that there are differences in the values and perceptions held by people at different levels of the organization and this is affecting the effectiveness of communication. The aim of the communication is to change peoples' values and perceptions. Again this raises a difficult question. How can the peoples perceptions be changed when the communication which is trying to change perceptions is being filtered out because it contains values which conflict with those of the intended receiver.

The second stage study did not uncover any evidence that mistrust or conflict of leadership were providing a real barrier to downward communication in the organization.

### 10.4.3   Upward Communication

The second stage study provides evidence that there is only limited upwards communication with regards to Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development

### 10.4.3.1 Mechanisms

During the second stage study the only channel mentioned which facilitated upward communication was informal discussion with supervisors or others in the department.

Interview 2:3 Housing

'If I wanted to get information up the organization, say I had an idea about how we could improve our work with regards to sustainable development or social inclusion then I would speak to my boss first, see what they said'.

This was the most effective technique identified in Chapter Nine for upwards communication but there are a number of other techniques which were not uncovered in the second stage study.

### 10.4.3.2 Models

The models of communication follow the interaction model or the two-person relationship model. There is the opportunity for feedback which characterises the interaction model

Interview 2:6 Community

'talking things over with your boss or another colleague is useful because you can get an objective view which might be able to point out things you have missed'.

However, there is also the opportunity for an ongoing mutual relationship in the organizational setting.

Interview 2:1 Environment

'another point is that if you pass ideas on to your boss they might have more opportunities to talk about them with other people to see how they might work or might cause problems so they can get back to you later having got a whole lot of additional input from people in other areas'

In this organizational setting upwards communication appears from the evidence gathered in the second stage study, to be largely informal. As can be seen below, this may cause problems.

### 10.4.3.3 Barriers

The main potential barriers to upward communication which were identified were the attitude of the superiors or the characteristics of the organization.

The second stage study uncovered concern that because of the informal nature of upward communication channels in the organization, there is the potential for the attitude of the superior to cause problems and block the communication channel.

Interview 2:2 Environment

'I get on with my boss but I can imagine that if you have a personality clash then the last thing that you are going to be wanting to do is take your ideas to them'.

Interview 12

'There are a lot of demands on everyone's time and it is true that there are times when you are simply going to be too busy to talk with the people under you about their ideas. Obviously if they have concerns or problems then they have to be addressed but if they have positive ideas then sadly sometimes there just isn't going to be time to look at them properly and give them the attention they might deserve right away. It is not a case of deliberately ignoring or overlooking them but just prioritising your workload'.

There was no evidence that the characteristics of the organization were inhibiting upward communication as it exists in the organization. Indeed the physical characteristics seem to have people working in a relatively close proximity to their immediate supervisors.

There are limited mechanisms for allowing upward communication in the organization. As well as limiting the communication initiated by lower levels of the organization, it could also be helping to create the problem with downward communication where there are few mechanisms to facilitate feedback.

The evidence from the second stage study supports the idea that communication in the organization falls in the integration perspective but there is also evidence that there are occasions where the most appropriate communication models are not being used. This can be seen in the reliance on one-way communication methods for top down communication to disseminate information. This is resulting in the message being easy for the whole organization, and all of the subcultures to ignore.

## 10.5 CONCLUSIONS FROM SECOND STAGE STUDY

There are a number of conclusions which can be drawn from the second stage study. These first of these is that the organization exhibits many of the characteristics of the community leader authority and that this is compatible with the change strategies and tools identified in the first stage study. The evolution to

this type of organization is ongoing and some aspects of the organization may still exhibit characteristics of the transactional authority, such as the reliance on one-way communication methods for the dissemination of information. Secondly, that there exists in the organization sustainability sub-cultures which facilitate sustainable development to differing degrees. Environmental Services and to a lesser extent Community Services have a sub-culture which is far more supportive of sustainable development the Housing or Education. The vision of sustainability has been communicated more effectively to them. Lastly, the communication channels being used to disseminate information in an attempt to raise awareness about sustainable development are ineffective. They are one way and the message is not being received.

## 10.6 REFLECTION

Having carried out the analysis of the second stage study it is time for another period of reflection on the findings of the second study.

The main questions which the second stage study asked have been addressed. However there are additional topics which have arisen out of this study which it would have been interesting to investigate further had time and resources been available. More work could be done on the existence of the sustainability cub-cultures in the organization. In particular the number of sub-cultures could be established and the differences between them more clearly defined. In addition as part of an action research process different change strategies could be assessed for dealing with the different sub-cultures and then followed over time to see if their

implementation had the expected effects.   However the studies have uncovered the desired information to allow the research questions to be addressed fully.

## 10.7 CONCLUSIONS TO THE FIRST AND SECOND STAGE STUDIES

It is necessary now to take the evidence from the first and second stage studies and use it to briefly address the research questions which were established in chapter two:

These are:

**To what extent has a sustainability ethos permeated the organization and are organizational factors facilitating or providing a barrier to this?**

The evidence shows that a sustainability ethos has permeated the organization to different extents in different departments because of the existence of sustainability sub-cultures.   There is much more of a sustainability ethos evident in Environmental Services then in Housing or Education. The study found that where there was not a much of a sustainability ethos in place organizational factors did have a role to play.   There was a lack of managerial commitment and no clearly defined vision of the desired state was evident.

**To determine the extent that this influences the success of failure of Local Agenda 21 implementation.**

This does have an effect on LA 21 implementation.   If the socially based departments are not involved in LA 21 then sustainable development becomes an environmental exercise.   Socially-based departments are involved at a strategic

level, although their commitment may be questioned, but this involvement is not evident at a lower level in the organization .

**To examine the effect of changes in organizational factors on the above.**

There have been changes in organizational factors such as the development of cross-departmental working groups and establishing sustainable development as a strategic aim and the effect on this situation appears to have been minimal, as the socially-based departments are still to a large extent uninvolved in the process. There is a need to raise awareness about sustainability and how it relates to social factors but as has been seen the communication channels which have been used to try to do this have proved ineffective. Also changes in organizational factors have been in the strategic or structural area rather then the human process area which is necessary to change the way in which people work.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

# CASE STUDIES

## 11.0  INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide triangulation for the results from the previous two studies, of which the results of the first are detailed in Chapter Eight and the results from the second are detailed in Chapter Ten. This chapter will examine the extent to which the findings can be applied to other local authority organizations and so consider the wider applicability of the results of the original action research. This chapter will present the evidence found in two other local authorities and compare it with that found in the original two stage study. This is done through the use of case studies of two different local authorities in which the issues identified in chapters eight and nine are examined.

## 11.1  THE CASE STUDY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The two local authorities included in this study are Moray and Edinburgh. Moray is a local authority situated in the north east of Scotland and is similar to Stirling in a number of ways. Both cover a large town and rural areas, cover similar acreages and operate under similar budgetary constraints. Edinburgh is a rather different setting. It covers an urban area rather than a rural one and is a larger organization. The purpose of including two authorities one which offers similarities and another which offers rather more in the way of differences, is to determine the extent to generalisations be made from the findings of the original research. It might be expected that more applicability might be found with regard

to Moray then with regard to Edinburgh. It will be useful to look in slightly more detail at the two local authorities in question and then to reiterate the areas under investigation and the methods employed by the researcher in the investigation.

### 11.1.1 Moray

The local authority which is the subject of the first case study is Moray Council which is based in the North East of Scotland. Moray Council has many similarities with Stirling Council. The population covered by Stirling Council is 83,130, that covered by Moray Council is 85,870 (GROS 1999 Mid Year Population Estimates). Stirling Council covers an area of 2,196 square kilometres and Moray Council covers 2,238 square kilometres. Both cover a major large town, smaller villages and rural areas. However whilst the majority group in Stirling is Labour, Moray has 13 out of 26 seats held by independent candidates.

### 11.1.2 City Of Edinburgh

The City of Edinburgh covers a population of 452,850 people and an area of 100 square miles. It is a Labour held Council and although doing well economically with high employment there are some very deprived areas with the associated social problems which the Council must deal with.

## 11.2 GATHERING DATA FOR THE CASE STUDIES

In gathering the data to compare with that which was gathered from Stirling Council a number of different techniques were used. Some techniques were used in both Moray and Edinburgh whilst others were used in only one or the other.

This arose out a pragmatic decision to use whatever resources, contacts and access were made available to the researcher and resulted in a wide range of data sources being used.

### 11.2.1 Moray

Moray Council was geographically much further from the researcher then either Stirling or Edinburgh and this limited the number of visits and time which could be physically spent in this Council. Three visits were made to Moray Council, one lasting for a whole day and two lasting for half days. During these visits seven informal interviews took place. These were with a Councillor, a Planning Officer, an Engineer, a Client Services Officer, a Clerical Officer, a Corporate Liaison Officer and a Training Officer. Three of these were members of the LA 21 team at Moray Council. Moray Council has also made a large number of its documents, minutes and agendas available on its website (www.moray.gov.uk) and document examination along with telephone conversations and e-mail messages gathered the rest of the data used for this case study. As with Stirling anonymity was guaranteed. Interviews from Moray are prefixed with an M in the text.

### 11.2.2 City of Edinburgh

Initially the intention was to gather data in a similar manner at the City of Edinburgh Council and four interviews were carried out to this end with a Councillor, a Planning Officer, a Recreation Officer and an officer from the Chief Executives Office, all of whom had had some involvement with

the LA 21 process. The researcher then had the opportunity to work on temporary placements at various locations throughout the Council over a period of four months and so participant observation was used to gather data. Placements lasted for between two weeks and two months and encompassed Education, Social Work and City Development. In every placement the researcher was open about the fact that research was being carried out and colleagues were asked if they had any reservations. A further two interviews were carried out with a development officer in Education and the Head of Lighting in City Development, both of whom expressed an interest in taking part in this way. Again interview responses were guaranteed anonymity. Documentary examination was also used to gather additional information for this case study. Interview evidence from Edinburgh is prefixed with an E.

## 11.3   WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

The first and second stage study demonstrated that in Stirling Council, whilst there was a general awareness of what sustainable development was, there was a lack of a deeper understanding of what it meant specifically for the all the component parts of the local authority and the community that it served. It was also discovered that there were differences between departments, indicating the presence of sub cultures.

### 11.3.1 Moray

In Moray Council the research uncovered a similar scenario. It is described as 'a long term balanced approach to social, economic and

environmental needs' (Moray Council, Local Agenda 21 eight point commitment, 2000) and something to 'improve the quality of life at a local level yet protect the Earth at a global level'. As was the case at Stirling, these are adequate definitions of general sustainable development but they fail to address more explicitly what it means for the local authority. However in March 1998 in it's 'Sustainability Strategy' (page nine) Moray Council stated that it would:

'place sustainable development at the heart of decision making and in doing so would adopt the following themes. Where possible local needs are met locally; everyone has access to adequate food water and shelter at a reasonable cost; everyone has the opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy and the value of unpaid work is recognised; health is protected by the creation of safe, clean and pleasant environments and of services which emphasise the prevention of illness as well as care for the sick; people live without fear of crime or persecution on account of race, gender, sexuality or beliefs; resources are used efficiently, waste is minimised and materials are recycled; pollution is limited to levels which do not cause damage to the natural ecosystems, the diversity of nature is valued and protected; everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information which they need to play a full part in society; all sections of the community are empowered to participate in decision making; opportunities to participate in culture, leisure and recreation are readily available to all; buildings open spaces and artefacts combine meaning with beauty and utility; settlements are human in scale and form and distinctive local features are valued and protected'.

This is a much more detailed statement of what sustainable development means for Moray Council in terms of what it means for the area covered by the local authority but the perception appears to be that this is not something which is commonly known in the organization.

Interview M1

'I think that there is a general vague awareness of what sustainable development is in the Council but to expand on that, well that's another matter altogether'.

Interview M2

'Levels of knowledge and awareness vary, probably quite a lot, but I think that that is something to be expected. Eventually there is the hope that it will be at the heart of our culture if you like, that's what it says in the strategy, but that is not going to happen overnight'.

Interview M4

'I don't think that the majority of the people that I work with can see the whole sustainability picture. That is the combination of environmental, economic and social factors'.

These comments and the evidence in documentation indicate that Moray is experiencing the same situation as Stirling, that there is certain degree of confusion in existence with regard to what specifically is meant by sustainable development. There also appears to be the same possibility

that ineffective communication, or a lack of communication could be at least partly responsible for this situation.

Interview M5

'Nobody has ever actually told me what sustainable development means for the Council. Maybe I am just supposed to work it out for myself'.

Interview M1

'There is training available – I know that because it is in the LA 21 strategy but I have to say I don't know anyone who has been on it'.

There was also evidence from Moray that there are subcultures which exist in the organization.

Interview M3

'I have to say that in my department awareness of sustainable development is astoundingly low. I think that some of them must have avoided watching television over the last couple of years. Faces just go blank when you mention it'.

Inteview M5

'I would say that most people that I work with every day are pretty clued up about sustainability. Not to the level that I am being on this team but they would still be able to hold an intelligent conversation with you'.

As with Stirling this division occurred along departmental lines, with the social departments apparently demonstrating the least interest in sustainable development.

## 11.3.2 Edinburgh

In 'Towards a Sustainable Council' (City of Edinburgh, 2001) there are a number of introductory definitions given of sustainable development and they are all general and rather vague. However on page 11 a 'sustainability vision' is stated:

'Sustainability is one of the major considerations of the Executive and Scrutiny Panels of the Council....All staff are fully aware of the implications of sustainability on the service they provide....All principles are...integrated into every strategy produced by the Council and form one of major projects and development go through a sustainability checklist and are rejected if they do not meet the specification'.

This is then followed by a very detailed description of what sustainable development means to the City of Edinburgh. However it was evident from the participant observation carried out that this has not filtered down to an operational level.

Whilst working in the different departments the researcher found that there was little knowledge about sustainable development at the lower level of the organization, with the main response being that people had heard of it

but were not quite sure exactly what it was or how it related to them. However in discussions with more senior members of staff, differences became apparent. In City Development the senior members of staff were keen to discuss sustainability and ways in which it could be implemented. This was not experienced in Education or Social Work. Another way in which the different attitudes were revealed was in the fact that some departments had paper recycling facilities and some did not.

Based on this it can be concluded that the findings from the study in Stirling can be seen in other local authorities. That is, there are some in the organization who have a strong understanding of what sustainable development means and this is revealed in the artefacts of the organization. This has not been communicated throughout the organization and departmental differences are apparent.

## 11.4 MOVING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

In examining progress in moving towards sustainability three priorities were looked at in Stirling Council. These were improving performance, integrating sustainable development into all the Council's policies and practices and measuring and monitoring performance. The evidence suggested that Stirling Council was aware of the issues which needed to be addressed in order to promote sustainable development and was making some progress. The main thrust of this progress appeared to be in improving its own performance, with progress less evident in the other two stages.

## 11.4.2 Moray

The perception in Moray Council is that progress is being made on all three fronts.

Interview M2

'As you have said the emphasis has been on getting our internal workings in order and I think that we have gone forward with this'.

The corporate plan of Moray Council, and subsequent strategies based on this, are the result of seeking a balance between the economic strategy, the community care plan and the environmental charter. There is a perception that this reflects genuine progress in integrating sustainable development into all the Council's activities.

Interview M3

'Certainly in the making of the corporate plan, sustainable development was a very real consideration. We wanted it to show through and I think that it does [examine plan]. Now I do think that some of this may have been lost when it has been translated into strategic plans and service plans for the different services but it is a start and it shows, I think, that there is a commitment to sustainable development at the top levels of the Council. Maybe it is just a question of this having time to filter down to all levels'.

In terms of integrating sustainable development into all the Councils activities there are some other tools being used at Moray Council. There are a number of cross-departmental working groups and a Local Agenda

270

21 team with a varied professional and hierarchical make up, which liases with managers. In Stirling Council Measuring and Monitoring was an area in which little progress was evident. At Moray Council the situation appears to be similar. There was an audit of all departments in 1996, there is an annual review of the progress of the Local Agenda 21 team and sustainability indicators are currently under preparation, although there is no target date specified for them being in use.

### 11.4.2 Edinburgh

In Towards a Sustainable Council 2001, much is written in the future tense (p13) about working to integrate sustainable development into the Council policies and decision making. There is no evidence that much has been achieved to date in this area and there is recognition that this will require significant work in the future in order to turn this to reality. Edinburgh has a set of standard indicators to measure sustainability in the community but also states that they are developing measures to assess their own sustainability performance. Again there is no target date as to when these should be in place.

It is evident that the stage of progress at which Stirling is at cannot be used to determine the progress of other local authorities. They are all obviously at different stages and tackling different tasks. In chapter two it was established that there is no one best way or order to deal with issues surrounding Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development so it is only to be expected that local authorities are doing different things.

## 11.5 TYPE OF CHANGE

In Stirling Council it was established that the type of change required internally was classified as large scale, involving incremental changes throughout the entire organization. This was as was expected following a review of literature and so it can be expected that the same will be seen in Moray and Edinburgh. The evidence from the case studies supports this.

Interview M5

'Its not about making huge changes. We just want to change everybody's attitude just a little bit and that will make a big difference'.

Interview M2

'I don't know why its so difficult because it is only small changes that we are after'.

Interview E2

'We need to try to change the way that everybody in the organization thinks about what they do'.

The evidence shows that as expected it appears that all local authorities would recognise that they are pursuing small changes across the entire organization.

## 11.6 TRIGGERS FOR CHANGE

In Chapter Eight it was established that the main triggers for this change came from outside the organization. It would be expected therefore that these external

triggers would be acting on all local authorities and exerting the same pressure on them to change.

Interview M3

I think that the main drive, the push if you like for us to become more sustainable comes from outside the organization. The Government wants us all to have Local Agenda 21s, the public are more aware of the damage that has been done to the planet and what can be done to try and address this and because we do so much in the community we are in a position to do something about it'.

Interview E1

'There are pressures from inside and outside the organization for us to improve our own sustainability performance and develop Local Agenda 21. I suppose that the big one is the government though'.

These quotes indicate that there is an acknowledgement by both case study organizations that there are external pressures which are triggering the need for change in the organization. However in Edinburgh it appears that the internal triggers are very strong as well.

Interview E1

'I think that we have perhaps coasted for a while, getting things down in writing but not doing as much as could be done to translate it into action and I think that now we are at a stage where there is getting to be tremendous pressure from on high for that to happen, and I am sorry to say that it probably needed that kind of

trigger. I think that now we want to be viewed very much as a local authority which wants to protect its environment and continue with our economic growth'.

This however does not change the fact that this internal pressure is itself the result of external forces acting on the local authority and the Towards a Sustainable Council 2001 for Edinburgh details the international, European and government level pressures for developing sustainability.

## 11.7   WHAT CHANGES TO MAKE

There was a consensus in Stirling Council that there was a need to establish sustainable development as a strategic aim or at least account for it in the long term strategies of the organization. This would give it status in the organization and demonstrate a high level commitment to it.

A similar attitude was found in the case study organizations.

Interview M5

'Of course sustainable development needs to have a strategic aspect. It involves long term plans. Plus it will also lend it an air of legitimacy or seriousness. When things start getting into strategy documents then you know that they're important'.

Moray Sustainability Strategy 1998 p 3

' Sustainable development needs to become integrated into the strategic aims of the organization,'

Interview M3

'Getting top level commitment is important because we can't expect every one else to behave in a certain way if the bosses aren't.'

Interview E1

'Developing this strategic framework for sustainable development is absolutely vital. It demonstrates that we are taking it seriously'.

In Stirling it was also recognised that human process issues were important, as there was a need to change the way in which people think and work. Little work had actually been done in this area as the council was primarily concentrating on raising awareness of sustainable development. There appears to be recognition amongst the case study authorities that changes are required in the human process and structural issues in order to facilitate sustainable development.

Interview M6

'We need to look at the way people work and the way that they think and see if this can be improved to be more sustainable if you like. We also need to support people if they are having to work in different ways , perhaps be creating more groups which allow for people in different departments to work together on a regular basis and swap ideas and that kind of thing'.

Interview M2

' You can't just tell someone that from now on they are going to have to work in a completely different way and consider things that they never had to consider before. I certainly would not appreciate having something like that just dropped

on me, you would just think that it sounded like an awful lot of extra hard work. So there needs to be support mechanisms, help for people to work in a new way'.

Interview E4

'Until a couple of years ago I had never been involved in any kind of cross departmental group, but that is something that is going to have to increase in number if you want people to be able to accept and understand the holistic nature of sustainable development'.

Interview E1

'Yes we need to change the way that people work so that sustainable development is an automatic consideration there is a big difference between how easy it is to say that and how we can get people to do it in practice. We need to take action to change the way that people think.

There is a recognition in the case study organizations that there is a need to change the way in which people think and work. There is also an acceptance that in order to do this they will require some help. Structural issues are seen as important and both Moray and Stirling have a number of cross-departmental working groups which include one dedicated LA 21. As with Stirling there is also an acceptance that attempts will have to be made to address human process issues to create cultures more supportive of sustainable development. This is a difficult task and as with Stirling it is not an area that they have tackled to any great extent.

It appears that local authorities are making the relatively easy appropriate structural changes which will support the work required to develop sustainability

in local authorities but are shying away from doing more to try to change their cultures to ones which facilitate sustainable development.

## 11.8  CHANGE STRATEGIES AND MODELS

In Chapter Eight it was demonstrated that in attempting to make changes to the organizational culture Stirling was adopting a normative-re-educative approach. Information on sustainable development was being disseminated to those in the organization down a number of channels in an attempt to raise awareness and knowledge with the desired aim being to change the way people thought about sustainable development. However the medium of communication proved to be one way resulting in the message being ignored.

In the case study organizations a normative-re-educative approach can also be seen in attempts to raise awareness about sustainable development.

Interview M1

'We are trying hard not to push it down peoples throat. That would be counter productive. We need to educate people at their own pace. We should make information available to them, run workshops, all that kind of thing'.

Interview M6

'There is a sustainability training course but I think that it has to be integral to your job before you go on it'.

Interview E1

'We are trying to raise awareness amongst all of the staff here about sustainable development. There are plenty of pamphlets and leaflets and there have been work shops and the like'.

These techniques being used by the local authorities, pamphlets and leaflets, could also to some extent be accused of being one way. In conversations with colleagues working at an administrative level it was discovered that none had ever come across a leaflet containing information about sustainable development, that they had remembered. Whilst working in Edinburgh Council the researcher only came across this information whilst sitting in reception areas at various Council locations. On one other occasion the researcher was invited to attend a seminar on 'Sustainable Communities' by a manager with a personal as well as professional interest in sustainable development. On enquiring whether we should see if any body else wished to attend the reply was 'No, because I can tell you now that not one of them has any interest in it at all'. The result being that they weren't asked. A barrier was in place because of a perceived lack of interest of other staff members. The manager later stated that he had tried to get his colleagues involved in doing more for sustainable development and also tried to get the Council interested in an exchange scheme with Council officials in developing countries which encouraged swapping ideas, techniques and knowledge. On both occasions he had got nowhere and likened the experience to 'banging his head on a brick wall'.

It is apparent that the communication models being used are largely one way, as was the case with Stirling, and Edinburgh and Moray are encountering the same problems as at Stirling. In Edinburgh the problem is as much about the message not reaching the intended receiver rather then being filtered out by them.

## 11.9  RESISTANCE AND BARRIERS TO CHANGE

In Stirling Council it was established that there was a recognition that resistance to change did exist for different reasons in the organization and that this provided a barrier to change processes. This allowed for strategies to be developed to address this. In the case study organizations there appears to be less awareness of the fact that resistance to change can prove a barrier to change. Instead the barriers with which they are concerned are the more traditional money and time.

Interview M6

'Barriers to us becoming more sustainable. The main one has to be lack of resources I would say. If we had unlimited money and time it would be no problem'.

Interview M2

'Lack of money is of course always a problem but the whole of local government is competing for less and less in the way of resources so that is something that we will just have to work round'.

'Is there anything standing between us and where we want to be with regards to sustainability. Yes we don't have enough money to do everything that we want to do.

Unprompted no-one from Moray or Edinburgh mentioned the fact that people in the organization might resist change for some reason. However they are likely to face the same problems as Stirling in this area and the only difference is that Stirling appears to be better prepared.

## 11.10 CONCLUSIONS

From the evidence of the case studies it is fair to conclude that they are in much the same situation as Stirling. There are sub-cultures in the organization based on departmental lines which facilitate sustainable development to different extents in the organization. They do have a clear vision of sustainability available in the artifacts but this has not been communicated to the entire organization. They are taking action to move towards sustainability in terms of integrating sustainable development into policy and decision making and measuring and monitoring but they are at a different stages from Stirling, although this is only to be expected. They anticipate the need to carry out the same 'Large Scale' changes as Stirling and have been subject to the same external pressures. As with Stirling there is an acknowledgement that changes have to be made in strategic, structural and human process issues and they are using similar change strategies and techniques as Stirling in trying to raise awareness of sustainable development in the organization. They do not appear to have accounted for that the fact that people

rather then money are likely to be the biggest barriers to change that they will encounter.

Despite this difference the findings from the first and second stage study correlate with those from the case studies. This indicates that it is possible to be able to generalise from the results of the study carried out at Stirling.

# CHAPTER TWELVE

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 12.0  OVERVIEW

This final chapter draws on the data gathered and the evidence presented in the preceding chapters and brings together a number of conclusions to the study that will address the original research questions. These were to establish the extent to which a sustainability ethos had permeated the organizations, determine the organizational development techniques, and their effectiveness, which are being implemented to try and promote a sustainability ethos in the organizations and to determine whether there were organizational factors hindering this. Before these conclusions are presented, more general conclusions are drawn from the conduct of the research, in respect of the theories used in the analysis of the primary information and the way in which the research methods were applied.

Following on from these conclusions are recommendations firstly as to action which could be taken to improve the situation for local authorities as regards the factors covered by the research questions, and secondly, factors which have suggested themselves as being of interest for further research programmes. The recommendations for action seek to make general proposals as to the phenomena which need to be addressed and also suggest specific actions which could be taken by local authorities in them.

## 12.1 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

These general conclusions summarise the findings from the research which do not necessarily relate specifically to the research questions. They concern sustainable development, the research philosophy, methodology and data gathering techniques and the theoretical concepts used as a basis for the studies.

### 12.1.1 Sustainable Development

The first and second chapters covered an introduction to sustainable development and, more specifically, the role that local authorities could play in its delivery and the progress which has been made up to the time when this study was conducted. The literature review which helped to inform these chapters allowed sufficient data to be gathered in relation to this, meaning that there was no requirement to carry out any primary research at this stage. As can be seen from the survey studies included in Chapter Two, the progress being made by local authorities had been examined in a number of previous surveys. It proved very helpful to use the model proposed by Whittaker (1997) as a framework under which to examine the progress made by local authorities. Whittaker's model provided a complete picture of possible local authority activity in relation to Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development. It covered internal activities, namely improving local authorities own performance, integrating sustainable development into all their policies and measuring and monitoring, and activities in the community, namely participation, partnerships and awareness raising. It meant that the data from all the surveys could be drawn together to give a complete picture.

The conclusions from this initial review were that sustainable development is a wide-ranging and complex subject, which needs to be dealt with in a holistic and integrated manner. Local authorities appeared to understand this, and had a stated commitment to the ideals of sustainable development, but actual progress towards delivering sustainability was generally marked by its absence. There were no previous studies which had attempted to uncover the reasons for this lack progress. Identification of this gap meant that the research aims and objectives could be articulated and presented at the end of Chapter Two. It has also proved useful to have these two introductory chapters preceding the research aims and objectives, which go on to provide a much narrower focus to the thesis, as they give an introduction to the concept of sustainable development and the role of local authorities which is necessary for an understanding of the subject. This is particularly useful if the thesis is being approached without prior knowledge of the topic.

## 12.1.2 Research Philosophy, Methodology and Data Gathering Techniques

Once the research aims were established the philosophical underpinning of the research approach could be considered. A phenomenological much more then a positivist approach was demonstrated to be the most valid and appropriate, given the relatively intangible nature of the subjects addressed in the research aims and objectives, and identification that it was going to be

necessary to examine the perceptions of the people who were taking part in the studies.

An investigation was then undertaken to decide what would be the most appropriate research methodology to use and what tools and techniques could be used to best provide the information needed to answer the research questions. A number of potential methodologies were proposed as ones that could potentially be used and one, action research, was chosen as it offered some advantages over the others. It was going to be a longitudinal study in a working organization, and the action research methodology had been specifically developed to be used in situations like that. In addition, the way in which this methodology offered in-built opportunities to reflect, identify and examine further developments was seen as particularly useful. One concern identified with this methodology was that there was an emphasis on introducing a change and examining how it had effects over time. It was correctly foreseen that there would be no opportunity to introduce changes but in validating the methodology as having rigour, this was highlighted and substituted with the following of the initiatives being used in the organization. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews were found to be techniques which could be used in the study to meet the research aims and were consistent with the access which had been negotiated. A further requirement for action research, in order to satisfy the demand for rigour, was that opportunities for triangulation be identified and followed up. This resulted in the two case studies which were carried out in order to

determine whether the findings from the first stage study were more generally applicable, which they were found to be.

The cyclical nature of action research meant that further theory exploration could be done if it was deemed appropriate at any stage. As the research questions had been based on the gap identified in the literature further theory exploration was seen as necessary to explore change and culture in organizations in general and in local authorities in particular prior to the main body of the first stage study being carried out. Further theory exploration was also necessary after the first stage study, to go look at culture in more detail and to look at theories about communication.

There are a number of conclusions which can be drawn from the conduct of the research. Firstly, action research was an eminently suitable methodology with which to meet the aims and objectives of the research. The main advantage was the periods for reflection and, if necessary, re-evaluation of both the aims, and progress towards meeting these aims, that were built in to the research methodology. This was particularly evident when reflection on the first stage study identified that the design, which focused on members of the Member Officer Group on Sustainability (MOGS), meant that there were gaps in understanding and in answering the research questions and the second stage study was then able to address these in order to ensure that the research questions were answered.

The first and second stage study involved gathering data through participant observation and through semi-structured interviews. The participant observation generated much data and much of this related to subjects which, although they were also covered in the interviews, these did not give as complete or as detailed a picture as the participant observation did. These methods could also be used as a form of triangulation for each other, as it was possible to assess whether there were contradictions between what was being said and what was being done. Although a lot of useful information was gathered in the interviews during the first stage study, a fuller picture of the organization could have been obtained during this study if the design of it had been different and officers from outside MOGS had been included.

The case studies provided an opportunity for triangulation of the findings from the first and second stage studies. The data-gathering techniques used in these were again participant observation and semi-structured interviewing. The data which were gathered was of a quality which would not have been achieved through the use of other data gathering techniques which were discussed and evaluated in Chapter Four.

To summarise, the research methodology and the data gathering techniques used were appropriate and successful in gathering the data needed to answer the research questions. Although the scope of the first stage study limited its use, this was mitigated by the action research methodology which allowed for this to be identified and rectified by a further period of research.

### 12.1.3 Theoretical Framework

It was useful to use Hawkins and Miller's Four level model of organizational culture, as identified in Chapter Five (p94), as it meant that documents and observed behaviour could both be used to diagnose culture, as well as gaining organizational members perceptions of the culture of their organization. The three perspectives on organizational culture, integration, differentiation and fragmentation, identified by Frost (p99), were useful, particularly when examined in relation to local authorities. They provided a starting point for investigating organizational culture in the first stage study. Hofstedes work (p109) on different aspects of culture was useful in gaining further insight in to the components of organizational culture, as was the work of the other writers cited on p105. However the emphasis placed on quantification and measurement of culture by these authors was incompatible with the research philosophy, which views reality as something that is socially constructed and requires to be understood and cannot be objectively measured. Therefore their inventories were not used in the study. The components of culture identified were useful in considering what kind of culture would be most supportive of sustainable development and in thinking about which aspects it would be most beneficial to examine.

In the second stage study the framework developed by Asquith, in Chapter Nine, was used as a base from which the data gathered in the second stage study could be analysed. It examined organizational culture in local authorities from the perspectives, already identified in Chapter Two as the

dominant perspectives in local authorities, of a traditional bureaucracy, 'new public management', and a point between these two, which Asquith called a 'community leader'. The cultural characteristics that Asquith identified as being associated with these could be compared to the characteristics identified by Littlewood and White (1997), who matched aspects of culture, such as centralisation and departmentalism, to the requirements of sustainable development, to help identify what would be desirable. This was very useful in providing a structure to the second stage study as it meant that there were specific aspects of culture which were identified as being important and so could be examined, and then the degree to which they did or did not facilitate sustainable development could be ascertained. Given the differentiation perspective from the first stage study, the recognition that Asquith's different classifications could exist together in different departments of the same organization is important. Goddard (1995) had also identified a number of sub-cultures which could be present in a local authority, in terms of aspects such as management practices, formality, and officer-councillor relationships, but this was not felt to be as strong a framework with which to approach the research as Asquith's model. The topic was approached from a strongly positivist standpoint and there was great emphasis on the physical measurement of aspects of organizational culture. This study looked at only one local authority and therefore did not offer the same broad outlook as the Asquith's model did. Also, the correlations with the findings in Chapter Two were not nearly as clear as in Asquith's model.

The identification of the six components of communication in Chapter Nine, the sender, the receiver, the message, the channels, feedback and perception, was of great value during the second stage study. This was because the models of communication, the one-way, the interaction, the two-person relationship and the communication in context models, also identified in chapter nine were known to be effective in different situations. Identifying the individual components then made it was straight-forward to classify attempts at communication into the different models. The examination of communication in different perspectives as identified by Harris (1993) and Fisher (1993), was of limited use and the main reason for this was that, other then the classical perspective, these did not relate to the models of organizational culture identified by Asquith which was used as the main basis for the second stage study. The integration perspective was viewed as the most likely to reflect the actual situation and this was found to be the case, but this could only be used to conclude that different communication models would be in use in the local authority.

Chapter Six presented a number of theories of change which were found to be of different value to the first stage study. For instance, it was very useful to examine the changes occurring, or which were perceived as required, in terms of their size and scope and also the triggers which were, or might be, the impetus for them. The model for possible triggers put forward by Torrington, Weightman and Jones (1989) ranged from voluntaristic to deterministic and proved to be very useful. The strategic models proposed by Burnes (1997) and Genus (1997) were of limited use as they did not

extend to cover other possible triggers and the first stage study found that most triggers fell outwith the models of Burnes and Genus. Cummings and Worley's (1993) framework on the aspects of the organization in which changes could be made was more useful. A comparison with Chapter Two, which identified what was necessary for sustainable development, meant that there could be prior consideration of where change would be most necessary to support sustainable development.

In summary it was found that the theoretical exploration provided a solid base and a useful framework with which to approach the research.

## 12.2 ANWSERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### 12.2.1. IS THERE A SUSTAINABILITY ETHOS?

The original examination of theory suggested that an essential stage in the Local Agenda 21 implementation process was to define explicitly and in detail exactly what sustainable development meant for the individual authority. Only when this was done would there be a solid base from which to proceed with policy making. Failure to do this would ultimately lead to confusion of purpose and lack of focus. Whilst it seemed that there was a good vision of sustainability to be found in an examination of the organization's artefacts, it was found that although most members of the organization could give some definition of sustainable development, far fewer could talk about in either a more detailed sense or in terms of what it meant for the organization as a whole or how it specifically related to their own jobs. Those from socially-based departments found this particularly

hard. There was also a general admission from those involved in the first stage study that they were probably the best informed amongst their colleagues, and the second stage study supported this.

In general those in the environmental departments were more able to relate sustainable development to their own job, although, perhaps understandably, there was a bias towards the environmental aspects of it. Only passing mention at most was made of the economic and social aspects of sustainability by those in environmental departments. Those in more socially-based departments tended to offer a short 'soundbite' definition but found it much harder to be clear about how it affected their jobs and departments, or how their jobs and departments affected sustainability. There was a tendency for sustainable development to be seen as an environmental issue, which was reinforced by concepts such as social inclusion, which is an integral part of sustainable development, being seen as something entirely separate. Socially based departments found it far easier to talk about social inclusion but failed to see its connection with sustainable development. Inevitably this will hinder the development of integrated solutions and reinforce departmental divisions The second stage study found that there were different sustainability cultures in different departments and in the socially-based departments the culture facilitated sustainable development to a much smaller extent.

In carrying out the Moray and Edinburgh case studies it was discovered that this situation was present in both organizations to some extent. There was a

perception amongst those involved in the Local Agenda 21 process that there was a general lack of understanding about exactly what sustainable development meant for the organization as a whole and for the individual departments. The main features were broadly similar. Sustainable development was largely seen and expressed as an environmental issue with social goals which do fall under the remit of sustainable development being articulated as separate goals or objectives, meaning that the sustainability ethos was more evident in some environmental departments then in social ones.

To conclude, the evidence suggests that there is a lack of deeper understanding as to what sustainable development means for a whole organization and those with the most understanding have tended to have a personal interest in the area and have pursued information proactively rather then being provided with it by the organization. Departments at the environmental end of the spectrum have taken on board sustainability to a greater extent then those at the social end of the spectrum with the result of creating a self-perpetuating cycle. As they deal primarily with the environmental aspects of sustainable development, it becomes increasingly seen as only an environmental concept, reinforcing the idea that it is not relevant to the work done by the more socially-based departments who will then increasingly draw back from getting involved. It is evident that a sustainability ethos is beginning to infiltrate local authorities but that it is doing so unevenly with the result that some departments have been

excluded, and/or have excluded themselves, from this development altogether.

Further evidence that a sustainability ethos is beginning to permeate local authorities, albeit unevenly, came from examining the work that is being done by local authorities to try to improve their own performance. This predominantly encompasses environmental areas, such as recycling and sustainable travel plans for the organization. There was enough evidence to conclude that the types of project being implemented by local authorities are reinforcing the idea that sustainable development and Local Agenda 21 are environmental concerns. Management in the socially-based departments do know at an intellectual level that sustainable development ought to be about them as much as it is about the environment but find it hard to translate this into action.

## 12.2.2 IS THIS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL AGENDA 21?

It is obvious that local authorities are a long way from being sustainable organizations in terms of having workforces which work with the concept of sustainable development continually in mind. However it has been demonstrated that there are people in local authorities for whom this could be a description and it is also clear that many projects in the wider community have been achieved, although the majority of these are environmental. So, does the fact that a sustainability ethos is only beginning to permeate and doing so unevenly matter?

Local Agenda 21 requires holistic thinking and integrated working on the part of local authorities. A sustainability ethos would facilitate this and allow for successful implementation of Local Agenda 21. If there is not a sustainability ethos throughout the local authority, and the evidence is that there is not, then this was shown to have implications for Local Agenda 21. If, as was shown to be the case, environmental departments dominate the sustainability process then it results in the cycle, identified in 12.2.1 whereby socially-based departments make little or no contribution, which leads to an increasing focus on environmental matters, which leads the socially-based departments to feel it has little relevance to their work. This hinders the progress made towards the social and/or economic goals of sustainable development and so will have an adverse affect on Local Agenda 21.

There was an argument presented in Chapters One and Two, that the social and economic goals, which are often seen to be articulated separately from sustainable development, are being pursued, with the end result being that they are still addressed by local authorities. Whether this is acceptable depends to the extent that either the ends justify the means or the ends need to be supported by the means? Chapters One and Two showed that the key principle of sustainable development was that the inter-related nature of social, economic and environmental problems was recognised and that integrated solutions should be pursued as a new and more effective way of dealing with these. Therefore it is not enough to say that the goals of

sustainable development are being pursued in communities but are being pursued separately by local authorities which have not changed the way in which they work.

Sustainable development is recognised as a utopian ideal and so it may be that we have to abandon the ideal of a local authority with an entirely sustainable culture. However the fact that a sustainability ethos has not permeated with any great depth does have repercussions on Local Agenda 21. It means that sustainable development is not being considered in all decision making and policies. The fact that a sustainability ethos is apparent at different levels in different departments is also an area of concern. Social economic and environmental issues are equal parts of sustainable development and any Local Agenda 21 process which continues without the participation and co-operation of the social departments will be the poorer for it.

Therefore work should continue to try to encourage those in the organization to think and act more sustainably and to encourage socially-based departments to become more involved in sustainability. However it may be unrealistic to expect everybody in the organization whose work is not directly involved in decision-making or policy formulation to be considering sustainability. The study demonstrated that the attitude and commitment of management in a department towards sustainability was reflected in awareness and attitude throughout the department. Therefore perhaps only those whose at a management level, whose work is involved in policy and

decision making should be targeted first of all, in an effort to change the ways which people think and work.

## 12.2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

There is a realisation by local authorities that moving their organization onto a more sustainable path requires small changes throughout a local authority. At the moment there are small incremental changes being made but not throughout all parts of local authorities.

The actual changes which are being implemented by management vary, but there are common threads which can be identified. In terms of the areas in which the changes are being made, all organizations recognise that there is a need to introduce strategic support to lend legitimacy to the issue. All of the organizations also agreed that human resource issues were important and all would like extra money and people to implement Local Agenda 21 more effectively and to develop their own sustainability. However, there was also resigned agreement that given the budgetary constraints under which the organizations operated, and the many statutory requirements already competing for these scarce resources, that this was unlikely to occur.

There was also a general consensus that human process issues were viewed as important, and initiatives in this area were most likely to result in changes to the ways in which people work. This was being left alone whilst easier changes were made to the structures of organizations. This has

predominantly involved the formation of cross-departmental working groups. It would be interesting to examine the extent to which changing the way people work, in this manner, influences the way in which they think. The evidence from this study showed that it did not appear to be changing the way that socially-based departments thought about sustainable development and Local Agenda 21.

In looking at the changes which are being attempted, attention was also paid to the change strategies and the change models which were being used. It is possible to conclude from the evidence presented in the original studies and in the case studies that the local authorities are pursuing a normative-re-educative strategy to try to make their organizations into ones better able to integrate sustainable development into all of their activities. There is recognition amongst them that this is the most appropriate strategy with which to pursue change relating to sustainable development. All the changes have the aim of raising awareness amongst staff about sustainable development with the desired end result being to change the way that people think about the organization and the way that they work in it.

It was discovered that main methods of trying to raise awareness across the whole organization were one-way communication techniques and that this made it easy for the message to be overlooked, ignored or filtered out. There were other more effective methods of raising awareness but they were more resource intensive in that they could only reach a small number of staff at a time. A member of staff with responsibility for sustainable

development, such as a Local Agenda 21 Officer, was shown to be effective at awareness raising, facilitating feedback and questions, but could only reach a limited number of employees.

Now that the research questions have been addressed it is possible to go on to make recommendations about future action and possible areas for further research.

## 12.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 12.3.1 For Action

There is a need to establish a clear vision of sustainability was demonstrated as very helpful for an organization to promote a more sustainable ethos. Local authorities should, therefore, establish what sustainable development means for them and their locality. It is not enough to have sustainable development as a strategic aim without going into more detail as it has been demonstrated that this leads to confusion and a lack of understanding which in effect creates a barrier to action. It needs to be translated into how it affects the work of every department and service in a local authority, and especially those at the 'social' end of the spectrum. Every department should be aware of how its activities affect sustainable development.

Many local authorities have social inclusion and sustainable development as joint strategic aims and this should be addressed as it implies that social justice, equality and other social inclusion issues, such as poverty, are not parts of sustainable development. This will contribute to the on-going alienation of the socially-based departments from the sustainable

development process and re-emphasise the message that sustainable development is only an environmental issue. It was demonstrated that socially-based departments could relate far more to social inclusion then sustainable development. It promotes the way of working where social issues are dealt with exclusively by socially based departments and environmental ones exclusively by the environmentally based departments. Although the tasks will be dealt with, doing so in this way results in a barrier to the holistic and integrated ways of thinking and working that are required to support sustainable development and ignores the inter-related nature of social, economic and environmental problems. If they are both to remain as aims then it must be emphasised that social inclusion and sustainable development are not mutually exclusive. It would be preferable if social inclusion was shown as an aim under an overarching drive towards sustainable development.

Once the clear vision has been established it has been demonstrated that it is then essential to communicate it to the organization effectively. Efforts to communicate a sustainability vision to the entire organization using one way communication models may be cheap but they have proved ineffective. Account also needs to be taken of the different cultures which exist in different departments. Local authorities should give consideration to making sustainability training a part of the induction process for new employees. This would be a time when those coming into the organization would have an opportunity to engage in two-way communication, and the role that sustainable development has in the post they are coming into can be

communicated to them. They would have the chance to ask questions and clarify points where, required, in a way that is not seen in local authorities currently. This would gradually raise awareness of sustainable development and help to develop a sustainability ethos.

New ways of communicating to existing employees also need to be considered. The aim needs to be to allow for a two-way communications process where there is an opportunity for feedback and questions. It was demonstrated in the study that a Local Agenda 21 Officer could do a lot to raise awareness of sustainable development through personal discussion with organizational members, but it is not realistic to expect them to be able to communicate personally with all members of the organization. Given this, one option to consider could be to develop sustainability champions in services. These champions could be given targeted training which would allow them to promote sustainability in their service. They would be in a position to answer questions and find further information in this was required. These champions would need to be at a level in the organization where they are in a position to exert influence in order that they be taken seriously. This would also signal a managerial commitment to sustainable development.

Other channels of communication, which require participation by the receiver and the sender, could also be considered. Team, and other small group meetings, would provide a useful channel in which two-way communication could flourish. Advantage needs to be taken of these to raise awareness and

encourage feedback. To deal with different sub-cultures, when a department had little involvement or knowledge relating to sustainable development at any level, an external facilitator could be present to make the message clear and deal with the feedback which would be generated. Cross-departmental meetings could also be utilised and used as a forum for different departments to show each other how they were dealing with sustainability. This would have the added advantage of presenting a wider picture of sustainability and how it relates to all the Councils activities than would be otherwise be the case.

The competition between sustainable development and other important Council activities, such as Community Planning and Best Value, which have an legal impetus, was demonstrated to be an additional reason why sustainable development has failed to progress. An option for local authorities would be to tie sustainable development to one of these. The most straightforward option would be to add a sustainability criterion to the Best Value process.

More effort should be put into addressing the human process issues which affect the way that people work. This is harder then the changes which have been seen to date in changing the structure of the organization to support sustainable development, through allowing more cross-departmental work to go on, and through making sustainable development a strategic issue. Cross-departmental working should be encouraged at all levels of the organization. The commitment and attitude of management is important and it would be vital that the management of all departments demonstrate a commitment to

such groups, through attendance and participation. If sustainability was tied to the Best Value process, as was recommended above, then this commitment would be easier to achieve. This would also signal top-level commitment and given the prevalence of Best Value, would be a step towards getting sustainability to be considered in all decision making. Cross-departmental groups at a lower organizational level would facilitate lateral communication at this level, which is not currently seen.

The support of management in all departments is vital. Once this has been achieved then they can use their position of power to develop a sustainability ethos in their own department. Traditionally change in local government has followed this top down model and so it would make use of communication channels and mechanisms which are already in existence. If sustainable development was tied to Best Value this would give an added impetus to management to ensure that sustainable development was considered in the work of their department.

### 12.2.2    For Further Research

To develop the research presented in this thesis it would be useful to follow the change process in local authorities further as they start to address human process issues as well as raising awareness and making structural and strategic changes.

A topic which would be interesting to study further would be to investigate whether the pressure from the triggers for change was felt more strongly in

some departments than others and whether this contributed in any way to the development of the sub-cultures noted in the study. The investigation found that the triggers for change in relation to sustainable development were largely external to the organization. It would be interesting to investigate whether they were then being funnelled with the result that only some parts of the organization were in positions to react to them.

It would be interesting to examine whether changing the ways people work in this manner influences the way in which they think as suggested by Beer et al. (1990) in chapter six. It would be interesting to see whether the structural changes already in place are enough to change the way the people think and act.

An international comparative work would be helpful as, despite there being some differences in local government working and responsibilities in different countries, it would still be useful to try and identify what was different in countries, such as the Scandinavian ones, where more progress has been made on sustainability.

# REFERENCES

Altman, Y. & Illes, P. (1998) Learning, Leadership, Teams: Corporate Learning and Organizational Change, *Journal of Management Development*, vol 17, no 1, pp 44-55.

Anthony, P. (1994) *Managing Culture.* Buckingham: Open University Press

Argyris, C. (1994) 'Good Communication That Blocks Learning,' *Harvard Business Review.* July-August, pp 77-87

Argyris, C., and Schon. D. (1978), *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

Asquith, A. (1997) 'Achieving Effective Organizational Change in English Local Government.' *Local Government Studies* 23 (4) pp 86-99

Asquith, A. (1998) 'Non-Elite Employees Perception Of Change In English Local Government.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 11 (4) pp 262-280

Atkinson, P. (1990) *Creating Culture Change* London: Pfieffer

Baines, A. (1998) 'Creating a culture of ownership' *Work Study.* 47 (1) pp72-78  pp 14-16

Baker, S. Kousis, M Richardson, D. and Young, S. (1997) *The Politics of Sustainable Development.* Routledge: London

Basi, R. (1998) 'Administrative decision making: a contextual analysis.' *Management Decision.* 36 (4) pp 232-240

Beeby, M. and Simpson, P. (1995)'Developing strategic processes for change in top management teams' *Executive Development* 8 (1) pp20-22

**Beer, M., Eisenstat, R. and Spector, B.** (1990) 'Why Change Programs Don't Produce Change.' *Harvard Business Review.* Nov-Dec, pp 158-167

**Belasco, J.A.** (1990) *Teaching the Elephant to Dance: Empowering change in your organization.* London: Century Business

**Bennet, R.** (1993) 'Developing People for Real: Some issues and approaches.' *Management Decision.* 31 (3) pp 55-63

**Boak, G., Martin, C. and Thompson, D.** (1997) 'What do senior managers do?' *Career Development International.* 2 (1) pp 6-10

**Boon, S. and Ram, M.** (1998) 'Implementing quality in a small firm.' *Personnel Review.* 27 (1) pp 20-39

**Brewer, J. and Hunter, A.** (1989) *Multimethod Research.* London: Sage

**Brookes, I.** (1997) 'Leadership of a cultural change process.' *Health Manpower Management.* 23 (4) pp 120-137

**Brugman, J.** (1997) in **Dodds, F.** (ed) (1997) *The Way Forward: Beyond Agenda 21.* London: Earthscan

**Bryant, C.G.** (1985) *Positivism in Social Theory and Research.* Basingstoke: MacMillan

**Bryman, A.** (1988) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research.* London: Routledge

**Bryman, A.** (1992) *Research Methods and Organization Studies.* London: Routledge

**Bryman, A.** (1984) "The debate about quantitative and qualitative research: a question of method or epistemology" *British Journal of Sociology,* 35 (1) pp75-92

Bryman, A. (1988) *Doing Research In Organizations.* London: Routledge

Burgoyne, J. and Reynolds, M. (1997) *Management Learning: Integrating Perspectives in Theory and Practice.* London: Sage

Burnes, B. (1996) *Managing Change: A strategic approach to organizational dynamics. 2nd edition.* London: Pitman Publishing

Burnes, B. (1997) 'Organizational choice and organizational change.' *Management Decision.* 35 (9-10) pp 53-760

Cade, A. and Church, C. (1996) 'Anti-Poverty: A Challenge for Local Agenda 21.' *Local Environment News* 2 (8) pp 11-14

Cairncross, F. (1995) *Green Inc.* London: Island Publishing

Carr, A. (1997) 'The learning organization. New lessons/thinking for the management of change and management development?' *Journal of Management Development.* 16 (4) pp 26-35

Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (1994) *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research.* London: Sage

Cave, E. and Mckeown, P. (1993) 'Managerial Effectiveness: The Identification of Need.' *Management Education and Development.* 24 (2) pp 122-138

Certo, S. (1983) *Principles of Modern Management.* Dubuque IA: Brown Co. Publishers

Chandler, J.A. (1996) *Local Government Today.* Manchester: Manchester University Press

Chenitz W. and Swanson, J. (1986) *From Practice to Grounded Theory.* Menlo Park CA, Addison

Chilton, B. (1997) 'It's a Small World.' *Municipal Journal.* 27 June, pp 16-17

Chisholm, R and Elden, M. (1993) "Features of Emerging Action Research". *Human Relations,* 46 (2) pp 121-142

Clarke, J. and Newman, J. (1997) *The Managerial State* London: Sage

Clarke, L. (1994) *The Essence of Change.* London: Prentice Hall

COSLA (1999) *Changed Days: Local Agenda 21 in Scotland.* Edinburgh: COSLA

Cummings, T. and Worley, C.G. (1993) *Organization Development and Change. 5th edition.* St. Paul: West Publishing

Dasgupta, P. (ed) (1997) *The Environment and Emerging Development Issues.* Oxford: Clarendon Press

DEFRA (1994) *The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development* London: The Stationary Office

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds) (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* London: Sage

Dobson, A. (1996) 'Environmental Sustainabilities. An Analogy and a Typology' *Environmental Politics.* Vol 5, No. 3 pp 5-24

Dodds, F. (ed) (1997) *The Way Forward: Beyond Agenda 21* London: Earthscan

Eden, C. and Huxham, C. (1995) "Action Research for the Study of Organizations" in Clegg, S., Hardy, W. and Nord, W. (eds) (1995) *Handbook of Organization Studies.* Beverly Hills: Sage

Eisenhardts (1989) 'Making Fast Decisions in High Velocity Environments.' *Academy of Management Journal* 34  pp 517-554

Elden, M. and Chisolm, R. (1993) "Emerging Varieties of Action Research". *Human Relations,* 46(2)  pp 121-142

Elcock, H. (1994) *Local Government: Policy and Management in Local Authorities,* Routledge, London.

Evans, K. (1996) 'Manging Chaos and Complexity in Government.  A New Paradigm for Managing Change, Innovation and Organizational Renewal.' *Public Administration Review.* 56 (5) pp 491-495

Farthing, S. (1997) *Evaluating Local Environmental Policy.* Aldershot: Avebury

Field, P. and Morse, J. (1985) *Nursing Research: The Application of Qualitative Approaches.* London, Chapman Hall

Filmer, P., Jenks, C. and Seale, C. (1998) 'Developments in Social Theory.'  In  Seale, C. pp 23-36

Fisher, D (1993) *Communication in Organizations*  St Paul: West Publishing

Frederic, T (2001) *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication, Advances in Theory, Research and Methods.* London: Sage

Freeman, C., Littlewood, S. and Whitney, D. (1996) 'Local Government and Emerging Models of Participation in the Local Agenda 21 Process.' Journal of Environmental Planning and Management. Vol. 31, No. 1, pp 65-78

Frost, P (1991) *Reframing Organizational Culture.* Newbury Park CA: Sage

**Garvin, D.** (1993) 'Building a Learning Organization.' *Harvard Business Review.* July-August pp 78-92

**Genus, A.** (1998) *The Management of Change. Perspectives and Practice.* London: Thomson Business Press

**Ghauri, P., Grøhaug, K. and Kristianlund, I.** (1995) *Research Methods in Business Studies: A Practical Guide.* Bodmin: Prentice Hall

**Gibb, S and Knox, L.** (1998) 'The Evolution of Management in UK Local Government.' *Local Government Studies* 24 (2) pp 71-85

**Gill, J. and Johnson, P.** (1991) *Research Methods for Managers.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd

**Glaser and Strauss** (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.* Chicago: Alidine

**Goddard, A.** (1995) 'Investigating the Existence of Multiple Cultures in Three Local Government Organizations.' *Local Government Studies* 21 (2) pp 206-223

**Golden, K.** (1992) 'The Individual and Organizational Culture. Strategies for action in a highly ordered context.' *Journal of Management Studies.* 29 (1) pp 131-154

**Gossop, C.** (2001) 'Sustainable Development and the Role of the Planner.' *Planning Inspectorate Journal.* Vol. 22, Spring 2001, pp 10-14

**Greenwood, D., Whyte, W.F. and Harkavy, I.** (1993) "Participatory Action Research as a Process and as a Goal". *Human Relations,* 46 (2) pp 175-192

**Gregory, K.** (1983) 'Multiple Cultures and Conflicts in Organizations.' *Administrative Science Quarterly* September pp 359-376

Guba, E and Lincoln, Y. (1994) 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research' in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y (1994) pp 105-117

Graham, B. (1997) *Perspectives on Communication.* London: Sage

Guimaraes, T. (1997) 'Assessing employee turnover intentions before/after TQM.' *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management.* 14 (1) pp 46-63

Gummesson, E. (1991) *Qualitative Methods in Management Research.* London: Sage

Haralambos, M. (1980) *Sociology Themes and Perspectives* Slough: University Tutorial Press

Harris, T. (1993) *Applied Organizational Communication: Persepctives, Principles and Pragmatics.* Hillsdale: LEA Publishing

Harris, R, and Barber, D. (1997) 'Consensus Building for Sustainable Development.' Local Environment News. Vol.3, No. 1, pp 7-9

Hawkins, P. and Miller, E. (1993) 'Psychotherapy in and within the Organization.' *The Handbook of Pyschotherapy.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Hill, S. and McNulty, D. (1998) 'Overcoming cultural barriers to change.' *Health Manpower Management.* 24 (1) pp 6-12

HMSO. (1994) *The UK Strategy For Sustainable Development.* London: HMSO

Hofstede, G. (1980) *Cultures Consequences.* London: Sage

Hollis, M. (1994) *The Philosophy of Social Science.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Holmberg, T, Bass, D and Timberlake, N.. (1991) *Defending the Future: A Guide to Sustainable Development.* London: Earthscan

Holstein, F. and Gubrium, J. (1994) Phenomenology, Ethnography and Interpretative Practice.' in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y (1994) pp 262-272

Huczynski, A. and Buchanan, D. (1991). *Organizational Behaviour. An Introductory Text,* New York: Prentice Hall

Jackson, T and Roberts, P. (1997) 'Greening the Fife economy: Ecological modernisation as a pathway for local economic development'. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management.* 40 (5) pp 615-629

Jacobs, M. (1991) *The Green Economy; Sustainable Development and the Politics of the Future.* London: Pluto Press

Jameson, H (2003) 'Ministers blamed for lack of trust in Councils.' *Municipal Journal* 22 May p1

Kirkby, J., O Keefe, P., and Timberlake, T. (1997) *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Development.* Earthscan : London

Kitchener, M. and Whipp, R. (1997) 'Tracks of change in hospitals: a study of quasi-market transformation.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management.* 10 (1) pp 47-61

Lee, T. (1999) *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research.* London: Sage

Lele, T. (1991) 'Sustainable Development: A Critical Review' *World Development* Vol, 19, No. 6, pp 607-621

Littlewood, S and White, S (1997) 'A New Agenda for Governance.' *Local Government Studies* 23 (4) pp 110-123

Local Government Management Board. (1994) *Local Agenda 21: Principles and Processes.* Luton: Local Government Management Board

Louis, M (1983) 'Organizations as culture bearing milliuex.' In Pondy, L , Frost, Morgan, J and Dandridge, T (1996) *Organizational Symbolism* Greenwich: JAI pp 39-54

Lowndes, V. (1997) 'Change in Public Service Management. New Institutions and New Managerial Regimes.' *Local Government Studies* 23 (2) pp 81-96

Luke, T. (1995) 'Sustainable Development as a Power/Knowledge System. The problem of governmentality in greening environmental policy.' In Fischer, F. and Black, M. (1995) *The Politics of a Sustainable Future.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing

Marston, A. (1996) 'Local Agenda 21 Processes: A survey of the new councils.' *Scotlands 21 Today* 10 Autumn pp 6-7

Martin, S. (1997) 'Leadership, learning and local democracy. Political dimensions of the strategic management of change.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management.* 10 (7) pp 534-546

Martin, J and Meyerson, D (1994) 'Cultural change: an integration of three different views' in Tsoukas, H. (ed.) *New Thinking in Organizational Behaviour: from Social Engineering to Reflective Action,* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 108-132.

Matthews, P. (1997) 'Commissioning Sustainability' *Scotland's 21 Today.* 13 July p11

Mayey, C. and Mayon-White, B. (1993) *Manging Change. 2nd edition.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing

McCallum, J.S. (1997) 'The face behind change.' *Ivey Business Quarterly.* 62 (2) pp 73-76

MacNaughton, P and Urry, N. (1995) in McNaughton, P and Prothero, A. (1997) *Green Management: A Reader.* London: Dryden Press pp 145-168

McCormick, J. (1995) in McNaughton, P and Prothero, A. (1997) *Green Management: A Reader.* London: Dryden Press pp 112-122

Meadows, D.H, Meadows, D.I, Randers, J and Behrens, W. (1972) *The Limits to Growth. A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind.* New York: Universe Books

Meek, V. (1988) 'Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses' *Organization Studies* 9 (4) pp 453-473

Mcniff, J., Lomax, P and Whitehead, J. (1996) *You and Your Action Research Project.* Bournemouth: Routledge

Metcalfe, l. and Richards, S. (1990) *Improving Public Management.* Sage Publications: London

Miller, K. (1997) 'Reaching the Roots of Local Democracy' *Local Government Management.* 1(21) pp 12-13

Mintzberg, H. (1973) *The Nature of Managerial Work* New York : Harper Row

Moffatt, I. (1996) *Sustainable Development: Principles, Analysis and Policies.* Carnforth: Parthenon

Moran, J. and Avergun, A. (1997) 'Creating lasting change.' *The TQM Magazine.* 9 (2) pp 146-151

Morphet, J. and Hams, B. (1994) 'Responding to Rio: A Local Authority Approach' Journal of Environmental Planning and Management Vol. 37, No. 4, pp 475-480

**Nadler (1993)** 'Concepts for the management of organizational change.' in **Mayey, C. and Mayon-White, B.** (1993) *Manging Change. 2nd edition.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing pp 85-98

**Nelson, , R and Winter, S.** (1982) *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press

**O'Riordan, T.** (1995) *Environmental Science for Environmental Management* Harlow: Longman

**Oliver, S.** (1997) *Corporate Communication. Principles, Techniques and Strategies.* London: Kogan Page

**Oppenheim, A.** (1993) *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement (new edition).* London: Pinter

**Paterson, A. and Theobold, K.** (1995) 'Sustainable Development, Agenda 21 and the New Local Governance in Britain.' *Regional Studies.* 29(8) pp 773-778

**Pearce. D** (1995) *Blueprint 4: Capturing Global Value* London: Earthscan

**Pearce, D., Markandya, A. and Barbier, B.** (1989) *Blueprint For a Green Economy.* London: Earthscan

**Peters, M. and Robinson, V.** (1984) 'The origins and status of action research' *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science.* 20 pp 113-124

**Petrock, F.** (1996) 'A Quadrant of Corporate Cultures.' *Management Decision* 34 (5) pp 37-39

**Pool, S.** (2000) Organizational culture and its relationship between job tension in measuring outcomes among business executives' *Journal of Management Development* 19 (1) pp 32-49

**Porter, M** (1980) *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors* New York: Free Press

**Porritt, J.** (1997) ' My Favourite Books', *BBC Wildlife Magazine* Oct p24

**Portis, B. and Hill, N.** (1991) 'Making Employee Paticipation a Way of Life.' *Natural Productivity Review.* Autumn pp 481-489

**Potter, D.** (1995) 'Customer Care at Standard Life Assurance Co. Ltd.' *Managing Service Quality.* 05 (5) pp 16-19

**Randolph, W.** (1995) 'The Leadership Challenge of Changing to a Culture of Empowerment.' *Executive Development* 8 (1) pp5-8

**Rapoport, R.** (1970) 'Three dilemmas in action research' *Human Relations* 23 pp 488-513

**Roarty, M.** (1997) 'Greening business in a market economy.' *European Business Review.* pp 97-102

**Robb, K.** (1997) *Scottish Local Authorities Experiences in Implementing Local Agenda 21.* MSc Environmental Management Thesis (unpublished), University of Stirling

**Robinson, R.** (1983) Hofstedes: Cultures Consequences.' *Work and Occupations* 10 pp 101-115

**Rummelt, R** (1994) 'The Evaluation of Business Strategy' in **deWit, B and Meyer, R.** (1994) *Strategy, Process, Content, Context* Minneapolis: St Paul

**Salaman, G.** (1979) *Work Organizations: resistance and control.* New York: Longman

**Sarantakos, S.** (1998) *Social Research.* London: MacMillan

Schein, E. (1985) *Organizational Culture and Leadership.* London: Jossey Bass

Schumacher, E (1973) *Small is Beautiful: A study of economic as if people mattered.* London: Blond and Briggs

Seale, C. (1998) *Researching Society and Culture.* London: Sage

Selman, P. (2001) 'Social Capital, Sustainability and Environmental Planning.' *Planning Theory and Practice* Vol. 2, No. 1, pp 13-30

Senge, P. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization,* New York: Currency Doubleday

Serageldin, I and Steer, (eds) (1995) *Valuing The Environment: Proceedings of the First Annual Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Development.* Washington: World Bank

Sharp, J. and Howard, K. (1996) *The Management of a Student Research Project (2nd edition)* Aldershot: Gower Publishing

Sharp, L. (1999) 'Local Policy for the Global Environment.' *Environmental Politics.* Vol. 8, No. 4, pp 137-159

Sharwood, M and Russell, S. (1997) ' A Review of Local Agenda 21 *Fora'. Local Environment* News. Vol. 3, No. 3, pp 5-8

Shrivastava, P. (1995) 'Ecocentric Management for a Risk Society' *Academy of Management Review.* Vol. 20, No. 1, pp 118-137

Smircich, L. (1983) 'Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis.' *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28 Sep pp 339-358

**Somekh, B. and Thaler, M.** (1997) *'Contradictions of Management Theory, Organizational Cultures and the Self.'* Educational Action Research 5 (1) pp 141-160

**Somekh, B.** (1995) 'The contribution of action research to development in social endeavours. A position paper on action research methodology.' *British Educational Research Journal* 21 (3) pp 339-354

**Sondergaard, M.** (1995) 'Hofstedes Consequences – a study of reviews, citations and replications.' *European Group for Organizational Studies.* 15 (3) pp 447-456

**Stewart, J.** (1995) *Understanding the Management of Local Government, $2^{nd}$ edition* London: Pitman

**Stewart, J. and Welsh, K.** (1992) 'Change in the Management of Public Services.' *Public Administration*, Vol 70 (winter), pp 449-518

**Stoker, G.** (ed.) (1999) *The New Management of British Local Governance* Hampshire: McMillan

**Stott, M and Simpson, H.** (1996) 'Empowering Staff: Creating the Right Organizational Culture.' *Local Government Policy Making* 22 (4) pp 65-70

**Susman, G and Evered, R.** (1978) *'An Assessment of the Scientific Merits of Action Research.'* Administrative Science Quarterly, 23 pp 582-603

**Thornhill, A.** (1992) 'Management Training Across Cultures.' *Journal of European Industrial Training.* 17 (7), pp P43-49

**Torrington, D., Weightman, J. and Johns, K.** (1989) *Effective Management. People and Organization* New York: Prentice Hall

**Trow, M.** (1957) 'A comment on participant observation and interviewing: A comparison.' *Human Organization.* 16 (3) pp 33-35

**Tuxworth, B.** (1996) 'From Environment to Sustainability: Surveys and Analysis'. *Local Environment News* 1 (3) pp 277-297

**Tuxworth, B. and Carpenter, C.** (1995) *Local Agenda 21 Survey 1994/95 - Results March 1995.* Luton: LGMB

**Vermuelen, W.** (1997) 'Cultural Change: Crucial for the Implementation of TQM.' *Training For Quality* 5 (1) pp 40-45

**Voisey, H and O'Riordan, T.** (1997a) 'Beyond the Early Stages of the Sustainability Transition.' *Environmental Politics. Special Issue*, Vol. 6, No. 1 pp 174-175

**Voisey, H and O'Riordan, T.** (1997b) 'The Political Economy of Sustainable Development' *Environmental Politics. Special Issue*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp 24-53

**Voisey, H. and O'Riordan, T.** (1997c) 'Governing Institutions for Sustainable Development.' *Environmental Politics, Special Issue*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring, pp. 1-24.

**Wackernagel, M and Rees, W.** (1996) *Our Ecological Footprint* Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers

**Wallace, J., Hunt, J. and Richards, C.** (1999) 'The Relationship Between Organizational Culture, Organizational Climate and Managerial Values.' *The International Journal of Public Sector Management.* 12 (7) pp 548-564

**Welford, R.** (1997) *Corporate Environmental Management 2: Culture and Organization.* London: Earthscan.

**Whittaker, S.** (1995) 'Local Agenda 21 and Local Authorities' *Local Government Policy Making.* 22 (2) pp 3-11.

**Whyte, F.W.** (ed) (1991) *Participatory Action Research.* London: Sage

**Williams, A** (1993) *Changing Culture: New Organizational Approaches.* London: IPM

**Williamson, O.** (1981) 'The Economics of an Organization: A Transaction Cost Approach' *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 87, No. 3. pp. 548-577

**World Commission on Environment and Development** (1987) *Our Common Future* Oxford: Oxford University Press

**Worthington, I and Patton, D** (1995) 'Researching UK local authority responses to Local Agenda 21'. *Local Government Policy Making.* 22 (2) pp 70-75.

**Wright, M** (1997) in **McNaughton, P and Prothero, A.** (1997) *Green Management: A Reader.* London: Dryden Press pp 78-92

**Yin, R.** (1984) *Case Study Research, Design and Methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage

**Zuber-Skerrit, O.** (1996) *New Directions In Action Research.* London: Falmer