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The responses of Local Education
Authorities to changes in their functions:
A study of In-Service Education and
Training.

PhD. (Education)

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ABSTRACT

This research is about the politics and policy processes of education. The focus is on central Government policy relating to INSET and the political activity and responses of LEAs to new policy developments. LEAs have a statutory duty to provide efficient and sufficient schooling. This entails a concern for the professional quality of teaching. To meet this responsibility LEAs traditionally employed advisers, maintained teachers' centres and secured provision by sending teachers on INSET workshops/courses. During recent years, however, changes in the funding of LEAs and the introduction of specific grants significantly impacted on the organisation and delivery of INSET. This research ascertains the INSET provision in a sample of five LEAs; identifies the similarities and differences between these authorities in their responses to the changing funding mechanisms; and examines the underlying rationale for the variation in INSET provision. The research methodology is underpinned by an eclectic ethos. Concepts are derived from theories of organisations and policy implementation. A range of data collection techniques are employed. The research concludes that the responses to change adopted by the five LEAs in the sample are different in several important respects. Each LEA's INSET policy greatly depends on the authority's size, resources, history, culture, commitment and avenues of communication. Even where similar structures have developed, disparities in the mode of operation are evident. By way of representing the full range of responses to change which characterises each LEA, the researcher uses a spectrum. All of the LEAs in the sample sought to establish a 'partnership' with schools in regard to INSET. However, in each case, associations are framed according to a distinct set of values. At one end of the spectrum is an hierarchical association; at the centre a association which is complementary; and at the other end an enterprise association with schools.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSET.	Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers.
CPD.	Continuing Professional Development.
DES.	Department of Education and Science.
DfE.	Department for Education.
DfEE.	Department for Education and Employment.
ERA.	Education Reform Act.
ESG.	Education Support Grant.
FAS.	Funding Agency for Schools.
GEST.	Grants for Education Support and Training.
GM.	Grant-Maintained.
INSET.	In-Service Education and Training.
ITT.	Initial Teacher Training.
LEATGS.	Local Education Authorities Training Grant Scheme.
LMS.	Local Management of Schools.
MSC.	Manpower Services Commission.
OFSTED.	Office for Standards in Education.
SLA.	Service-level Agreement.
SSA.	Standard Spending Assessment.
TVEI.	Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative.
TRIST.	TVEI Related In-Service Training.
TTA.	Teacher Training Agency.

*** Locally used abbreviations are explained in their context**

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This research is about the politics and policy processes of education. The focus is on central Government policy relating to in-service education and training (INSET) and the political activity and responses of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to new policy developments. Since 1944 LEAs have had a statutory duty to provide efficient and sufficient schooling. This entails a concern for the professional quality of teaching. To meet this responsibility LEAs traditionally employed advisers/inspectors, maintained teachers'/professional centres and secured provision by sending teachers on INSET workshops/courses. During recent years, however, changes in the funding of LEAs and the introduction of specific grants significantly impacted on the organisation and delivery of INSET. This research ascertains the INSET provision in a sample of five LEAs across the country. It identifies the similarities and differences between these LEAs in their responses to the changing funding mechanisms and examines the underlying rationale for any variation in INSET provision. The terms 'education policy sociology', or 'sociology of education policy', have been used to describe work in this vein. As Raab observed, policy sociology rests 'on a somewhat insecure theoretical foundation in its nonetheless fruitful synthesis of perspectives'. 'The work of education policy sociologists has been characterised by differences in fundamental philosophical and theoretical stances concerning the nature of politics and the state'. Raab notes that within education policy sociology:

relationships between policy process and outcome and between motive and action are at the heart of many investigations. [Education] policy sociology may try to hold both policy and practice (or implementation) within the same frame and in some sense map them onto 'macro' and 'micro' dimensions, whilst attempting to work out the rules or methods for framing and for mapping. (1994: 7)

What does the acronym INSET stand for?

Before one could attempt to define the term INSET it was important to address a prior question. What does the acronym INSET stand for? The acronym has, along with several others, become embedded in the education service. In contrast to the majority of the others, however, there are several possible variants over what

INSET actually represents. The terms in-service training, in-service education, in-service training of teachers, in-service education of teachers and in-service education and training have all been used. What INSET stands for can often depend on whose book, article or guidelines one is reading. Some may feel that highlighting this point is overly pedantic. However, the term which one uses to represent INSET can be very significant. This is especially true when considered in the wider context of the philosophical differences entwined within the education and training debate. As Esland *et al* observed, education and training have:

often been linked in everyday usage, but historically they have been substantially different. It has been customary for education to be seen as being essentially concerned with the broad development and understanding of the individual [...] Training, on the other hand, is usually construed in terms of the narrow instrumental requirements of the specific tasks detached from their wider significance and context. Education implied that the learner can engage reflectively and critically with the substance of what is being taught. Training on the other hand required acceptance by the trainee of the terms and procedures laid down by the training programme, and if this necessitated subjecting oneself to low-skill tasks because that is what the job required, then so be it. (1991: 18)

Although education and training might overlap one needs to resist any temptation to couple them too closely together. Throughout this thesis the acronym INSET is taken to stand for In-Service Education and Training. With this clarified it is possible to attempt a definition of the term INSET. The researcher was unable to find a single definition of INSET within the literature reviewed. Authors tended to simply offer their varied opinions of what the acronym INSET stood for. A definition can be identified in the Education Acts. The Act of 1994 noted that, 'references [...] to training, in relation to teachers, include any training or education with the object of fitting persons to be teachers, or better teachers'. (s.19 (4)) This is a tight legal definition which does not differentiate training and education. The following operational definition of INSET has been used throughout this thesis.

INSET constitutes any formal learning activity organised by others in which a qualified teacher participates alone or with colleagues, and which encompasses one or more of the following: the development of awareness, knowledge and understanding; critical reflection; and/or the acquisition of skills directed towards an improvement in the teacher's practice.

Some of the INSET activities which a teacher engages in might focus on staff development. The latter has been seen as 'job-embedded' and serving school improvement. Other INSET activities can focus on professional development which is seen as 'job-related' and has as its aim, the teacher's individual professional development. Of course, some INSET activities which the teacher is engaged upon can serve both school improvement and personal professional development. An example of this could be an action research Masters' degree looking at effective school management. The editors of the *British Journal of In-Service Education* expressed concern that there has been a blurring of the above distinction between professional development and staff development. As they noted, 'it is all too easy at a time of tight financial stringency, to talk of professional development when the focus of the financial allocations is almost entirely on improvement in the school system. (Look at the GEST categories for the past few years, for example.) Is the 'HEADLAMP' [Headteachers Leadership and Management Project] initiative for the benefit of the headteacher *qua* professional, or is it for school and system improvement?' (The Editors, 1994: 3)

What is an LEA?

The above commentary observes the differences of opinion over what INSET stands for and the lack of a clear definition. There is no such confusion surrounding the use of the initials LEA. The LEA remains a construct of the law and there is no room for doubt or debate over what it constitutes. Section 12 of the Education Act 1996 notes which authority is the LEA in England for the areas of a county council, a district council, a London borough and the City of London. The LEA 'for a county in England having a county council is the county council [...]; for a district in England which is not in a county having a county council it is the district council; for a London borough it is the borough council; and for the City of London it is the Common Council of the City of London (in their capacity as a local authority)'. (s.12 (1-4) Education Act 1996) From 1944, however, the need for increased professionalism in educational provision has been recognised. Each LEA is required to appoint a Chief Education Officer. The LEA also employs specialist staff to help discharge its functions. An education department supports, informs and offers advice to the authority's education committee, sub-committees and panels. The LEA, therefore, constitutes not only elected representatives (members) but also professional experts such as advisers. Having an organisation constituted in this way raises a number of questions for consideration. Do officers or members represent the LEA in educational matters such as INSET? Whose

opinions are validated in local policy? These questions were addressed in the study undertaken of five LEAs.

Why a study of LEA INSET provision?

The researcher's interest in the LEA developed in the 1980s, following completion of a course component for a BSc (Hons) degree entitled 'Educational Policy and Administration'. During the final year of this degree the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) received royal assent. This was to have major ramifications for the LEA. Although in the years which followed there was no specific policy initiative in relation to the LEAs, there were a number of major legislative changes that had important ramifications for LEAs so that it began to appear that the aim of central Government was to limit the functions and roles of the LEA. This aim was manifest with the introduction of the 'Local Management of Schools' (LMS) in 1988, the point at which the researcher took up a position as a primary school teacher. Increasingly, while it was possible to recognise the benefits to education which policies such as LMS might bring, the researcher became concerned about the possible consequences of what John Patten (Secretary of State, 1992-4) termed 'the grant-maintained revolution'. (*The Guardian*, 19:5:92)

While in post, the researcher had growing reservations about the pursuit of the privatisation of public services and the establishment of an educational market place by Conservative Governments in the early 1990s. He was convinced that in relation to enhancing local accountability, improving educational administration and, thus, raising the quality of learning for the pupils in his class, the LEA had an essential role to play. This opinion was reinforced when the researcher completed an MA in History of Education and wrote a dissertation entitled, 'The changing role of the LEA since 1944'. While writing this he became keen on the idea of completing further research on the LEAs and their changing functions and roles. Whilst the role of the LEA in relation to financial management of schools had been reduced by LMS they, nevertheless, retained other important functions. The researcher decided, after discussion with prospective supervisors, to focus on how the LEAs had met their responsibilities in terms of INSET and how this provision had been affected by widespread legislative and administrative change during recent years.

The design of the research

The overall design of this research can be said to involve 'macro' and 'micro' levels. However, the terms are used only by way of 'mapping' the research, so that a reader might better understand its shape. It is necessary to make this point because within policy studies a distinction has been made between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' views of policy processes. The researcher, though, did not consider these to be competing perspectives. Sabatier (1986) called for a synthesis of the strengths of both approaches. Indeed, 'their complementarity opens up policy processes to more sophisticated analysis that is better able to deal with complexity'. (Raab, 1994: 9) Therefore, by using the terms 'macro' and 'micro' the researcher is not over-emphasising the distinction between policy formulation and policy implementation. As will be highlighted subsequently, the researcher accepted the view that the different 'levels', 'dimensions' or 'moments' of the policy process were 'loosely coupled'. As Raab observes, it is reasonable to construe that recent educational policies in Britain are:

coming from a 'top' which comprises central government and its apparatus, including the Conservative Party and its attendant 'think tanks'. However, one should not preclude understanding both the wider contexts and factors that might help to explain a given policy, and the contributions made by those who are located outside the centre, whether in local education authorities or in sectors of the professions. Nevertheless, it would be desirable to investigate matters from the 'bottom' up, [...] for government is by no means certain to achieve its objectives in a system in which resources can be mobilised by others at many points for purposes outwith the determining constraints of the policy as devised by its 'makers'. This means that variations across sites of implementation, such as [...] local education authorities, need to be explained, and one path to explanation runs through investigating networks at or near the 'bottom', with connections running upward and outward. (1994: 10)

Theoretical approaches informing the 'macro' level of the research

The methodological issues surrounding the 'micro' case study level of the research will be discussed in chapter five. The following three chapters of the thesis are historical in nature. As will be noted, they place the empirical work in the wider context. However, these early chapters are not simply descriptive. 'Narrative without explanation is not vacuous [...] but necessarily incomplete'. (Ranson, 1980:

13) A number of theoretical perspectives were to offer insights about the events which are outlined in the early chapters. At the 'macro' level the researcher's considerations focused on the function of the state and its apparatus in the policy process. The researcher considered what Marxist and neo-Marxist perspectives might offer in addressing this issue. The definition of the state offered by Dale and Ozga proved helpful. As they remarked, it is not simply:

reducible to government which is the most visible and arguably the most important part, but not the whole. The state also encompasses publicly financed institutions such as departments of state, the military and police, the judiciary, the legal and education systems. It includes central as well as local state apparatus [...] The state is not a monolith. It is a set of publicly financed initiatives, neither selectively nor collectively necessarily working in harmony, confronted by certain basic problems which derive from the state's relationship with capitalism. (1991: 9)

Dale and Ozga contend that these problems stem from a need to support the process of capital accumulation by assuring the right context for its continued expansion. Also the state continues to have to legitimate the capitalist mode of production, including its own part in this. Marxists believe that the state acts in the interest of the capitalist class because 'it is ultimately dependent on the perpetuation, albeit possibly in a modified form, of the capitalist system, and because of the dangers in an international competitive system of the flight of capital to more amenable regimes'. In consequence Marxists claim that 'the economy sets limits to what is possible for any state in any society.' (*loc. cit.*) One can certainly recognise that the elements of the state are not working towards the replacement of capitalism in the United Kingdom. However, is everything the state does so obviously in support of capitalism? One might suggest that in the case of comprehensive schooling this function was not pre-eminent. These schools, while trying to redress the negative effects to the economy of a wastage of working class talent, have been seen as part of a move to enhance equal opportunities for socially disadvantaged sections of the population. This anomaly stemming from traditional Marxist theory has been considered by neo-Marxists. They offer a solution. Marx viewed capitalist societies as comprising separate classes. There are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Neo-Marxists, though, suggest that 'although the state in capitalist societies is a class state it has autonomy from the bourgeoisie.' (Ham and Hill, 1993: 37) This relative autonomy allows the state to carry out reforms in the interest of the proletariat. However,

Ham and Hill noted that the 'concept of relative autonomy' does not furnish a satisfactory explanation of state activities'. Crucially they highlighted that:

once it is acknowledged that capitalists are a divided group, who do not necessarily have interests in common, and that the state has a measure of autonomy, it becomes difficult to predict [...] the behaviour of the state, by reference to the interests of capital. The question to be addressed here is whether this has the effect of reducing what we can say about the power of capital to a statement evident to all but the most naive, that state action will tend to support the existing economic order [...] It must be acknowledged that there are considerable difficulties in distinguishing some of the positions taken by contemporary Neo-Marxist writers from those who subscribe to a version of pluralist theory which stresses group inequalities. (1993: 38)

This is an important point and demonstrates that while certain theoretical perspectives are different enough to be distinguishable, they have several elements in common. The researcher found himself agreeing with Coates that, 'while Marxist analysis of contemporary life is a good place from which to begin the pursuit of understanding, it is not always necessarily the best place to end'. Marxism can be criticised for being reductionist. The determining influence on all education policy tends to be reduced to economic factors only. While these are extremely important, attention also needs to be given to 'the autonomous and non-economic generation of social, cultural and political change'. (1991: 5) Could pluralist theory also be helpful? Traditional pluralists hold that the sources of power are unequally though widely distributed among groups and individuals in society. Although not all groups and interests have the same degree of influence, even the least powerful are able to make their voices heard. Neo-pluralist writers question this view. They claim that power can be concentrated in the hands of a minority of groups or individuals. The use of the word individuals here immediately appealed to the researcher. There seemed to be a recognition that human agency in the policy process should not be ignored.

Pluralism was seen by the researcher to be a useful explanatory tool. To give an example, he considered the pluralism which exists within the Conservative Party. Within the Conservative Party in the 1980s there was a range of views and ideas that were in some ways contradictory. 'The first and dominant strand is that of liberalism or neo-liberalism, i.e. economic ideas about the importance of free markets allied to political ideas stressing the importance of individual freedom

and the need to curtail state interference [...] in individual lives.' A second strand of Conservative thinking is 'that of conservation and the importance of order, traditional values and social hierarchy'. (Dale and Ozga, 1991:41) The contradiction between the liberalist and conservative strands concerning the role of the state is striking. 'Where liberalism implies a limited government, conservatism requires a strong state to maintain social order and authority.' (King, 1987: 21-25) This contradiction has been implicit in education policy since 1979. Johnson related his analysis of the 1988 ERA to factional differences within the Conservative movement. He remarked that the ERA worked as a unifying force, 'harmonising the programmes of neo-liberals, neo-Conservatives and traditionalists, and even of Conservative modernisers and LEA Tories'. (1991: 64) As will be noted in chapter three, this contradiction was also a characteristic of INSET policy in the period 1991-1996. The centrality of power and control in the concept of policy' needed to be recognised. 'It is important to consider whose values are validated in policy and whose are not'. (Ball, 1990: 3) The relative influence of different agendas is important. The election of four Conservative Governments from 1979 onwards influenced decisively the action which is outlined in the early chapters of this thesis.

This is not to suggest, however, that it is only economic factors and political factions within the Conservative Party that shape education policy. While central Government has historically continued to have final political authority in the United Kingdom, such a narrow view ignores the ascertainment that in practice Governments require the co-operation and political consent of other powerful economic and social interests in the community. Pluralists believe that central Government 'both pursues its own preferences and responds to demands coming from outside interests.' (Ham and Hill, 1993: 30) Conservative Governments from 1979 onwards responded to growing pressures for change from 'outside' the education system. Barber (1994) has noted that developments in the education service over the last decade cannot be understood without consideration of a number of 'causes' for change. Barber provided a list of these causes. The first was 'a growing social diversity.' By the 1970s Britain was not a socially homogeneous place. There was a wide variety of lifestyles, cultures, religions and a range of outlooks. People's perceptions and aspirations had changed and 'younger generations were demanding as entitlements what had been the privileges of the few in previous generations'.

Second, despite the expansion of the 1960s, there was wide and growing dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the education system. Criticism was not

simply coming from those with an ideological axe to grind. Third, Barber noted that economic failure resulted in politicians turning to education 'both for part of the explanation and, less worthily, to seek scapegoats'. Fourth, the economic crisis meant that public spending had to be controlled. The fifth factor comprised demands to know exactly how LEAs were spending their educational budgets. There were calls for greater accountability from the mid-1970s onwards. Finally Barber observed that 'the least debated but by no means least important' factor was that [...] 'the decision-making and implementation process was painfully slow: far too slow for a world in which social, cultural, economic and technological changes were gathering pace'. Barber gave the example of the GCSE, 'invented as an idea in the late 1960s, it took over 15 years to implement'. All these factors contributed to a recognition across the political divide that changes were needed in the educational world. According to Barber, several options could have been imagined, however, 'Thatcherism selected from among them the distinctive combination of centralisation and market forces which has characterised education policy since 1987.' (1994: 6) It was the Conservatives who responded to pressure for change. Their political agenda was the moulding force for the actions taken from 1979 onwards.

The organisation of chapters

The theories discussed above, then, help throw light on the context in which the events described in the early chapters of this study took place. As chapter one will show, the impact on the LEA of economic and political factors has been profound. In particular, an account is given of the effects which reductions in public spending and educational legislation have had on LEAs. A further chapter outlines developments in INSET policy since the 1972 James Report. In particular, these opening chapters highlight a reduction in the discretion and autonomy of LEAs and the creation of what has been termed 'an INSET market'. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 9) Chapter three then relates the LEA and INSET strands of the research. It considers the effects of a reduction in LEA power and the development of the INSET market on arrangements made by local authorities over the last two decades. In particular, the impact on LEA advisory services and teachers' centres are considered. There have been few studies in this area. Chapter five highlights the methodological principles and assumptions which shaped the researcher's approach to the study of INSET arrangements in five LEAs and indicates how the study was conducted. Chapters six and seven then describe the INSET arrangements made by the five LEAs and the changes experienced, as perceived by the LEA's key advisers and administrators in the field of INSET over a five year

period (1991-1996). Chapter eight explains and offers an explanation for the similarities and differences between the INSET policy of each LEA. Chapter nine outlines the findings of a survey of INSET co-ordinators and chapter ten draws conclusions from the study undertaken.

CHAPTER TWO

The Place and Purpose of LEAs: A Recent History

The LEA and the post-war educational partnership

During the post-war years, despite conflicts which arose between a Minister anxious to get his/her own way and LEAs who believed that he/she was overstepping the boundaries, it was widely agreed that an 'educational partnership' existed. The impact of conflict on this partnership was lessened by what was popularly termed the 'consensus in education'. The main ingredients which it was claimed encouraged this consensus were the determination of both the major political parties, Labour and the Conservatives, 'to sustain the impetus of the 1944 Act. [...] The importance of the partnership value of the enterprise was universally held'. (Gordon *et al*, 1991: 62) All partners 'were united by the broader objectives of the education service'. (Barber, 1994: 353) In seeking to sustain the advances anticipated in the 1944 Act successive Governments proclaimed the importance of the partnership value of the enterprise. Collaboration between the Ministry, LEAs and the teaching body was regarded as a 'peculiarly British and unique way to run education'. (Gordon *et al*, 1991: 66) This was not to suggest, however, that the balance of power and influence between the partners remained static. Indeed, by the end of the 1960s the scope of LEA autonomy and discretion had increased. Ranson draws attention to the development of comprehensive schooling to show the extent of the growing influence of LEAs over the direction of education policy. Education policy was increasingly initiated at the local government level. In addition, 'LEAs were able to negotiate considerable discretion to suit local circumstances'. (1980: 8) Tomlinson remarks that the LEAs appeared to have become 'the essential engine of the national/local education system':

Consider any catalogue of significant educational development in this country this century and I suspect that you will find LEA involvement - often an LEA initiative - even though for much of that time broad curriculum policies were centrally directed or were much influenced by public examinations subject to central direction. (1993: 147)

This change in the relative influence of the partners was to result in a situation which was unsatisfactory for the Labour Government of 1969. Its circular 10/65 requested that LEAs reorganise their secondary schooling along comprehensive

lines. Four years later, several LEAs were refusing to do so. The Education Secretary, Edward Short, came under pressure from groups such as the influential Comprehensive Schools Committee. He decided to use his political power and introduced a Bill which, if enacted, would have imposed the duty of developing non-selective systems of secondary schooling on all LEAs in England and Wales. The Bill got as far as its second reading in the House of Commons in February 1970 before lapsing to the Prime Minister's decision to call a general election. The Bill, however, demonstrated the fragile nature of the educational partnership. The partners could have conflicting opinions. They could also be internally divided. Obviously not all LEAs shared similar views on the future of secondary schooling. Most importantly, the Bill indicated that the consensus in education was in danger of collapse as there was a growing politicization of the debate over comprehensive schooling.

Following the election victory of the Conservatives in 1970, Margaret Thatcher became Education Secretary. She replaced circular 10/65 with circular 19/70. This left reorganisation decisions regarding secondary education to the discretion of LEAs. The circular noted that it was unwise to impose a uniform pattern of secondary organisation on LEAs by legislation or any other means. LEAs were to be 'freer to determine the shape of secondary provision in their area'. (DES, 1970: 1) Given the events which will be remarked upon on the subsequent pages of this chapter, one can point to the irony of Thatcher's bolstering the educational partnership, and the place of the LEAs within it, in this way. Consensus over education, though, began to disappear in the early 1970s. Maclure observed that groups of right-wing intellectuals began to print several books and pamphlets which in particular sought to compare the standards of achievements of comprehensive schools with those of the remaining grammar schools. It was argued that standards had fallen because of the move to comprehensive education. At the local government level views were becoming equally polarised. 'Local politics became fiercer'. (1989: vii) When Labour returned to power in 1974 it 'seemed to be generating few new ideas and concentrated on completing the unfinished business of the 1964-70 government'. (Judge, 1984: 164) This included comprehensive reorganisation. The 1976 Education Act was introduced empowering the Secretary of State to require all LEAs to submit detailed plans for comprehensive reorganisation. However, while it seemed that education was not a high priority on the new Government's agenda, events were conspiring to give it greater prominence.

The economic crisis of the 1970s seemed to nourish the criticisms of the education system which had been first voiced by the authors of the Black Papers between 1969 and 1974. The growth of public interest and debate over education could be gauged by the interest which the Labour government began to take in educational matters from 1976 onwards. Indeed, as Heller and Edwards noted, James Callaghan's famous Ruskin College speech could be seen as one of the 'first active steps to challenge the sovereignty of the established liberal orthodoxy'. Heller and Edwards claimed, however, that despite this challenge following the election of three Conservative Governments from 1979-1990 'the ministers responsible for education [...] all seemed to accept the conventions of traditional educational discourse and dialogue'. As they remarked, 'the very guru of monetarism, Keith Joseph, observed the proprieties in his admittedly often maladroit dealings with the educational establishment'. Heller and Edwards declared that even Kenneth Baker, who was to succeed Keith Joseph and steer through the major reforms of the 1988 ERA, 'could still assure a national conference of LEA officers in 1988 of the key role and contribution to be made by the LEAs post-ERA'. (1992: 8-9) It was important to recognise, though, that the involvement of LEAs in consultations over the possible content of educational policy did not necessarily mean that they had a decisive effect on the main provisions of any proposed change in legislation. Charting developments from 1979 onwards, Cokke and Gosden noted that:

the over-riding impression was of a government determined to have its own way, contemptuous of its 'partners', professing a determination to relax controls and decentralise decision-making but in reality doing the opposite, unwilling to listen to 'outside' independent expert advice. (1986: 137)

What is beyond doubt is that from the mid-1970s onwards there was a shift in the relative power and influence of the educational partners which involved an assertion of central department control. As noted, the 1976 Education Act had given the Secretary of state new powers although, in the late 1970s, some LEAs frustrated the intentions of the Education Secretary in the courts and won. At this time the DES also introduced initiatives to review standards and the curriculum. Broadfoot (1979) suggested that the centre had, by the end of the 1970s, been more or less consciously arrogating to itself more and more responsibility for the direction of the education service. However, it was to be measures introduced following 1979 that were to give this movement towards central control its most powerful thrust. The Conservative Government elected in 1979, and those which followed throughout the 1980s, believed that large sections of the British economy

were extremely inefficient. In particular, the new Government felt that the public sector was much too large and bureaucratic. The Government firmly believed that in order to eliminate this inefficiency the public sector should be exposed to what had been termed the 'discipline of the market'. (Coates, 1991:11) The determination of several Conservative administrations to achieve this broad aim was eventually to see the end of the post-war educational partnership. The measures introduced to achieve this aim were to have a profound effect on all LEAs.

The move towards greater central control

Financial constraints lay at the heart of the 'marketisation' measures taken. Government ministers used the language of the marketplace while simultaneously increasing their own powers. The first and most potent 'lever of centralism' was financial. Here the continuities of central Government policy across the 1979 general election proved 'remarkably strong'. The Labour Government of the late 1970s had already started to reduce the annual Rate Support Grant (RSG) which local authorities received. It further limited local government expenditure through a cut in specific grants. In addition, the capital building programmes were reduced and what were termed 'cash limits' were introduced thus enabling central Government to control the total level of grant to local authorities. From 1979 onwards the Conservative Governments 'carried the process much further and faster'. (Cooke and Gosden, 1986: 130) Some local authorities had responded to the restrictions on their RSG by increasing their rate demands so that planned expenditure could be maintained. Central Government objected to this as it threatened their control over the aggregate level of rates which was perceived as a threat to their policy of reducing public expenditure.

The 1980 Local Government Planning and Land (No. 2) Act enabled the Government to exert a powerful influence over the level of rates in local authorities. The needs and resources element of RSG (around 92% of the whole grant) was replaced a year later, in April 1981, by a block grant. Central Government could henceforth control the amount of grant-related expenditure (GRE) which each local authority could spend on its various services and the amount it could reasonably be expected to raise through the rates to support these services. If local authorities overspent on the targets set by central Government, then they received financial penalties in the form of a reduced block grant the following year. A number of Labour-controlled local authorities subsequently overspent. In response to the overspend the Government introduced 'rate-

capping' legislation in 1984. Thus, for the first time since their establishment, central Government 'imposed restrictions on the right of local authorities to determine the level of local rates at their discretion subject only to local accountability'. (Cooke and Gosden, 1986: 131) 'Local government expenditure had been closed at both ends'. (Tomlinson, 1993:152)

Decisions on local authority expenditure continued to be greatly influenced by central Government. In 1990/91 it introduced Standard Spending Assessments (SSAs) which were a way of assessing what they thought each local authority should be spending. The amount of money each council received was arrived at by central Government subtracting the council's tax income from its SSA. SSAs were divided into seven service blocks which related to local authority services, one of which was entitled 'Education'. Each November, the Government would announce how much of the total amount of funding available was going to be given to each local authority. It also stipulated how much of the amount each council received should be allocated to each service block. So, 'alongside the national totals, the government [told] each local authority what it [was] proposing its individual SSA should be for each service block'. These figures were open to consultation and usually between November and January, when a final announcement was made, councils could submit their views about the amount they had been allocated to the Department of the Environment. As the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) pointed out, however, the final figures had been 'usually much the same as the November figures'. The LGIU noted that the 1992/93 SSA education block was divided into five sub blocks including primary, secondary, post 16, under fives and other. Five indicators were then used to evaluate the amount to be given for each of these sub blocks. These indicators were:

1. an allowance for the size of the client group, eg. secondary education is calculated on the basis of the number of pupils aged 11-15.
2. an adjustment for Additional Needs to take account of social deprivation.
3. an allowance for sparsity (ie. the extent to which the population is dispersed) but this is not applied to primary, secondary and the post-16 sub blocks.

4. an allowance for the costs of free school meals in the primary and secondary sub blocks.

5. an 'Area Cost Adjustment' to take account of varied labour costs.
(LGIU, 1992: 39)

During the 1980s the Government also redeployed existing resources for education with the introduction of a number of specific grants. Education Support Grants (ESGs), Local Education Authority Training Grants (LEATGS) and Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST) are examined in more detail in the following chapters. It is sufficient to note here that, like all specific grants, they were to be paid to support services over which central Government wanted to have considerable influence. The resources were to be 'earmarked' for specific purposes which central Government considered as priorities. Essentially, these specific grants and the other financial measures outlined resulted in a considerable reduction in the discretion which LEAs had to pursue local initiatives.

Each year the setting of SSAs has increasingly been accompanied by much heated debate about reductions in educational spending. The Report of the National Commission on Education (1993) noted that 'for some time, observers of the education world have been confused by the discrepancy between apparently rising real expenditure and the perception 'at the chalkface' that severe financial cuts have been imposed.' In cash terms public expenditure on all levels of education for the UK has risen, claimed the Commission, from £1.6 billion in 1965-66 to £26.7 billion in 1990-91. Even taking into account the effect of general inflation and removing it by using the Gross Domestic Product deflator, the Commission found that this still left 'a rise of 84.4 per cent over the 25 year period'. This meant 'an average annual increase of 3.4 per cent, a substantial amount. Why, then, was there such a divergence of views over educational spending? A possible explanation was provided by the National Commission. Essentially, they recognised that:

using the GDP deflator to calculate real changes in education expenditure ignores the fact that costs in the education world have risen and continue to rise faster than prices in the economy as a whole [...] Adjustments using the GDP deflator do not, therefore allow us to examine what the money will buy in terms of goods and services, in other words, to view expenditure in volume terms. (1993: 370)

To overcome this the Commission used their own 'education deflator'. This analysed the costs of the different components of educational spending. The deflator was specifically related 'to education rather than the general economy [and] derived from repricing factors reflecting geographical, sectoral and specific price variations'. Hence, for example it took into account the fact that teachers' pay or the price of books, equipment etc, may have risen more rapidly than general inflation. The Commission claimed that 'in these terms, spending on education rose by only 0.4 per cent between 1980-81 and 1990-91' (as compared to 12.6 per cent when the GDP deflator was used). In other words, resources were only made available for a tiny increase in the number of teachers, books, buildings and other resources during this period.

The above helps one to understand subsequent events. In January 1995 the Government issued the SSAs for the financial year 1995/96. *The Education Guardian* reported on the 7th February 1995 that 'in England next year the centrally approved education spending will be £17.2 billion, nearly £700 million less than the local authorities' spending estimates for this year of £17.9 billion. They say that they need a billion more next year.' Within weeks of these levels of spending being set there was growing opposition to the budget set for education from LEAs, teacher associations, parents and governors at what were perceived to be enforced cuts. The Government, though, claimed that the amount represented a 1.1 per cent rise. Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, speaking at the North of England Education Officers Conference in January 1995, claimed that 'local government has been treated fairly and indeed more favourably than many central Government services [...] education receives a higher increase than all the other services except community care and the police.' A month later, however, the independent pay review body recommended that teachers' pay should rise by 2.7 per cent during 1995/96. The Government accepted this judgement although it made clear that it would not provide any funding to help pay for the rise as it had in 1992. Some noted that the decision to do so in that year was perhaps not unconnected with the imminence of a general election. The Government remarked, however, that this time the local authorities had to fund the whole of the teachers' pay rise out of their reserves of cash. As the *Education Guardian* noted, the local authorities were to draw £400 million from their reserves, on top of the money they raised through the council tax, just to maintain a 'cash standstill'. This took no account of inflation, teachers' pay and increases in pupils numbers.

In addition to financial constraints, the introduction of new educational legislation was also responsible for curbing LEA autonomy. An initial phase of legislative reforms was designed to enhance 'parental choice'. The Education Act of 1980 required that parents should receive extensive information about schools with the aim of increasing their choice of schools. The 1986 (No 2) Education Act strengthened parental representation on school governing bodies and made it the duty of LEAs to have a policy in relation to the secular curriculum of county, voluntary and special schools in their area. This policy was to be kept up-to-date and under review. The 1988 ERA, however, was to result in the most radical reshaping of education since the 1944 Act. Throughout the 1980s LEAs had become the focus of criticism by right-wing political groups. The Adam Smith Institute suggested that the problems facing education were those of 'producer capture'. LEAs, as producers of education, were said to be ignoring the consumers of education, parents and children. The institute's Omega educational policy document went on to note that 'however dedicated they may be as educators, however concerned they may be as parents, the cocoon of producer interest keeps spinning around them'. (1984: 2) As Maclure observed, the charge of producer-domination was not necessarily a new idea. It had been:

advanced, albeit in muted form, more than ten years earlier by the then Prime Minister, James Callaghan, in his seminal Ruskin College address [...] He noted the hostility of 'some people' to the idea of a Prime Minister intervening in the educational debate: 'It is almost' he said 'as though some people would wish that the subject matter and purpose of education should not have public attention focussed on it: or at any rate, that profane hands should not be allowed to touch it'. (1989: vi)

While views on education had become increasingly polarized, there appeared, by the mid-1980s, to be one element of consensus remaining. This was in relation to opinions against the 'educational establishment'. This agreement crossed political and social divisions to 'accuse the functionaries of the system of subordinating the needs of children to their own interests and convenience'. (Maclure, 1989: vii) The teachers' pay dispute and the steady deterioration in the relationship between central and local government seemed to give the 'producer capture' accusation some credence. Later in the 1980s further criticisms of the LEAs came from the Hillgate Group (1986) and the Institute of Economic Affairs (Sexton, 1987). The former noted that:

we believe LEAs should be deprived not only of the power to provide education, but also of the power to enforce it. All legal responsibility must be returned to Parliament, which is the rightful guardian, until it is possible once again to bestow them on institutions which will be genuinely answerable for their exercise, and genuinely concerned to enforce them'. (Hillgate Group, 1986: 13)

The ERA was, in part, the response of the Conservative Government to this analysis. The Inner London Education Authority was abolished, polytechnics were taken out of local authority control and through a combination of Local Management of Schools (LMS), pupil-led formulae and open-enrolment schools were placed in competition with one another for pupils. Through the grant-maintained option and City Technology Colleges, the LEA monopoly was broken. A diversity of schools was encouraged. The ERA resulted in a fundamental restriction on the powers of LEAs to manage the education service both because central Government acquired greater control, and because financial control was transferred to school governing bodies through LMS and the creation of grant-maintained schools. This made it extremely difficult, or impossible, for LEAs to continue to provide certain services. It affected, for example, the provision of LEA advisory services and teachers' centres, both discussed in chapter four. A direct consequence of LMS was the reduction in LEA levels of staffing.

The dispensable partner

LEAs did survive the ERA. Moreover, while reducing the administrative powers of LEAs in relation to schools the ERA did seem, potentially, to leave a significant role for them in relation to the curriculum. Wallace even talked about 'the new partnership'. As he noted at the time:

Local authorities may have less control over spending levels and less budgetary control through local financial management of schools and colleges, but they have been given a much more powerful role in relation to the promotion of the new curriculum and monitoring the work done in schools and colleges. The new relationship between local authorities and their schools and colleges will be based on the need for the latter to prepare development plans annually, showing how staff are to be deployed, revenue is being spent, in-service training for staff is being planned, and academic standards are being monitored and raised. (1988: 23)

The LEA had apparently been charged with the monitoring and evaluating of the quality of learning within schools. They were said to have a new 'strategic role'. Ranson (1992) commended an Audit Commission paper entitled *Losing an Empire, Finding a Role: The LEA of the Future* (1989). It suggested that the LEA would 'have to learn to share power and responsibilities in a more pluralistic environment'. The LEA could then 'discover rewarding roles with new responsibilities'. The Audit Commission proposed that the new LEA 'was to be a leader articulating a vision of what the education service was trying to achieve: a partner, supporting schools and colleges and helping them fulfil this vision; a planner, of facilities for the future; a provider of information, to the education market, helping people to make informed choices; a regulator, of quality in schools and colleges; and finally a banker, channelling the funds which enable local institutions to deliver'. (1992: 15) The Audit Commission Paper was full of metaphor. Morris noted that his own 'mistrust of metaphor in the analysis of what LEAs were for' began to formulate around the time when the 1988 Education Bill was passing through the parliamentary process. By the Autumn of 1988 he 'had become deeply suspicious of metaphor as a tool of exegesis'. As he commented, it was the opposite of what he had been told at school, that metaphor illustrates. 'Quite as often, it obfuscates'. Morris used as an example ministerial use of metaphor in the House of Lords to allay fears that provisions outlined in the ERA would not undermine the LEAs. Rather, it was suggested that LEAs would have their 'new strategic role'. As Morris emphasized, his criticism of the use of metaphor was 'not intended to decry the imagery where there is solid and demonstrable activity to which it can refer'. However, as he remarked, there was always 'a risk to seek comfort in the imagery without identifying the substance'. (1995a: 10)

Indeed, just as the LEAs were adapting to their new 'strategic role', they once again became the focus of critical attacks. Heller and Edwards (1992) noticed 'a congruence' of 'insults and derision' from the ministerial team at the DES in 1991. Junior Education Minister, Michael Fallon, for example, predicted a bleak future for LEAs. 'I don't think we will lose much sleep fretting over the future of the LEAs', he noted. Fallon then went on to remark that 'it would be hard to plan the present education provision worse than the councils have done since the war'. (1991: 16-17) Barber noted that in the immediate aftermath of the ERA there was still a 'substantial degree of dialogue between the traditional educational partners'. (1994: 356) Importantly, however, Fallon's remarks helped underline that by 1991 'any facade [by the DES] of continuing collaboration with the educational establishment was dead'. (Heller and Edwards, 1992: 11) However, a commitment

to the diminution or demise of the LEAs was, as in the late 1970s and 1980s, not simply restricted to right-wing politicians and pressure groups. Ranson highlighted, 'Schools Charter: A Policy Study for Education in the Nineties', published in *The Independent* newspaper in June 1991. This 'advocated the disappearance of local authority control of schools'. (1992: 6)

The 1988 ERA was not to be the end of the legislative process. In 1992 the LEAs lost control of mainstream Further Education with the enacting of the Further and Higher Education Act (although they remained responsible for adult education and the youth service) and the Education (Schools) Act of the same year created the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The LEA could no longer inspect schools at will. They had to have good cause if they were to inspect a school. Good cause was defined as needing to know something which could not be found other than by inspecting. During 1991 there were further attempts to reinvigorate the policy of allowing schools to opt for grant-maintained status. When in 1992 the White Paper *Choice and Diversity* was published, it was seen by Education Secretary, John Patten, 'as the last piece of the jigsaw' to bring about the new organisation of schooling which the Government wanted. This was to depend, however, on what he termed 'the grant-maintained revolution'. (*The Guardian*, 19:5:92) It was expected that, once the new Bill had been enacted, the number of schools achieving GM status would increase dramatically. In the same week as *Choice and Diversity* was published, for example, Bob Balchin, chair of the GM Schools Foundation, claimed that its publication effectively meant 'the end of local authority control of education is now in sight'. (*The Times*, 30:6:92) The publication of a White Paper had, traditionally, resulted in some debate over the content of the legislation proposed. However, as Barber asserted, the educational policy-making process between April 1992 and the summer of 1993 was characterised by a Secretary of State:

[turning] down invitations to conferences including that of the National Association of Headteachers and the North of England Education conference, which every Secretary of State for a generation had attended. He refused to receive deputations from the teacher unions, he described the leaders of parents' organisations as 'Neanderthal' and tended to make policy by proclamation rather than consultation'. (1994: 357)

The proposals outlined in *Choice and Diversity* became the 1993 Education Act, creating the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS). From the point where 10 per cent

of pupils in the LEA were in GM schools, the FAS shared with an LEA the duty to secure sufficient secondary or primary school places in an area. This was known as stage one. Stage two was reached when between 10 per cent and 75 per cent of children in the LEA were in GM schools. In stage two both the LEA and a FAS funding authority had the power to propose to the Secretary of State a significant enlargement of existing schools or the establishment of new schools. Stage three was obtained when over 75 per cent of the school children in an LEA area were enrolled in GM schools. At this point only FAS could make provision for, and open, new schools. With the introduction of the 1993 Act, therefore, the future of the LEA looked very insecure .

Opting to stay in the club

By February 1995 only 28 English LEAs out of 109, did not have any GM schools in their area. *Prima facie*, it seemed that the 'GM revolution' was well under way. However, opting out was heavily concentrated in a small number of areas. In May 1995 six LEAs had reached stage two in relation to primary schooling and 47 LEAs in relation to secondary schooling. Only two LEAs had reached stage three in relation to both primary and secondary schooling. These were Bromley and Hillingdon, both in London. Brent, also in London, had reached stage three in relation to secondary schooling only. (Morris, 1995: 15-16) It appeared that the 'GM revolution' was not materialising. As some of the effects of legislative changes matured, for example LMS, the vast majority of schools across England and Wales were deciding to opt-in rather than opt-out of what was being described as 'membership of the LEA club'. (Coleman and Riley, 1995: 11) Indeed, as early as January 1994, the *Times Educational Supplement (TES)* indicated that 'the number of schools seeking GM status had dropped dramatically', with the level of support falling in the previous school term to its lowest since the election of yet another Conservative Government in May 1992. The same article highlighted a frank admission from Eric Forth, a Junior Education Minister, that 'there are some people who see the day when all schools will have gone grant-maintained - at the current rate of progress that is still a long way off'. This comment was seen by the *TES* as acknowledging a 'sea change of opinion' which was happening among schools. As the *TES* recorded, 'heads and governors now recognise the benefits of inter-dependence rather than independence'. Nevertheless, on the front page of the same issue of the *TES* it was reported that John Patten was 'considering pushing all secondary schools into GM status and scrapping parental votes on opting-out'.(28:1:94) Before he could go any further, though, Patten was replaced

by Gillian Shephard. As *The Guardian* commented, this was to be more than merely a change in personnel. It noted that Shephard's speech in January 1995:

to the masked ranks of local chairmen at the annual North of England educational conference was emollient in a way her predecessors' would never have been. Instead of conflict and ill-disguised contempt for such local worthies, who are after all responsible for more than 90% of all state schools, she spoke instead of partnership and working together. (7:1:1995: 12)

Four months later, in May 95, *The Guardian* reported that there might well be some substance in the new Education Secretary's friendly advances to LEAs. 'In a shift of government policy, academics and local government officials are being drafted in to help civil servants and the Office for Standards in Education in a task group'. This group was to 'help improve schools'. *The Guardian* highlighted that this decision represented a reverse of 'years of attacks' on LEAs 'by ministers who blamed town halls' laxity and bureaucracy for educational failure and encouraged schools to opt-out of their control'. Indeed, the article pointed out that this move was 'bound to alarm some right-wing Conservative MPs'. (26:5:95: 7)

Gillian Shephard announced that up to a quarter of 1996-97 GEST activity one, School Effectiveness, was to be held by LEAs to target help at schools identified as having 'serious weaknesses'. GEST 1 made up just under half of the £214 million available through GEST in 1996-97. This was to be directed at improving the training of school staff or governors, or to support the curriculum. 'Serious weaknesses' did not necessarily need to be diagnosed by OFSTED inspectors. The LEAs were also to withhold payment of the post-inspection and annual formula element of GEST 1 in 1996-97, if they believed that the planned expenditure of any LEA-maintained school did not meet the objectives of the GEST scheme or address key issues for action identified by OFSTED inspectors. The significance of these developments was highlighted by Barber a month after the improving schools initiative was announced. He likened LEAs to 'a phoenix rising from the political ashes'. He went on to note that 'in the early 1990s many LEA staff - those that survived the big clear-outs anyway - were clinging on in the vain hope of a Labour election victory to prevent the replacement of LEAs by a network of regional offices of the FAS, which appeared to be a real possibility at the time'. Barber concluded that opting-out had been reduced to a 'trickle', and observed that LEAs 'were no longer simply asking: how can we regain control of our schools'? Instead, he contended, they are asking what we can do to improve schools? (1995)

Others declared that 'a role in promoting and supporting quality in schools was emerging for LEAs'. (Coleman and Riley 1995: 11) Support for this opinion could even be found in the Parliamentary Conservative Party. In October 1995, Sir Malcolm Thornton, the, then, Conservative chair of the House of Commons Education Committee, observed that there was a strong case for the 'new revamped LEAs which are emerging'. They should continue giving vital support to schools. As he claimed:

not only is there strong empirical evidence to show that schools want a re-vamped LEA but also, increasingly, parents, governors and teachers do not believe that severing the links with their LEA is the best way to improve educational opportunities for their children. The debate has moved on to finding ways of combining maximum self-government for schools with effective support services from LEAs. This is particularly true for primary schools where budgets, in the main, lack both the size and flexibility of their secondary counterparts. (1995: 20)

However, there was still cause for concern. As noted earlier, a similar role had been identified for the LEAs following the 1988 ERA. The Conservative Governments which followed had then set about introducing legislation which could have left the LEAs withering on the vine. Indeed, throughout 1995 there continued to be speculation about the Government providing what was termed 'a fast track' to GM status for some schools. The *TES* produced an article in September 1995 entitled, 'Whose Agenda'? It noted that there seemed to be a difference in priority between Gillian Shephard and the Prime Minister. The latter had given an interview to *The Times* in which he had 'raised old debates' by seeming to suggest a move to make opting-out compulsory. As the *TES* observed, this was rather a contradiction in terms. Shephard had 'distanced herself from opting-out coercion, endorsing it only as a manifesto issue, rather than current policy'. (1:9:95) A month later Travers claimed that the Government were 'edging closer to removing schools' funding from local authority control.' He noted the far reaching effects of such a move which would reduce councils' spending 'to little more than half of their existing expenditure' and would necessitate 'a new system of financial control and oversight.' Also, 'a national funding formula would need to be created to allocate the £16bn of school funds to individual schools.' Schools would need to employ new staff to meet these new responsibilities and inspection and audit arrangements would need to be strengthened. (1995: 11)

The continuing commitment of some in the Government to removing schools from local authority control was not diminished by reports that after 'a heady dose of the market [since 1992]', many further education (FE) colleges were seeking a 'more rational framework for longer-term planning with more scope for responding to local community needs.' (Maden and Hunter, 1996: 26) The LEAs were seen by some as having a significant role in a new proposed framework for the FE sector. Maden and Hunter remarked that no one in FE wanted to return to the days of LEA control. However, FE staff were finding the new funding and planning 'hard to live with'. Maden and Hunter found that FE college principals and corporations were:

in an uncompromising market where the strong become rich and powerful and the weak go to the wall. There is no agency or public body, locally, to moderate the market. There are no politicians or officers who can strengthen the voice of the local community to argue for services which are needed locally but which do not necessarily meet the short-term test of financial viability. Colleges have been transformed into private companies, charged with fostering their own ends rather than acting as a public service. (1996: 26)

A new educational partnership?

Late in 1995, however, the Queen's Speech omitted any mention of changes in opting-out procedures. As Barber noted, the improving schools initiative, and the new responsibilities placed on the LEAs, had resulted in 'tangible evidence' that there was a new emphasis on partnership. 'The DfEE has realised that the LEAs are not only necessary but desirable'. (1995) A team of educational researchers found that LEA relationships with their schools were 'increasingly articulated in terms of various versions of partnership'. (Radnor *et al*, 1996: 4) Coleman and Riley observed that 'new partnerships are emerging between equal members, based on a strong assertion of common educational goals and a wish to develop collaboration rather than competition at a local level'. They pointed out, however, that in some 'LEA clubs' relationships appeared uneasy and the benefits of membership were open to question. (1995: 11) Heather Du Quesnay for example, the Executive Director of Education in the London Borough of Lambeth (and President of the Society of Education Officers) observed that in Lambeth 'consultation had been inadequate and the spirit of partnership which characterises the best LEAs is palpably lacking.' She continued, however, by pointing to 'the spirit of change' which abounds in Lambeth.' There would be a 'drive to raise standards' which was to be the 'focus for the developing partnership

between schools, authority and stake-holders over the next year and beyond.' (1996: 19) Some, though, were not convinced by all the talk of partnership.

Headteacher Paul O' Shea (1995) questioned 'whether real partnership now existed'. Professors Tim Brighouse and Michael Barber (quoted above) were promoting the concept of 'post-modern and adaptive LEAs'. 'The new LEAs, we are told, are committed to school improvement; they will be at the forefront in promoting the new modes of teaching and learning necessary for the new century'. O' Shea observed that 'we are told the Chief Education Officers are up to this challenge as many of them are busy evolving a new philosophy of local administration based on partnership'. O' Shea, however, in a sceptical tone, noted that 'it is my contention that this evolving "partnership" has failed in LEAs which did not trust their schools and spent more time trying to secure their declining empires'. O' Shea claimed that effective partnerships were put to the test when it came to 'painful [financial] cuts'. He asked, 'was there genuine consultation with the heads at this stage or did a form of paternalistic decision-making continue to take place'? O' Shea detected from his 'conversations with local authority heads that further divisions arose in the last round of cuts due to a lack of openness and real consultations'. Suggesting that LEAs were 'on trial for the foreseeable future', even if there was a change in Government, he acknowledged that LEAs should play 'a positive role' if the pressure for school improvement continued. He claimed that the 'acid test' would come in the way a LEA supports a school's capacity for self-renewal. He recognised that 'the emerging political agenda talks about LEAs providing "pressure and support" for schools' but added: 'perhaps these educational spin-doctors should revive some other words such as trust, openness, and opportunities for all to learn'. (1995: 17)

Certainly, by the time of the May 1997 general election, both the major political parties made it clear that they saw the LEA fulfilling an important 'role'. The Labour party document *Diversity and Excellence: A New Partnership for Schools* remarked that the operation of LEAs had changed because of LMS. However, this was also down to 'the development of a new ethos of public sector flexibility and responsiveness'. The Labour party believed that the quality of education available to pupils would 'benefit from a partnership between all schools and their new LEAs':

The job of the LEA is to support schools in identifying good practice and spreading it and in identifying weakness and rooting it out. LEAs need to make further progress in developing their new role as

champions of their parents and communities. Their job should be to undertake only those tasks schools cannot do for themselves, or where it makes sense for the resources and expertise to be combined for greater effectiveness. Their focus should be on creating a framework which increases the chances of schools succeeding and reduces the chances of failure.

[...]In addition to LEAs having a role in backing up OFSTED inspections with support and advice, LEAs will be expected to set strategic development plans detailing how standards will be raised. [These] plans will form the basis of the national drive for rapid and radical improvement in standards and effectiveness. [Plans] will be developed in partnership with representatives from education networks, bringing together parents, governors, the business community, colleges, universities and the voluntary sector in an area. (Labour Party, 1995: 14)

In June 1996 the Conservative Government which once questioned the future role of LEAs (in the 1993 Education Act) seemed to formally acknowledge that the LEAs were here to stay and that they had a 'significant' role to play. This role, according to the White Paper, *Self-government for Schools*, was 'to provide those functions which schools [could not] carry out for themselves and which no other agency is better placed to carry out'. The Government gave a list of functions which it believed LEAs should, or may, undertake:

- *Organising forms of education which take place outside schools.
- *Planning the supply of school places, handling complaints and other regulation.
- *Allocation and monitoring of school budgets.
- *Organising services to support individual pupils.
- *Supplying support services for schools to buy if they wished.
- *Promoting quality in schools complementing the responsibility of schools for their own performance and the responsibility of the national inspectorates for inspecting and reporting on that performance

*Co-ordinating school networks and delivering good practice; particularly in carrying out national initiatives. (TES, 28:6:96: 9)

On the eve of the May 1997 election both the Conservative and Labour parties supported the idea of OFSTED inspecting the work of LEAs in monitoring and supporting schools. Both parties were also committed to increasing the percentage of the Potential Schools Budget (PSB) which is delegated by each LEA to locally-maintained schools. In May 1997 at least 85 per cent PSB in England and 90 per cent in Wales had to be delegated. The Conservative Government in *Self-government for Schools* proposed that 95 per cent of PSB should be delegated. This disappointed Roy Pryke, chairperson of the Standing Conference of Chief Education Officers, who noted that 'there was little evidence that schools wanted more delegation of finance'. Pryke added that schools 'know it brings responsibilities they consider are better handled by the LEA'. He suggested that further delegation would prevent LEAs from providing some services. (TES, 28:6:96: 7) The AMA was cautiously to welcome *Self-government for Schools* noting its surprise at the extent to which 'the full chapter devoted to an exposition of the role of the LEA is in substantial accord with [its own views]'. However the association regretted the 'grudging' acknowledgement of a role for the LEAs. (AMA, 4:7:96) The requirement on LEAs to delegate a greater percentage of PSB could be seen as a way of ensuring that, while they remained an educational stakeholder, they were subject to controls.

Review

Increased delegation and the proposal for OFSTED to inspect the work of LEAs was seen as 'the price' to pay for the new role the authorities had been given. (TES, 28:6:96: 7) By May 1997 it appeared that the place of LEAs was more secure. However, their freedom to determine the range and volume of education services within the framework of legislation had been dramatically reduced over the previous two decades. Financial controls, delegation requirements and a plethora of educational legislation had resulted in a diminution in the discretion of LEAs and an increase in central control through the setting of national priorities. Chapter three will focus on central Government's interest in exercising control over INSET policy in the period 1972-1996.

CHAPTER THREE

The Changing World of INSET since 1972

A feature of the post-war period has been the 'low status' of policy-making about INSET at national level. (Burgess *et al*, 1993: 1) Indeed, it was not until 1972 that the James Report became 'the first occasion on which central Government set up an enquiry which included INSET in its brief'. (Tomlinson, 1993: 108) The Report made far reaching recommendations for the content, structure and organisation of INSET. Its promise, though, was not to be fulfilled. INSET was not to feature prominently in central Government thinking over the next two decades. On the few occasions that it did, policy on INSET was directed at changing the funding mechanisms to provide the Government with the power to define and control the priorities and substantive foci of teachers' professional development. The specific grants introduced were to be used as tools by central Government to direct its own initiatives locally. It was only subsequently that INSET and development work with teachers occupied a more prominent place in the thinking of central Government.

The James Report and its immediate aftermath

The James Committee remarked on why it had been necessary for them to conduct their enquiries. Considerable changes had occurred since the McNair Report of 1944 examined the supply and training of school teachers. The James Report mentioned some of the 'most important' developments of the 1960s. These included an 'extension of the normal teacher training course from two years to three'. There had also been 'a massive expansion' in the school population which resulted in the number of students in initial training institutions rising from around 60,000 in 1961 to 120,000 in 1971. Higher Education (HE) had expanded and diversified and demand for it increased. In addition, schools had been adapting to 'far reaching changes'. Many new schools had been built and many remodelled. Secondary education was being 'reorganised into a great diversity of forms'. As the Report remarked 'teachers of the middle and upper age ranges often had to take on new roles, for which the traditional kind of post-graduate training is not always a suitable preparation'. The Report further noted that 'curricula and teaching methods in primary schools, already the subject of much innovation ten years ago [the Plowden debate] continued to inspire experiment and new approaches'. The Report noted that the curriculum development work of the Schools Council, the Nuffield Foundation and other bodies had 'stimulated the

study and reform of the curriculum' and had resulted in further changes in teaching methods. (DES, 1972a: paras 1.3-1.8) While INSET had not been seen as important by central Government, by some LEAs and by many teachers (Tomlinson, 1993: 108), at the start of the 1970s all these changes were making it necessary to turn attention to the content, structure and organisation of training. During 1969 concern about the education and training of teachers had led to a study of the issue by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and Science. Edward Short, the Secretary of State for Education in the Labour administration of 1964 to 1970, also requested that the area training organisations should conduct a detailed review of their procedures. Both of these developments were prior to Short appointing the Committee of Inquiry of Teacher Education and Training under Lord James of Rusholme.

The committee was to enquire into the arrangements made for the education, training and probation of teachers in England and Wales. In particular, however, emphasis was to be placed on examining and making recommendations about: '(i) what should be the content and organisation of courses to be provided; (ii) whether a larger proportion of intending teachers should be educated with students who have not chosen their careers or chosen other careers; (iii) what, in the context of (i) and (ii) above, should be the role of the maintained and voluntary colleges of education, the polytechnics and other further education institutions maintained by local education authorities, and the universities'. (DES, 1972a: iii)

The committee reported to a Conservative Secretary of State, Margaret Thatcher. The Report made a number of general recommendations. The first noted that 'the education and training of teachers should be seen as falling into three consecutive stages or "cycles": the first, personal education, the second, pre-service training and induction, the third, in-service education and training'. The Report went on to recommend that 'the highest priority should be given to the expansion of the third cycle, ie. of opportunities for the continued education and training of teachers'. It made six recommendations in relation to this particular cycle. These were in connection with entitlement to in-service education and training, professional tutors, professional centres, special needs in the third cycle, research and development, and degrees, higher degrees and advanced qualifications. (DES, 1972a: para 2.21-2.36)

In December 1972 the Government published the White Paper, *Education: A Framework for Expansion* (DES, 1972b). It was a wide ranging document addressing many aspects of the education service. Accepting the James Committee's views on teaching it stated the goal of:

building a body of teachers well prepared, academically and professionally, to sustain confidently the formidable task to which they are called: to guide each generation of children into full appreciation of our culture, to enhance their social and moral awareness, to enhance their intellectual abilities to the highest standard of which each is capable, and to develop their practical and human skills so that each may be enabled to make his or her maximum contribution to the health, wealth and harmony of a democratic society. (DES, 1972b: para 57)

The White Paper noted the widespread support for the James recommendations and confirmed that these were 'fully accepted by the Government'. In particular the White Paper endorsed the Report's recommendation on the entitlement of teachers to INSET:

The James Committee considered it essential that there would be adequate opportunities for the continued education and training of all teachers at intervals throughout their careers. It was therefore their leading and most widely endorsed recommendation that all teachers should be entitled to release for in-service training for periods equivalent to one term in every seven years of service in the first instance. They estimated that actual take up of such an entitlement would result in three per cent of the teaching force being absent on secondment from schools at any one time; this involves a four fold increase in present opportunity. [...] The Government propose to give effect to the Committee's recommendations in the firm belief that expenditure to achieve an expansion of in-service training of this order is a necessary investment in the future quality of the teaching force. (DES, 1972b: para 60)

In retrospect, the James Committee's recommendations, and the acceptance of them by the Government in the pages of *Education: A Framework for Expansion*, could be seen as the highest water mark this century in the Government's commitment to invest in the continuing professional development of school teachers. (Tomlinson, 1993: 109) However, the James Committee's proposals were never to be implemented. As noted in the previous chapter, the oil crisis of the early 1970s was to precipitate a down-turn in the country's economy. The expansionist era in education was over and economic factors were to have a major influence in shaping future policy in relation to education. It was argued that education should be seen as more closely linked to the needs of the labour market. Education was to be made as efficient and effective as possible with economic

rather than human objectives to the fore. Callaghan's Ruskin speech of 1976 can be seen in this context. However, also within this context:

concern for in-service training survived. Its purposes changed, however, to become more specific and instrumental. Interestingly, and demonstrating the importance attached to it by government, it also became one of the first territories in which government tried to implement a policy directly through the Local Education Authorities by claiming the right to make grants to LEAs for in-service programmes. (Tomlinson, 1993: 110)

What Graham described as 'an inexorable drift to centralised control' was beginning. (1986: 5) In July 1977, with a Labour Government in power and Shirley Williams as Secretary of State, the Green Paper, *Education in Schools: A Consultative Document*, was presented to Parliament. It was to pull together comment and the Government's proposals following the 'Great Debate' on education started by the Ruskin speech. The Green Paper devoted one chapter to teachers and, within this, ten paragraphs to INSET. Some 13,000 places were to be made available in higher education to provide workshops and/or courses. (Tomlinson, 1993: 110) *Education in Schools* outlined the Government's four main priorities for INSET.

Underpinning them was a belief that 'full benefit will only be secured if in-service training is focused on specific objectives and problems of individual schools and is therefore to that extent school-based'. (DES, 1977: para 6.30) The Green Paper went on to announce that the Government had found a way of making specific grant available for some INSET. They were developing 'arrangements to channel funds through the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) for the first year of retraining of teachers of certain shortage subjects'. (DES, 1977: para 6.31) The following paragraph warned that 'in the longer term, [all] in-service training might be considered appropriate for specific grant'. (DES, 1977: para 6.32) The Green Paper was very significant. It represented a fundamental departure from a situation where the choice of which INSET to pursue was virtually left to the individual teacher to the current situation where INSET is primarily seen as having to serve the needs of the school. The professional or personal needs of the individual were to become secondary to the institutions' needs. Furthermore, the Warnock Report of 1978 recommended that the INSET of teachers should meet a wider definition of special educational needs. (DES, 1978: para 19.31)

The INSET 'pool'

By the end of the 1970s 'the complex funding mechanism operative [for INSET] favoured the use of long-term award bearing courses as the major form of professional development provision'. This mechanism was known as the INSET 'pool':

At this time, most teachers experienced INSET as a full-time (seconded), part-time, or evening attendance at an HE [Higher Education] institution to gain a qualification following an extended period of study.[...] Having gained a place on a course at an HE institution, a teacher would notify his or her LEA, which would then claim back 90 per cent of the costs (including supply cover and course fees) from the DES through the uncapped [...] "pool" [...] Hence while a broad array of types of in-service experiences developed during the 1970s and early 1980s (e.g.. on-the-job school-based professional development activities, 'twilight' sessions, teacher placements in industry, advisory teachers and teachers centres), the availability of substantial DES subsidies through the 'pool' for long-term HE courses and the approved list of HMI's [Her Majesty's Inspectorate] courses ensured that the extended course-type provision remained the predominant mode of INSET. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 4-5)

Professionally, there was concern that the considerable resource, 'the pool', was not necessarily the most effective way to fund INSET. This was reflected in the 'signs of growth in "school-based" or "school-focused" training in the mid-1980s'. (*op. cit.* 4) In addition, the focus of HE-based 'long' courses was very much on the professional development of the individual teacher. There was continuing concern that the focus of INSET provision was not directed sufficiently enough towards curriculum, whole staff and institutional development. From within the education profession there was growing pressure for the LEAs and schools to play a greater part in a new INSET framework. (Goddard, 1989: 14) 'Many writers on in-service activities under the 'pool' system argued the case for moving beyond a view of INSET which too often placed the teacher in the role of passive recipient of menu-led "courses" to one which encouraged school-centred, collaborative and dynamic approaches to professional development'. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 5)

As Goddard remarked, there were also economic and political factors to consider. As noted in Chapter two, all Governments from the 1970s onwards had sought to control and reduce the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR). 'The pool'

could not be tolerated by a Conservative Government in the early 1980s which made reducing the PSBR its major broad economic objective. 'The "uncapped" element in the 'pool' system, in conjunction with the retrospective claim procedure, made it impossible for the DES to control expenditure on INSET. The Conservative Government after 1979 'wished to be able to promote its own priorities for educational development'. (1989: 14) The Government wanted to extend its overall control of the education system, including INSET for school teachers. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 5) Therefore, there were two problems facing the Government with regard to INSET during the early 1980s. The first concerned the 'pool'. This had become too unwieldy and expensive for the Government as it was at odds with their economic objectives. It had to be replaced: but by what? The second, was the problem of ensuring a match of INSET provision to the needs arising from the Government's own growing list of policies for education. (Merton, 1989: 74) These problems were to be addressed in the White Papers *Teaching Quality* (1983) and *Better Schools* (1985).

The introduction of specific grants for INSET

By mid-April 1982 there were already 'twenty-one or so specific and related grants' operating in education in England and Wales. These had been introduced despite what Morris termed the 'prickly' stance of the local authority associations towards them. As he remarked at the time, 'in the theology in central/local government relations' at that time, 'the greatest anathema is specific grant'. (1982: 28) This animosity was also remarked upon by the Cockcroft Committee of 1982. The local authorities, it claimed, generally, disliked the concept of funding for specific purposes although they had acquired experience of, 'and accepted', it in a number of fields. (DES, 1982: paras 765 and 766) The authorities viewed specific, 'earmarked', funding as a threat to their autonomy and discretion. However, as Morris contended, the Cockcroft observation could be verified by several examples at the time. He mentioned 'a resolution carried unanimously by the Seventh Annual Meeting of Metropolitan LEAs in November [1981]'. The 'discussion topic' chosen for the conference was 'advanced further education'. The resolution demanded a pivotal role for the LEAs in 16-19 education and training and concluded that:

[t]his will become possible only if finance is made available to local education authorities for this particular purpose. This Annual Meeting therefore asserts that the local authority associations should reconsider their present policy against specific grants so that the crucial needs of this

age group can be met by local education authorities in a more comprehensive and economic way than is the case at present. (1982: 28)

Morris (Under Secretary for Education at the AMA in 1981) was quoted at the conference as saying that 'although the AMA were in principle not in favour of specific grants, they were not opposed to specific grants in particular circumstances.' (*Education*, 1981: 397) Indeed, in a paper one year later, he remarked that 'it was 'a matter of public record that, in the autumn of 1981, AMA Policy Committee called upon the Government to use specific grant to deal with an educational problem'. This problem had been a lack of funding to cover the costs incurred by a significant increase in the number of young people staying on in education as a result of the growing prospects of unemployment. Calls for specific grants were also heard across the political divide. As Morris noted, Neil Kinnock, the Labour opposition spokesperson on education in 1982, 'advocated both national minimum standards, and national funding in five areas'. One of the areas he 'earmarked' for specific funding was INSET. In part, these calls were claimed to be 'a response to evidence that disparities in expenditure between LEAs is producing unjustified disparities in standards, and that there is some unacceptably poor provision'. (1982: 33) Certainly, the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers (ACSET) was to highlight the regional disparities in INSET provision across the country. (1984: para 58)

Despite the local authorities half-hearted opposition to specific grants, the grants were to proliferate in the field of INSET over the following decade. The publication of the White Paper *Teaching Quality* in 1983 and the launch of the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (TVEI), in the same year, were to have far reaching ramifications for school teachers' INSET. *Teaching Quality* announced the introduction of specific grants for INSET:

steps are being taken to introduce in 1983-1984 a limited scheme of Central Government grants intended both to increase the total amount of in-service training and also to concentrate part of that training on certain key areas [...] The expenditure will be directed in the first instance towards the following priority areas: management training for heads and other senior staff; mathematics teaching, with particular regard to the report of the Cockcroft Committee; teaching the 16-19 age group; special educational needs in ordinary schools; and bilingual needs in Wales. Among these priorities the Government attach particular importance to the training needs of head teachers and other senior staff. In addition to the grants

referred to above, funds have also been earmarked within the Department's regional course programme for the provision of relevant courses, and the Government will fund from 1983-84 a national project to appropriate training courses and activities. (DES, 1983: paras 86-87)

Aware, perhaps, of the mistrust which LEAs felt towards specific grants, the White Paper made the following observation. 'As with induction support, so with in-service training: the local education authorities, as the employers of most teachers, must bear the primary responsibility for providing in-service training - including school-based training - to meet the changing needs of the school system. (DES, 1983: para 86) As will be shown, this opinion was to change significantly over the next decade. A further specific grant scheme was launched a year later. Education Support Grants (ESGs) were introduced under the Education (Grants and Awards) Act 1984. The Secretary of State was able to make provision for the payment of ESGs to LEAs in accordance with regulations made by him/her. The latter had the power to direct the grants for educational purposes. These were to be what the Secretary of State felt the LEAs should be encouraged to support in the interests of education in England and Wales. (DES, 1984: s. 2) Grants were made available for 'specific curriculum and professional development initiatives'. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 6) These developments meant that the mechanism of specific grants and the notion of directed INSET had been firmly established.

In addition to the above, TVEI was introduced in 1983. It was run as a pilot scheme in its first year of operation. Fourteen LEAs participated in the first pilot. In an evaluation of the scheme after one year, Hofkins highlighted the 'controversy' surrounding it and the 'political objections' of many LEAs to it. These were based on a fear of the way in which TVEI was organised. It was felt that this would 'lead to increased stratification'. However, Hofkins noted that, although LEAs voiced objections to TVEI, the scheme appeared to be 'sweeping the country'. In the second round of pilots, for example, 48 LEAs were to become involved. (1984: 173) Many LEAs found themselves caught between accepting much needed funding through TVEI and their principles. TVEI provided funding, through the MSC, to LEAs and schools 'on the basis of a contract and monitoring of results'. (Tomlinson, 1993: 114) This was in stark contrast to the 'loose' arrangements surrounding the INSET 'pool'. The 'pool' remained in operation, however, when TVEI generated the TVEI-Related In-Service Education and Training (TRIST) scheme, its future looked uncertain. This was because 'in essence, TRIST in 1985-86,[...] incorporated much DES thinking on the ways of developing INSET policy so as to overcome its previous inconsistency and relative

ineffectiveness in practice'. (Goodyear, 1992: 4) Indeed, the determination of the Government to follow the specific grant model for all INSET became clear with the recommendations of *Better Schools* in 1985.

The Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme

Better Schools outlined several proposals, across a wide range of fronts, all of which would have an effect on existing educational arrangements. These proposals, including those relating to the funding arrangements for INSET, were underpinned by a desire to secure two broad aims. These were stated in the White Paper as being 'to raise standards at all levels of ability' and 'to secure the best possible return from the resources which [were to be] found for [education]'. (DES, 1985: para 2) The White Paper pointed to the Government's agreement with ACSET (1984) over 'a radical change [being] required in funding and organising in-service training'. 'Consultation on ACSET's advice had shown widespread support for the case for a new funding mechanism and for more systematic and purposeful planning of in-service training'. To achieve this the White Paper called for the introduction of 'a new specific grant to support LEA expenditure on most aspects on in-service training, including that expenditure currently supported through the in-service training pool'. (DES, 1985: paras 175-176)

One year after the White Paper's publication the DES launched the Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme (LEATGS). This scheme was outlined in DES circular 6/86 and subsequently in regulations under section 50 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986. Circular 6/86 set out the aims of the new scheme. These were 'to promote the professional development of teachers; to promote more systematic and purposeful planning of in-service training; to encourage more effective management of the teaching force; [and] to encourage training in selected areas, which are to be accorded national priority'. (DES, 1986: para 4) LEAs were 'invited' to bid for grant expenditure under specific headings. The scheme was to support centrally designated national priority areas (NPAs) at a higher rate of grant than a unhypothecated element for local priority areas. (LPAs) As M. Williams observed, 'it was necessary for [LEAs] to demonstrate that they had comprehensive INSET plans which took into account local and national priorities, which specified the methods of delivery, including collaborative arrangements and which incorporated monitoring and evaluation'. Funds were available through LEATGS for establishing INSET infrastructures within LEAs. (1991: 28) Circular 6/86 listed six categories of eligible expenditure under the scheme. These were:

- i. tuition fees, examination fees and residential and other charges payable in respect of eligible training;
- ii. travelling, subsistence and other incidental expenses incurred by persons undergoing eligible training;
- iii. the remuneration of persons required to take the place of the trainee (whether or not the person replacing the trainee is already employed by the authority), including supply teachers on temporary or permanent contract, others employed specifically to replace those released for training, and any part of the permanent staffing complement intending to facilitate release to training;
- iv. costs directly incurred in providing or evaluating eligible training: these costs may include that part of the salaries of those specifically employed to provide, support or evaluate eligible training which is directly attributable to that training; they may also include that proportion of the costs of providing and maintaining premises used for the provision of eligible training which is directly attributable to that training;
- v. that part of the remuneration of education advisers/inspectors [...] which is directly attributable to time spent in planning, co-ordinating, monitoring or evaluating eligible training;
- vi. in the case of the training of youth and community workers, costs may include those incurred on training provided by voluntary organisations for eligible staff if that training is included in the authority's training plan approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of grant. (DES, 1986: para 11)

The LEATGS and ESG schemes became known as 'the new INSET'. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 6) In terms of the attention paid by scholars and researchers towards INSET during the late 1980s, it remained a 'Cinderella topic'. (Williams, 1991: xii) However, pulling together the limited information which was available Harland *et al* remarked that the 'new INSET' had 'a very significant and wide-ranging impact on the planning, organisation and delivery of teachers' in-service provision'. They summarised its main effects on the structures of INSET provision as follows:

- i. Much of the power to define and control training needs was transferred from HE institutions to central Government (through national priorities) and, at least in the early stages of the scheme, to LEAs and schools (through local priorities).
- ii. To some extent, it led to a marginalisation of HE's role in INSET [...] and a gradual curtailment in long-term secondments [...]
- iii. The first four or five years of the scheme precipitated an expansion in many LEAs' levels of INSET activity and staffing, especially in advisory teacher appointments [...] The ESG schemes in mathematics, primary science and information technology, for example, increased the recruitment of advisory teachers who frequently provided school-based and classroom-based forms of professional development rather than 'courses'. Many LEAs, which had not gained significantly from the 'pool' system, were able to strengthen their INSET resources and provision.
- iv. The requirement to submit annual bids and oversee budgets for specific categories encouraged the establishment of posts of responsibility for the co-ordination of INSET within the LEAs [...] This in turn facilitated improvements in the management and administration of INSET at the LEA level [...]
- v. Similarly, TRIST required schools to appoint INSET or staff development co-ordinators, whose duties often included many of the responsibilities of the 'professional development tutors' envisaged in the James Report [...] For many, this raised the profile of INSET management, which was often buttressed by school staff development committees, TRIST clusters or networks for INSET co-ordinators, and the provision of 'INSET on INSET' training sessions by the LEA [...]
- vi. The new categorically-funded INSET created the need, and indeed requirement, for LEAs to develop more formalised and coherent systems for managing teachers' professional development [...] including, for example, consultative procedures and systems for identifying training needs with schools and teachers [...] Handbooks [...] offering guidelines on such matters as the identification of needs, LEA committee structures, data processing and the planning of INSET were published

vii. The DES stipulation [in 1987] that TRIST, ESGs and LEATGS schemes should be evaluated, stimulated an increase in the commissioning of evaluation studies by LEAs [...]

viii. [T]he 'new INSET' imported and applied a vocabulary and conceptual framework which were derived largely from business economics and logistic imagery [...] Terms like 'categorical funding', 'bids', 'contracts', and 'value for money', were promulgated and played a significant role in paving the way for the widely-accepted current vocabulary of 'market forces', 'agencies', business plans' and 'market economy models' of INSET [...]

ix. TRIST and the DES Circular 6/86 set in motion the annual cycle of the designation of National Priority Areas followed by LEA bids. Criticisms that this system militated against long-term planning, including the development of secure structures to facilitate the provision of quality INSET, were widespread [...]

x. ESGs and the new funding arrangements required advisers to assume managerial and supervisory roles in relation to the expanding numbers of advisory teachers. (1993: 7-8)

There is a touch of irony in the observation that LEAs, while initially seeming to oppose the introduction of specific grants, then used the local priority element of LEATGS to establish, strengthen and maintain their INSET infrastructure. HMI were to produce several reports monitoring the impact of LEATGS following its introduction. One of these, *The Implementation of The Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme: April 1988 - April 1990* (1991), concluded that 'LEATGS, having run for four years, has gone a good way to achieving its aims'. (DES, 1991: 3) Other writers, however, were to refer to the scheme's aims as simply 'gloss' and 'rhetoric' designed to distract one from 'the very significant financial pressures and power struggles at national and local level'. According to Graham, the LEATGS scheme could be seen as part of a policy package designed to reassert the control of the Secretary of State over 'the professional beliefs and skills of teachers through intervention in the system for in-service training'. While HMI was praising LEATGS for moving towards the achievement of its aims, an official report had recommended that 'to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to secure maximum autonomy of operation, a unified grant system should replace the ESG and LEATGS grant systems'. (Glickman and Dale, 1990: 33) These schemes had

operated alongside one another. OFSTED noted that the majority of LEAs managed both their ESG and LEATGS funds well. It remarked that 'the two programmes were achieving their aims efficiently'. (1993: para 3) However, 'the two systems were not integrated or synchronised over the years so that they proved cumbersome and time-consuming for the LEAs. There was obviously room for rationalisation'. (Tomlinson, 1993: 114) Others, though, observed that the rationale underlying calls for a unified grant at this time should not be seen simply as a way of bringing about operational efficiency. Goddard claimed that unifying ESGs and LEATGS offered a solution to a growing political dilemma which faced Government towards the end of the 1980s. By that time it had 'more policies and priorities than it had the resources to support'. The level of funding available through the ESGs and LEATGS 'was clearly inadequate and failed to match the need for development support'. It was clear, for example, that teachers would require substantial INSET support if the national curriculum was to be successfully implemented. 'The options were to either increase the cash available or to alter the distribution mechanism'. (1991: 23)

Grants for Educational Support and Training (GEST)

Central Government opted for the latter course of action and in 1990 it was announced that the funding mechanism for INSET would be changed once again. A circular arrived in all English LEAs informing them that the ESGs and LEATGS programmes would be brought together administratively into a single funding mechanism, GEST. There was delay in sending this circular to authorities. It had been promised for May but was not received by the authorities until June 1990. Welsh authorities did not receive the circular until September. The GEST scheme for 1991-92 incorporated 24 separate 'activities' or categories of grant. To implement the new scheme the DES reorganised its staffing and structures. Each of the 24 GEST activities was headed by a designated officer. LEAs would submit a 'bid' for funding under all, or some, of the activities to these designated officers. Central Government would provide 60 per cent of the total resource for each bid while the local authority was expected to provide the other 40 per cent. GM schools were not eligible for GEST. Instead they would receive what were called 'Special Purpose Grants' for development purposes (SPG(D)). SPG(D) was made available to GM schools to support similar types of initiatives which were being funded through the GEST scheme in any given year.

The late arrival of the GEST circular caused dismay in LEAs. The authorities only had until mid-October to submit their detailed bids. John Plummer (1991), the

principal adviser (INSET/curriculum) in Cheshire in 1991, observed that the unifying of ESGs and LEATGS 'made sense'. However, he claimed that the DES had rushed through the merger and had presented LEAs with a major headache. The circular itself, Plummer declared, was 'one of the most unreadable documents compiled by the DES'. Also, the GEST scheme required LEAs to provide the DES with a greater volume of data than had previously been the case. In addition to supplying this increased amount of data the LEAs were faced with the task of managing and sharing, what Plummer described as, a '24 layer sandwich'. ESGs and LEATGS derived from different legislation and, in 1991-92, they could not financially and technically be merged. (1991: 14) Indeed, it was not until the passing of the 1993 Education Act that provision was made for GEST grants to be paid on a single statutory basis as a unified grant.

A major change under GEST was that there would no longer be grant support for designated LEA, as opposed to central Government, INSET priorities. LPA funding was replaced by a specific GEST activity [only for 1991-92 and not in subsequent years] - grant 24: the management of INSET and non-subject-specific training - which supported £20 million worth of expenditure. This fell short of the £94.2m support for LPAs under LEATGS'. (OFSTED, 1993: para 3) Grant 24 amounted to only 10 per cent of the total supported GEST expenditure for 1991-92. It was also described as 'such a ragbag of disparate activities that no strong initiative could be placed upon it'. (Tomlinson, 1993: 115) The DES claimed that LEAs had been spending the LPA funding on the national curriculum or other national priorities. Hence, there was no need to preserve the distinction between LPAs and NPAs, it would be more sensible, it was argued, for the DES to direct the use of all funding. Plummer noted that 'the DES and LEAs fortunately [did have] many priorities in common'. However, he claimed that GEST would still 'dislocate many LEA INSET programmes'. (*op. cit.* 14) This was even more likely because, as noted in chapter two, at the time when GEST was introduced a number of other factors were beginning to impact on LEAs. These, for example, included reorganisation stemming from LMS and the inception of grant-maintained schools. As a result LEAs were required to devolve increasing amounts of their budgets to schools. The impact of all these developments on the ability of the LEAs to organise and provide INSET 'in-house' will be considered at greater detail in the following chapter. It was sufficient to note here that the autonomy of the LEA in relation to INSET was greatly eroded under the GEST scheme. The LEAs 'became solely an instrument of central government policy'. The Secretary of State's main objective for GEST was declared to be the targeting of as much support as possible on the implementation of the ERA, to ensure that

teachers received the INSET needed to implement the reforms. (Tomlinson, 1993: 115)

Concerns were immediately expressed about the bulk of INSET provision being directed at priorities set by central Government in this way. Woodrow observed that GEST was 'clearly designed towards meeting nationally determined objectives'. He claimed that because of this an 'INSET space' had developed. 'It is clear that the professional development of individual teachers on any significant scale will inevitably disappear as the demands of implementing the national curriculum arrangements continue to soak up massive amounts of money'. Woodrow noted that in the past successful and effective curriculum development had always followed on from similar teacher development through INSET. However, what was now evident were attempts to 'direct curriculum change'. This was resulting in teachers' development through INSET activity being directed only at 'using teachers' to successfully deliver the implementation of the national curriculum. Woodrow suggested that in instituting the ERA 'no attention was paid to teacher development'. He remarked that, through TRIST and LEATGS, the DES had placed pressure on schools and LEAs to 'face up to their staff development responsibilities through forward planning and evaluation'. However, Woodrow observed that it was 'not at all clear that there is any forward planning on a national scale by the DES, other than a consistent policy of offering isolated short-term responses'. He went on to use, as an example, the 'one-off' provision of 20-day designated courses to mathematics and science which had been funded through ESGs for a short time in the 1980s. He also cited the use of advisory teachers by LEAs. This practice will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Woodrow concluded that the DES needed 'to make clear the principles and long-term strategy underpinning its frequent changes [to INSET] funding and its organisation. (1991: 432-433) Other authors also expressed concern at the absence of a central Government strategy for the management and organisation of INSET. (Harland and Kinder, 1994: 53) Following the introduction of GEST there was also criticism of placing so much emphasis on the schools' assessment of their own needs. As Tomlinson noted, 'that way inadequacies may be recycled or reinforced and needs [including those of the individual teacher] not always fully understood. The importance of an external view and assistance from beyond the school itself is being increasingly understood and accepted'. (1993: 117)

The introduction of GEST resulted in the development of what had been termed 'a market economy within in-service education and training'. (Dempster, 1991: 181) GEST put more resources at the disposal of schools to manage much of their own

INSET. They could choose to 'buy' INSET from a range of providers. GEST was to significantly further encourage school-based, school-initiated and school-focused INSET. This had already grown during the time of TRIST, through the introduction of non-contact days for teachers and through the delegation of funding to schools under LMS. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 8) It should be noted that many local authorities had further encouraged these developments by 'delegating part of their INSET budgets to schools, using local priority funding'. (Plummer, 1991: 14) Throughout the 1990s the basic pattern of GEST remained unchanged although the categories of grant were reviewed annually. Indeed, each GEST circular reminded LEAs that they were not to assume that the approval of grants in a particular year meant that similar support would be available the following year. LEAs complained that this meant long-term programmes and commitments were jeopardized because there was no guarantee of continued funding. The capricious nature of the GEST programme can be highlighted by offering a list of GEST funded grants for two different years. There is a short-term topicality about particular categories of grant, for example, the introduction of appraisal, political concerns about truancy and delinquency, and about school security following the murder of headmaster Stephen Lawrence and the Dunblane tragedy.

<u>GEST grants: Financial Year 1993-94</u>	<u>GEST grants: Financial Year 1997-98</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Support for School Management 2. Local Management of Schools 3. LMS Implementation Schemes 4. Training for School Management 5. School Governor Training 6. Head Teacher Mentor Scheme 7. School Teacher Appraisal 8. General Support for the Basic Curriculum and Assessment 9. NC Assessment 10. IT in Schools 11. Designated Courses for Enhancing Primary Teachers' Subject Knowledge 12. Training for SEN Specialisms and for and for SEN in Ordinary Schools 13. Training for Educational Psychologists 14. Deaf/Blind Children 15. Articled Teacher Bursaries 16. Articled Teachers Other Costs 17. Induction Training and Licensed Teachers 18. Vocational Qualifications in Schools 19. Raising Standards in Inner City Schools 20. Reducing Truancy 21. Workers Educational Association 22. Youth Action Scheme 23. Training for Youth and Community Workers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Effectiveness 2. Implementation of NC Assessment Arrangements 3. Designated Courses for Enhancing Primary Teachers' Subject Knowledge 4. Special Educational Needs 5. Qualifications 6. Truancy, Disruptive and Disaffected Pupils 7. Bilingual Pupils 8. Drug Prevention and Schools 9. Training for Careers Teachers 10. Literacy and Numeracy Project Centres 11. Youth Service 12. National Professional Qualification for Headship 13. School Security 14. Child Protection 15. Family Literacy 16. Specialist Schools 17. Specialist Teacher Assistants

Over the years a contradiction lay at the heart of the GEST scheme. GEST was to be a fine example of the willingness of recent Conservative Governments to use both free-market forces and central control simultaneously in relation to education policy. The GEST scheme offered something to the powerful factions within the Conservative parliamentary party. In the sense that it was to be administered

through LEAs, it could be argued that it also appeased Conservatives in local government. (Tomlinson, 1993: 168) During the early years of the 1990s the influence of the neo-liberal faction on Government policy was becoming very evident. They were pursuing a 'marketisation' or 'privatisation' agenda for education. (Dempster, 1991: 181) They envisaged education as a marketplace in which schools competed. Schools were to become self-governing and self-managing. Once they had control of their own budgets schools were to compete with one another to attract pupils. More pupils attracted more funding. Information about the schools' performance would be released to parents so that they could make a 'choice' about which school they wanted their children to attend. In this way, it was claimed, the most successful schools would flourish while the unsuccessful ones would decline and eventually disappear. The neo-liberals welcomed the devolution of further funding and decision-making for teachers INSET to schools as they saw no role for the LEAs in the future. A paper produced by the Carlton Club Political Committee recommended that LEAs should be allowed to 'pass away'. (1991: para 4.3) However, neo-liberals were not totally satisfied with GEST. The scheme was to be administered by LEAs. GEST expenditure, along with other specific-grant-assisted programmes affecting schools, was to remain outside the aggregated schools budget of each authority, ie. outwith the money delegated to schools, but within the general schools budget. There were, however, explicit requirements about the devolution of decision-making on how the money would be spent in each GEST category.

The influence of the neo-liberal faction within Conservative politics was very evident in 1992 when the White Paper, *Choice and Diversity*, appeared. This welcomed the new context in which schools were to operate. They were to 'take decisions reflecting their own priorities and circumstances in a way that was not possible a few years ago'. The White Paper went on to observe that LEAs were still continuing to 'offer a range of educational advice, support and training services to their own schools and to others'. The Government, however, was expecting that 'increasingly the private sector will step in to provide such services'. (DfE, 1992: 32) Whilst in 1983 *Teaching Quality* noted that the LEA should bear the primary responsibility for teachers' INSET, less than a decade later there was a clearly articulated belief at central Government level that LEAs should eventually not provide INSET at all. As noted in the previous chapter, however, a grant-maintained revolution, on the scale predicted in the early 1990s, did not materialise. The Government, however reluctantly, appeared to have accepted that LEAs had a role. Indeed, subsequent developments suggested, perhaps, that the Government believed the LEAs could play a part in the drive towards school

improvement. But as will now be highlighted, the LEA's position in relation to improvement remained unclear.

The School Improvement Initiative

School improvement was placed firmly on the agenda of educational institutions in England and Wales in the period 1994-1995. As Fidler and Morris (1996) observed, 'since the advent of OFSTED inspection and the formation of a school effectiveness unit at the DfEE in 1994 there has been increasing pressure on schools to improve'. There was, however, disagreement over whether or not there was any accepted definition of the term 'school improvement'. Fidler and Morris however, observed that there remained 'a good deal of confusion over the term school improvement'. They noted that various writers had proposed 'more or less complex definitions', but quoted with approval the definition offered by Miles and Ekholm who stated that school improvement was 'a systematic, sustained effort aimed at changes in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively'. (1985: 48) Fidler and Morris pointed out that the latter definition was more acceptable than many others because it 'focused ultimately on educational goals but covered any intermediate process necessary to achieve those goals'. Thus, while it was certainly about improving teaching and learning in due course, 'this may not be the starting point'. They stressed that each school had to choose its own starting point for school improvement based on its own context and problems'. (*op. cit.* 1)

While the semantic arguments raged, the drive towards school improvement continued. It had a major impact on GEST programmes in the early 1990s. DfE circular 18/94 outlined the GEST programme for 1995-96. A new block grant entitled School Effectiveness drew together the majority of the GEST activities which in previous years had supported school management and appraisal, national curriculum and assessment. The aim of the new grant was to enable schools to improve effectiveness in line with their development plan or, following an OFSTED inspection, their action plan. The school effectiveness grant constituted nearly half of the GEST 1995-96 programme. Expenditure had to fall within the following areas of activity: local management of schools; school management training and development; support and training for governors; support and training for basic curriculum and assessment and; information technology in schools. As part of the 1996-97 GEST programme the Secretary of State proposed to give the school effectiveness grant an even 'sharper focus' on the

quality of teaching and learning and to reinforce the link between inspection, action planning and school improvement. The grant would once again make up almost half of the total GEST budget for that year. It would, though, be structured in three parts: up to 30 per cent to help schools implement their action plan, following an inspection; up to 60 per cent for all schools to be distributed by way of an LEA allocation formula and; up to 25 per cent for LEAs to focus support on schools identified by inspection or otherwise as having 'serious weaknesses' and for other 'local priorities' related to school effectiveness. The major focus of the 1997-98 programme was 'school-self improvement'. The subtle addition of the word 'self' reflected the widespread belief that the school should remain the centre of action towards improvement. As part of the 1997-98 programme several grants which had previously been separate were 'merged'. It was suggested that this was to increase discretion at local level. (DfEE, 1996: para A4) Some observed, though, that the effects of increasing local discretion were mitigated by continued reductions in the overall GEST budget. The Local Government Information Unit claimed that central Government expenditure on the GEST budget fell from £165.4m in 1993-94 to £150.2m in 1994-95. (LGIU, 1994: 3)

The 1997-98 circular clearly demonstrated a broad acceptance that it was highly unlikely that all schools would develop without help from some external sources. As noted, for example, LEAs were to provide expenditure to support 'weak' schools. One way that they had helped schools to undertake improvement was through the organisation and provision of INSET opportunities for school teachers. However, LEA responsibility with regard to quality of schooling remained vague and unclear. (Fidler and Morris, 1996: 4) As will be highlighted in the next chapter, the responsibility of LEAs to provide INSET had certainly remained ambiguous and open to different interpretations. By July 1996, when circular number 13/96 outlined the 1997-98 GEST programme, the attention paid to the INSET of school teachers had increased. This partly reflected an increasing recognition that 'quality' INSET was integral to the plans of schools committed to improvement. However, INSET issues had also been brought to the fore through the work of a new non-departmental public body, the Teacher Training Agency.

The Teacher Training Agency (TTA)

The 1994 Education Act was 'to make provision about teacher training and related matters'. Part one of the Act established the TTA. The functions given to the TTA by the Act included the provision of funds to institutions in England (including schools) which provided for the 'training' of school teachers. This function had

formerly been carried out by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. It was envisaged that the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales would continue to provide funding for training to schools and universities, including the Open University, in Wales. The TTA was given four objectives. These were 'to contribute to raising standards of teaching; to promote teaching as a career; to improve the quality and efficiency of all routes into the teaching profession [and]; to secure the involvement of schools in all courses and programmes for the initial training of school teachers'. In addition, the Act stated that the TTA should generally 'secure that teachers are well fitted and trained to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'.

Morris 1995 observed that 'the main focus of the Parliamentary debates on the Bill (preceding the 1994 Act) was initial teacher training (ITT) and, in particular, school-centred ITT'. INSET work was 'little mentioned'. As Morris remarked, however, 'the CPD [continuing professional development] powers of the TTA are extensive'. Indeed, because of this, he noted, 'it is no surprise that the agency has adopted a high profile throughout 1995 in seeking to improve CPD'. During that year the TTA was asked by the Secretary of State to administer the DfEE's initiative in management education, the Head Teacher Leadership and Management Programme (HEADLAMP). The HEADLAMP scheme had actually been announced prior to the TTA's inception. It was a 'voucher scheme' whereby a school's governing body applied for a newly-appointed head's entitlement to funding up to £2,500 to be spent on appropriate INSET within two years of the date of appointment. The scheme was to cover all maintained schools and non-maintained special schools. The TTA produced a register of providers for HEADLAMP. The first register contained 151 entries including 40 LEAs and 52 HE institutions. The number of registered providers for HEADLAMP rose to over 200 providers by the end of October 1995. (1995: 8) At the Conservative Party conference in October 1995, the Secretary of State announced that there would be a National Professional Qualification for Headteachers administered by the TTA. This new qualification would 'underpin' HEADLAMP. The TTA set up a 'National Professional Qualification Advisory Group' and the new qualification was trialled in 1996-97.

Also, in 1995, the Government commissioned a review of INSET by the TTA. Gillian Shephard outlined the reasons for this move. It was, she contended, to ensure that 'teachers' precious time and energies are not wasted on inadequate and inappropriate training'. (*The Guardian*, 28:3:95) The *TES* welcomed the

readiness of the TTA to take up a 'neglected professional issue such as in-service training'. It noted that two decades had passed since the James Report had proposed a more integrated approach to initial induction and INSET. The *TES* was critical about the low level of interest concerning INSET since 1972. 'To say [the review] is overdue is inadequate. It is frankly incredible that this is the first time that a thorough review of in-service training has been undertaken'. In the same issue of *TES* Anthea Millett, the Chief Executive of the TTA, called for the establishment of 'a national focus for in-service training'. She asked for all educational professionals to have their say on the future of INSET. She noted that the TTA review would 'seek views on a range of options for a more strategic direction for the continuing professional development of school teachers. This could range from a "light touch" system, setting national criteria for schools and teachers to use when planning and reviewing training, through to a national framework which could include a range of professional qualifications'. (*TES*, 19:5:95) Commenting on this statement by Millett, Morris noted that it 'could stand for a multitude of interpretations in literal language'. He pointed out, for example, that 'an additional or alternative feature of a heavier touch option such as a national framework of professional qualifications might be control of funding'. (*op. cit.* 13)

In July 1995, following its consultations with interest groups, the TTA sent its formal advice on INSET (or CPD as the agency prefers to call it) to the Secretary of State. Later in 1995, on October 31st, Millett gave a summary of the decisions which had been agreed. The TTA proposed the establishment of separate groups of practitioners. One of these groups was to ensure overall coherence while the others worked on national standards with remits:

- to clarify the profile of competencies for newly qualified teachers and
- to establish similar national standards of excellence in relation to key responsibilities:
 - of expert teachers
 - of experts in subject leadership and
 - of experts in school leadership and management. (Morris, 1995: 18)

As Morris noted, the TTA considered the first four items on the above list to be 'the most urgent'. Gillian Shephard, however, did not fully agree with the TTA's priorities. With an eye on the introduction of vouchers for nursery education she stressed the importance of effective early years teaching. Thus, when her priorities for CPD were announced they included:

- i. improving school leadership and management, including training for existing head teachers and the development of [the] National Professional Qualification for Headship [...];
- ii. improving subject leadership and management for heads of department, in secondary schools and subject co-ordinators in primary schools [...];
-
- iii. increasing specialist teaching in the primary phase;
- iv. increasing key stage 2 teachers' subject knowledge [...];
- v. [promoting] effective teaching for early years children;
- vi. [promoting] effective teaching at 14-19 [...];
- vii. [promoting] the use of IT to improve pupils' achievements;
- viii. increasing the effectiveness of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (DfEE, 1996: para A9)

Millett commented upon how much she 'valued the agency's independence from the DfEE'. Others, however, expressed concern that the TTA had been used as a medium for political intervention. They had 'looked askance at the [TTA] board's nominees as another example of quango sleaze'. (*Education*, 20:3:95: 12) Graham suggested that the work of the TTA in compiling national standards for teachers at every stage of their career allowed central Government to exercise power through ideological control of ITT and INSET. He believed that this amounted to 'the colonisation of consciousness in shaping the profession's thinking'. He also found risible any suggestion that the TTA was the same as a General Teaching Council (GTC), 'however seductive the rhetoric about benefiting the profession'. As he pointed out, 'teachers have not contracted into a system of self-regulation, nor have they asked TTA to act for them. The profession had not agreed that the competence model is the best vehicle for assuring the professional standards of members. The TTA is an organ of Government, controlled by the Secretary of State'. Graham concluded by observing that 'the governance of the profession by the profession through a [GTC], based on consensus and broad participation might be acceptable means of demonstrating accountability, but political control

through a 'quango' like the TTA is highly questionable'. (1996: 128-131) In an appraisal of the workload which the TTA had undertaken in its first year, Morris noted that it had been 'enormously energetic'. This was, in part, due to 'Ministerial impatience'. The TTA had been 'zealous to consult and largely to show the workings of its consultations'. However, as well as being eager to 'do some urgent jobs', Morris remarked that the agency also seemed 'intent on entrenching itself in the public education service'. (1995: 25)

Review

Within the wider context, then, national economic and political agendas had increasingly shaped the developments which had occurred in the field of INSET. Whilst at one time a partnership characterised relations between central and local government, since the mid-1970s central Governments had sought to secure much greater control over the management of INSET policy. In chapters two and three the changing place and purpose of LEAs and recent developments with regard to INSET were examined almost independently of one another. This was important as it helped draw attention to a very broad range of factors which moulded the arrangements which LEAs were making for providing INSET. It is now necessary to pull together the LEA and INSET strands of the research to focus on the role of the LEA in relation to INSET. In particular the following questions needed to be addressed. What responsibility did LEAs have to provide INSET? How have LEAs met this responsibility? Is there much diversity in the ways different LEAs have met this responsibility? How have the changes in the wider context impacted on the ways LEAs organise and deliver INSET? What previous studies have been conducted of LEA INSET provision? What were their findings?

CHAPTER FOUR

The LEA and INSET

The previous chapters considered several important factors within the context in which LEAs have operated in recent years. The effects, for example, of the demands for change stemming from central Government legislation were remarked upon. In particular, a reduction in the discretion and autonomy of LEAs, and the creation of an INSET market, were noted. This chapter will consider, in more detail, the effects of these significant influences on the arrangements made for INSET by LEAs over the last two decades. In particular, the impact on LEA teams of advisers and teachers' centres will be considered. Only a limited number of studies have been undertaken in this area. The chapter ends with a rationale for a comprehensive study of the ways in which LEAs are organising and delivering INSET opportunities for teachers. Traditionally, the employment of advisers and the establishment of teachers' centres were the two major ways in which LEAs met their responsibility for school teachers' INSET. However, as will now be noted, the LEAs' responsibility for INSET remains ambiguous and open to different interpretation.

The legal responsibility of LEAs to provide INSET

The provision of INSET has been widely accepted to be an important means of improving the education system as a whole. INSET is perceived as a vehicle for improving the quality of the teaching force, contributing to the effectiveness of individual schools and assisting the teacher's own personal and professional development. ACSET 'emphasised the central importance of LEAs in the determination of local INSET policies'. (1984: para 66) A decade later the House of Commons Education Committee observed that, 'at its best, the work done by LEA advisory services has been of great value [...] in maximising the benefits of in-service work'. (1995: viii) Morris pointed to the continuing ambiguity surrounding the legal position of LEAs with regard to 'educational quality'. He lists a number of statutory references which suggest that the LEA has an INSET function. The LEA is an employer and this seems to entail a duty on it to ensure that employees, in this case school teachers, are up-to-date with new developments in curriculum and pedagogy. 'There are duties of the employer in general under the Health and Safety at Work legislation (such as under section 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974), where [...] there are substantial responsibilities for the

headteacher and other staff (s.7), who expect to receive training, guidance and practical help from the LEA)'. (1994: 11)

There are also a number of other statutory functions listed in the Education Acts which imply that the LEA should have a concern for the professional development of school teachers. Under section 13 (1) of the 1996 Education Act there is a duty upon the LEA (so far as their powers enable them) to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development of the community by securing that efficient [...] education [throughout the primary, secondary and further education stages shall be] available to meet the needs of the population of their area. (Education Act 1996, s13 (1)) Section 357 (1) of the 1996 Act allocates curricular responsibilities and provides that the LEA and governing body of every maintained school is under a duty to exercise their functions with a view to securing that the National Curriculum is implemented. Section 14 (1)-(3) of the 1996 Act imposes upon the LEA the general duty to secure that there are available for their area 'sufficient' primary, secondary and special schools. A proviso adds that 'the schools available for an area should not be deemed to be sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as might be desirable in view of their ages, abilities, and aptitudes, and of the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training opportunities to their respective needs'.

However, while providing 'efficient' and 'sufficient' schooling hinted at an LEA INSET role, LEAs have disagreed on the extent to which these duties require them to make provision. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why LEA INSET arrangements have been so diverse over the years. LEAs, when deciding whether-or-not it is necessary to provide INSET opportunities, have considered their legal position. This is not to suggest that the LEAs interpretation of the law is the only factor determining the character of the LEA's INSET arrangements. As will be observed subsequently, a combination of several different factors could inform their decision. However, the vague statutory position has allowed LEAs to adopt a position which lies somewhere between two extremes described by Morris as a 'minimalist' or a 'maximalist' view of INSET responsibility. A proactive LEA which interpreted in a full sense the statutory duties of securing efficient and sufficient education might invest considerable resources in advisory staff, while an LEA taking a more minimalist view would employ or engage very few advisers. (1994: 27) Of course, it was possible that an authority which adopted a more minimalist approach might have no option because it was constrained by limited

resources. However, as was noted in the previous chapter, back in the early 1970s, when LEAs controlled greater resources, some of them did not view INSET as a high priority. So, while INSET is widely considered to be a vital means of ensuring quality in the public education service, uncertainty remains.

The publication of the White Paper, *Self-Governing Schools* (1996), seemed to offer some hope of clearing up the ambiguities. It had, after all, devoted the whole of chapter five to 'The Role of Local Education Authorities'. The White Paper has been criticised, however, for being 'inappropriately informal' and for not distinguishing between 'functions, which were laid down by law, and roles, a metaphorical expression, which is to do with styles and ways of performing or discharging functions'. (Fidler and Morris, 1996: 6) Fidler and Morris described *Self-Governing Schools* as a 'paradigm of confusion'. Chapter five listed support services for schools which they could choose to purchase from the LEA. These included INSET and teachers' centres. However, the White Paper remarked that 'it was [...] not an inherent or necessary part of the LEA role to provide such services'. Indeed, the White Paper went on to offer encouragement to schools in looking to purchase such services from LEAs other than their own, or from their own LEAs 'at full cost and in fair competition with the private sector'. (DfEE, 1996: para 20)

These extracts, it is claimed, demonstrate that little account had been taken by the writers of the White Paper to the fact 'that LEAs remained public authorities, created by Parliament, and had within their boundaries in aggregate the whole of the land of England and Wales. They are not creatures of the market, or of random local enterprise, and so they differ in kind from the variety of other bodies which may have sound, professional and deep interest in the quality of schooling'. Furthermore, Fidler and Morris highlighted the intention of Government to legislate to extend the powers of OFSTED and the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (OHMCI) so that they could inspect the work of LEAs. They noted, however that 'what is inspected in LEA business must be as defined in law as are, for example, at the [level of the] individual school, the teaching of core and foundation subjects. If such LEA inspections took place, 'no one could say whether the LEAs inspected are doing what they should be doing, in a legalistic sense. (*op. cit.* 6) The legal function of LEAs in relation to quality of schooling, then, requires attention. Despite the confusion, though, one can point to two main ways through which LEAs have traditionally supported INSET opportunities for school teachers.

LEA Advisory Services

Before considering the development of LEA advisory services it is important to highlight a problem of nomenclature. There has been an absence of any agreed title over the years for LEA staff who are concerned with advice and inspection. While in one LEA all officers may have become known as advisers, in another they may have acquired the title of inspector. This may have been the case even where an LEA employing advisers placed a greater emphasis on inspecting schools and vice versa. Further, a team of advisers in an LEA may have been headed by a Chief Inspector (Cave, 1984:4). Some LEAs also developed teams which included a mixture of advisers and inspectors but were headed by individuals with a variety of different titles including Deputy Education Officer or Principal Education Officer. With this in mind, throughout this thesis, unless otherwise stated, the term adviser is used to refer to both LEA advisers and inspectors.

A small number of LEA inspection and advisory services existed before the second world war. However, it was the 1944 Education Act which paved the way for all LEAs to provide these services. It stated that, 'any local education authority may cause an inspection to be made of any educational establishment maintained by the authority and such inspections shall be made by officers appointed by the local education authority.' (s.77(3)) As already hinted at in the discussion of the nomenclature problem, there was to be a great deal of variation in how LEAs interpreted this statement. This was reflected in more ways other than through the title which LEAs gave to their staff. A study by Stillman and Grant revealed that the size of advisory services from one LEA to another ranged, in 1974, from four to 94 advisers. Following local government reorganisation in 1974, the rationalizing of the size of LEAs resulted in a reduction in their number. This effectively meant that 'many [of the larger authorities which were left] gained their first reasonable establishment of advisers'. It was important to note, however, that across the country there continued to be a startling range of ratios between the number of advisers and adult, pupil, teacher and school numbers within LEAs. Some LEAs were employing up to four and a half times as many advisers per million adults as others during the 1980s. (Stillman and Grant 1989: 40) A further variation was that, while several LEAs would employ advisers to work across the primary and secondary divide, others wanted advisers to work in one particular phase only.

A number of attempts had been made to outline the work of LEA advisory services. In 1985 a DES publication, *The Role of the Local Education Authority's*

Advisory Services, suggested that they had four interrelated groups of functions. These included, 'monitoring and evaluating the work of the authority's services; supporting schools and other educational establishments; supporting and developing teachers and advising on their management and working on local initiatives.' (*op. cit.* 6) In a more general sense, however, their role could be defined as comprising three broad tasks by the mid-1980s. First, the inspectorial (accountability) function involved the managing and monitoring of educational institutions for both local and central Government. Second, the advisory (developmental) function concerned the facilitating and supporting of educational developments in the curriculum through INSET. Third, the administrative function which encompassed the paperwork which their inspectorial and advisory functions created. There were to be continued calls throughout the 1970s and 1980s for some form of balance between these broad functions as there was a wide variety between LEAs in the emphasis which was being placed on each of these functions. (*op. cit.* 123) In one LEA the main emphasis may have been on frequent and regular inspections, while in another full inspections were rare or, indeed, were not being conducted at all. (Cave, 1984: 4) This meant that LEAs differed in the amount of time they expected their advisers to devote to the advisory function and, in particular, the INSET element of this. Even in an LEA which placed a great emphasis on the advisory function it did not necessarily follow that all advisers would have a responsibility for INSET. Some advisers would devote the majority of their time to INSET while others would devote only half of it or none at all. Those advisers who were concerned with INSET would be involved with organising and participating in workshops, courses and conferences at teachers' centres or in schools. They would also visit schools and work on a one-to-one basis with teachers as a consultant.

During the 1970s some LEAs sought to differentiate the roles of inspector and adviser by appointing what were termed advisory teachers. By July 1987 a HMI report, *LEA Provision for Education and the Quality of Response in Schools and Colleges in England 1986* noted that through the support of central Government funding schemes introduced in the 1980s (TVEI, TRIST, ESGs and LEATGS), the number of advisory teachers employed by LEAs had increased. (1987: 17) Neil Straker traced the development of the ESG initiative to fund advisory teachers in mathematics, which came into effect in September 1985. He found that there were few stated guidelines from the DES as to the role which the new advisory teachers were to fulfil. Indeed, he observed that following a successful proposal from an LEA, the functions of the advisory teacher depended on each authority's specific perceived needs. In addition, at central Government level there appeared to be

little effort to co-ordinate or oversee the work of the new advisory teachers in mathematics or to appraise the effectiveness of this model of in-service training for teachers. This effectively illustrates the lack of a national long-term INSET strategy noted in the previous chapter. 'Projects have been evaluated, as required in the conditions upon which a grant is awarded, and this evaluation has been conducted on a somewhat haphazard basis: some authorities have appointed external local evaluators, others have relied on self-evaluation procedures, others have made some form of presentation of their activities to a local committee and, in some LEAs, the mathematics advisers have conducted the evaluation exercise'.

In an attempt to categorise the nature of the work of advisory teachers Straker conducted interviews with several of them. He asked them to describe a typical working week in diary form. On the basis of their responses it was possible to broadly categorise the work of advisory teachers:

Teaching: School-based INSET - working alongside teachers. Running in-service courses or workshops. Specific planning of lessons or workshops.

Administration: General administration.

Meetings: with other advisory teachers. With LEA mathematics adviser. Attendance at workshops/user groups etc. With visitors.

Advisory: Specific discussion with heads and teachers - giving specific advice to individuals.

Curriculum: Producing material/creating resources. GCSE training role. Visits to higher education institutions relating to curriculum development.

He found that, with one exception, the advisory teachers approached spent at least one half of their time engaged in teaching and preparation. Straker recognised that the categories he employed were not mutually exclusive; undoubtedly there were overlaps between the teaching and advisory nature of the work. Nevertheless, the study indicated the diversity of roles undertaken by advisory teachers. (1988: 373) The point here, however, was that a significant role of the growing number of advisory teachers was to devise and deliver INSET programmes, with a great deal of their time being spent in the classroom. The

advisory teacher, then, would support some advisers with their classroom commitment. However, advisory teachers also needed support and line-management which was undertaken by advisers. This, it was claimed, had resulted in an additional administrative load for the adviser and while he/she was coping with it advisory teachers' took on some of their classroom work. (Stillman and Grant, 1989: 123) Further encouragement and means for LEAs to strengthen their advisory services and teacher support teams was provided by the introduction of LEATGS in 1986. As noted in chapter three, this scheme made funds available for LEAs to develop and maintain their INSET infrastructure.

Only one in 10 of the existing advisory teacher posts in 1987 had been established before local government reorganisation in 1974. More than one in three had been brought in between 1984 and 1986. (Stillman and Grant, 1989: 39) After the introduction of LEATGS their number was to rise at an even faster rate and supercede the number of advisers. This increase was confirmed by the HMI Report, *The Implementation of the Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme, April 1989-April 1990*. HMI noted that the number of advisory teachers, particularly those with curriculum duties, had continued to rise between 1988 and 1990. The report observed that many new advisory teachers 'became responsible for delivering INSET as well as supporting teachers in the classroom. They contributed to in-service training through: the planning and delivery of off-site sessions; contributing to school-based INSET; supporting teachers who had recently attended courses given by advisers or other advisory teachers'. The report noted that, by 1990, 'training for [National Curriculum] core subjects was an increasingly important part of their work'. The quality and effectiveness of advisory teachers' INSET work was praised by HMI. (1991: 7) Of the new advisory posts created, over half were permanent and over sixty per cent of the posts were funded by the LEAs. However, even though a post was permanent this did not necessarily imply that the post holder had any career in that field, or tenure. (Stillman and Grant, 1989: 39) There was no clear career structure for advisory teachers within LEAs and many of them had little hope of promotion within their advisory service. Most could only hope to return to school with promotion, although 'this seemed to be expressed in hope rather than conviction.' (Blanchard *et al*, 1991: 95)

Male was to claim that, following the introduction of LEATGS, LEAs came very close to establishing what he termed 'the ideal model of INSET delivered at the local level.' He observed that with LEATGs the spending power of LEAs in relation to INSET increased dramatically and that this was coupled with a

desirable increase in autonomy. While the 'pool' funding arrangements had allowed higher education to dominate the INSET scene, its disappearance and the introduction of LEATGS meant that money was used for short non-award bearing courses devised and delivered locally by advisers. Male claimed this resulted in LEAs 'investing in people and development programmes which were to bring about real change of skills and knowledge of the teaching force.' (1994: 16-17) It should be noted, however, that the relative advantages of this local provision in comparison with that provided by higher education institutions was questioned. ACSET, for example, had found that many LEAs did not normally provide short courses 'of substantial academic subject study on the dissemination of relevant research, which is best provided by higher education institutions.' (1984: para 62)

The introduction of the 1988 ERA, however, was to have serious consequences for the LEA INSET structures which had been established following the introduction of LEATGS. As already indicated in Chapter Two, underlying this Act was a firm desire of central Government to reduce the power of LEAs. Council budgets had been reduced during the 1980s through restrictions on public expenditure and the ERA required LEAs to delegate a large amount of their reducing budgets to schools under LMS provisions. In addition, 1991 saw the introduction of the GEST scheme. As noted, GEST meant that local priority funding disappeared with INSET priorities and funding parameters being set by central Government. Decisions regarding a substantial element of the GEST budget were given to the schools. The combined effects of LMS requirements, the introduction of GM schools and the launch of the GEST scheme had serious consequences for LEA INSET arrangements. As HMI observed, for example, by 1991 'it is uncertain whether advisory teachers will be used to the same extent in the future. The reductions in LEA budgets made it more difficult for authorities to pay advisory teachers' salaries'. HMI pointed out that schools managing their own budget under LMS, might choose not to buy the services of advisory teachers. LMS could also make the recruitment of advisory teachers on short-term contracts more difficult because 'schools are, naturally, unwilling to second their best practitioners, and staff are afraid to apply for a fixed-term contract if they believe that this may not further their career'. (1991: 9) Male noted that the early 1990s saw LEA staff numbers being significantly reduced. He observed that advisory teachers became 'so scarce as to feature in the probably extinct category'. (1994: 17) As will be noted subsequently, this was a period in which a number of teachers' centres were no longer considered financially viable and closed.

The ERA had immediate implications for the work of those advisers who remained in post. Following its introduction a great deal of local INSET was directed towards helping teachers with the introduction of the National Curriculum. The Act itself placed a duty on the LEA and the governing body to exercise their function with a view to securing that the National Curriculum was implemented. (1988: s.1(1)) This implied that LEA advisers should continue to act as change agents facilitating educational innovation. However, LEAs were also expected to suspend financial delegation to schools where the governing body was guilty of 'a substantial or persistent failure to comply with any requirements under the [LEA's financial delegation] scheme'. (s.37(1a)) This suggested that LEAs needed to keep the work of schools in their area under constant review. There was certainly an increased emphasis on the inspection function of the LEA adviser. The phrase 'quality control' became more widely used. An Audit Commission Report entitled, *Assuring Quality in Education: a Report on Local Education Authority Inspectors and Advisers* (1989), remarked that the basic task of LEA advisory services should be to promote quality in education.

The Report suggested three ways in which this task could be carried out. First, through direct observations of teaching and learning. Second, by having LEA advisory services fulfil a control function, for example, in ensuring that the National Curriculum was being taught. Third, in consequence of the second point above, by distancing themselves from institutional management. However, as Nixon and Ruddock found, many LEA advisory services were to choose to make explicit to schools the criteria which were to underpin inspections following 1988. In this way it was felt that LEAs could at least try to maintain a spirit of partnership with the schools. It was hoped that 'the seeming openness and straight-forwardness of these agreed criteria served to soften the hard and divisive edge of teacher suspicions about inspections.' (1992: 432) As LEAs began to redesignate many of their advisers as inspectors in the aftermath of the ERA, the role of the advisory teacher became one of pursuing the outcomes of inspections. They were said to be 'primarily playing a remedial or fire fighting role within a climate of accountability.' (Blanchard *et al*, 1991: 95) More of the INSET work of the LEA fell to them.

By the end of 1991 LEAs were caught between, on the one hand, increased central control at the national level and, on the other hand, pressures to extend the devolution of INSET money to individual schools. As a result, LEA discretion in pursuing its own INSET initiatives based on local priorities had been seriously diminished. They were now predominantly 'delivering' central Government

initiated priorities. After devolving the large majority of their INSET budget to schools, LEAs could only hope that they would 'buy-in' to the authority's services. LEA INSET services had experienced almost a golden age in the period of LEATGS. By the early 1990s they were entering an 'uncertain phase of contraction and restructuring'. Faced with financial pressures, several LEAs began to experiment with what was termed an 'agency-based approaches to market-led INSET':

[The] main patterns of LEAs' structures for providing INSET were undergoing substantial change in the early 1990s. Talk of the 'enabling' authority was widespread, and LEAs were at various stages in grappling with the problem of transforming 'command' cultures into 'service' cultures or shifting from 'management by control' to 'management by contract'. It was against the background of this emerging contractual approach, with its 'service level agreements' and 'competitive tendering', that the 'agency-based' structure gained ground as a solution to the problem of delivering centrally-determined initiatives, while offering a service to schools with devolved INSET budgets. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 12)

In this climate, Geoffrey Morris (Cambridgeshire) was among the first Chief Education Officers to pursue the idea of 'an agency approach'. He noted that 'an agency arrangement [...] would be funded partly by the authority in recognition of specific services and standards which the agency would be contracted to supply or meet and partly by the schools and colleges buying (if they chose) those services'. Morris remarked that the 'size of each agency and the proportion of each kind of contract would depend on the agency's success or otherwise in attracting school and college business which could extend beyond those establishments maintained by the authority in question [...], the number taken on by the agency would depend on the demand from schools'. Morris stressed that any new agency, before taking on the risk of appointing people, would have to conduct 'careful research of schools'. 'This argued strongly for re-structuring [LEA] departments in terms of self-standing units capable of being managed by accountable budget-holders able to respond flexibly to the particular client groups they exist to serve'. (1990: 9)

The early 1990s, then, was a time when 'some LEAs were experimenting with agencies, others were preparing the way for them, and still others were keeping their options under review while operating along more conventional lines'. Harland *et al* conducted a research project funded through the NFER, examining

contrasting approaches to LEA management and organisation of INSET. The project involved a postal questionnaire being sent to all LEAs in England and Wales in the summer term of 1991. Sixty LEAs responded. The data from this survey were used to select five LEAs for more in-depth case-study research. Analysis of the survey data suggested that LEA INSET organisation could be categorised as either 'relatively centralist' or 'highly delegated, agency-based'. Harland *et al* offered a summary of the other main findings from their survey:

- i. Although the average number of advisers/inspectors remained constant in the 60 LEAs surveyed (at about 27) for the two years under consideration (1990-91 and 1991-92), the average number of advisory teachers fell from about 42 to 38.
- ii. Over 40 per cent of full-time advisory teachers, compared with less than 20 per cent of part-timers, held permanent contracts. Just under 20 per cent of both groups had fixed-term contracts. Most of the remainder were on secondment.
- iii. LEAs saw the key issues associated with the INSET role of their advisory teacher services as the ability to meet schools' training needs, to fund the service adequately, and to recruit, retain and maintain the morale of their advisory teacher teams.
- iv. The majority of LEAs had carried out systematic enquiries into the professional development needs of school staff.
- v. Most LEAs used a variety of strategies to market their INSET provision including written information on individual courses, their whole programme and phase/curriculum specific courses, personal contracts and presentations to specific groups (such as head teachers). Computerized databases of training on offer were used less frequently.
- vi. Lecturers from higher education institutions and other external consultants were used by all the LEAs taking part in the survey, most frequently for school management training and subject specific training. However, outside expertise was also used for a variety of other activities.

vii. Professional Development/Teachers' Centres were the most frequently used locations for LEA INSET provision, but most LEAs also used a number of other types of location.

viii. LEAs were more likely to use 'top-down' approaches (such as questionnaires, proformas or attendance counts) when monitoring and evaluating INSET in general than when monitoring or evaluating schools' use of delegated budgets.

ix. The percentage of INSET budget allocated to schools and colleges increased from 22 per cent in 1990-91 to about 25 per cent in 1991-92.

Harland *et al* found that two of the five case-study LEAs were more closely akin to a relatively centralist approach to INSET organisation. They continued, as far as possible, to hold resources centrally rather than delegate them to schools. The other three LEAs in the study used a more delegated, agency-based approach. However, Harland *et al* observed that none of the five case-study LEAs exclusively used a centralist approach. 'Devolved budgets and elements of a market system were evident to varying degrees in all the case-study LEAs examined in the research'. Conversely, all five LEAs, 'contained examples of INSET provision which was organised along centralist lines, though in the case of the two agency-based authorities, this type of provision represented the exception rather than the rule'. A major difference between the two organisational approaches lay in the identification of schools' INSET needs and priorities. An 'important determinant of the efficacy of [...] centralized processes and structures was the capacity of the advisers to match the provision mounted to the professional development needs and interests of the LEA, schools and teachers. This approach differs greatly from the market economy model, in which, theoretically at least, it is the schools that determine their INSET priorities and agenda'. (Harland *et al*, 1993: 30-31)

Documentation publicly available from two LEAs seemed to corroborate the use of the relatively centralist and agency-based organisational models. In advertisements Hampshire County Council indicated that they provided several services to schools each of which was organised through an agency. Advisory monies had been devolved to all local schools who bought back, or did not buy back, services from an Inspection and Advisory Agency. The authority had also established an Education and Training Agency. Each agency had a 'Business Unit Manager'. These agencies had quasi-independence from the county council. They were required to generate their own incomes to pay for costs. These costs

included the rental of office space in a professional development centre which was 'owned' by the county council. In contrast, the London Borough of Croydon had decided to operate a relatively centralist INSET arrangement. In the early 1990s the authority made the decision not to devolve advisory funding to schools. In consequence, Croydon retained a relatively high number of staff who were clearly designated as inspectors or advisers. There was an on-going cycle of LEA inspections and a inspector was assigned to every LM school. The members of the advisory service were 'expected to spend 60 per cent of their time in schools, 20 per cent organising and running courses and conferences, and 20 per cent on preparation and professional development'. (Gyte and Hawes 1994: 16) The continued existence of relatively centralist LEA INSET organisations, however, depended very much on sufficient resources being available. At the start of 1992 the LEA continued to have unrestricted power to inspect schools. These were given by s.77(3) of the 1944 Education Act. However, the 1992 Education (Schools) Act was to restrict LEA inspection powers. Critically, it also resulted in a further reduction in LEA advisory service budgets.

The LEA's unrestricted right of inspection was replaced by a right of inspection only where the authority needed information in connection with any of its functions and if that information could not reasonably be obtained other than by inspection. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) was established in 1992 and, as the name suggests, its main role is a responsibility for standards in schools. To this end OFSTED presides over a list of registered inspectors who tender for the task of carrying out school inspections. A significant part of the annual expenditure for advice and inspection which the LEAs received prior to 1992 was deducted from their budgets and redistributed to OFSTED. The inspections were conducted once every four years initially, although this changed subsequently to once every six years. The first four year cycle began on 1st September 1993 for secondary schools and 1st September 1994 for all nursery, primary and special schools. LEA advisers could become registered inspectors on the OFSTED list and tender for the job of carrying out inspections. Kirkman noted the impact of the 1992 Education (Schools) Act. She claimed that the introduction of OFSTED had halved local authority resources for advisers. Kirkman observed that the number of advisers in urban authorities fell by 22 per cent between 1992-93 and 1993-94. The number of advisers in Norfolk had fallen from 15 to three, Doncaster's from 20 to four and Leicestershire's from 50 to 21. Overall the number of advisers fell by 18 per cent and the number of advisory teachers by 38 per cent.

The figures used by Kirkman had been taken from the 1993 and 1994 *Survey of the Organisation of LEA Inspection and Advisory Services*. These surveys had been conducted by Joan Dean on behalf of the Education Management Information Exchange. In 1995 a third survey was completed by Peter Mann. He received responses from a total of 74 LEAs, 61 per cent of those in England and Wales. Of the LEAs responding in 1995, 73 per cent indicated an overall reduction in posts, 26 per cent reported losses of one quarter to one half of posts; 14 per cent reported losses of more than one half of posts; and 11 per cent reported that they had no remaining advisory teacher posts. The total number of adviser posts declined by 14 percent, while the total number of advisory teacher posts declined by 34 per cent. Mann noted regional differences. Indeed, two LEAs in London reported rises in their complement of advisory teachers. 'There was a greater decline in advisory teacher posts in English and Welsh counties (39%) and metropolitan boroughs (38%) than in London boroughs (20%). However, the London picture was affected by substantial rises in two LEAs whereas in the remainder the decline amounted to 32%'. In 1987 the Audit Commission observed that in order to cover the required range of subjects and skills an LEA should have at least 17 full-time advisers. Mann found that in 1994/95 almost half of the responding English and Welsh LEAs had fewer than 17. Mann also noted an increased involvement in OFSTED work. This, though, varied. Five of the 64 LEAs responding to Mann's survey were not involved in OFSTED work. In contrast, three LEAs depended on OFSTED work to support 40-49 per cent of their total income. Moreover, 'faced with likely reductions from their own LEA budgets, 14 LEAs (22%) were planning to increase their income from OFSTED during 1995/96. (1995: s. 3)

Financial difficulties in the aftermath of the 1992 Act were 'further exacerbated by rate-capping and an exodus of schools seeking [GM] status'. (Kirkman, 1995, 8) Within this context support for the work of LEA advisory services was to come to the fore. As noted, a report by the House of Commons Education Committee, *Science and Technology in Schools*, pointed to the need for support systems if schools were to be properly maintained and further developed. The report praised the 'best' work completed by LEA advisory services and recommended that 'such good practice must be maintained, whether by supporting the numbers and qualifications of existing staff or by developing other systems of support that can make best use of the expertise that exists within local authorities and in other organisations'. (1995a: para 41) Another Commons Education Committee report, published a couple of months earlier, had already expressed the Committee's concern about the decline in LEA advisory services. *Performance in City Schools* had recommended that:

in assessing its *overall* spending priorities - that is, not just its education policy - each local authority pays particular attention to the continuing need for advisers and inspectors. To ensure that local government remains convinced of the importance of its role in education, and maintains the capacity to carry it out, national government must take a lead. The DFE, in conjunction with non-departmental agencies such as OFSTED and the Teacher Training Agency, should support and encourage the continued existence of core educational services provided by local authorities. This can be done not only through funding strategy, but by a recognition on the part of the national government of the value of well-focused high-quality support from LEAs for their schools. (1995b: para 110)

Kirkman suggested that immediate action was needed to 'reconnect the life support system', LEA teams of advisers. She noted that in an attempt to move back to their advisory support role, many LEAs had started to 'run commercial services, which schools can buy with their delegated funds. One advantage is that LEAs are forced to tailor projects to schools' needs. However, splitting an advisory department into separate commercial units and employing free-lance advisers can lead to lack of cohesion'. Kirkman observed the calls for more investment in LEA advisory services, 'to get the support going again'. She claimed that, following the recommendations of the local government review, the move to unitary authorities in many areas might once again worsen the situation and lead to a further deterioration in LEA advisory services. (*op. cit.*) As noted, SSAs were based partly on the population size of an authority. Population, then, was extremely important in determining the amount of financial resource an authority received each year. It was feared that less populated unitary authorities might find it difficult to provide a workable service. They would not have the financial resource to employ a viable number of advisers. Many new unitary authorities might have to try and build a joint advisory service with neighbouring authorities. As will now be highlighted, the availability of financial resources also had a dramatic effect on the provision of LEA teachers' centres in the period 1980-1996.

LEA Teachers' Centres

Teachers' centres were an expression of the LEAs concern for the professional development of teachers. (Williams, 1991: 6) Some teachers' centres, attached to institutions or schools of education in universities, existed almost throughout the entire post-war period as part of area training organisations established after the Mc Nair Report of 1944. In the 1960s, however, there was a sudden increase in the number of teachers' centres set up by local authorities. Adams claimed that 'these were the outcome of Working Paper Number 10 published in 1967 by the Schools Council'. This paper was entitled, *Curriculum development: teachers' groups and centres*, and it provided local education authorities with 'a certain amount of guidance for action - a teachers' centre was a firm proposition needing accommodation and staff, that is, a place in the estimates'. The paper put forward the idea of teachers' centres in a context of the need for secondary teachers to meet to discuss both the Certificate of Secondary Education, and the experience of some colleagues with the Nuffield mathematics and science projects. It was claimed that teachers needed to meet locally in groups in a workshop situation. (1975: 4) As the paper declared 'the motive power should come primarily from local groups of teachers accessible to one another; [and] there should be effective and close collaboration between teachers and all those who are able to offer close collaboration [...] that is, the support services of advisers, inspectorate and institutions of training'. (Schools Council, 1967: para 8) In effect, 'the LEA was asked to co-operate with existing in-service agencies such as colleges of education or universities, even to cross authority boundaries, in an attempt to make suitable new in-service education opportunities. In its conclusions the working paper enjoined that local groups of teachers should provide the motive power, without hierarchy of initiative or control. As the paper then gave a couple of pages to practical considerations including financial implications the LEA recognised that a new institution was being mooted for which they might choose to make provision.

By 1977 a total of 544 teachers' centres had been established. (M. Williams, 1991: 7) As the previous section on advisers noted, though, they were created at a time when there was a wide disparity between LEAs in their approach to, and provision of, INSET. (Lee and Gough, 1982: 74) ACSET reported that while some LEAs had 'developed well-considered INSET policies and produced effective arrangements, others had minimal provision'. (1984: para 58) As a consequence, opportunities for teachers to undertake INSET varied depending on where they worked. Teachers' centres certainly reflected this disparity in so much as they were to differ considerably. As J. Williams noted, 'in view of the influence that the

British Teachers' Centres idea has had overseas, it is a surprise to the visitor to this country to see the diversity of ways in which it has developed here. British centres varied in almost every respect. They were situated in old country houses, redundant school buildings, parts of existing schools, and in some cases, in colleges of education'. (1981: 131) In general, though, three types of teachers' centre were to be supported and maintained by LEAs. The local, multi-purpose centre, generally staffed by a leader with other professional and technical assistants and used for day time and early evening courses; the local specialist centre of similar nature to the multi-purpose centre, but offering a high degree of skill, information and expertise in one subject area; and the residential centre which provided opportunities for some intensive work and an important social element. (Stephens, 1982: 47)

Gough listed what he considered to be the unique qualities of the contribution of teachers' centres in the early 1970s. These were: their local nature; the neutral setting they offered, ie. their relative freedom from hierarchies involved in either schools or local authority systems; the tendency they had to involve the teachers' themselves in the decision-making, the design and the implementation of their in-service programmes. (1975: 12) Other authors considered the main role of the LEA teachers' centre. It was claimed that they acted: as providers (in offering courses, working parties, and the like, to demonstratable needs); as facilitators (in making premises, technical service, expert advice etc. available to teachers wishing to undertake work for themselves); as brokers (in recognising common interests, introducing people to people, and posing provocative questions ie. acting as catalysts between institutions, between stages and across the curriculum.) and; as initiators (in undertaking work unilaterally). (Newman *et al*, 1981: 45) In their study of teachers' centres, Weindling *et al* listed the range of centre activities. This range had 'increased considerably' since the 1960s. Courses as well as one-off lectures were offered on a variety of topics. These formed a large part of the programme which centres' offered. However, another important aspect of some centres' work was their provision of curriculum groups. 'This was not surprising considering that a major impetus for the growth of teachers' centres had come from the Nuffield curriculum projects. As Weindling *et al* noted, in their survey of centres' local curriculum projects were mentioned by 180 of the 248 multi-purpose centre leaders, while national projects were mentioned by 124. (1983: 59) Other centre activities included the provision of equipment and services, exhibitions, social activities and the use of the centre by various groups. The latter included, Youth Services, play groups, adult literacy, the Careers Services, school governors

and most common of all, the teachers' subject associations and professional associations.

The staffing of teachers' centres tended to vary 'from part-timers, involved for as little as one fifth of their time in centre work, to institutions having perhaps 18 professionals in a team supported by ancillary staff'. Most centres had an individual within them who was usually given the title Warden, although several other terms were used. It is interesting to observe, given the lack of hierarchies which Gough found to be a significant characteristic of the centres, that with the formation of their first national association these individuals decided to adopt the title Teachers' Centre Leader. Redknapp highlighted the emphasis some had placed on 'the Leader's independent role'. (1977: 68) He claimed that this was 'in line with the existing situation in most teachers' centres'. Questioning this, Newman *et al*, remarked that 'undoubtedly a large number of leaders, perhaps the majority, are answerable to an adviser - probably the chief adviser'. They went on to note the definition of the centre leaders role given by HMI Arthur Clegg while speaking to centre leaders in Roehampton in 1979. Clegg suggested that the role of the centre leader included: 'offering a service station (resources, machinery, etc.); grouse shooting (what the more pretentious of us would call pastoral care); trouble shooting (problem solving? Where, perhaps, more than anywhere a leader is required to be a good teacher); yellow pages (an information service); pollinating (a refreshing alternative to the cliches, a type of catalyst, or broker); and evaluating'.

Teachers' centres had been set up by LEAs in an attempt to promote and improve INSET opportunities for school teachers. However, they were said to be neither wholly the LEA's person nor the teachers' person. Equally, teachers' centres were neither exclusively concerned with doing their own thing nor merely disseminators of other people's work. At root, the original concept of a teachers' centre was of a location and a community of professionals where professional learning took place. The 'ownership' of the learning was held by the professional community, which arranged formal, and less formal, programmes of INSET activity. Making a prediction about the development of teachers' centres in the 1980s, Newman *et al* concluded by speculating that they would undoubtedly 'face their share of reappraisal and readjustment'. (1981: 48) ACSET noted the advantages of the INSET provision made through LEA teachers centres'. In particular they highlighted that some had made a substantial contribution in the form of short courses. ACSET went on to claim, however, that the centres' did 'not normally provide courses of substantial academic subject study, on the

dissemination of relevant research, which was best provided by higher education institutions'. ACSET recommended that LEAs should review their locally-based INSET provision, having regard to the relative advantages and disadvantages of such provision made by higher education institutions which itself may be based in teachers' centres or other LEA accommodation. (1984: para 62) By the early 1980s, the heyday of the teachers' centres was well and truly over. Professionally doubts about the value of external workshops/courses based away from the schools were being voiced.

Throughout the 1980s the impact of an increasing number of central Government initiatives were to have an effect on the work of teachers' centres. These included the introduction of the GCSE and the National Curriculum. Concurrently financial constraints placed on the public sector were significantly altering the situation in which teachers' centres operated. In a more financially-conscious era the costs of running teachers' centres became a stumbling block. Elected members on education committees had sometimes failed to discern their purpose. The centres were seen to be under-used for large parts of the week during school terms, and especially at holiday times. Parts of the programme offered by many teachers centres were also not directly under 'outside' control and were criticised for being weak and of little value to teachers mainly because they lacked accreditation. Teachers' centres, in the eyes of some, appeared to be an extra that could be easily cut or significantly changed. This was not to suggest that the amounts saved by any cut backs were substantial. As Williams observed, throughout their history 'many of the centres were often under funded and poorly supported'. (*op. cit.* 131) Some LEAs were to adopt changes in approach and philosophy which had ramifications for the running of centres. Changes of this kind were evident when LEAs renamed a teachers' centre a professional development centre. With the latter, 'ownership' of the centre was placed more firmly into the hands of LEA advisers so that they could promote their own, and the Government's, agendas for INSET. The idea of professional centres had been proposed by the James Committee in its 1972 report. The committee recommended a 'country-wide network' of professional centres. (DES, 1972a: para 2.29)

Several LEA teachers' centres became the casualties of crises over finances. If centres were not closed completely, financial constraints still influenced the way in which they continued to operate. When resources became tight, for example, the range of curriculum support materials, equipment for teachers to borrow or the latest publications for teachers to read might be shed. This was also true of staff.

In an attempt by LEAs to save money, space in many teachers' centres became the 'home base' of personnel such as advisory teachers. The worst effects on centres of financial reductions in public spending during the 1980s, though, were initially negated. This was because of the injection given to LEA INSET infrastructures by TVEI, TRIST and LEATGS local priority funding. With the introduction of LMS and GEST, however, many more teachers' centres became financial casualties. Those that remained changed completely with their original purpose becoming a distant memory. By the 1990s they were operating in a significantly changed context. The Government was increasingly laying down the INSET agenda for school teachers. Teachers' centres became places where LEA advisers, and others such as educational consultants, gave the word instead of sharing it. Long gone were the days when the concept of pluralism underpinned the control of INSET and the curriculum. (M. Williams, 1991: 7) This was also true in relation to the control of the centres themselves. As noted, in the past teachers were considered to have had a degree of control over the day-to-day working and future development of centres in an environment which had been relatively free of hierarchies. From the mid-1980s the management of many centres was increasingly placed in the hands of LEA staff. An, INSET co-ordinator, or equivalent, was given overall responsibility for the centre, while an administrator managed it on a day-to-day basis. As Harland *et al* (1993) found, the teachers' / professional centre was still the most frequently used location for LEA INSET provision. With reduced resources and the 'marketisation' of education, however, many centres had to generate part of their own income. They did this by renting out accommodation and offering printing services etc. to other local authority departments and schools. As will be highlighted subsequently, some also provided similar services to organisations such as small businesses.

Reorganisation stemming from the recommendations of the local government review was also likely to change the situation in which many of the remaining teachers' centres were operating. It was possible that several 'repositioned' county councils and the new unitary authorities might not be able to support the running of existing centres. There was the possibility of 'joint arrangements' although this depended on the willingness of all parties to provide resources. In *Reorganising Education in Inner London*, a report prepared on behalf of the South East Region of the Society of Education Officers, Graveson attempted to describe the inner London experience of reorganisation following the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority at the end of March 1990. It was hoped that this would contribute to the process of the Local Government Review. Graveson noted that a small number of specialist centres continued to operate across London after April

1990 through arrangements which included some, or all of the, inner London boroughs. Several of these provided INSET opportunities for teachers. Five types of 'ownership' of the centres had emerged, though all were still evolving. These comprised: having a lead borough without a joint committee; a lead borough with a joint committee; independent charitable trust status; higher education; and further education. Ominously, though, Graveson drew inferences for those county areas facing reorganisation. He observed that 'it would be unwise to assume, without convincing evidence, that the present county boundary will hold particular significance for the new authorities, other than for a short time initially, and possibly not at all'. (1992: 33-36)

Review

Several factors in the wider context, then, had an influence on the ways in which LEAs organised and delivered INSET from the 1970s. The Harland *et al* study was the most relevant research which had been completed in the area of LEAs and INSET prior to this study. They collected their data between 1991 and (the early months of) 1992. Since then further changes took place in the context in which LEAs operate. We witnessed an increase in central Government control, as it set the levels of financial resource which LEAs had to spend. It decided on the amounts available through SSAs and the GEST scheme. The 1992 Education (Schools) Act further reduced LEA financial resources. LEA practices also had to adapt to the developing INSET market and, from 1995, to the proposals of the TTA. Many county councils reorganised following the recommendations of the local government review. As a consequence of these developments the INSET organisation and practices of all LEAs were likely to have changed since 1991. It was timely, therefore, for this study to be undertaken. The following questions needed to be addressed. What had been the impact within LEAs of all these changes? How had LEAs responded? What were the similarities and differences in LEAs' responses? What was the rationale which underpinned each LEA's response? Chapter five now considers the methodological approach which was adopted for the research undertaken.

CHAPTER FIVE

Theory and Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to give the reader an indication of the methodological assumptions which underpinned the researcher's approach to the study of LEA INSET provision. Producing the chapter has allowed the researcher to highlight, and reflect upon, the principles, the process and some problems associated with conducting the research. Burgess and Bulmer observed that the concept of methodology denoted 'the systematic and logical study of the principles guiding research.' (1981: 478) In this sense methodology had a broader nuance of meaning than cognate terms such as 'strategy' or 'methods.' The latter are technical issues which, in this study, are subsumed under the more comprehensive classification of 'methodology'. Also, as Gouldner noted, implicit within methodology are ideological resonant assumptions about the social world. (1971: 51) In an attempt to make more explicit the principles directing this inquiry, the chapter begins with a justification for the eclectic theoretical approach which was employed. The role of theory and concepts in the research are demonstrated. Then the research strategy is discussed. This involves consideration of the relationship between theory, data collection and data analysis. The methods employed, the rationale for their use, and the relationship existing between the methods employed is made explicit.

An eclectic theoretical approach

An eclectic theoretical approach was adopted within this research. The use of this eclectic approach was influenced by a combination of factors. It allowed the researcher to avoid becoming conceptually delimited and meant that he did not miss any advantages which different theoretical perspectives might offer. Intellectual forces such as post-modernism had an influence on the researcher's thinking. While it is perceived as a slippery term which has been given several meanings, the definition of post-modernism offered by Tomlinson is useful. He uses it generally to mean 'the attempt to show that all knowledge must be relative because, by deconstructing language, it seems possible to show that it is actually a barrier to telling the 'truth' about reality. [...] The issue is whether objective knowledge of any kind is possible'. (1995: 307) The term objectivity itself, however, is also problematic. Is one talking about what Eisner (1993) termed 'ontological objectivity' or 'procedural objectivity'? 'Extreme relativism' does not necessarily follow from the absence of some foundation of data whose validity

was absolutely certain. (Open University, 1994: 34) Nor does it mean that a use of the traditional notion of truth has to be abandoned. One can still claim that 'the truth is out there', even if, in the ontological sense, we will never know if we have found it. Popper made the point by using a classic analogy. Asking readers to imagine a mountain peak which was permanently, or almost permanently, wrapped in clouds, he observed that a:

climber may not merely have difficulties in getting there - he may not know when he gets there, because, he may be unable to distinguish, in the clouds, between the main summit and some subsidiary peak. Yet this does not affect the objective existence of the summit [...] The very idea of error, or of doubt [...] implies the idea of an objective truth which we may fail to reach. (1968: 226)

One needs to be wary of both 'naive realism' (Eisner, 1993: 50) and 'extreme relativism'. All research remains historically and culturally specific and, therefore, its ontological objectivity can be challenged. One can talk of 'cultural relativism'. One can also still, though, 'in a straightforward and non-troublesome sense', use objectivity as a 'label'. 'At any one time the viewpoint that is the most objective is the one that currently is the most warranted or rational'. (Philips, 1993: 61) However, giving up any claim to certainty means that the researcher's presupposition that the 'truth' can be obtained becomes transcendental. In this sense the basis for using the concept of 'truth' becomes as much about intuition as reasoning. However, this remains the case with many other presuppositions about the world which are used everyday. One can never be confident beyond all possible doubt about them. This does not, though, undermine their use in this research. (Open University, 1994: 27) As the above commentary makes clear, this researcher is not a post-modernist. However, the willingness to question, and not to accept uncritically, the 'grand theories' which have been used within educational policy studies is appealing, especially if one agrees that none of the 'grand theories' alone can offer an adequate explanation of the topic under examination. An eclectic approach, therefore, was adopted because it offered more satisfactory tools for exploration.

Selecting more than one theoretical perspective, however, might also be considered problematic. The research could be accused of theoretical disarray. There may be no clear 'map'. However, given the complexity of the process of implementing educational policy, employing different perspectives is not unlike using different lenses in the camera to focus on particular aspects and, thereby,

illuminate the whole. A greater problem would have arisen if the researcher's commitment to an established orthodoxy had resulted in a distortion of data to fit an explanation, or even the deliberate ignoring of data which did not 'fit' the explanation. Again, it might be claimed that drawing on concepts from a variety of theories can lead to 'conceptual chaos'. Raab noted that in some studies 'different phenomena are labelled similarly, or the same phenomenon is labelled differently'. (Raab, 1994: 8) However, it is important to recognise that problems arise with all operationalizations. (Open University 1994: 89) Conceptual sloppiness is not the sole preserve of those using an eclectic approach. All researchers need to be aware of the richness of suggestion and nuance which concepts carry. Conceptual incongruity would be a serious problem. It might be claimed that talk of conceptual incongruity is at odds with an eclectic ethos. The term is used, however, to refer to concepts which are patently inappropriate for exploring a given phenomenon. The researcher, by adopting an eclectic theoretical ethos, is not encouraging the use of inappropriate theories and concepts. However, this is not to deny that some 'risk-taking' may be necessary. It has been suggested, for example, that educational researchers need to give more thought to theory. Ball has observed, the urgent role which theory needs to perform in educational research. He wrote about the 'sorry state of educational studies' which 'stems, in part, from both the wholesale appropriation of other 'unreflexive' and utilitarian languages and an internal lack of dynamism, exacerbated by intellectual isolationism as educational studies pointedly ignore significant theoretical developments in cognate fields'. (1995: 256)

The function of concepts in the research

Bulmer acknowledged that 'enormous effort has been devoted to the dissection and exploration of terms'. However, he noted that analysis of the role which concepts play in social research remains 'underdeveloped'. Bulmer observed that concepts are not theories, rather 'they are categories for the organisation of ideas and observations'. Concepts offer a means of storing observations of phenomena which might be used subsequently to form a theory. 'Similarly while concepts are distinct from observations, the role of concepts is a spur to the development of observable indices of the phenomenon subsumed under the concept'. As Bulmer suggested, concepts tend to mediate between theory and data and in this sense they formed an essential 'bridge'. They have also been described as 'the building blocks of theories'. In this sense, theoretical explanations are said to consist of a network of concepts. (Open University, 1995: 183) A researcher needed to consider the following questions. Where do the concepts they employ come from

in the first place? What provides the justification for the use of particular concepts? Addressing these questions Bulmer noted that:

concept formulation in the analysis of sociological data proceeds neither from observation to category, nor from category to observation, but in both directions at once and in interaction. The distinctive character of concepts in empirical social science derives from this dual theoretical and empirical character. The process is one in which concepts are formed and modified *both* in the light of empirical evidence *and* in the context of theory. Both theory and evidence can exercise competing influence on what emerges. (1979: 653)

In other words, concepts are not just developed out of observation, but neither are they simply imposed *a priori* categories. Issues surrounding deduction and induction are discussed in more detail below. It is enough to note here that theories within social research are not developed deductively or inductively, but both deductively and inductively. (*op. cit.* 659) Concepts can be used to help 'make sense' of the social world. It follows, therefore, that the use of concepts is indicative of a researcher's view of the social world and how it can be investigated. This researcher drew on concepts from several theoretical perspectives to explore the responses of LEAs to the changes described in earlier chapters. In particular, the literature in the areas of policy implementation theory and organisational theory were helpful in this respect. The concepts were employed to focus the research by identifying questions which needed to be addressed; were operationalised in the collection of data; and informed the analysis of data. The Interview Guide in Appendix 1 indicates how the concepts were operationalised in the questions addressed of interviewees.

Policy implementation theory.

In a study of policy-making in LEAs Jennings defines policy as 'a guide for taking future actions and for making appropriate choices or decisions towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired end'. It can also be thought of as outlining solutions to problems. Policy gives direction, 'indicating the choices which are preferable in terms of what is to be achieved'. It results in 'action' being taken as a series of choices or decisions are made about how to achieve a certain end or solve a problem over time or at a later time. (1977: 30) However, as Ball points out, action is most certainly not determined by policy:

Policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create circumstances in which a range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed, or particular goals or outcomes are set. A response must still be put together, constructed in context, offset against other expectations. All of this involves creative social action not robotic reactivity. (1994: 19)

Ball has highlighted his own 'uncertainties about the meaning of policy'. He notes that he cannot come up with a definitive version of the meaning of policy and goes on to argue that there are two very different conceptualisations of policy. These are 'policy as text' and 'policy as discourse'. He observes that policy is not one or the other, but both; they are implicit in each other. Ball claims that policies themselves, the texts, are not necessarily clear or closed or complete. The texts are the product of compromises at various stages in what Ball referred to as the 'policy process'. (*op. cit.* 15) Policy, then, is certainly not 'neutral'. It involves the choice of which direction to follow; several alternatives may be put forward. Within an LEA, for example, there may be many attitudes and opinions about what the LEA should do and which services it should, or should not, provide.

Jennings illustrated the policy-making process in LEAs by using a model which included a series of stages. Each stage represents the different kind of decision which are made by the policy-makers. Questions are raised at each stage of the process to which policy-makers respond and, hence, 'influence what happens in succeeding stages'. The first stage, 'initiation of the process', stems from dissatisfaction being expressed about the existing situation. The policy-makers decide which dissatisfied voices to listen to and when. The second stage, 'reformulation of opinion', is 'when opinions are gathered and begin to crystallise around particular points'. Stage three, 'emergence of alternatives', involves a selection of potential solutions to the problem or ways of fulfilling a need. In stage four, 'discussion and debate' occurs as alternatives are shaped into 'policy proposals'. Stage five involves the 'legislation' of a policy from among the competing proposals. 'Selection of the one or more policy proposals for final consideration is made by the policy-makers, and it is the policy-makers who decide what should become the policy'. Implementation of the policy is the final stage although, as Jennings noted, the process is not static but 'cyclical'. (*loc. cit.* 38-40) Decisions taken throughout the process result in policy outcomes. These effectively regulate the scope and shape of LEA services, and in particular the arrangements (if any) it makes for INSET. Of course, as Jennings recognised, 'who

influences, controls or attempts to control these decision situations therefore becomes critical'.

Ball (1987) rejected a 'top-down' approach to decision-making in schools. Policy-making was not seen simply to be the property of those at the 'top' of an organisational hierarchy. He observed that schools, and other organisations such as LEAs, were places where interpersonal influence, compromise and behind-the-scenes negotiation were as important as formal procedures and official meetings. In a later work, Ball noted that 'discontinuities, compromises, omissions and exceptions are also important' and policy-making is 'often unscientific and irrational' as well as 'unwieldy and complex'. (1990: 3) Policies are 'typically the cannibalised products of multiple influences and agendas'. (Ball, 1994:16) Kogan once remarked that policy was clearly a matter of the 'authoritative allocation of values'. (1975: 55) Ball agrees, but observes that 'values do not float free of their social context'. As he notes, one needs to consider whose values were validated in policy and whose were not. (1990: 3)

Some of the possible participants in the policy process within LEAs were identified by Jennings. The first are members of the public. They, according to Jennings, have several roles which might have a potential impact on the policy process within LEAs. 'Through the ballot box they determine whether the direction of local policy-making should continue as it had under the incumbents or whether a new direction should be sought under a new set of office-holders'. While the electors vote on many different bases 'the result is an elected body which tends to act as the representation of the constituents' interests'. (*op.cit.* 41) Secondly, members of the public organise into interest groups and can 'influence the actions of local officials'. Jennings noted that such groups are most successful when they limit their objectives and apply 'subtle pressure'. Thirdly, Jennings remarked that the most heralded participation by members of the public is through co-option onto the education committee of a local authority. Jennings pointed out, however, that LEAs showed little enthusiasm for co-option, and the persons appointed were often selected for their past service and sympathy with the majority party.

Elected members also participate in the policy process through their various roles. Their roles include representing the constituents of their wards, being members of their party group and being members of committees such as that for education. Some members have a leadership role, such as committee chairperson, shadow chairperson or spokesperson of the minority party, party leader in the council,

member of the policy and resources committee and/or member of the executive or policy committee of the party group. The chairperson of the education committee works closely with principal officers to obtain advice and opinions for operation of the local education service. As Jennings observes 'often it is the chair[person] and the chief [education] officer [CEO] who cooperate in initiating policy alternatives for the [education] committee's consideration'. There remains the chance of conflict if the views of the politicians do not agree with the officers' views. Jennings suggested, however, that 'committee members often fear that chair[persons] are led to decisions by officers rather than [being] guided by the [education] committee'. (*op. cit.* 43) As Kogan *et al* found, though, there are chairpersons of education committees who are 'exasperated by Chief Officers who will take responsibility for virtually nothing without phoning the chair[person] first'. Kogan *et al* noted, however, that the 'day-to-day or year-to-year creation of policies is in the hands of permanent officials who identify issues and implement policies once they are sanctioned by councillors'. (1973: 42) Jennings agreed that officers, and particularly the CEO, have a large influence on the policy process within LEAs. As professionals, for example, 'they identify needs for changes in the service and for resources to operate the service and they bring those needs to the attention of their committee'. They also plan the future provision of LEA services and advise and recommend on policy alternatives.

It was suggested that in the late 1970s and early 1980s a politicisation of local authorities occurred. Jennings observed the influence of party political control on the decision-making process within LEAs. He noted that because of this LEAs were increasingly 'closed systems'. (*op. cit.* 182) Indeed, in 1985 the Widdicombe Committee was to inquire into the conduct of local authority business. The committee submitted its final report in May 1986 and this pointed to the politicisation of local government. '[An] increasing proportion of local authorities are organised on party political lines. The intensity of politics had also sharpened in those authorities which had been politically organised for some years'. (Department of the Environment, 1986: para 2.34) However, a further, more modest, study sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation concluded that 'the nature of the politicisation process described in the Widdicombe report is far more complex than has been supposed'. It was claimed that 'the Widdicombe Committee took too simple an approach to characterising [...] political change, overlooking the evidence of diversity'. (Young and Davies, 1990: 60) Young and Davies observed the complexity of political change and noted that local government had certainly not become a monolithic politicised sub-state. 'There is little to sustain the notion of a rising tide of politicisation beyond the obvious and

perhaps trivial observation that most councillors wear a party political label'. (*op. cit* 61)

As Bird remarked, most of the literature concerned with the educational policy process within local authorities has indicated that the key people most concerned are likely to be the Chief Education Officer and the Chair of the Education Committee, the Majority party Leader. (1990: 100) Over recent years as central Government control has increased, greater constraint have been placed on local decision-makers. However, there still appears to be a degree of local autonomy in relation to policy implementation. It is possible that there may be a gap between central Government policy aspirations and local realities. (Ham and Hill, 1993: 99) A study by Thomas, for example, found that a sample of LEAs chose a variety of means to implement their schemes for the local management of schools despite central Government guidelines. 'The schemes, naturally, reflected some of the specific characteristics of the LEA'. (1990: 4) But what are the factors which influence policy implementation at the local level? As noted earlier, capacity in terms of financial and other resources is important. This is also true in relation to the size of the LEA. Moreover, Ball remarked that commitment, capability, resources, practical limitations and co-operation all have a bearing on policy implementation. (1994: 19)

The concept of control is another factor which needs consideration. Externally, for example, the DfEE exerts control over the LEAs through SSAs and in relation to GEST spending. Within the LEA control is likely to be exercised through line-management. Control within an LEA is closely associated with communications. Good communications allow professionals to share a common 'definition of the situation' and this makes for more successful implementation of policy. The function of two-way communications has also been observed. 'Feed-back' from what W. Williams refers to as 'the street-level' to those who had the role of interpreting policy decisions and implementing them is essential. Williams describes the implementation system within organisations as 'bottom heavy' and 'loosely-coupled'. According to Williams the nearer one investigates to the 'bottom' of an organisation, the closer one is to the factors which have the greatest effect on a policy's success or failure. Williams noted that organisations tended to have a pyramidal hierarchy but that the ability of the higher levels to control the lower levels is weak and 'largely negative'. (1980: 60) Elmore supports these observations in his critique of 'forward mapping' and the premise upon which this analytical approach is based, the traditional 'top-down' analysis of the policy process. He notes the:

weaknesses of forward mapping and its severe limitations as an analytic technique. The most serious problem with forward mapping is its implicit and unquestioned assumption that *policy makers control the organisational, political and technological processes that effect implementation* [...] Backward mapping [a 'bottom-up' analysis of the policy process] shares with forward mapping the notion that policy-makers have a strong interest in affecting the implementation process and the outcome of policy decisions. But backward mapping explicitly questions the assumption that policy makers ought to, or do, exercise the determinant influence over what happens in the implementation process. (1982: 20)

A further important influencing factor on the implementation of policy within LEAs is that of organisational culture. Burtonwood claims that the concept of culture is increasingly used in the field of educational research. However, culture is not an easy concept to define. It has a 'looseness and ambiguity'. (1986:1) The word culture is of particular interest to educationalists in two senses. The first is in the sense of 'high' culture. In this use the word carries overtones of approval. Rowntree notes that 'high' culture generally means the liberal arts and areas of scholarship approved of by, what he equivocally terms, 'the dominant group'. (1981: 59) The second use of the word culture is the one in which this researcher was interested. This is sometimes termed 'the sociological or anthropological sense'. Culture is seen as the values, beliefs, assumptions, customs and creations of people who regard themselves as a coherent group. Public organisations, such as LEAs, have cultures which support their values (Ranson and Stewart, 1994: 244)

Culture represents the understandings that we live by as members of an organisation; these are carried as symbols which act as vehicles for meaning. In addition to specific meanings, we also absorb other things characteristic of the culture such as attitudes and ways of thinking about the world. [...] One image of culture is that it represents a web of understanding that we need in order to make sense of and cope with the complexity and confusion of organisational life. This web then gives shape to what we do and the ways in which we do it. (McLean and Marshal, 1988: 11)

Ouchi and Wilkins observe that the study of organisational culture is rooted 'more deeply in sociology than in any other intellectual tradition'. The theory of organisations is discussed in more detail below. One should note, however, that

within the research in organisational sociology there has been a 'constant tension between those who prefer to study what is explicit about organisations and those who prefer what is implicit'. The study of the culture of organisations grew out of this tension. Ouchi and Wilkins remarked that the paradigm which placed an emphasis on studying 'formal organisational structures' was found to be incapable of encompassing the anomalous forms of, for example, LEAs. Anomaly led to an evolution in the theory of organisations. Researchers have continued to emphasise the organisation as a dependent variable with respect to macro social forces. Many took a 'natural systems point of view and concluded that the culture of an [organisation] was the natural outgrowth of its particular time and place and was not subject to human attempts at manipulation'. Increasingly, however, organisational culture became seen as an independent variable which has an effect on the members of the organisation. It is claimed that implicit features of an organisation, such as culture and dominant values, can subtly influence the thoughts, feelings and actions of individual participants. They, in turn, might influence changes in the organisational culture. A new member of staff might introduce new ideas and values which have a significant impact. (1988: 223-252) As will be made clear on the following pages, this researcher has welcomed insights offered by both a systems and action approach to the study of organisations.

Within LEAs not all values and beliefs are held common. Sub-cultures may exist. Some of these might even strive to resist and subvert the dominant culture. There are, though, some cultural features which are held in common. This has been termed the 'common culture' of the LEA. More explicit factors, such as capacity and size, influence the choices which LEA personnel make. However, implicit in change and decision making are also factors such as the LEA's organisational culture. Values, then, are very important. They have been described as 'the beliefs, standards or wishes that underpin the workings of an organisation'. Ryan noted that many educational organisations are 'committed to a clearly defined and deeply internalised set of values'. She was concerned to find out what happened when these organisations were confronted by the values implicit in recent educational legislation. Although her research was carried out in a comprehensive school the findings are of interest to all those who might find themselves involved in or with other types of educational organisations. Ryan concluded that when values come into 'collision', the conflict allows organisations 'to review their values and carry out a full value audit'. This enables organisations to 'consider the priorities they accord their cherished values' which are by no means 'cast in stone'. This, according to Ryan, is a positive thing. As she noted,

'blind adherence to values could be dangerous and there was a need for organisations to be prepared to question and if necessary reassess the values on which they were founded'. (1992: 259-264) There is little doubt that in the period 1979-96 all LEAs were involved in this process of reassessment. However, cultural change is not something which happens within an organisation overnight. There is likely to be a period of organisational turmoil in which there is a lot of negotiation until a new dominant culture is established. Policy implementation theory, then, suggests that history, culture, control, capacity, size, commitment and communications have a considerable bearing on LEA responses to changes in their functions.

Theory of organisations

In addition, the theory of organisations has been considered. This also offered some helpful insights which informed the approach employed in exploring the changing INSET provision of LEAs. As Silverman noted, researchers of organisations, who wished to place their work in a broad theoretical framework, were faced with a choice. They could make use of a 'systems' approach or look around for an alternative approach. The major alternative strategy of studying organisations was derived by adopting an 'action' approach. In the eclectic vein, rather than making a choice between one or the other of these two approaches the insights offered by both were valued by the researcher. In this way it was hoped to avoid the problem found in many earlier studies of organisations. As Silverman highlighted, researchers had 'tended to give a great deal of emphasis to one aspect of an organisation while tending to ignore its other features. The systems approach concentrates on formal organisational structure. The action approach emphasises the study of informal social relationships'. (1972: 2) A 'systems' approach to organisational analysis is drawn from inter-disciplinary general systems theory and the sociological tradition of structural-functionalism. There are several assumptions which have underpinned the view of an organisation as a system. Firstly, an organisation is said to be made up of a set of interdependent parts. Each part contributed to and received something from the whole. Silverman noted that this relationship between parts involves a 'process'. It is argued that the latter should always be the main focus of any research which adopts a 'systems' approach to the study of an organisation. The 'process' usually involves the exchange of 'resources and problems' between parts. (*op. cit.* 28) A second assumption of a systems approach is that organisations are governed by a series of needs which they have to satisfy if they are to survive. Goal attainment, according to Silverman, is only one of many needs.

Another, controversial, assumption of the systems approach is a belief that the organisation itself can take action to satisfy its needs. This is in the sense that actions derive from a certain set of social relationships which appear to be independent of the personal qualities of those concerned. As Silverman noted, 'this is clearest when an act is repeated many times even though the personnel has changed'. (*op. cit.* 29) Systems theorists remain divided over the forces which make organisations change. This is also true of notions about what influences the direction of organisational change. Some suggest that the needs of the organisation as a whole, in particular the need for survival, shape the actions of system parts. In addition, some observe that some parts of the system have more influence over change than others. Therefore, the part can sometimes determine the whole. It has also been pointed out that the wider environment places 'demands' on any organisation which result in change. Any organisation is one of a collection of sub-systems which make up society as a whole. The functioning of each system therefore depends on its inter-relationship with the others. The rest of society is influencing changes in an organisation. All of this suggests that the behaviour of the individual (an adviser for instance) within an LEA is shaped by 'external' factors. Advisers would not act entirely independent of a range of influences.

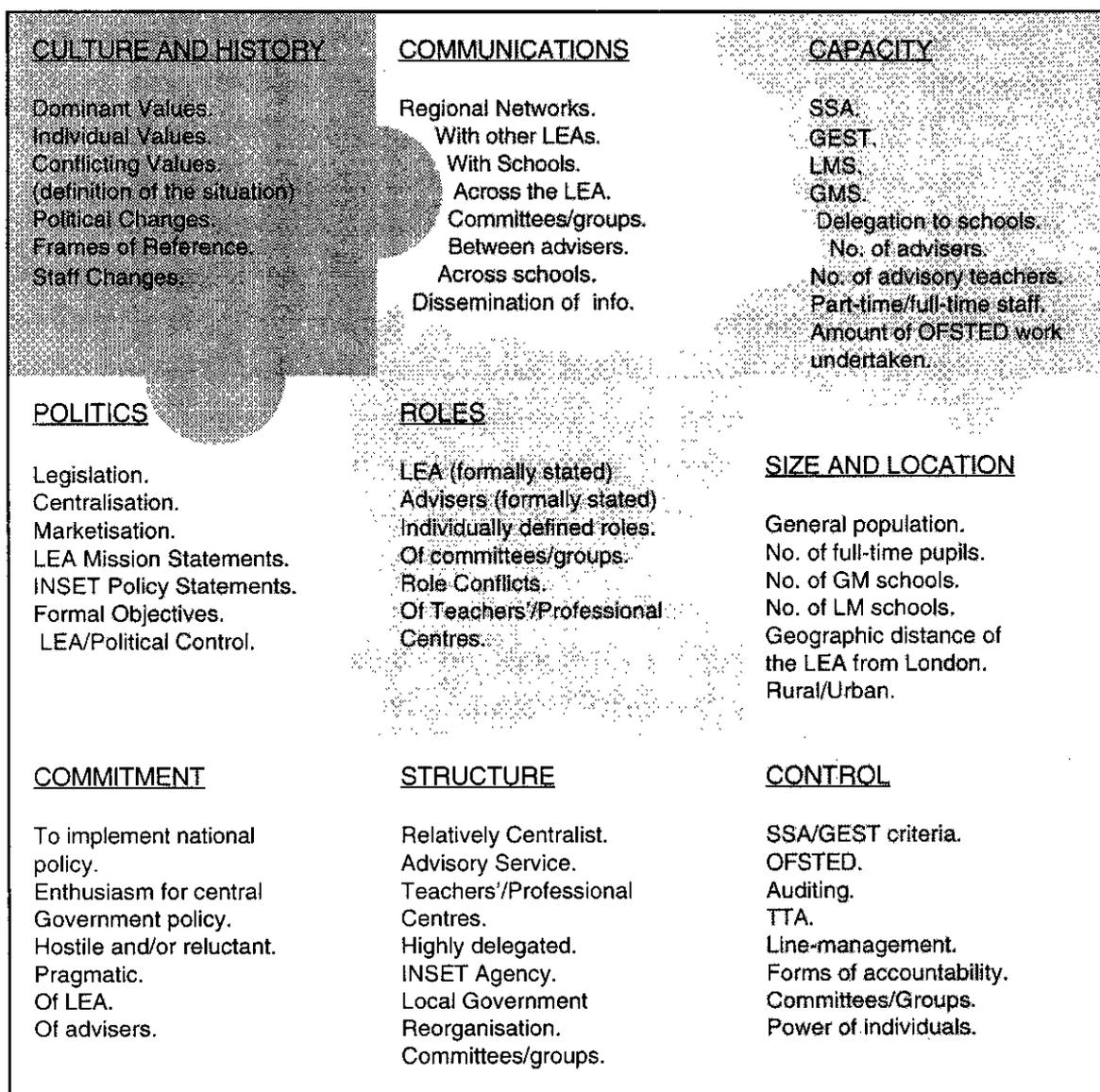
An alternative to the 'systems' approach is the 'action' approach. It offers a 'frame of reference' which suggests a series of related questions about the nature of social life in any organisation. (*op. cit.* 223) Silverman notes some of the essential features of an 'action' approach. First, 'the social sciences and natural sciences are seen as dealing with entirely different orders of subject-matter.' Second, there is an emphasis on understanding action rather than simply observing behaviour. Actions are said to arise out of the 'individuals meanings which define social reality'. These meanings are given to individuals by their society, thus, 'while society defines man, man in turn defines society'. Third, through interaction with one another individuals modify, change and transform social meanings. Fourthly, in consequence of the above, any attempt to explain human actions needs to take into account the meanings which individuals assign to their acts. Any explanation which asserts that actions are 'determined by external and constraining social or non-social forces, are inadmissible'. (*op. cit.* 127) Silverman pointed to the contribution which the 'action' approach can give to any study of organisations. It can help explain the orientations and behaviour of members of a LEA by showing how their actions derive from the 'definitions of the situation' and the 'ends' which they hold. This is shaped by the individual's prior expectations and their

historical experiences of past interactions, their 'frame of reference'. In this way the 'action perspective provides a means of understanding the range of reactions to apparently 'identical' social situations within one or more organisations'. Therefore, it offers a way of establishing the extent and nature of consensus between individuals within an LEA. At the same time it enables a researcher to highlight any lack of consensus which may, or may not, result in conflict. As Silverman noted, 'people might fulfil the expectations of others in various ways and for different purposes, which is why we distinguish between norms and values'. (*op. cit.* 165) In particular, the 'action' approach highlighted that in this study of LEAs, agency should not be ignored. Individuals can be very important in initiating organisational change which is not simply a product of wider environmental pressures.

Operationalisation of concepts

David Easton has been attributed with the development of systems theory. As he pointed out, 'whether or not we wish it, we do depend on broad theoretical orientations to guide us into narrower empirical paths'. (1965: 471) A consideration of both the system and action approach to the study of organisations helped inform the strategy used by the researcher. As Figure 1 below indicates, a number of concepts derived from the aforementioned theoretical perspectives were considered useful to this research. These concepts suggested, and could be used to inform, certain areas of interest. This is illustrated by the adoption of another simple concept used in everyday life. Figure 1 depicts a jigsaw. Each piece is representative of a concept. To arrive at a 'picture' (understanding) of the responses of any LEA to recent changes all pieces needed to be considered. Each area of interest suggests questions which need to be addressed. In this way the concepts permeate the interview guides used by the researcher. An example of these can be found in the appendices at the end of the study. The 'picture' might be very detailed and complex. Some of the concepts, for example, have a national and local sphere of influence. As the earlier chapters denote, this is the case with regard to the concepts of politics, control and capacity.

Figure 1: Influences on LEA INSET Provision



Research Strategy

Insights gained from the review of previous research in the field of LEA INSET provision; exploratory interviews in the first year of the project with LEA and school staff and; the theoretical framework above helped to focus the study and informed questions which needed to be addressed. It was noted that, we 'use the term 'research focus' to refer to the most general set of phenomena (one or more) about which a study draws conclusions and the aspects of those phenomena that are of concern. Equally, [one] can think of the research focus as the general set of questions that the study addresses'. (Open University, 1994: 30) The nature of the questions, in turn, influence the choice of methods employed to collect data. Also instrumental in the choice of methods are what Atkinson and Hammersley (1982:

51) refer to as 'trade-offs'. All researchers become engaged in making research manageable within the resources (financial, time and access opportunities) which are available. A case study strategy was favoured given the number of cases which it was possible to explore. Whilst it would have been possible to conduct a survey of a relatively large number of LEAs, the researcher felt that the operationalisation of the concepts noted earlier would be most effectively achieved by employing face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, while a survey strategy would have provided a sounder basis for the researcher to make generalisations, previous studies have indicated some of the important variations between LEAs which needed to be borne in mind when exploring their role. The researcher felt that, to gain a greater understanding of the rationale underpinning the likely diversity in LEA INSET provision, it would be more useful to obtain in-depth information of a more detailed nature on a smaller number of cases.

As noted, the research is characterised by an eclectic theoretical approach. The eclectic ethos also pervaded the decision to use multiple methods to obtain data. This is quite a novel approach. Indeed, as Brannen had observed, 'there had been virtually no books [...] devoted [exclusively] to the issue [for] almost twenty years. (1992: xii) One notable exception over the last two decades was Bryman (1988), *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. The limited amount of literature focusing on combining methods was indicative of a methodological polarisation which had been evident in social research throughout the twentieth century. Much has been made of 'a very crude distinction,' (Open University, 1994: 25) between qualitative and quantitative research. Bird suggests that the divide between quantitative and qualitative research has been 'unnecessary' and even 'detrimental' to some educational research. (1992: 127) Others note that although there were constraints on what methods could be combined, it was easy to exaggerate the degree to which different forms of research design, data collection and data analysis tended to go together, or needed to go together. Much educational research had combined qualitative and quantitative methods in various ways and to varying degrees. It has been claimed that there is probably even more scope for doing so than is currently exploited. (Open University, 1994: 25) The combining of methods traditionally associated with either the quantitative or qualitative tradition remains controversial. Much philosophical debate and disagreement surrounds the mixing of methods. Can one, for example, integrate data from a survey and interview which is focused on the same research problem? Or, can the data from such an interview only be used to complement the data obtained from the questionnaire?

Some point to fundamental epistemological issues and argue that implicit in the use of either an interview or questionnaire are differences relating to views of the social world and how it can be explored. Therefore, as a consequence of this, integration is not possible. Tensions arise with respect to differing types of explanation and the nature of data itself. (Brannen, 1992: 12) Brannen suggests that data can only be understood in relation to the purposes for which they are created. The purpose might include the production of theory. On the other hand it might be the testing of a theory. She concludes that if the purposes differ then the data sets from a mixture of methods cannot be integrated. They can, however, be used to complement one another. Bird's 'logic of inquiry' involved her adopting a deductive model of analysis during the first phase of her PhD research project, *The Implementation of Educational Policy: A Case Study of the Open College of South London*. (1990) In the first phase of her research Bird had attempted to test certain hypotheses by utilising a survey. During the second phase she adopted an analytic-inductive model and conducted in-depth interviews. The data sets, then, were used both deductively and inductively in a continuous interactive process of formulating and reformulating ideas. Bird observed that her research strategy was a modified version of the scientific linear model of research. (1992: 130)

Hammersley highlighted the major components which characterised the quantitative/qualitative divide. These included: qualitative versus quantitative data; the investigation of natural versus artificial settings; a focus on meaning rather than behaviour; adoption or rejection of natural science as a model; the identification of cultural patterns as against seeking scientific laws; idealism versus realism; and an inductive versus a deductive approach. Hammersley concluded that in each of the above cases 'what is involved is not a simple contrast between two opposed standpoints, but a range of positions sometimes located on more than one dimension'. Not all quantitative research, for example, has been concerned with hypothesis testing. Equally, not all ethnographers reject the hypothetico-deductive method. Hammersley also suggests that 'there is no necessary relationship between adopting a particular position on one [of the above] issue[s] and specific positions on the others'. (1992: 51) During the course of a project educational researchers might make a wide-range of decisions involving the choice of many options. 'What is involved is not a crossroads where we have to go left or right' but 'a complex maze where we are repeatedly faced with decisions, and where paths wind back on one another'. Hammersley observed that all research involves both deduction and induction in the broad sense of the terms; 'in all research we move from ideas to data as well as from data to ideas'. (*op. cit.* 48) This is certainly evident in this research. The researcher

developed several ideas about the nature of LEAs and their modes of operation from his early reading and the exploratory interviews which were completed. These ideas informed the questions which were asked during interviews and, in turn, their credibility was 'tested' by the data collected.

Case Selection

The preliminary work which the researcher completed also informed the basis for sampling. In this sense the selection of LEAs for study was, to a degree, systematic and theoretically guided. Finch and Mason claim that 'it is quite possible to produce a selection strategy in field research that is systematic rather than *ad hoc*'. They refer to this technique as 'theoretical sampling'. Cases for study are selected on the basis of their theoretical significance. Finch and Mason highlight general principles that can be drawn from their own research process. Like this researcher, they agreed that within field research 'analysis of some kind was constantly taking place, and formed the basis for decisions about strategies'. Finch and Mason note that theory should guide data collection and the on-going analysis of data should feed back into theory, which in turn guides the next phase of data collection. They suggest that, because decisions taken during the research process are both situated and informed, including the selection of cases to study, they cannot be made at the very beginning of a research enterprise without the loss of theoretical and data sensitivity. (1990: 28-48) The sample of LEAs used in this research was, to a degree, 'situated and informed'. The researcher considered it important to include at least one LEA controlled by the Labour party and one controlled by the Conservatives. If possible, it was also important to include LEAs of varying sizes, both counties and metropolitan boroughs and urban and more rural areas. It was hoped that the authorities would also be located in several different regions of England. However, it would be wrong to suggest that the sample of LEAs involved in this study was totally representative. There has not, to the researcher's knowledge, been any study exploring INSET provision in all LEAs in England and Wales. It follows, therefore, that it would be impossible for the researcher to claim that the sample was representative of the diversity of LEA INSET organisation and provision. In addition, the sample, while theoretically informed, was also heavily influenced by more practical considerations.

One of the LEAs was approached after a contact was made at a conference of LEAs. Access was requested to another on the basis of the researcher having taught in a school within the authority for several years. The researcher, therefore, had some familiarity with the LEA and its location. It was also felt that access

would be more easily obtainable as the researcher was a former employee. Two of the other LEAs were approached because the researcher, through his parents, had a 'second base' within the boundaries of one and close-by another. This 'second base' allowed the researcher to stay in the area for longer periods at very little cost. In addition, as the researcher had grown-up in the region where these two LEAs were situated (indeed, in the past he had also worked for one of these) he had familiarity with the locality and some of the characteristics and history of the local authorities. The fifth LEA was approached partly because it contrasted with the other LEAs in the sample on some important dimensions namely size, location and political control but also because it was conveniently placed in relation to the researcher's 'home base'. This meant, for example, that travelling to interviews and to view education committee minutes/reports was relatively inexpensive, straight-forward and less time consuming. Access, then, to five LEAs was sought. The first one approached for use as the pilot study was Rivendell. This provided a site to 'trial' the research instruments.

Documents and Interviews

It was felt that the use of LEA documentation and interviews would provide the researcher with data relating to both the explicit and the implicit features of each LEA. The information would, for example, give the researcher a basis for inferring the actions of those within organisations. It was hoped that the interviews could highlight the values, intentions, motives and experiences which underpinned the actions of individuals within an LEA. Interviews and documents would also prove useful in obtaining data about events which occurred before the researcher began his study. As noted earlier, this was important as the history, changes in culture and political control had all been identified as factors which may have an influence on the responses of LEAs to central Government policy initiatives. A variety of documents were collected from the LEAs. These included education committee minutes, reports from education officers, staff newsletters, INSET policy documents, mission statements, service-level agreements, INSET workshop/course booklets and material for distribution to parents. The collection of some documentation, for example, education committee minutes, was fairly straight-forward. They were relatively accessible being found in either local libraries or archive/record offices. Others, for example, INSET course booklets or GEST bids, were not publicly available. These were obtained from the LEAs after some negotiation to gain copies of them. In one of the LEAs the researcher had to purchase the INSET course booklet.

Where possible, documentation was obtained before the initial interview in each authority took place. This allowed interaction with the documentation data and informed the interview. Further documentation was also collected as a result of this interaction with the initial material and as a result of information obtained in the interviews. The researcher was not involved in any participant observation within the LEAs and as a result it was extremely important for him to establish in each case which documents were available, who had them, and where he could get access to them. The prior knowledge of a number of the LEAs (which had been helpful in case selection) also proved useful in this endeavour. The researcher, for example, knew where libraries housing documents were situated and how to get to them. Documentation was also obtained from the DfEE. This included the revised GEST allocation for each LEA in 1996/97. Local authority associations were an additional source of documents.

The number of people interviewed within each LEA varied between two and three. The exception to this was in the first LEA in which pilot work was completed where five interviews were conducted. As noted, it was decided to complete a pilot study to 'test out' the interview schedules and questionnaire which the researcher had produced. Access to the pilot LEA was requested in January 1996 and the first interview took place late in February 1996 with the LEA's Adviser for Staff Development. Additional interviews were conducted with the chief inspector, a senior adviser, a advisory teacher and the manager of the teachers' centre of this authority. All these interviews were completed by early April 1996. Their arrangement had proved very time-consuming indeed. At this point the researcher had not even transcribed all the interviews from the pilot study. The intention was to complete further interviews in the main study by the end of October 1996. The four other authorities had been selected but access had yet to be secured. Meanwhile, the researcher had also become involved with an Open University study of LEAs in Greater London. The interview guides developed by the researcher for this study were used in a project exploring INSET provision in seven London LEAs. (Bird *et al*, 1997) Being involved as a co-researcher in the latter project proved extremely advantageous. The researcher benefited greatly from collaboration with three other team members all of whom had been involved in the London INSET network for more than fifteen years. In particular their comments on the interview guide developed by the researcher for the pilot study were invaluable and informed minor revisions for its further use in the main study.

The four other LEAs were approached in May 1996. Responses to the request for access were received from three of these relatively quickly and initial interviews were conducted by the end of July 1996. The interviews from the earlier pilot work had also been transcribed by this time and the researcher felt that, considering the limitations in time, more people had been interviewed than was really necessary. There had been a strong case for interviewing the Adviser for Staff Development (he was in the best position to provide relevant information in all the areas of interest which made up the interview guide), the Chief Adviser (who had only recently been appointed) and the Manager of the teachers' centre (the centre was under threat of closure). However, a significant amount of the observations offered by the other personnel, the Senior Adviser and the Teacher Adviser, had simply replicated what the Adviser for Staff Development had already provided. This was not to suggest that this data was not important. The researcher might have wished to interview more people in each of the LEAs in the sample. However, given the limited time, it was necessary to limit the number of people approached by the process of 'snowball sampling'. Access to the fifth LEA was gained, after some delay, at the end of August 1996. The researcher visited libraries on more than one occasion. In the case of the two county councils this was to look at minutes which were informative about the ramifications stemming from local government reorganisation. Both counties were to be 'repositioned' after April 1997 following the recommendations of the Local Government Commission. The researcher also requested further interviews with individuals at times when the impact of reorganisation had become more clear. In addition, it was evident that the situation within the pilot LEA was in a state of flux following reorganisation resulting from new senior appointments. The researcher, therefore, returned to look at documentation on more than one occasion and also contacted an interviewee by telephone to inquire about any significant developments which had taken place since their meeting.

The interview guides were informed by the preliminary work. In this sense they had a degree of structure and direction. The researcher was conscious, however, of not making the schedules too directive. This might result in serious problems if the researcher was asking the wrong questions. During the interviews with those responsible for the day-to-day management of the teachers'/professional centres, for example, the researcher realised the lack of salience which questions relating to the sources of centre funding had to the interviewees. They were providing only oblique answers. However, they were much more forthcoming and responsive about how they generated income to help fund the centre which was much more connected to their everyday life. The researcher was influenced by a feature

prevalent among those conducting ethnographic research. Ethnographers attempt to adopt an attitude of learner. With this in mind, during interviews the guide was not adhered to in a rigid way. To this end, the researcher was happy for the conversation to digress into other avenues opened up by the responses of the interviewee. While preliminary work had helped form the basis of interview guides these did not have to be slavishly followed verbatim and question by question. On occasion questions were introduced into the conversation at points which differed from their position on the guide. The exact wording on guides was also not strictly adhered to.

Interviews allowed for a more probing investigation than would have been possible with any other method, such as the use of a questionnaire. However, interviews are not a means of extracting 'pure' information from someone and a researcher should never assume that they are eliciting a respondent's 'real' beliefs and attitudes. When interviewing, what an informant tells a researcher can depend upon their perception of the researcher and of their inquiry, how the interviewee interprets the questions and upon how the interviewee wishes to present themselves. 'This is not to suggest that [...] informants are deceitful, but that they will provide [researchers] with the version of the information which they think is appropriate'. (Open University, 1996b: 44) Certainly, during the pilot work, the researcher became aware that his appearance might be having an adverse effect on interaction between him and the interviewees. At this time the researcher had very short hair. Prior to the interview with the Teachers' Centre Manager in the pilot LEA the introductory conversation focused on the researcher's previous employment as a school teacher within that particular authority. The interviewee inquired if the researcher 'had hair then'. Shortly after this interview the researcher set up a further meeting with the authority's Chief Adviser. The researcher felt that the latter could be placed into the 'nouveau statures' category of interviewees developed by Dean *et al* (1967). The Chief Adviser was new to the LEA, being in post for only a few months at the time of the interview. The transition from one position to another meant that the tensions of new experiences were quite vivid and on display. These tensions may partly have explained her belligerent mood. However, her rather supercilious attitude also stemmed, in the opinion of the researcher, from the disdain she felt towards his appearance and the assumptions which she drew from it. It was something which she could not disguise at the initial introduction. As a result of these experiences the researcher decided to grow his hair into a more 'conventional' style.

Questionnaire

Interviews, then, while an extremely important source of information were not perfect. One could still question the validity of the data that they produced. A major means of overcoming this problem is through 'triangulation'. The use of several methods to explain an issue increases the chances of accuracy. (Open University, 1994: 67) The form of triangulation employed in this research was interviews with key people in the authority, documentation and questionnaires to to elicit information from schools. The rationale for combining methods which had been identified with either the quantitative and qualitative tradition of research was discussed earlier in this chapter. However, another issue which required clarification was the pre-eminence of the qualitative or the quantitative. The researcher viewed the information obtained from the questionnaire as being secondary to the information derived from interviews. The questionnaire provided quantifiable information which complemented the qualitative data obtained through the interviews and documentary sources. The purposes of the qualitative and quantitative methods employed also differed. The interviews and the documentation were used to determine the responses of the LEAs to changes in their functions. It was hoped that they would also provide data which could explain the responses. The questionnaire, however, had a different purpose. It was aimed at 'testing' hypotheses which derived from the in-depth interviews conducted with key people in the LEAs.

As will be noted subsequently, all of the LEA personnel interviewed placed an emphasis on 'partnership' between the local authority and schools. The researcher needed to ascertain if those in schools felt that they were participating in a 'partnership' and, if they did, whether they perceived of the 'partnership' in the same way as LEA staff presented it. A questionnaire was preferred to interviews in this endeavour because it allowed the researcher to obtain the views of staff in a large number of schools. The questionnaires were sent to schools within the pilot LEA in May 1996. The schools in the other four LEAs were sent their questionnaires in January 1997. The researcher asked if they could be returned by the end of February. Questionnaires were addressed to the head teacher in the school. This decision was based on the supposition that they would most likely be the person who could provide information across all the areas of interest incorporated within the questionnaire. If they could not then they would know the person who could provide the information and would pass the questionnaire on to them. This might be the school INSET co-ordinator or, in the case of larger schools, a member of the school's INSET committee. Practically, the use of the

questionnaire would be less time-consuming and, because the researcher had access to free postage, a postal survey would make the best use of his limited resources.

The main purpose of the questionnaire was to ascertain the perceptions of schools in relation to several areas of interest. The questionnaire asked respondents to *provide information on their school's INSET structures; the use made by their school of LEA INSET provision and that of other agencies; their attitudes towards the LEA continuing to provide INSET; their perceptions of the local INSET 'partnership' and; their involvement, or not, in inter-school arrangements for organising, providing and delivering INSET.* Information about response rates is provided in chapter nine. The use of the questionnaire was not without some problems. The majority of the questions were 'closed'. These, by their very nature, tended to limit the information which was given. In an attempt to mitigate this problem, some 'open-ended' questions were included where the researcher felt more information would be required. Use was also made of an 'other' category with a request to 'Please Specify'. A four or five-point scale was included to allow informants some measure of flexibility in their responses. However, in some cases these did not cover the informants preferred response(s). This was evident where the respondent found it necessary to write additional information at the margins of the page.

Data Analysis

As highlighted, some preliminary and primary analysis took place at the pilot stage. In any research project it would be a mistake to simply carry on accumulating data without examining it from time to time to see if any major themes, issues or categories were emerging. The researcher employed concepts from a variety of sources to focus the study, to inform the data collection and to analyse the data. However, there was always the possibility that other concepts might emerge. Size in relation to the LEA's population was a good example of this process. Originally it had been subsumed under the concept of capacity. However, the researcher began to realise, after preliminary analysis of interviews and documentation, that it needed to be given greater prominence. In this sense the researcher's initial ideas informed the collection of data. The data then helped develop these ideas. Data were, therefore, regularly consulted as the research progressed and resulted in an 'escalation of insights'. Documentation obtained from LEAs informed the interviews which were conducted. Furthermore, the task of transcribing these interviews was not simply mechanical. The researcher used

the transcripts from initial interviews to aid in selecting people for further interviews. They also suggested further documentation which might be collected. In this sense preliminary analysis facilitated 'progressive focusing'. (Open University, 1996a: 102)

The nature of the data sets obtained determined the form which analysis took. The data obtained from interviews and documentation was relatively unstructured and predominantly qualitative in character. This was not to suggest that the data gathered from these sources could not be used to produce numerical tables. Indeed, tables highlighting the different size of the LEAs and numbers of advisers etc. were assembled. Initially, though, the data obtained from interviews and documents was used in a narrative form to describe the situation and recent changes in each of the five LEAs. The data was also used analytically. The researcher valued an analytical technique employed within many ethnographic studies which is 'theme analysis'. (*op. cit.* 61) The latter technique involved the development of categories and sub-categories (concepts). As noted, within this research categories had been developed from preliminary ideas and from the scrutiny of data. As a result, new themes emerged and those stemming from prior reading were clarified. Concurrent with the accumulation of data under these categories, was some consideration of the relationships ('bridges') between them. The latter involved a degree of 'sussing out'. To what extent was the response of a particular LEA the product of its culture, size, political complexion or resources etc.? This process promoted the comparative analysis of the different cases, allowing the researcher to identify the similarities and differences between the LEAs and the rationale underpinning their diversity. A typology of LEAs was formulated.

Coding the questionnaire produced categories for all the answers supplied under each question or variable. These categories were then assigned numeric values so that the information could be transferred for computer input. Even missing data was given a numeric value. The researcher used SPSSX to help manage and statistically analyse the coded questionnaire data. The analytical process initially involved the tabulation of the frequency and percentage of responses falling into each response category for every variable. Once the frequencies for all the variables were tabulated the researcher extended the analysis of the data by examining the relationships between different variables. Cross-tabulation made explicit the associations between two or more variables. It also allowed a statistical test of the significance of the relationship between variables to be performed. Using SPSSX proved extremely helpful by avoiding the excessive time

needed for tabulation by hand. It also allowed for a more thorough statistical analysis of the data. However, the researcher remained aware of what Youngman (1987) termed 'the eternal dilemma of questionnaire analysis'. This dilemma is knowing 'when to stop' analysing, given the large amount of data produced. As will be highlighted in chapter nine, the researcher completed enough analysis to provide for triangulation between the questionnaire data and that gained from interviews and documentary sources.

Review

This chapter considered how the researcher conducted this study of changing LEA INSET provision and the principles which underpinned this process. The following two chapters outline the way in which the sample LEAs organised and delivered INSET opportunities for school teachers. The chapters also indicate how these arrangements had changed in the previous five years

CHAPTER SIX

Changing LEA INSET Provision: A Study of two County Councils

To guarantee anonymity, throughout this thesis all of the five sample LEAs are referred to by pseudonyms. This chapter outlines the INSET organisation and provision offered by two county councils in England. It describes how this had changed between 1991-96. As noted in Table 1 below, Moriadon is located in the north of England. County Hall is situated within a small city at almost the geographical centre of the county. The largest urban area, however, is a town in the south of the county. This town had a unitary authority following April 1997. Moriadon has many small towns and villages which have a strong industrial tradition. Many were 'pit villages' and most of the towns have an historical association with one or more heavy industry. These include steel-making, the railways or engineering. Shirebridge is located in the south of England. The largest urban settlement is a town in the north of the county. This town also had its own unitary authority from April 1997 and is characterised by rapid population growth and 'high-tech' industry. County Hall is situated in a small market town in the south of the county. The authority has several such market towns and a large number of villages. Unlike villages in Moriadon, though, those in Shirebridge have no real industrial heritage.

Table 6.1: Features of the two case study County LEAs.

	Moriadon	Shirebridge
Political Control of the Council (Autumn 1996)	Labour	Conservative
Location	North of England Urban/Rural mix	South of England Rural
Population (Autumn 1996)	610,000	600,000
LM-Schools		
Primary	324	283
Secondary	45	34
Special	11	20
GM-Schools		
Primary	None	8
Secondary	None	9
Special	None	None

Moriadon LEA

Moriadon LEA had maintained a core INSET service. Indeed, it was stated in the authority's Curriculum and Professional Development Policy Statement that the LEA attached 'considerable importance' to the professional development of 'its' personnel. In addition to this commitment, the number of schools in the LEA and the overall size of the education budget were important. Both were large enough to allow Moriadon LEA to retain sufficient financial resources centrally and, in managing change, to continue providing a relatively large team of inspectors and several centres with an INSET related role. As will be indicated, the LEA also 'recouped' GEST resources through a service-level agreement with schools. These resources were used to fund 'Curriculum Support and Development Services'.

The Moriadon policy statement for INSET and Curriculum Support

Moriadon LEA had a written statement highlighting the authority's policy for INSET. The efforts made to claim its grant under the GEST scheme and to make additional funding available from within the LEA's budget to finance training and curriculum support were said to reflect the authority's commitment in this respect. The LEA sought to:

- make staff development an integral part of the management and delivery of the service.
- encourage and promote a more systematic and planned approach to in-service training at LEA, institutional and individual level.
- achieve a closer link between curricular policies, in-service training and resource allocations.
- enable the LEA and its establishments to achieve declared curricular aims.
- enable staff of the education service better to meet the needs of its clients. Emphasis should be given to the need to respond to change and to be forward looking.
- encourage each institution to understand its role within and its relationship to the rest of the service.

- enable priority needs of staff to be identified and met, involving individuals in this process.
- establish and co-ordinate coherent relationships between staff development and other aspects of the education service, such as staff deployment, curriculum development and resource allocation.
- provide a degree of freedom to establishments and individuals to determine their needs and how they will meet them.
- provide a coherent programme of training and support which will enhance the skills of staff and provide better career satisfaction.
- increase the understanding of staff of national and local developments in education.
- encourage curriculum development through in-service training and the use of in-school support.
- encourage increased participation in relevant in-service training and the use of curriculum support staff.
- encourage collaboration between establishments and sectors in the whole in-service process.
- utilise the expertise and experience of staff in providing training for others.
- use new technology to establish a comprehensive and reliable information management system to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and professional development processes.

The rationale underpinning the above policy statement was also evident within the LEA's literature. The LEA was said to 'strongly subscribe to the opinion that effective training and curriculum support stem from close partnership between officers of the LEA, those eligible for training and support and the agencies involved in the delivery of training and support'. As well as the emphasis on partnership, the rationale for the LEA's INSET policy was a belief 'that training

and curriculum support should be closely linked to broader development issues such as curriculum development, resource allocation, personal development and organisational development'. The LEA had sought to ensure that its INSET policy, and the principles underpinning it, were 'firmly established and adhered to' by pursuing the following practices.

The LEA had a Staff Inspector with specific responsibility for all staff training covered by the training grant scheme and for curriculum support and development. As LEA documentation noted, all schools were 'required' to have a written staff development policy and to annually review their training and curriculum support needs. The policy statement was expected to include details of: methods of review; methods of identification of sectional/individual needs; criteria for prioritisation; procedures for monitoring and evaluation; aftercare for trainers. The LEA's training and curriculum support programmes were designed to reflect nationally and locally-determined needs. Needs were established by regular, formal and informal consultation between the LEA, schools and other eligible groups. The LEA recognised the importance and value of the principle of partnership by devolving the GEST funding for curriculum support and training directly to schools and offering schools the opportunity to enter a service-level agreement which enabled the provision of a programme of training and curriculum support. Each school within the LEA was required to nominate a specific person with responsibility for liaison with the LEA and the co-ordination of all INSET activity within the school. INSET Co-ordinators were encouraged to meet regularly on an area/phase basis to provide mutual support and share experiences. Schools were encouraged to form consortia/cluster groups, development groups, networks and to jointly identify common needs, plan training, make bids for support, provide monitoring arrangements and ensure aftercare following their event.

Moriadon LEA's Service Level Agreement (SLA)

Through the establishment of a SLA for INSET with schools Moriadon had set out to avoid what had been termed 'the straightforward implementation of either the business culture or market ideology which underpin the Government's educational reforms'. (Radnor *et al*, 1996: 17) As the authority's Co-ordinator for Continuing Professional Development commented:

the whole notion of service level agreements grew out of the way GEST was reorganised, when local money was taken away and we were told

that we had to devolve nearly all the grant to schools. All the LEAs had to find ways around that. Our schools did make it clear that they did value the central programme that we produced. So building on that we had to come up with a service level agreement structure.

There were three 'levels of membership' to the SLA for Support and Training in 1996-97. Schools 'opted' to 'pay back' part of their GEST allocations to the LEA at one of these levels. The SLA arrangement for 1996-97 applied to training funded from a number of GEST grants. For secondary schools these were Grant 1 (Management Development, Curriculum Support and Training, IT. Training); Grant 5 (SEN Policies/Implementation of IEPs); Grant 12 (Careers); Grant 13 (Drugs Education); and GEST 8 (GNVQ). For Special (Secondary) schools again they were Grants 1, 5, 12, 13 and, in addition, Grant 3(b) (Teacher Assessment in Core Subjects) For Nursery, Primary and Special (Primary) schools the arrangements covered the same categories of grant within the 1996-97 GEST programme. Those schools agreeing to 'pay back' 90 per cent were given 'Full Membership' and they received a number of what were termed 'benefits'. These included: access to all the services described under the Curriculum and Support Service's Operational Strategy at no additional charge; five copies of the LEA's INSET Programme; first priority of access to all LEA in-service courses; first priority of access to curriculum support staff; course fees, travel, subsistence and cover costs for all participation in approved training paid for centrally by the LEA; monitoring of expenditure and a supply of information on request within 48 hours from the LEA. 'Full Members' were alerted when their expenditure was approaching its limit and they had access to possible negotiated overspend.

The 'benefits' to those schools agreeing to pay back 40 per cent of their appropriate GEST allocation were as follows. These schools had, what was termed, 'Standard Membership'. They were entitled to access to all the services described under the Operational Strategy of the Curriculum Support and Development Unit at no additional charge. They received three copies of the LEA's INSET Programme; priority of access to all LEA in-service courses after full members requests had been dealt with; priority of access to curriculum support staff after full members requests had been dealt with; payment of course fees, travel and subsistence costs for all participation in approved training by the LEA. Cover costs were met by the school. The LEA also monitored expenditure and supplied information to 'Standard Member' schools bi-termly. 'Standard Members' were alerted when their expenditure was approaching its limit. There was limited access to possible negotiated overspend.

The SLA involved a further 'Basic Membership'. As part of the latter schools agreed to 'pay back' 15 per cent of their appropriate GEST allocations to the LEA. Basic members received access to the services described under the Curriculum and Support Service's Operational Strategy, but a charge was levied according to use. These charges, which were less than full cost recovery, were published in advance. 'Basic Members' also received one copy of the LEA's INSET Programme; places on courses organised by the LEA, at full cost recovery, after consideration was given to the needs of full and standard members; access to curriculum support staff, at full cost, after consideration was given to the needs of full and standard members; details of all participation in the programmes at the end of each financial year. In addition to the SLA a 'Supplementary Contract' was offered by Moriadon LEA to schools. Schools which had paid back into the SLA at any of the above levels of membership were eligible for an additional contract for the provision of in-school support. The latter was provided by Curriculum Support Teachers. This contract was offered to schools for 10 per cent of their GEST allocation for training and provided a level of service commensurate with the actual costs of the contribution. This meant that if a school decided to 'pay back' into the SLA to become a 'Full Member' and also contributed 10 per cent of its GEST allocation for training the LEA's staff described them as being '100 per cent Full Members'. Not all of the schools who were members of the SLA took up the supplementary contract. However, as the Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development proudly noted, the above schemes were 'well supported by schools within the authority'. He observed that only two comprehensive schools in the authority had not decided to 'pay back' into the SLA at any of the three levels. The Co-ordinator suggested that this demonstrated how schools still placed a value on the LEA as an organiser and provider of INSET.

Moriadon Curriculum Support and Development Services Unit

The money which the schools 'paid back' through the SLA and the 'Supplementary Contract' for in-school support was used to fund the LEA's Curriculum Support and Development Services (CSDS). In addition, some local initiatives money helped to support the salary of one or two Curriculum Support Teachers. The CSDS was one of the two service units which made up Moriadon's Inspection and Advisory Service. The other was the Inspection and Monitoring unit which is discussed below. As Figure 6.1 below illustrates, the CSDS management was headed by a Senior Inspector (Advisory Programmes and Support). She was responsible to the Head of Education Standards, whose equivalent would be a

Chief Inspector/ Adviser in another authority. The Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development was accountable to the Senior Inspector (Advisory Programmes and Support). These two posts were both financed through central LEA resources. All nine staff in three Education Centres were accountable to the Co-ordinator for Continuing Professional Development:

We have an administrative assistant in each centre who is paid on a clerical scale four. They manage each centre on a day-to-day basis. If they have any problems then they get in touch with me. We sort it out over the phone or on one of the visits that I make to the centre.

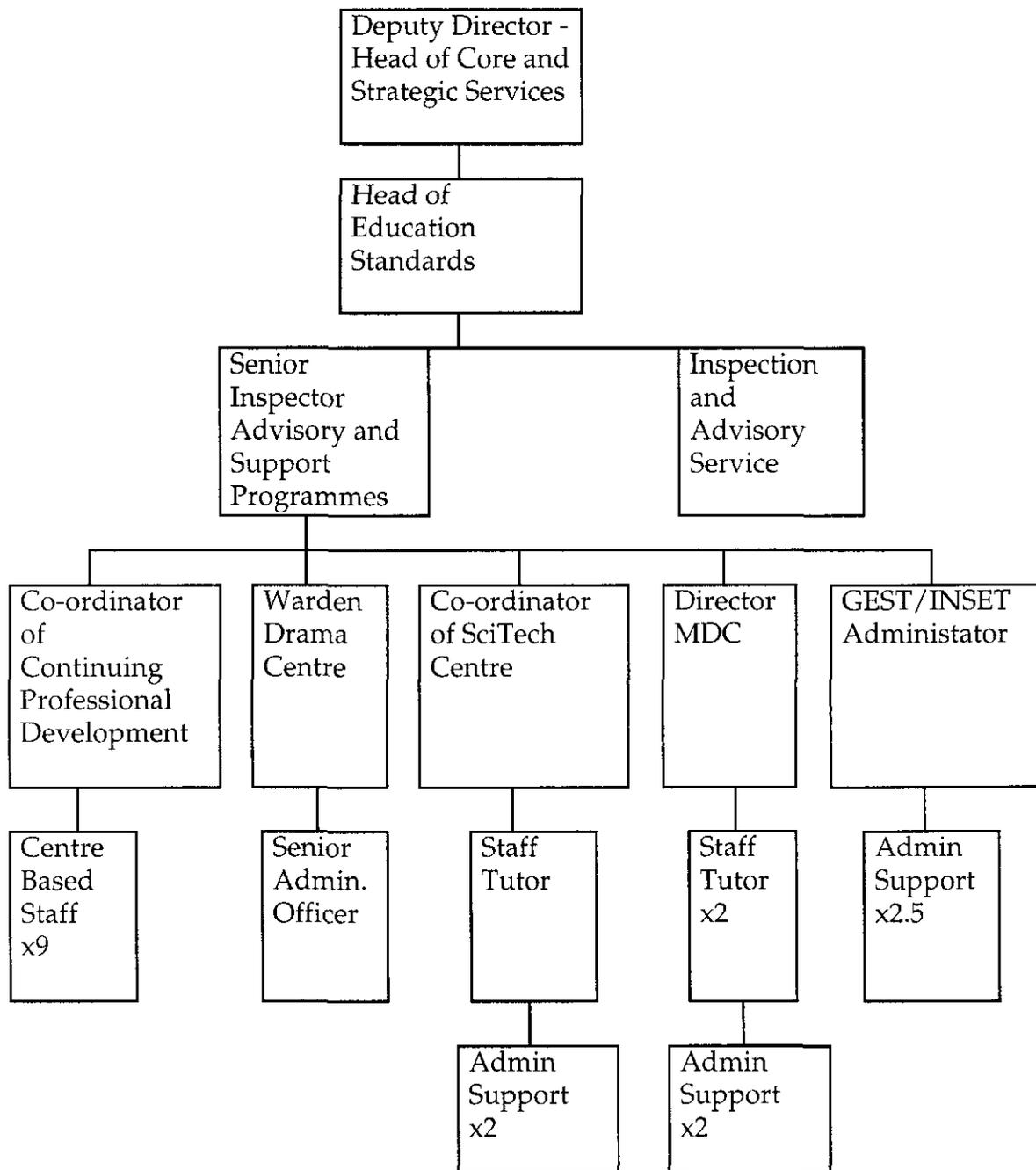
The operational strategy of the CSDS provided for the three tier SLA. It also undertook to provide programmes of INSET as well as in-school support. The CSDS produced a comprehensive county-wide perspective of school needs and this informed the annual programme for INSET. INSET needs were identified by schools themselves, through inspection and as a result of LEA and national priorities. The INSET organised through the CSDS was almost exclusively provided through Curriculum Support Teachers. Moriadon seconded experienced teachers on short term contracts and this, it was claimed, added to the credibility of the LEA's INSET provision:

Mainly the courses are run by our curriculum support teachers. There are a small number of consultants who provide courses, but it's not a large number and we try to keep it within the authority. [...] First of all we train [Curriculum Support Teachers] to deliver in-service training and, secondly, their credibility is probably higher because they have been in teaching very recently and gained a good reputation. We take them out of schools so the credibility is there. (Co-ordinator for Continuing Professional Development)

INSET workshops/courses offered by the LEA covered all the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum as well as: Behaviour Management; Business Education; Careers Education and Guidance; Cross Curricular Themes; GNVQ Networks (Secondary schools); Health Education; Information Technology; Management Development; Improving Primary Schools; Newly Qualified Teachers; Religious Education; Raising Achievement; Secondary Curriculum Planning; Special Educational Needs; and Post Inspection Action Planning. As noted above, for full members of the SLA the course fee together with the cost of any supply cover incurred was debited from the school's GEST money which had

been subscribed to the LEA. Travel and subsistence were paid to teachers from full member schools by the LEA where applicable.

Figure 6.1: Moriadon's INSET structure



Teachers in schools which were standard members of the SLA had their course fees paid as well as travel and subsistence where applicable. However, the cost of any supply cover incurred was met by the schools. Schools with basic membership of the SLA were expected to pay all costs including fees, travel, subsistence and supply cover from their own school's budget. Full and standard members paid course costs charged at a third of what was termed 'the economic rate'. This effectively meant that for a course costing £300 full and standard

members would pay £100. A basic member of the SLA would pay half the economic rate, or £150 for a course costing £300. Schools which were not members of the SLA paid all costs incurred by sending a teacher on an LEA course including fees, travel subsistence and supply cover. They also paid the full economic rate for courses. So, in the case of a £300 course, the non-member would pay the full amount (£300). In addition to the courses provided exclusively by the LEA a number of DfEE designated courses for enhancing the subject knowledge of primary teachers were organised through the LEA. They were mainly provided by local higher education institutions. All costs to schools for these courses were met centrally by the LEA. The resources, though, were provided to the LEA through the GEST Grant 3 of the 1996-97 programme.

Moriadon placed a great emphasis on monitoring and evaluating the INSET which its CSDS provided. The LEA's policy statement had been published in a document entitled *Monitoring and Evaluating Staff Development and In-Service Training*. This booklet had been distributed to all schools in Moriadon. The LEA noted that 'monitoring and evaluating INSET was an important and integral part of the overall process of staff development'. It listed five purposes of the evaluating and monitoring INSET:

- to provide evidence of the effectiveness of the training in relation to the original reasons for providing/undertaking the training,
- to improve the training provided,
- to improve the quality of teaching and learning,
- to improve the procedures by which training is organised, and
- to provide evidence of the extent to which public investment in training is producing benefits.

As the LEA's literature noted, to supplement and strengthen its INSET procedures the authority 'required' schools to complete an annual evaluation of their INSET programme. In an attempt to assist schools in their evaluation of the effectiveness of their management of the INSET process, the LEA gave schools a number of 'indicators' which sought to show that a school's arrangements for supporting staff development were contributing to the overall effectiveness of the school. The LEA looked for evidence of the impact of INSET on the curriculum in schools. This, it

was claimed in the LEA's documentation, 'would be an indicator of the effect and success of in-service':

We have always said that the whole aim of in-service training is to ensure that the children receive the best possible education in the classroom. To do this we ensure that the curriculum is enhanced and strengthened through in-service training and that children will benefit from that strengthening. [...] We do evaluate each course. [We use an] evaluation form. We actually statistically analyse the answers and produce an evaluation of that on a yearly basis. [...] We actually have a small group of inspectors at the moment who are conducting a qualitative evaluation of in-service training. We are waiting for the outcomes of that at the moment. They are tracking a number of schools, where schools have identified in their action plan what it is they want to do in terms of improvement, and where the in-service, professional development, comes in, they are tracking that through to look at the impact of that in the classroom. (Co-ordinator for Continuing Professional Development)

The Education Centres

The majority of the Moriadon CSDS unit's INSET workshops/courses were offered through specialist centres and in schools. These included three Education Centres in the North, East and South of Moridon. In addition, the work of the CSDS was situated within a SciTech Centre, a Management Development Centre and a Drama Centre. However, the situation was changing. South Moriadon Education Centre became the responsibility of a new unitary authority from April 1st 1997 and a newly-created Social Services Department took control of the centre. The two staff at the centre on full-time long-term contracts were 'transferred automatically' to the new authority. One member of staff responsible for the Audio-Visual unit within the centre was not transferred to the new unitary authority. He had been employed on a short-tenure, twelve-week renewable contract. In addition to the loss of this centre it was decided to close the East Moridon Education Centre. This decision followed a review by Price Waterhouse for the local authority. However, East Moridon Centre had a short 'stay of execution':

We were going to close it and then somebody began to take notice of what we [CSDS staff] were saying, that we would find it very difficult to

find places to run courses if that centre was taken away. So it's had a stay of execution certainly until next April and possibly until next July [1997]. One of [Price Waterhouse's] recommendations was that the functions which were out in Education Centres should be brought into County Hall and should be run centrally. [...] With the logistics of actually trying to close it all down and relocate people, but also at the same time try to maintain enough plant to run courses, somebody eventually began to see that it could not be done that quickly. (Coordinator of Continuing Professional Development)

Comments made by the Administrator of South Moriadon Education Centre, however, suggested that the LEA was already pursuing a strategy designed to 'consolidate' its use of the Education Centres'.

When I first started here [South Moriadon Education Centre] the place was a lot busier. The lady who was actually doing this job [...] had a very much more demanding role. A lot busier. Today we are lucky if we have got two meetings in. Some days we don't have any meetings. Back in those days [early-1990s] every room in the building was full. People were in and out, the place was just a hive of industry.

The LEA's *INSET and Professional Development Book, 1996-97* for primary and special (primary) schools offered twelve 'courses' under the heading of 'English'. Of these, six were provided at the Management Development Centre, two were provided at the SciTech Centre, one was provided at a local museum and three were provided at North Moriadon Education Centre. East and South Moriadon Education Centre were not used as a venue for any English courses. The *INSET and Professional Development Book, 1996-97* for secondary and special (secondary) schools listed only four 'courses' under the heading of 'English'. Of these, three were provided at the Management Development Centre and the venue for the other one was the SciTech Centre. With the reduction in the use of the East and South Moriadon Education Centres by the LEA as a venue for INSET activities, a level of alienation had become evident among the centre staff. It was suggested that the LEA had shown a distinct lack of commitment to use these two centres as a venue for INSET:

I don't think there has been a commitment. That was shown in the [INSET] meetings being taken away. They seem to have channelled a lot more things through [North Moriadon Education Centre]. Basically

some days we feel as if they don't give a stuff about us and we are just here on our own, doing our own thing. (Administrator, North Moriadon Education Centre)

When enquiring about the possibility of interviewing the manager of one of the Education Centres in Moriadon, the Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development had mooted that the researcher should interview the administrator in the North Moriadon Centre, perhaps recognising that the staff in the other two centres might reflect a degree of bitterness and anger about the reorganisation. Certainly at the time of interview, staff in the South Moriadon Education Centre were dismayed about a lack of information relating to the situation:

Put it this way, I get told nothing. I work here and I find it a bit disgusting really that we get told very little. [...] We are not in any unions so if we find out anything it is basically tittle tattle. [...] We had a letter when it [local government reorganisation] was first talked about if you know what I mean, saying what might possibly happen. But since then we've heard very little and anything we get is gossip. If I ask [the Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development] then he usually says he does not know. I find it a bit much that we are very much in the dark and it's our future and I think we should be told. (Administrator, South Moriadon Education Centre)

The administrator at North Moriadon Education Centre was actually retiring the day after the interview took place. An inspector's secretary had been seconded to the centre to 'keep things ticking over'. The future of North Moriadon Education Centre certainly seemed secure despite the loss of the other two centres. The administrator noted that the North Moriadon Centre was now to 'house' Curriculum Support Teachers from the closing East Moridan Centre. Furthermore, the LEA had been successful in bidding for GEST resources to establish a Numeracy Centre. This was to be situated within North Moriadon Education Centre. The above observations give an indication of the continuing flux which had characterised Moriadon LEA since 1990. A great deal of restructuring had occurred. The SLA had been a response to the introduction of LMS and GEST. Inspection 'came to the fore' in Moriadon after the introduction of the 1992 Education Act. Moriadon designated all its remaining advisers as inspectors. This change in title was illustrative of the authority's wish to become heavily involved in OFSTED inspection work. As the Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development remarked, 'we [Moriadon Inspectors] are all involved

in inspection to some extent, this authority more than others'. Further restructuring had resulted from 'rationalisation' in response to reducing budgets and local government reorganisation. Concomitant with restructuring had been a *re-orientation in the role of LEA officers*.

I was [South Moriadon Education Centre] leader and then Co-ordinator of Off-Site Programmes, but in between that I was Co-ordinator of all the three education centres. I can't remember the exact title. I've had that many bloody reincarnations that I've forgotten what they all are.

As the Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development pointed out, *changes in role involved some interpreting and negotiating of his role to meet new exigencies*. Even minor changes to the GEST budget had an effect on the LEA's operations and his role. Also, headteachers were involved in the re-negotiation of curriculum support teachers roles. This form of collaboration highlighted the LEA's recognition of the new inter-dependence with schools:

Primarily my job looks at providing continuing professional development opportunities for teachers in [Moriadon]. The mammoth part of that is to produce the in-service booklet outlining the provision across the county. That encapsulates the job but there are many things involved in doing that. Added to that, I also have a role to play in terms of the deployment of the curriculum support teachers. We keep a data base which actually plots the schools entitlement to curriculum support and also plots the deployment of curriculum support teachers. I get involved at various stages, for instance, if schools want to change their options, or in the case of the post-inspection grant this year, that is when I become involved and I begin to try and negotiate with the schools and the curriculum support teachers.

In 1991 the Co-ordinator CPD had been Warden of East and South Moriadon Education Centres. The North Moriadon Centre also had its own Warden. The Co-ordinator of Professional Development had then taken overall responsibility for the three centres. As noted, this had become only one element of a multi-faceted role. With the impending closure of two centres it was an element of the role which was to decline. The 'day-to-day' management of each Education Centre was placed in the hands of an administrative assistant. If a problem arose which they could not deal with then they would contact the Co-ordinator by telephone or seek his advice on one of his visits to the centre. Despite their designation as

administrators the role of the centre managers was varied. Also, as the staff of each centre declined in number the administrative assistant's brief was expanded:

I cover everything, because people have dropped out, as they have finished. I am now even stacking vending machines, I see that coffee is put out. I'll see to all the accounts. We have quite an involved accounting system which is not on computer here. So its done by me which takes quite a lot of the time. I buy in and sell out. I send booking forms out and arrange our meals and I have to keep that up to date.
(Administrative Assistant, North Moriadon Education Centre)

The use of the centres as a venue for INSET 'courses' had declined during the 1990s. Each centre provided alternative services to schools, LEA departments, and 'outside' organisations such as other LEAs, charities, examination boards or small businesses. The success of these ventures was important as the centres were required to 'generate some of [their] own income'. They did, however, still receive some financial support through the central LEA budget. South Moriadon Education Centre provided a thriving audio visual and printing service. As the administrative assistant noted, despite the decline in meetings, the audio visual and printing side of the centres work were 'still going strong'. The administrative assistants expressed pride in their entrepreneurial achievements and had even started to use the language of business economics:

We try to provide a smooth flow of customers. Keeping our customers happy is what it is all about. [...] We don't only get schools in, we get private people such as the NSPCC. We have visitors from other authorities and universities. We have also put on displays for publishers. We deal with quite a wide sector, not just schools and school teachers. (*Ibid*)

The only similarity which the centres had with the notion of the old teachers' centre was that they were the venue for some of the LEA's INSET programme. School teachers did not use the centres as a social venue. They rarely booked rooms for meetings with colleagues who had a similar interest for self-initiated activities. Teachers had no involvement in the management of the centres at all as they had at one time through Centre Management Groups:

It was made up of one or two retired heads and one or two who were still in-service. [There were] two [advisers] and also two county

councillors. It was quite a mixture. [...] It gradually disbanded because more direction was given from County Hall. (Administrative Assistant, North Moriadon Education Centre)

Alternative centres for INSET activities

The Management Development Centre (MDC) was located in the City of Moriadon at a local further education (FE) college. The key purpose of the MDC was to provide specialist support in school leadership and management. The MDC was staffed by three full-time tutors and an increasing number of associate tutors who supported particular aspects of the centre's work. The MDC support for schools consisted of a programme of management workshops and courses targeted to meet the expressed needs of schools in a wide range of areas. These included: management and leadership skills; team building; managing meetings; managing conflict; departmental development planning; managing staff development; motivation of staff; managing stress; managing time and school development planning. The MDC also offered school-based activities and consultancy in the mainstream fields of management and appraisal. During 1996-97, the MDC supported schools by offering:

- A full programme of support to head teachers in their first appointments through the Teacher Training Agency's HEADLAMP initiative.
- Courses and workshops to support the process of teacher and head teacher appraisal, including initial skills training appraisers.
- On-site, school-based consultancy work, in response to schools' identified needs including pre-OFSTED and post-OFSTED support.
- Consultancy and support in introducing schools to Investors in People, assisting schools in the production of an action plan, providing training and development activities as part of the implementation of that plan, and helping schools through the process of being recognised as an Investor in People organisation.
- Consultancy and support for schools in working with Lee Canter's programme of Assertive Discipline, including advice and information to

headteachers, skills training for teachers and support staff, and developing understanding of the causes of poor pupil behaviour.

-The opportunity for school managers to join an action learning set in the application of the Management Charter Initiative competencies and to produce a portfolio of evidence as proof of their managerial competence at NVQ level 4 or 5.

-Advice in the usefulness and purpose of a range of Centre-based training materials, including all of the materials produced by the Local Education Authorities Project (LEAP), a national body of which [Moriadon] LEA is a working member, assisting with the development, trailing and production of educational packages for use in schools.

The MDC, however, was not simply used as the venue for management and appraisal courses. During 1996-97 the MDC hosted the great majority of the LEA's INSET workshops and courses provided in all curriculum areas. The major venue for Information Technology and Science related INSET workshops and courses across all phases of the education service, though, was Moriadon LEA's SciTech Centre. This was located at the same FE college as the MDC. As well as offering curriculum support and advice the Scitech Centre provided a purchasing facility. It sold computer software and audio-visual items. The centre was managed by a Co-ordinator . It also had one staff tutor and two administrative staff. The SciTech Centre hosted classes of pupils. The latter worked on specific IT projects. This was a new development and the initial 'project days' had been for primary schools. A further INSET venue was the LEA's Drama Centre. Drama Support Staff aimed to offer INSET courses and in-school support and development. The work with teachers was only a small part of the Drama Centre Staff's remit. The centre was also used by community arts groups and agencies and members of the general public. The objectives of the INSET offered through the centre were stated as being: 'to provide focused support for schools wishing to develop Drama; to provide the opportunity for colleagues from a cluster group [of schools] to share Drama training; and to further enhance the provision of Drama in schools.

Moriadon Inspection and Advisory Services Unit (MIASU)

MIASU aimed to 'raise pupils' attainment through helping promote the quality of learning, curriculum teaching, management and cost effectiveness in schools'. The importance which the authority placed on the work of this unit was demonstrated

in the LEA's mission statement.. One of Moriadon's four main development themes was placed under the heading 'Quality Standards'. 'The Authority will seek to encourage the raising of standards by inspection and monitoring of school practices and other services provided by the LEA and through professional advice and support'. The unit had four main functions:

1. Inspection and monitoring (including OFSTED inspection, monitoring and evaluation work in schools in advance of and after OFSTED inspections; and County wide initiatives and activities.)
2. Providing advice and support (including support both pre and post OFSTED inspection, general advice to Head Teachers, advice to Governors particularly when making Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher appointments and Head Teacher appraisal.)
3. Providing subject specific advice and in-service training (including up-to-date curriculum development and advice in subjects and phases, arranging in-service training and providing in-service training.)
4. Providing advice to the LEA centre (including reporting to the Director of Education, involvement with Head Teacher groups, reporting formally to the Education Committee, representing the LEA regionally and nationally.)

The number of Inspectors employed by Moriadon at the time of the study was thirty three. The authority lost three of these inspectors following local government reorganisation in April 1997. At the time of the study no formal arrangements in relation to INSET had been agreed between Moriadon and the new unitary authority. There were four teams of inspectors which collectively undertook monitoring and support activities that were related to specific schools. Hence, each school had what was termed 'a link inspector'. The Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development remarked that the number of inspectors had certainly not declined over the last five years:

If anything they have increased [in number]. We have kept the full complement. We not only have a full set of curriculum inspectors, but we also have a heavy complement of primary inspectors who are known as the primary inspection advisory team. There is at least one specialist primary inspector per area across the county.

However, the amount of time which inspectors devoted to INSET work had declined since the introduction of OFSTED. As noted earlier, the curriculum support teachers managed and provided the majority of the LEA's INSET activities. To fund this level of inspection service the LEA had contracted for and conducted a relatively large amount of OFSTED inspection work. The LEA only bid for OFSTED work in Moriadon schools and had been 'one hundred per cent successful' in contracting for inspection work in 'its' primary schools. This was not the case with secondary contracts, although the LEA was still successful in the majority of bids to inspect 'its' secondary schools. However, the heavy involvement with OFSTED had created some concern at the school level.

When OFSTED came along this authority went big into OFSTED inspection to actually earn enough money to pay for an inspectorate. [...] They generate a hell of a lot of money for the inspection service. [...] They do earn a lot of money from the Inspection and Advisory Service salary bill through the OFSTED inspection process. They are pulling back from that because I think members have been convinced that schools still need more of the advice. [...] Schools are saying that they are not seeing enough of their inspectors. So the members have sat up and taken notice. They are now willing to provide more central money to keep the Inspection and Advisory Service going. (Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development)

The level of OFSTED work reduced the amount of time inspectors could commit to INSET related activities. In addition, as noted earlier, the Senior Management of the Education Department and members of the Education Committee had also expected inspectors to continue to closely monitor and evaluate the work of schools as an LEA. This was time consuming and also meant that the INSET work of inspectors was reduced.

Shirebridge LEA.

At the time of the study Shirebridge LEA Advisory Service had twenty seven advisers. Between them, they provided a wide range of advice and support, inspection and INSET workshops/courses to schools. The service was led by a chief adviser. The latter managed the service with four senior advisers. One of these four senior advisers shared responsibility with an adviser for the running of the LEA's Continuing Professional Development Unit. As will be noted

subsequently, the number of LEA advisers reduced by a third following local government reorganisation in April 1997. Like Moriadon, during the 1990s Shirebridge LEA had reacted to the developments identified in earlier chapters. In particular the 1992 Education (Schools) Act and the establishment of OFSTED had had a major impact on the LEA's arrangements for INSET. INSET related issues rarely appeared on the agenda of Education Committee meetings. In 1996 GEST was the only INSET issue which did. However, as the Chair of Shirebridge Education Committee remarked, 'by and large the committee approves the [GEST] bid through a vote by the majority of members'.

Shirebridge Continuing Professional Development Unit (SCPDU)

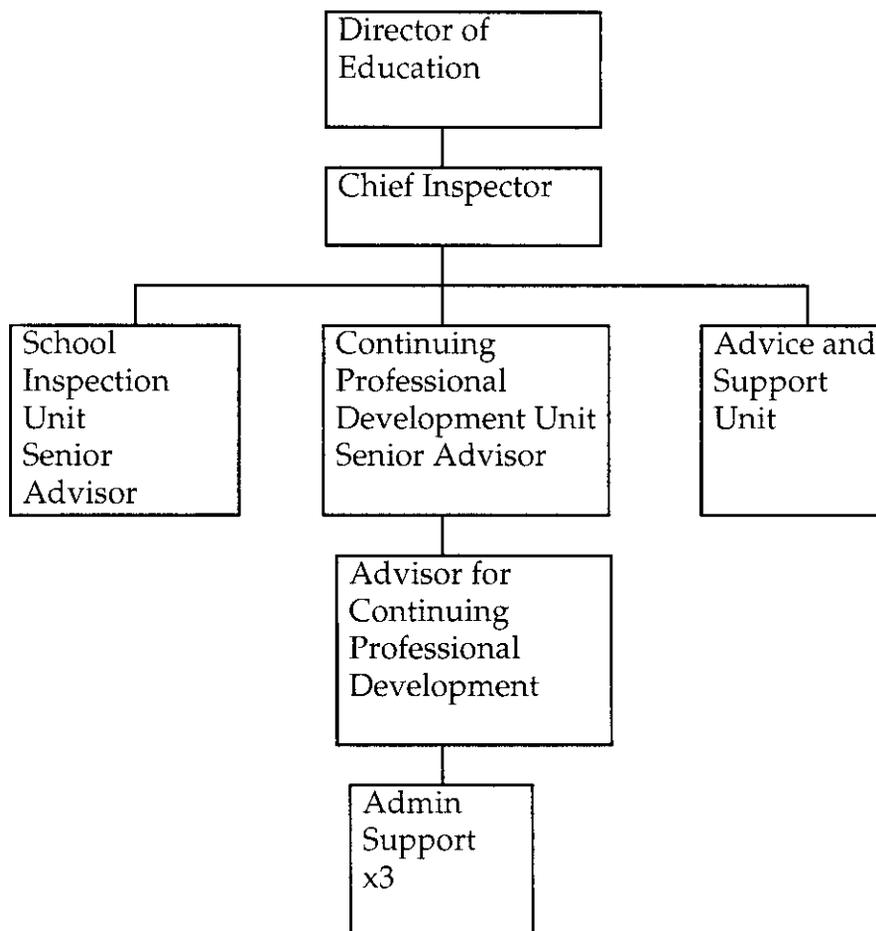
As figure 6.2 below illustrates, a senior adviser and an adviser were responsible for the SCPDU. They headed a 'team' of three administrative assistants based at County Hall. When asked what his role was in relation to INSET the senior adviser noted that:

The role is very clear. In [Shirebridge] we support teachers and schools in their work. Our job is to work as a team, with a small group of administrative staff, to provide for schools a package which is in our view, close to what the customers want. So not to provide something which may be attractive to those from outside [Shirebridge], if it attracts them that is incidental, but our first responsibility is to the young people in schools in [Shirebridge]. We all work as pastoral advisers, or almost all of us, which means that we have a pastoral responsibility for a group of schools. We work first and foremost there with head teachers, but quite often in classrooms. We do feel that we know the schools and have some insight into what their needs and wants might be. So that helps to shape, to some extent, what we provide.

The Adviser CPD had been the LEA's TVEI co-ordinator. Both he and the Senior Adviser CPD had substantial experience as advisers:

[There] was development in the service whereby we began to move towards a more functional model. [the Adviser CPD], with his experience [in relation to TVEI], was asked to take on this responsibility. It happens that [the Adviser CPD] and I work together very well so it suited us enormously. (Senior Advisor, CPD)

Figure 6.2: Shirebridge LEA's INSET Structure



The SCPDU organised a Directory of CPD workshops and courses. The SCPDU offered a 'promise' to schools which included the following: to provide a wide range of courses tailored to meet the current professional development needs of teachers and others who work in schools; to endeavour to provide courses of the highest quality; to monitor [the LEA's] own performance carefully and use this information to develop courses further; to treat with respect and courtesy [school staff] at all times; across the LEA's CPD programme as a whole, to strive to maintain competitive prices and provide an efficient service; to listen carefully to schools suggestions and incorporate these where improvements to course programmes and administration would benefit the majority of schools. Some of the terminology employed by the Shirbridge officers above and within the authority's literature was rich in nuance. There was an emphasis on 'quality', 'competitive prices' and 'efficiency'. The authority as a whole had actively sought to pursue the 'externalisation of functions'. During the 1990s many working practices had become underpinned by a business ethos. The latter had 'permeated down into the working of the advisory in terms of INSET'. (Chair of Shirebridge

Education Committee) Where INSET arrangements within the authority had become much more business-orientated, this had resulted in 'streamlining':

The LEA managed central courses that it thought the customers wanted. Now we have totally turned that around. We have stream-lined the whole thing. Basically what we now do is devolve a high percentage of the money to the schools rather than hold it centrally. We then sell to the market.. [...] About two years ago we [the Senior Adviser and Adviser CPD] went to the advisory service with a pretty radical set of proposals, at least at that time it was perceived as fairly radical. And, certainly we debated those and argued those and the result is the programme we have been following for the last two years. (Adviser CPD)

A major force for change within the LEA was the introduction of OFSTED:

Well that [the new arrangements for INSET] has arisen as a result of the OFSTED activities. The authority agreed that our advisory team should get involved in OFSTED inspections. There has been a big backdraft from what was a national plan into the advisory team. As you say, it is much more structured now. It's looked at more as if they were running a business. [...] I think the influence was the OFSTED influences. Gradually it has penetrated into the organisation to education officers and they have said this is right to operate more as a business and the committee agree. (Chair of Shirebridge Education Committee)

At the time of the study (October 1996), the INSET structure, culture and practice in Shirbridge highlighted the authority's enthusiasm for central Government's education policies. Another example of this can be given. Devolution of resources to secondary schools had exceeded those amounts required by Government. There was also a pilot study examining the possibility of devolving even more resources to primary schools.:

In [Shirebridge] it has been the policy to devolve the funding as close to the client as possible. In [Shirebridge] we have LEA-maintained schools and we have schools who have further devolved budgets. Now those schools, in a crude sense, have advisers salaries within their budgets. Therefore they use that as a purchasing power. All secondary schools are in that position and some primary schools are in a pilot. So we have a whole mixture of schools, some of which we have to earn part of our

salaries back from. Hence the fact that we function as a business which enables us to do some of the developmental work which we want to do. (Senior Adviser, CPD)

The rationale underpinning the INSET arrangements made by Shirebridge was outlined by the LEA's Education Committee chairperson:

[The LEA's present arrangements for INSET] are partly due to the overall philosophy of the authority which is basically the Conservative ethos generally which favours free enterprise. Now that is translated within the authority. When proposals come forward to create an internal business element within any part of the structure, then that has been supported by the authority. It's been supported in terms of what you can earn you can keep and so on. The climate is right for that.

Shirebridge had pursued a strategy for managing the changing relationship between itself and local schools which had emphasised the independence of schools from the authority. None of the LEA's literature placed any great emphasis on the authority as a local educational leader. The authority, for example, distributed literature to schools which was intended to help develop a 'whole-school approach to continuing professional development and teachers to reflect upon and plan their professional development. Advice to help teachers compile their own profile of continuing professional development was given to schools. However, great stress was placed on assuring schools and teachers that 'the ownership and control' of whole-school CPD and teacher profiles remained with schools and individual teachers. Schools were perceived as autonomous organisations with their own independent agendas. This changing LEA/school relationship had impacted on the authority's commitment to provide INSET:

I think the commitment has changed fairly significantly since the introduction of LMS. In the sense that because we are delegating to schools a very high proportion of the overall financing of schools, we are beginning to delegate responsibility for schools to ask for help rather than to be given help. I think that will carry on as more and more is delegated, more and more they will have to turn to us and say this is what we want, rather than we saying this is what you should have. I'm sure that will affect INSET. (Chair of Shirebridge Education Committee)

The SCPDU Directory for the school year September 1997 to July 1997 offered workshops and courses across all the primary and secondary phase core and foundation subjects. In addition, workshops and courses were offered in relation to: appraisal; assessment, recording and reporting; careers education; environmental education; investors in people; school management; newly qualified teachers; PSHE; vocational education and special educational needs. All sessions were organised by an adviser although they did not necessarily provide the workshop/course. 'Quite a lot' of what was termed 'sub-contracting' went on:

A lot of advisers contract their courses to other people. So the adviser is the course organiser, but the course deliverer may well be somebody else. (Senior Adviser CPD)

The Adviser CPD provided a justification for this practice:

We've got two dozen advisers who, we think, know their skills and their area. They are probably in the best position to really identify needs. They are far better at this than any computerised or sophisticated system you could ever set up. It's all been tried before and it simply creates numbers. So we are advisers who are in daily contact with our schools. And there you've also got people who have got expertise in the different areas in which we do our business, whether it's early years, or whether it's art, whatever. So they have got this expertise and they become our quality assurance people as well. We don't organise any INSET that does not go through an adviser. So you may have an adviser who has a number of people who are delivering courses, but every one of those people is supervised and managed through the adviser, and that adviser is accountable to us.

To pay for courses from the directory of CPD a school used their GEST allocations or money from their general schools budget. Shirebridge LEA schools had a direct debit made to their budget by including an appropriate code on the course application forms. The LEA had no Education Centres. They had had one in the past but, as the Adviser CPD noted, this had been closed a number of years before following a 'political and financial decision'. Most courses were held at schools or hotels. In addition to the 'courses' offered in the county council's directory the LEA, in 'a joint venture' with three higher education institutions, provided nine and twelve-day courses designed to enhance primary school teachers' expertise in the subjects of the National Curriculum. It was claimed by Shirebridge's Chief

Adviser that the latter programme 'represented a substantial commitment by the authority to the professional development of teachers'. As noted earlier in this chapter, however, funding for these courses was provided through a GEST grant, sixty per cent of which came from central Government. The LEA had also 'collaborated' with a university in relation to a specific project on school improvement and improving CPD. The use of terms such as 'joint arrangement' and 'collaboration' was illustrative. The terminology inferred a functional arrangement between the LEA and the HE institutions. The Shirebridge Education Department seemed to view the joint ventures as a necessary 'truce' in normal competitive relations.

Shirebridge Advisory Service

The number of advisers employed by the county council had reduced from around 36 in 1986 to 27 in 1996. Following local government reorganisation in April 1997 Shirebridge lost about a third of its 1996 complement. This is discussed below. In the previous five years numbers of advisory teachers had been greatly reduced. The only remaining area which the LEA employed advisory teachers in was information technology:

We used to employ a lot of advisory teachers but they no longer exist accept in relation to such things as IT. What has changed is the basis of the funding of the advisory service. (Adviser CPD)

Most advisers in Shirebridge were 'attached' to a number of schools. They provided these schools with general advice and worked in one of four areas. This changed after local government reorganisation in April 1997. Each Area Team's advisers was managed by an Area Senior Adviser. The Senior Adviser CPD was Manager of one of the Area Teams. He outlined the work of advisers in Shirebridge:

An adviser may be an adviser for a subject and that is part of their job across the whole of [Shirebridge]. In addition to that they have a number of nominated schools where they work in every curriculum area. So, my background is art, but, the head in a school says to me, in a primary school, we're just doing some work on AT 1 for Maths, you know it's a priority for us, you know we want to raise our SATs performance, will you please visit the classroom and report to us on the progress we are making in Maths. So in that sense every adviser is dealing with the

whole of the curriculum, with personnel, with budget, with management. so we have a huge data-base there. (Senior Adviser CPD)

All 'attached' advisers in Shirebridge had experience of senior management in primary or secondary schools as well as experience of OFSTED inspections. The 'attached' adviser was expected to 'build up a knowledge of, and develop a personal relationship with, each school'. The advisers liaised with the area and assistant area managers of their team. The 'attached' adviser service was provided at no cost to Shirebridge schools with a standard delegated budget. Those schools, such as all secondary schools, with a further delegated budget or grant-maintained schools had to purchase services as required. The focus of the work of 'attached' advisers in schools was agreed following discussion with the headteacher. However, the LEA documentation noted that 'attached' adviser activities should include:

- Support and advice for headteachers.
- Discussing the need for support from specialist advisers.
- Evaluation of aspects of school performance; particularly in relation to standards, quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and assessment.

The areas which 'attached' advisers were expected to provide advice on were listed as the following:

- Curriculum planning and the requirements of the statutory curriculum and assessment arrangements.
- Career and professional development for individual teachers, including guidance on appraisal and professional development portfolios.
- Recruitment and selection issues, in particular, the recruitment and appointment of a headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Supporting newly qualified teachers.
- Procedures and support in connection with teachers experiencing professional difficulties.

- School organisation and management.
- Preparation for and follow-up to OFSTED inspections.
- Internal monitoring and evaluation.
- Development planning.

All advisory staff were salaried employees of Shirebridge County Council. The sources through which the county council financed the advisory service were varied. Some resource came from the central LEA budget. However, the authority also required the advisory service to generate income and the figure set was relatively high in comparison to other authorities:

[Shirebridge] itself gets its income from a whole range of sources. The advisory has a target set to generate some of its own income. This target is high in terms of the advisory service. It really comes down to what we can earn through OFSTED contracts. (Adviser CPD)

The Adviser CPD noted that 'up to 25 per cent of every adviser's time was devoted to OFSTED inspections'. The authority took the decision to become heavily involved and had been successful in winning contracts in Shirebridge and in other authorities across the country. Indeed, advisers from Shirebridge had conducted inspections in one of the metropolitan LEAs discussed in the next chapter. The Senior Adviser CPD was quick to point out that Shirebridge did not 'target' other LEAs but contracted for schools in other authorities which 'appeared to fit the expertise which [the Shirebridge advisory service] had'. The level of OFSTED work undertaken by Shirebridge appeared to have created a tension among advisers in relation to the developmental and OFSTED facets of their role. The heavy involvement in OFSTED had certainly caused problems for the Senior Adviser and Adviser CPD in their planning of the INSET Directory of Courses:

[As] we also inspect, we don't know which contracts we will win. So advisers are saying to us, your asking us to organise courses but I don't know if I'm going to be available to run that course because I don't know which [OFSTED] contracts I'm going to be involved with. When preparing the courses programme I have to negotiate with my providers. But the providers of courses cannot tell me if they are going to be

available. The venues cannot tell me the price because they say it's another financial year. So, in April I end up planning a course which could run 18 months ahead. And that is what bringing things together in this sort of brochure means. (Senior Adviser CPD)

A further tension seemed evident between the adviser's pivotal role in identifying schools support needs, evaluating the impact of INSET and the emerging Shirebridge 'mode of operation'. As noted, the working practices of the advisory service were increasingly underpinned by a business ethos. Staff were encouraged to view schools as 'customers' operating in a market. Indeed, at the time of the interview with the Senior Adviser and Adviser CPD, they revealed how pleased they were to find that the SCPDU's team of three administrators had started to refer to schools as 'customers'. Schools could choose to purchase services from a variety of INSET providers although the LEA noted that it was 'confident that we offer a service which our competitors cannot equal'. However, while the schools were viewed as having independence from the authority, simultaneously the LEA's advisory service continued to play a prominent role in determining the CPD needs of schools. The advisers were the major means by which the LEA evaluated the impact of INSET in terms of the benefits which accrued from it for pupils. The authority used evaluation forms which the Adviser CPD referred to as 'happy forms' filled in by a teacher at the end of a workshop/course. However, as the Senior Adviser CPD noted:

Using the knowledge of the adviser is more accurate than questionnaires. Where we've asked schools on paper to specify from all this list of things which do you want, that has been much less accurate than asking the professionals to make a professional judgement. It is not simply a case of listening to the head. You can work in a number of schools. A school might identify something as a need, but the adviser might be clear from their classroom observations that there is a more clear problem which needs addressing. So, it is certainly not simply a case that heads are telling me they want this. It is also a case of me saying there is clearly a need for that.

The monitoring role of the advisory service and the developing business ethos sat uncomfortably alongside on another. They seemed incompatible. An attempt was made by the Senior Adviser and Adviser CPD to justify the apparent contradiction between the significant monitoring and evaluating role of advisers and the recently marketised principles and practices of the LEA. :

They [the advisers] are the experts in their field. They are as knowledgeable as anybody else in the country in their field. That is our job. We are paid to be up-front in our areas of expertise. So we are the people who we think are in the best position to judge what schools will need. The test, at the end of the day, is whether schools buy what we put out. If they don't buy then we have obviously got it wrong. (Adviser CPD)

The Senior Adviser and Adviser CPD also observed that schools would not 'buy-back' INSET services from the LEA if the LEA's advisers had 'got it wrong'. Therefore 'buy-back' was a significant 'performance indicator'.

Local Government Reorganisation in Shirebridge

In contrast to the reorganisation which occurred in Moriadon, the repositioning of Shirebridge County Council had been surrounded by controversy. Local government reorganisation also had a greater impact on the INSET structures within Shirebridge than in Moriadon. The controversy began after the Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer, announced in November 1993 that he expected to see recommendations for the retention of County and District structures only in what he termed 'exceptional circumstances'. In January 1994 the High Court ruled that Gummer had acted unlawfully in calling for the two tier structure of County and District councils to be abandoned only in 'exceptional circumstances'. Indeed, the Environment Secretary conceded after the ruling that he had made an error. However, by this time the County and District Councils in Shirebridge were well advanced in a process of consultations on options for change. These had been drawn-up in light of Gummer's previous advice. From the time of the High Court ruling in January 1994, the way was open for 'no-change' options being submitted to the Local Government Commission (LGC) by County and District Councils. During local consultation all five District Councils in Shirebridge were keen to seek unitary status. However, the County Council claimed that the local consultations had taken place in a context where the 'no-change' option was not an issue. Therefore, the County Council suggested that the consultation had not dealt fully with the case for retaining the present situation. When Shirebridge finally made a submission to the LGC it stated that the County Council favoured a unitary authority for a large expanding town in the north of the authority but no change elsewhere.

However, the LGC made 'final' recommendations for Shirebridge which proposed making it wholly unitary, with four unitary authorities. Immediately following this decision a 'Friends of [Shirebridge]' campaign was launched. Those participating included local Members of Parliament and prominent local citizens, including ex-Government Ministers. The success of the campaign can be gauged by the decision of Gummer, to ignore the advice of the LGC and allow only one district in Shirebridge to obtain unitary status. The rest of Shirebridge would remain intact. The Conservative Chairperson of one of the four District Councils which were not to become unitary authorities was said to be 'furious' and the Chief Executive of one of the authorities noted that other district councillors were 'spitting blood'. In the immediate aftermath of Gummer's announcement on Shirebridge the County Council's Chairman had hoped that there would be 'no animosity'. He claimed that 'common sense had prevailed' and suggested that district councillors 'should now stop moaning and groaning'. However, the furore surrounding the future of local government in Shirebridge was not quite over. The four districts denied unitary status claimed that Gummer had acted illegally in overturning the LGC recommendations. In June 1995 the High Court, though, rejected the district claim.

The Chair of Shirebridge Education Committee had suggested that there was no antagonism following the extended process of reorganisation. However, the actions of the County Council suggest that some 'fall-out' was expected. Shirebridge had striven, from June 1995 onwards, to develop 'multi-tier working arrangements with the local District Councils and Parish Councils'. What were termed 'joint member forums' had been established. Although only one district of Shirebridge was to become a unitary authority the reorganisation was to have a significant impact on the structures of the County Council. Talking about the effects of reorganisation on his own role and the County Council in general, the Chair of the Education Committee noted that:

It changes radically on the first of April next year. I've been involved in the discussions in relation to it. As opposed to having Heads of Departments, and the Chief Education Officer is the head of the Education Department, the County Council now has a position where departments have now been amalgamated. This is actually taking place before next April. All departments will become clustered under four strategic directors. The Director of Education is one of the strategic directors. He is keyed into a corporate organisation with the Chief Executive as well as four strategic directors. He is responsible for the

education service and plus we've taken over archives. We are already responsible for libraries and museums. These are quite radical changes which are about to come into affect. This is in preparation for the re-positioned [Shirebridge].

In relation to the Shirebridge advisory service the Chair of the Education Committee observed that:

The problem which we face is straight-forward. We have a team that covers all skills, if you want to put it that way. We have to lose from that team up to a third of the resource. That's 30 per cent, just above or below and that is not yet finalised, to [the unitary authority]. So obviously a certain number of people will go to [the unitary authority] to provide the core of what they will have as their separatist activity.

There was much uncertainty in the months prior to reorganisation. Several shadow structures for the adviserate were proposed of varying sizes. The Senior Adviser and Adviser for CPD noted that while the politicians might set up structures, the schools might, given their autonomy, go elsewhere for services. They claimed that both authorities might lose 'the economies of scale' which they benefited from prior to April 1997. The interviewees stressed that they were not fighting for their jobs, but, rather, discussion in the advisory service was all about how reorganisation might stop the momentum established for providing the best possible service. The pre-eminent concern of the advisers was the effects on the INSET service to schools which they had worked extremely hard to create. They were angry that the outcome of this hard work might be 'thrown away'. They suggested that there was a team commitment in Shirebridge to fight to ensure that schools in the new unitary authority did not end up at any disadvantage following reorganisation. The Shirebridge Local Government Reorganisation Sub-Committee had identified several 'potential areas for formal joint working arrangements' between the County Council and the new unitary authority. These included IT support to schools, schools admissions and transport and a development team dealing with planning and briefing of school places. Advisers from Shirebridge helped the new unitary authority to compile its GEST bids for 1997-1998. However, when asked about the level of co-operation and interaction between the two authorities after April 1997 the Chair of the Shirebridge Education Committee made the following prediction:

Very little I think after a short period. First of all there is the diametrically opposed political situation. I wouldn't like to describe what sort of Conservatives we are, nor would I want to describe what sort of Labour party is in charge of [the new unitary authority]. One must assume that they have different philosophies in relation to running an education authority and I think that over time they will want to be separatist in what they provide. Not initially, of course, [the unitary authority] has got to have joint-arrangements with [Shirebridge] over a whole range of issues in the early stages. But by-and-large they will want to provide their own arrangements as far as they are able to do so as an ultimate objective. They have said so.

Maureen O'Connor, a Council Member of the NAHT, had pointed to a similar problem following local government reorganisation in Wales. 'What we are seeing is advisory services split into four or five but expected to provide joint services. They find they are working for different masters with different agendas'. (1997, 8) The possibility of joint arrangements between Shirebridge County Council and the new unitary authority had not been helped by well-publicized tensions and differences of policy in respect of selective schooling. The Chair of Shirebridge Education Committee recognised that the issue was 'very much detrimental' to any future relations between the two authorities. However, he suggested that the long-term impact of the issue was debatable:

It is a contentious issue. But it's impossible to say exactly what the future impact will be on relations between the two authorities. People are pragmatic and if they want a service they will go and get it from whatever source they think is the best.

It seemed unlikely that there would be much collaboration between the two authorities. They were of a differing political complexion. Any moves towards regional collaboration with other LEAs or HE institutions was anathema to Shirebridge. As the Senior Adviser CPD noted, though, schools in the new unitary authority might choose to buy into the services offered by Shirebridge

Review

This chapter outlined the INSET structures and provision of the two county councils involved in the study indicating the changes which occurred throughout the 1990s. Several similarities and differences in managing change were already

evident in the two LEAs. Through comparative analysis chapter eight will consider these in greater detail. Before that, though, chapter seven will consider the response to changes in INSET policy in three metropolitan authorities.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Changing LEA INSET Provision: A Study of three Metropolitan Authorities.

The following chapter will outline the INSET arrangements made by three metropolitan councils in England. Like the previous chapter, this one will attempt to identify how these arrangements have changed in each of the authorities over the last five years. Hobbiton is located on the outskirts of a large city in the North-West of England. The area is largely made up of suburban housing although there is some industry. Havensham is an industrial city in the North-East of England. Many of the traditional industries had closed down over the previous two decades and the city council is working with development agencies to re-generate the local economy. Rivendell is a London borough largely comprising suburban housing. The council is hung although the chair of the education committee is a Labour representative. The Labour party had formed a pact with the Liberal Democrats.

Table 7.1: Features of the three case study Metropolitan LEAs

	Hobbiton	Havensham	Rivendell
Political Control of the Council (Autumn 1996)	Labour	Labour	Labour Hung
Location	North-West of England	North-East of England	Greater London
Population	180,000	290,000	220,000
LM-Schools			
Primary	71	99	54
Secondary	14	17	14
Special	5	8	5
GM-Schools			
Primary	No GM-Schools	No GM-Schools	None
Secondary			1
Special			None

Hobbiton LEA

In the five years previously Hobbiton Council had placed a great emphasis on 'partnership' and 'collaboration' with other 'appropriate agencies'. The mission statement of the Education Department noted that 'the LEA, in partnership with

its schools and the community, will secure opportunities for all individuals to develop fully their aptitudes and abilities enabling them to meet their needs and to enrich their own lives and the life of the community'. In a report outlining the major policy issues for developing the local education service Hobbiton's CEO observed that the council would continue 'to seek to maintain a locally managed and democratically accountable service by maintaining [a] 'family of schools' in partnership with Governing Bodies and Head Teachers'. Partnership based on collaboration and consultation in this way had been framed within the notion of 'civic association'. This was described as 'the living with others in a way that respects autonomy but with a consciousness of the existence of one another in a civic situation'. (Radnor *et al*, 1996: 20) The CEO also observed that Hobbiton LEA would 'continue to oppose the principle of grant-maintained schools as divisive, unaccountable and harmful to general educational standards'. As will now be shown, partnership framed in the above terms was certainly evident in relation to the LEA's arrangements for INSET.

Hobbiton's Staff Development Policy (SDP)

The Education Department's SDP set out the rationale of the LEA in promoting staff development in the schools within the authority. One of the principles which underpinned the policy was a strong commitment to staff development on the part of the LEA. The authority was said to 'regard staff development as an essential element in an organisation's success'. With this in mind the LEA had sought 'to enhance the quality of pupils' learning by providing and supporting opportunities for teaching and non-teaching staff to develop their skills, knowledge, understanding and expertise, thereby increasing their own self-esteem, motivation, morale and effectiveness, and the overall effectiveness of the schools within which they work'. Partnership formed the basis of the SDP. Within available resources the LEA pledged to work 'with schools, other LEAs, Training and Enterprise Councils, and further and higher education institutions to achieve the following listed 'purposes':

- identify the staff development needs of individuals, groups and schools, taking into account national and local priorities;
- provide and promote a range of appropriate and relevant central and in-house training and support;

- support/advise schools in developing their own staff development policies and practices;
- identify and disseminate good practice in staff development;
- strengthen and extend opportunities for all staff to benefit from contact with networks within and beyond the LEA;
- provide effective induction programmes and career support and guidance for staff;
- monitor, review and evaluate staff development provision. (Hobbiton Staff Development Policy)

Hobbiton had first developed an SDP in the mid-1980s following the introduction of the LEATGS scheme. The Senior Adviser Staff Development and Training (SDT) felt that it was important for the LEA to continually review and update its policy in the same way that the LEA expected schools to do so. The Senior Adviser SDT had several 'principal duties' written into his job description. He was responsible to the CEO through the Chief Adviser for:

- co-ordinating the management of staff development and training issues in relation to primary and secondary education;
- assessing and advising on the staff development and training needs of primary and high schools in relation to both local and national initiatives;
- oversight of all advisers' work in relation to staff development and training, including the management of the work of consultants and others;
- developing good management principles and practices in primary and high schools;
- oversight of the management induction and development programmes currently available in [Hobbiton];

- undertaking basic training through [OFSTED] to qualify as a team member, and, if appropriate, specialist training for registered inspector status for national inspections. Also undertaking annual training as required by OFSTED to maintain registration;
- participating in inspections as a team inspector or, if appropriate, leading teams as registered inspector as directed by the [CEO] so that Authority earning targets can be met;
- participating in or leading inspection teams within the LEA as part of the inspection and review function of the service;
- overall responsibility for teacher appraisal, including headteacher appraisal;
- oversight of the production of the termly Training Guide;
- co-ordination support and training for newly qualified teachers in the secondary phase;
- general advisory responsibility for a number of schools, both primary and secondary;
- oversight of advisory support and training SEN. (Senior Adviser SDT, job description)

The Senior Adviser SDT indicated that many of the functions listed above had been added to his brief in a very short period of time:

I've sort of got general oversight of the programme which we offer to schools. I'm responsible, I suppose if you want to start with the money end of it really, I'm the one who actually negotiates the oversight of the programme that we offer. I'm specifically responsible for bits within that, including appraisal and management courses. I'm also now wholly responsible for the Professional Development Centre (PDC). That has never been my formal management responsibility. It has [been] since the person who ran the PDC retired three years ago. I took on some of his functions then. I was responsible for it jointly with someone else who left the LEA. He was not replaced so now I have the whole responsibility

for the centre. When I came here we had 17 full-time advisers, we now have nine.

As noted earlier, the Hobbiton SDP was formulated by the Senior Adviser SDT in collaboration with a headteachers working group. The Senior Adviser SDT was very proud of the consultation arrangements between LEA staff and the schools. The authority had a Staff Development and Training Management Team which was made up of senior officers from the LEA. A Schools' Staff Development and Training Management Group (SSDTMG) had also been established. The SSDTMG was made up of four representatives from primary schools, four from secondary schools and one representative from a special school. They were elected each year. The functions of the SSDTMG were listed as being:

- Monitoring of the use made by budget holders of the money allocated for INSET under the buy-back package;
- General monitoring of the range and quality of LEA Staff Development and Training provision for schools, and advising the LEA on these areas of provision;
- Acting on [Hobbiton] schools' behalf as a consultative group in the preparation and development of the Curriculum and Staff Development/Training Services agreement;
- [Scrutinising] detailed breakdowns of how all the monies for which the group have been responsible have been spent. Budget holders [advisers] have been required to provide regular information to the group outlining how they have used their budget allocation;
- The Group monitors all the responses to all the PDC based training through the medium of the INSET evaluation forms which course members are asked to complete after all courses at the PDC;
- The Group have had a major input into the content and terms of the new service agreements through direct consultations and the group's representation on the Staff Development and Training Management Team. (SSDTMG minutes)

The Service Level Agreements (SLAs) mentioned above will be discussed in more detail below. As indicated, a headteacher sat on the LEA's Senior Management Group for INSET related issues. The Senior Adviser SDT noted, that person 'sits at the highest decision-making level' within the Education Department. The SSDTMG had control of part of the resources which schools 'paid back' to the LEA through SLAs and had some influence in the authority's shaping of INSET policy. The CEO commented that the SSDTMG had 'played an increasingly important part in our planning and reviewing on in-service provision, and will continue to work with [the LEA] in monitoring how schools' buy back money is spent'. The Senior Adviser SDT observed the following:

the schools' management group [...] has nine teachers on it. When we set the budget at the beginning of the year, the budget for staff development, and when we know how much money we've got in buy-back from the schools, which is the major source of income, part of the budget, a set figure, is then at the disposal of the schools management group. It's not an enormous figure. I guess it's somewhere in the region of £30,000 to £40,000. So say the Maths adviser wants to buy in somebody to do some maths training he would go to them. They also, more broadly, oversee the overall provision of training. I think the most important function [of the SSDTMG] is in helping us to make sure our provision is up to scratch. They are our regular touchstone. A member of the group also sits on the [Education Department's] overall management group for staff development. He sits on the highest decision-making level.

The Senior Adviser SDT was keen to emphasise that the SSDTMG had responsibility only for money which had been given back to the LEA by schools through the SLAs. It was the GEST resource. He suggested that in Hobbiton an acceptable 'balance' between democratic accountability and service accountability had emerged:

I actually believe in the concept of a local accountability. It's a delicate balance. [...] It brings up the whole question about the balance between schools self-determination and the fact that local council tax payers put their money in. Now I think it's right that there is a balance of those two things. I think it's right that schools do have significantly more control over the way that schools spend their money. But I equally think it's right that there should be a locally elected organisation. Their ultimate

responsibility should be to monitor the quality of what those schools provide. And that is what is missing from the GM situation.

Hobbiton SLAs

Following the 1992 Education (Schools) Act, schools had been asked to buy into a series of Staff Development and Training Service Agreements with the LEA. In each successive year over ninety per cent of schools had paid back through one or more SLA. During 1996-97 of the ninety schools in Hobbiton, all but eight bought into at least one of the four Service Agreements on offer. The CEO described this as a 'positive response' and a reflection of the LEA's strong commitment to providing INSET opportunities for those working in schools. Indeed, he observed that the LEA's 'training and development programme remained central to the authority's goal of celebrating and extending achievement in [Hobbiton] schools'. The Senior Adviser SDT further observed in the LEA's documentation that 'we continue to believe that local service agreements provide the best guarantee of quality, for the simple reason that if we do not successfully meet schools' needs they will not continue to buy back'. As noted above, the content and prices of SLAs each year were discussed with the schools' elected representatives on the SSDTMG. Headteachers and each school's Staff Development Co-ordinator were also consulted through what were termed 'GEST Seminars'. The latter were organised once every term. The importance of the monies recouped through the SLAs towards funding the LEAs INSET activities was emphasised by the Senior Adviser SDT:

Since 1993 our funding, for staff development and training, has been made up of around about a third of LEA money. The advisory service as a whole remains funded centrally by the LEA. The staff development and training budget which covers all the consultants and the Professional Development Centre [PDC], all PDC costs, the training costs, is about one third funded by LEA funds and about two thirds by income. Most of the income generated comes through our own schools. So most of the money now is coming from schools buying our services out of their GEST budget. Every year there is a bit less LEA money [put] in.

As noted, Hobbiton had four Staff Development and Training SLAs with schools in 1996-97. These encompassed the following areas of funding under the GEST 1996-97 programme: Support for Schools Effectiveness, Teaching Learning and Management (GEST Grant 1); Support for the Implementation of School SEN

Policies (GEST Grant 5); and Drug Prevention in Schools (GEST Grant 13a). It is noteworthy that in 1996-97 Hobbiton devolved virtually all of GEST Grant 1 funding to schools. This was well above the seventy five per cent which the DFEE required. For SLA 1 (Management, Curriculum and Assessment) Hobbiton LEA schools were charged 51 per cent of the annual formula part of the GEST Grant 1 which they received from the LEA. Hobbiton LEA primary schools could also opt to buy into the above with additional primary consultancy. This meant that they were charged 62 per cent of the annual formula GEST Grant 1 which they received from the LEA. This additional option entitled participating primary schools to in-school consultancy, training support and advice from the LEA's Consultancy Service in the following areas: Primary Language; Primary Mathematics; Primary Science; Primary Technology; Health Education/PSHE; Early Years Education; Assessment and; Recording Achievements. Non-LEA schools could buy into SLA 1 and pay for the primary consultancy option. Hobbiton LEA schools paid £34 per governor from their GEST Grant 1 to buy into SLA 2 (Governor Development, Support and Training). Non-LEA schools could not buy into SLA 2. SLA 3 (SEN) involved Hobbiton LEA schools paying thirty per cent of their devolved GEST Grant 5 funding back to the LEA. Non-LEA schools could also buy into SLA 3. SLA 4 (Drug Awareness) which was only open to Hobbiton schools. They paid fifty per cent of their devolved GEST 13a funding for the support and training available under this SLA.

Hobbiton LEA schools which bought into all four of the above SLAs received a discount equivalent to four per cent of the actual cost of the four SLAs. So, for example, a school for which SLA 1 would cost £2,000 was only charged 96 per cent of this, i.e. £1,920, if they bought into all SLAs. In addition schools received extra benefits rewarding their loyalty if they bought into SLA 1. It was noted that by buying into the latter agreement the schools 'had made a contribution to the overall infrastructure of the LEA's Staff Development and Training Service'. Participating schools therefore received a fifty per cent discount on any central training which fell outside the remit of any of the four Service Agreements. In 1996-97 this included all training offered by the LEA in the areas of Health and Safety and First Aid. Furthermore, some neighbouring LEAs also offered Hobbiton LEA schools participating in SLA 1 up to fifty per cent discount on places on many of their training courses. Details of courses provided by neighbouring LEAs were regularly circulated to Hobbiton schools. Again, this highlighted Hobbiton's rejection of competition and its endorsement of collaboration as a major shaping concept in its management of change:

We have some schemes with one or two authorities. We have a very thriving scheme whereby we offer each other reductions. Teachers from [Hobbiton] can go to [neighbouring LEAs'] courses for a discount. What is more important, I think, is that there are good working relationships between us and these other authorities. So, for example, we have advisers from them who work in this authority. This is important and is a *bonus in such small authorities like ours. There are several curriculum areas where there are good working relationships existing.* (Senior Adviser SDT)

As noted in the previous chapter, Moriadon had offered one all encompassing SLA. In Hobbiton it was considered important to offer schools some degree of choice:

We have four [service] agreements this year. We could roll it all up into one but I think, in the end, it's fairer to offer the schools a shopping list. There are some schools who buy into the smaller ones and don't buy into the big packet. There are some schools who buy into all of them apart from the [one for] governors. (Senior Adviser SDT)

Primary schools which did not buy into SLA 1, but wished to attend meetings and adviser-led INSET at the Hobbiton Professional Development Centre (PDC), were required to make a contribution to the support costs involved by paying what was termed a 'PDC Affiliation Fee'. This was charged at £125 per school plus eleven pence per pupil. High schools had staff development and training funding relating to PDC-based support staff delegated to them. Therefore, the cost of the PDC Affiliation fee payable by High schools not buying into SLA 1 was £250 plus seventeen pence per pupil. Areas of support and training not covered by the four Service Agreements in 1996-97 included: in-school adviser rate support (no charge to LEA schools as non delegated) and central training wholly organised and led by advisers or by other officers whose salary costs have not been devolved/delegated (no charge to LEA schools). In 1997-98 the LEA again decided to devolve virtually all the GEST Grant 1 funding to schools. Three SLAs were set-up with primary, secondary and special schools: SLA 1, Support for Schools Effectiveness, Teaching, Learning and Management (GEST Grant 1); SLA 2, Governor Development, Support and Training (GEST Grant 1) and; SLA 3, Support for Educational Needs (GEST Grant 4).

The Hobbiton Training Guide

The Hobbiton advisory service published three 'Training Guides' a year, one in each school term. Opportunities for INSET were offered in all the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum at the primary and secondary phase levels. In addition, workshops were provided in the areas of: Appraisal, Assessment, Early Years, Equal Opportunities, First Aid, Preparation for OFSTED Inspection, Management, Personal, Social and Health Education, Religious Education and, Special Educational Needs. In his introduction to the Training Guide in the summer term 1996 the Senior Adviser SDT pointed to the difficulties in providing a comprehensive INSET service with a reduced staff:

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who are involved in managing and leading in-service training in [Hobbiton]-advisers, officers, consultants, support staff, headteachers, teachers, and consultants and trainers from beyond the LEA. Despite huge reductions in the numbers of full-time staff, the Professional Development Centre is becoming busier, and the high quality of what is provided is continually reflected in the feedback forms and in comments made by visitors to the Centre. This seems to me clear evidence of the commitment, hard work and skills of all those concerned.

However, as the Senior Adviser SDT observed, the advisory service's team in Hobbiton halved between 1990 and 1996. In particular, he noted that the numbers of advisory teachers had been 'decimated'. Advisory teachers had traditionally been called 'consultants' in Hobbiton. The advisory service is discussed in more detail below. The LEA had negotiated with the Centre for Continuing Professional Development at a local University a scheme for accrediting INSET undertaken by staff from schools in the authority. The University offered the arrangement to most LEAs in the city in which Hobbiton was situated. Hobbiton LEA paid a registration fee every school year to the University. This covered every member of staff within the LEA who wished to take advantage of the arrangement which required that a teacher obtain 'a Record of Professional Development' sheet from Hobbiton PDC to record any professional development activity which they attended, unless that activity was already accredited by an institute of higher education. In-school INSET and workshops/courses attended outside the LEA by Hobbiton teachers could also be accredited.

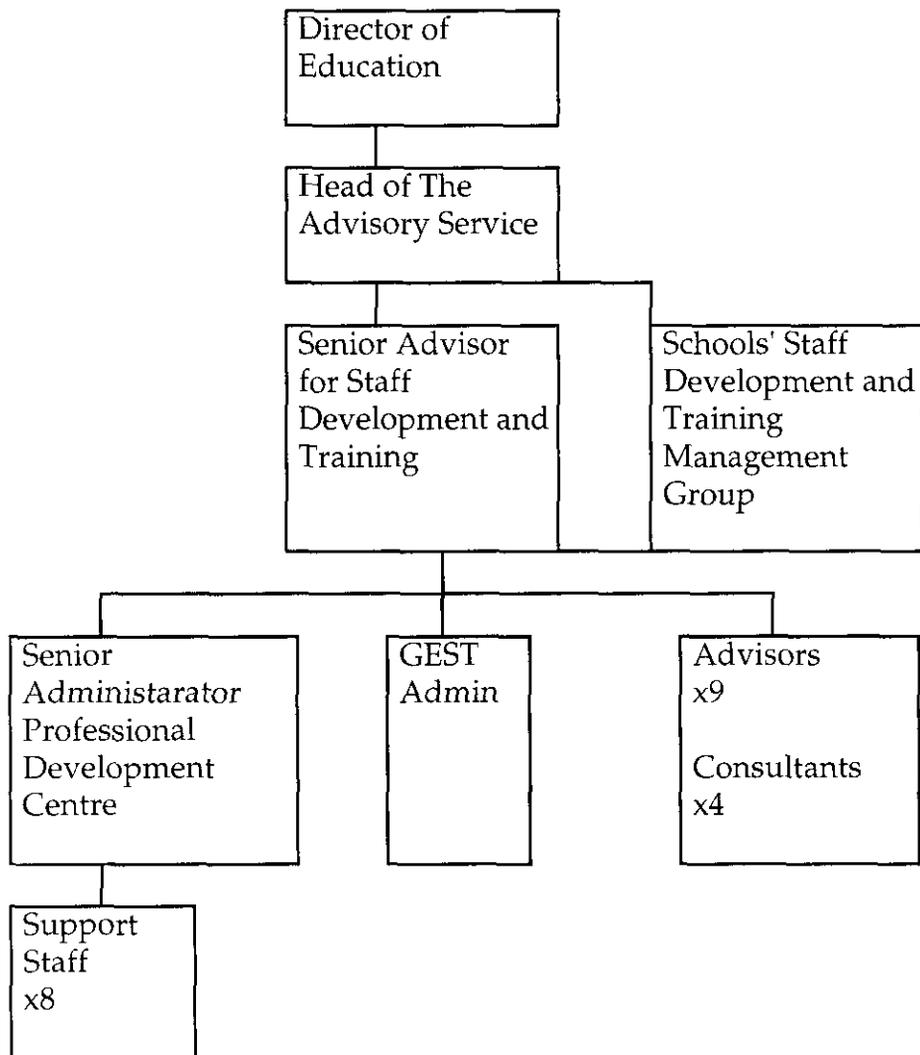
When the teacher had accumulated 25 hours INSET they submitted their record, together with a portfolio of evidence relating to the training and a five pound administration fee to the University. The teacher then received a certificate. When a teacher had four certificates, or a one hundred hours record, they could submit a 4,000-6,000 word assignment on a professional issue of their choice to the University. Successful completion of this piece of work resulted in the teacher being awarded a Faculty Diploma in Continuing Professional Development. A twenty pounds examination fee was payable at this point. The diploma could then be accredited towards a Masters Degree through Accreditation of Prior Learning Procedures. Credits could be gained for up to three of the eight modules required for the University's MEd degree. Two further modules of the University's MEd were covered by a dissertation and this meant that Hobbiton teachers would only have to attend as few as three taught modules at the University. The scheme had been offered to the LEA by the University. The Senior Adviser SDT noted, in the LEA advertisements for the accreditation scheme, that during discussions with schools' representatives 'there had been widespread enthusiasm for the idea'. However, during the interview with the researcher the Senior Adviser SDT observed that 'the up-take has not been enormous, in fact it has been a little disappointing':

It may be that we have not cracked how to make staff aware of it. It is available for all staff, not just teaching staff. Indeed, in some ways its been more attractive to non-teaching staff. It may be publicity. It may be that not a lot of teachers are actually that career conscious. I don't know. But as far as I'm concerned it's worth our while actually offering the opportunity.

The focus, then, of the accreditation scheme was very much directed towards the value which it provided for the individual schools and teachers rather than on evaluation for the LEA's purposes. This was also true in relation to the Schools Management Development Programme which Hobbiton LEA ran in collaboration with another University. The programme lasted for two years and consisted of six modules, each termly module comprising eighteen hours training at the PDC plus individual and school-based work. The programme was open to any teacher who had at least four years experience and some level of management responsibility. They also had to have the support of their headteacher. The programme led to the award of a local University's Certificate in Education Management which could then be taken forward, through two further years of study, to a Masters degree. At the time of the study (October 1996) 189 teachers had participated in all or part

of the programme; 36 had been awarded the University's Certificate, and seven had achieved their Masters degree. Participants had included teachers from 49 Hobbition LEA primary schools, all 14 high schools and two special schools. Members of support services and teachers from beyond the LEA had also participated. LEA documentation noted that while participating in the programme or since completing it, 17 had been promoted to headship, 10 to deputy headship, and at least 13 had achieved promotions in schools.

Figure 7.1: Hobbition Staff Development and Training Structure



Hobbition Advisory Service

The numbers of full-time advisers employed by Hobbition LEA had been reduced from 17 in January 1990 to nine at the time of the study (October 1996) The authority employed 10 part-time advisers, however, they worked only the equivalent of 'one day a week'. The number of advisory teachers, or consultants as they are known in Hobbition, had been even more dramatically reduced. At the time of the study the authority employed only four full-time consultants. A

further four were employed part-time. Hobbiton had faced some hard financial realities concomitant with the introduction of LMS and the 1992 Education Act. The Senior Adviser SDT expressed relief that he had survived the reorganisation and reduction in staffing levels. Despite the loss of so many colleagues he also made it clear that he saw advantages in having a more streamlined advisory service and he welcomed, in principle, the devolution of INSET funding to schools:

[The reduction in the number of advisory staff] is another thing that I'm quite comfortable with really in a way. [...] On the one hand we are at risk of schools not buying back. If that was not the case we would be at risk of the LEA cutting [resources]. But if we are providing what the schools want then you could argue that we are safer than if we were LEA funded. I think there are some advantages in it actually. [...] I actually have no problem with the fact that we have to sell. In many ways I really really generally welcome that. [...] I have to say that a lot of the training in the past was pretty ill-focused. It did depend on the adviser simply saying, it would be nice to run a course. We cannot afford that indulgence any more.

Some problems had resulted though from having a reduced number of advisers. Although each curriculum area was covered, having only nine full-time and 10 part-time advisers had raised issues such as the level of cover:

We have not got gaps as such, we don't think. We did have for a time after the first round of cuts. We have an insufficiency of time. That is more acute in some areas than others. We have every curriculum area covered by somebody but a lot of those areas are only covered by somebody who works for two days. Even where we have a full-time person they have not got sufficient time. (*ibid*)

Furthermore the LEA advisers did little evaluation of the INSET which it provided. There was an evaluation form given to teachers following a course. The Senior Adviser SDT, however, described this as a 'happy form' and observed that the authority 'did not pretend that it was evaluation'. It was instead simply 'instant feedback'. The Senior Adviser SDT noted that the LEA also evaluated INSET at an 'informal level' through Advisers working in schools and through the various consultative groups with teachers. However, he concluded that the

authority did not undertake 'formal full-blooded evaluations'. A major problem was a lack of staff and time. However, this had not always been the case:

I can't say that we do much in the way of formal full-blooded evaluation. We did up until 1992. [...] We had an INSET evaluator then. She did a major evaluation, for example, on the management programme when we first set it up which was very valuable.

The advisory service's work was defined under four headings: work on behalf of the CEO; work on behalf of schools and services; training; and inspection. The Senior Adviser SDT noted that the emphasis was on both monitoring and development as the authority had 'never made one more important than the other'. However, there had been a re-focusing of priorities within the authority since 1993. The amount of OFSTED work which the LEA completed had reduced and the advisory service had placed an emphasis on 'pre-OFSTED work' with Hobbiton schools:

We don't inspect our own schools at all. We do a decreasing amount of OFSTED work. We started off doing quite a lot when OFSTED first came into being. Though still nothing like as much as some other authorities were doing. We gave up tendering for secondary contracts over a year ago, because we were not winning any and it was a waste of time. So the chair of education agreed. We still work for other LEA teams on OFSTED contracts. I've just done one with another authority too. [Advisers] do four inspections a year in this way. [Advisers] did do six at one point. We do them for two reasons. One is to recoup some money that the Government nicked off the LEA. But, the education committee here is very generous to us in a sense. We [the advisory] have a low income figure to generate compared with many other authorities. We also do it for the experience so that we can give feedback to our own schools. I mean we do a lot of pre-OFSTED training and the street cred for that is that you are an inspector and you know the system.

The majority of workshops/courses in the authority's central training guide were organised by full-time advisers. However, they were not necessarily the provider of the course. Also, the time which advisers spent training in-school had diminished:

The advisers don't actually spend a lot of their time training. I do more than most. When we do it can often be in the schools. The advisers are involved in providing the training but they are more involved in managing it. [...] [Consultants] spend a lot of their time training and giving in-class support.

Hobbiton Professional Development Centre (PDC)

Almost all the provision advertised in the Hobbiton training guide took place at the authority's PDC. As the LEA's advertisement noted, the PDC provided facilities and resources to: 'support high quality training and development opportunities; enable people to meet together and join in activities in a friendly environment; provide a facility which others in the Authority can use at a 10 per cent discount; respond to the need of the business community in terms of training facilities'. The centre was managed on a day-to-day basis by a Senior Administrative Officer (SAO). She was the line-manager for eight staff at the centre including caretaking staff, reprographic technicians, reception and administrative staff. The PDC had an authority-wide role. Organisations from 'outside' the borough council used the centre. Hobbiton LEA previously had a Teachers' Centre. However, financial realities had led to re-structuring and the centre was closed. The funding of the PDC building and staff was through central LEA resources and 'generating its own income'. As the Senior Adviser SDT noted, the centre 'sells places on courses, rents rooms out and does a lot of printing'. The PDC also had a technology centre within it which 'also generated a lot of income'. The PDC was apparently 'becoming busier'. (Senior Adviser SDT) This was not surprising as it appeared that the PDC had generated a higher proportion of its own income over recent years. Talking about the future of the centre the SAO observed that:

It all depends on Government funding as far as we're concerned. If Government funding decreases then that obviously has implications on the authority and on schools. I think that this next financial year is probably going to be quite a headache. The authority, as a whole, has been cutting back over the years and we are at a point now where there is not a lot left that you can cut back on. Staffing has been cut-back over the years substantially and we are in a position where we could not manage without any of them. We would become totally ineffective.

Ironically, the success of the PDC in generating larger amounts of income had caused problems:

Because of our popularity we are finding that the training facilities are not adequate. We could do with an extension [to the] three training rooms. The resource library is actually getting to the stage now where we don't have any more room to put any more shelves up. (*ibid*)

The PDC facilities included a range of rooms for ten to eighty people, audio-visual equipment, a reprographic service and IT equipment and expertise. As noted above, the centre also stocked a small resource library storing teaching accessories mainly for primary teachers. The centre was open on a daily basis from 8.00am until 10.00pm. Some of the busiest sessions were actually between 7.00pm and 9.30pm. The SAO claimed that the popularity of the PDC was a result of the quality of service which was provided. Furthermore, as the LEA's advertisements stated the PDC was centrally located in the North West region, had extensive car-parking facilities and was close to, and gave easy access to, the local motorway network. According to the Senior Adviser SDT, he was line-manager for all of the staff at the centre. This had only been the case since June 1996. However, it was evident that the news of this change had not reached the SAO of the Hobbiton PDC by October 1996. She noted that her line-manager was the Chief Adviser of Hobbiton. She did observe, though, that the Senior Adviser SDT was the person whom she would consult if she had a problem in her role as the PDC manager. The SAO was on the PDC's Management Committee (PDCMC). This was made up of the Senior Adviser SDT, a Consultant and a person from the Community Education Service (which had offices on the site where the PDC was situated). The role of the PDCMC was mainly to discuss management issues although INSET specific issues might feature.

Teachers were not represented on the PDCMC. However, headteachers had been consulted in relation to decisions about the centre in the recent past. The centre, for example, had lost its catering facility. At that time the Senior Adviser SDT approached schools with the idea of paying a little extra for each course so that their teachers could be provided with a meal. They agreed and the centre provided pre-cooked meals from a catering firm for all-day activities. Furthermore, reports about the centre's operations were given to the SSDTMG. The centre staff monitored how many people used the centre and users feelings about the centre facilities. The results of this monitoring were presented to the SSDTMG. The SAO also attended traininee group meeting determine 'whether

courses had been successful'. The 'monitoring of feed-back reports' was also conducted at these meetings. (SAO, Hobbiton PDC)

Havensham LEA

Over the previous five years there had been significant re-structuring and changes in emphasis within Havensham LEA. The Chair of the Havensham Education Committee was very frank about the financial pressure which the LEA had been placed under. He noted that the LEA had been operating 'on the brink of disaster' over recent years. There was a 'lack of money' and interaction between the Chair of the Education Committee and Senior Officers was dominated by budget related issues. Decisions about resources and their distribution were becoming more difficult each year. Each year there was more 'dissension'. In its strategy for INSET the authority had decided to adopt an agency approach. As will be recorded subsequently, though, financial restrictions had impacted on the scale of the work done by the authority's INSET Agency and at one point even threatened its future.

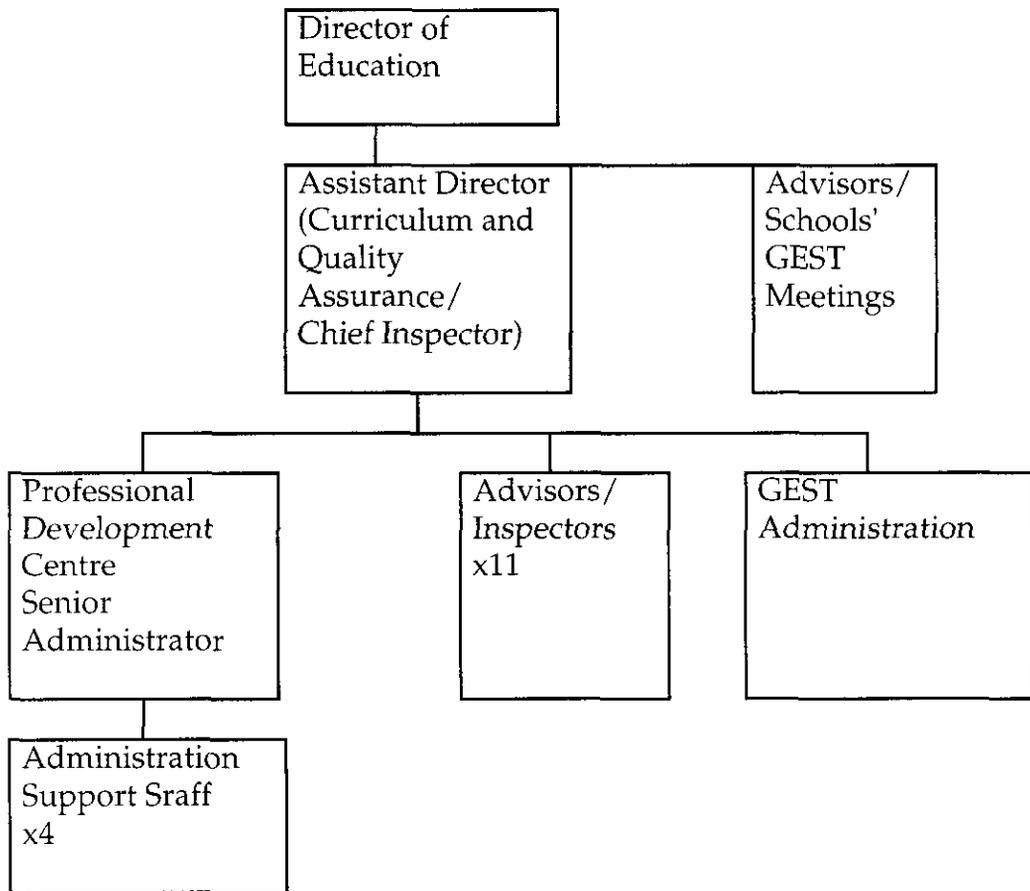
Havensham Curriculum, Advice and Inspection Service

In 1994 Havensham had 21 advisers including a Senior Inspector for INSET. But, following re-structuring, in 1996 the authority had only 11 advisers. The authority was in the process of finding another three to bring the complement up to 14. According to the Assistant Director (Curriculum and Quality Assurance) the number of advisory teachers employed in the authority had drastically been reduced from around 60 to around 13. A Senior Inspector for INSET had left the authority and his responsibilities had become part of the brief of an Assistant Director (Curricular and Quality Assurance). The Assistant Director had also taken on the responsibilities of the previous Chief Inspector. As he noted:

[There are] two parts to [my role]. My actual title is Assistant Director for Quality Assurance. So, I'm officially Assistant Director. I am one of five. Each of us leads a group. My responsibilities really are about curriculum, quality, inspection and advice, in that I also act as Chief Inspector. Then, within that, because of the restructuring within the service which came about three years ago, I also took on the role of overall responsibility for in-service, staff development, training. [My role] does involve strategy. It does involve planning, but it also involves the nitty gritty. So, I actually get involved in pulling the bits together.

But I actually write some of the bits, and I also do some of the delivery. [...] Initially in partnership with other colleagues [I] set out the parameters for the GEST bid. Identifying what we are and what we are not going to bid for, then developing those bids. Some of that work is done by me. Some of it is delegated within my group.

Figure 7.2: Havensham Staff Development and Training Structures



At the time of this study (October 1996) two National Curriculum subjects, Art and Physical Education, did not have an adviser. However, the authority had made efforts to ensure that the provision of INSET remained intact in these areas. As a report to the Education Committee by the Director of Education in Havensham noted, the LEA had resorted to 'buying-in' expertise from other agencies such as independent consultants and higher education institutions to 'plug this gap'. In addition, the authority would also 'buy-in' provision in areas where an adviser did not feel they had sufficient expertise:

We buy in parts of what we provide. We usually tend to buy in two areas. One, where a colleague may feel they do not have all the expertise they would want to have. Two, where we have holes in our system, for example, we do not have an adviser for PE or Art. So we buy that in.

Usually through known people who have worked with us in other instances. So the inspectors who join us on our [OFSTED] inspections, for example, we often make use of them. We buy them in for in-service as well. That is usually funded out of the [INSET] agency. (Assistant Director)

Following the introduction of the Education (Schools) Act in 1992 Havensham LEA became involved in OFSTED inspections. However, this decision was taken after a survey of schools by the authority. The results of the survey indicated the preference of schools in Havensham, across all phases, for the LEA to continue providing an advisory service. The direction taken by the LEA was heavily influenced by the schools' responses. As the Assistant Director observed:

Four years ago in 1992 just after the start of OFSTED our [education] committee took a decision to participate in OFSTED, [...] to inform our own practice and credibility and so that we could support our schools in preparation and approach to OFSTED work. Our schools had put as their top priority after their own budget, an advisory service rather than an inspection service. [...] We have what are called inspectors and we have what are called advisers. But all advisers act as inspectors on inspections and they are all trained inspectors. And all our inspectors also act in an advisory capacity. We were at the point, actually, of ditching inspector titles but when OFSTED came along we thought well we had better keep them. And, we almost got to the point of having everyone as an inspector, until we had our survey of schools and asked them what they wanted from the authority. They said they wanted an advisory service, so we've maintained the majority of our people with the title advisers. We also maintain the inspector title, for example, Chief Inspector to make the point as it were, not in any aggressive sense, just to say part of our role is a monitoring of provision, reporting on provision and improvements in standards.

Havensham decided not to tender for their own schools in both the primary and special phases. The reasons for this were that, given the limited number of advisers in Havensham, in the primary phase it would not have been possible to service all of the inspections schedules even if no other work had been done by the advisers. In the special phase it was felt that 'the very close working relationships would [have] meant there would be a conflict of interest'. (Director of Education,

Havensham) Consequently, in both the primary and special phases, advisers had bid for and won contracts beyond the authority:

We have too many schools and too few staff. Even if they worked non-stop back-to-back on inspections and nothing else we could not cover all of our own business. So we felt that would be divisive for schools. They agreed. So we do bid for three primary inspections, one per term, we wait for the second round, we then ring the local authority in which the school is situated, ask if they are bidding. If they are we drop out immediately. (Assistant Director)

Bidding for primary and special school OFSTED inspection contracts had been done on what the Director of Education referred to as 'a minimalist basis'. One per term in primary, one annually in special, and always with the agreement of the 'host' authority. This had meant that Havensham's primary phase advisers had been able to ensure that the maximum amount of time was devoted to support, advice and guidance within the authority's schools. The Havensham Curriculum, Advice and Inspection Service (CAIS) bid for OFSTED contracts at its own secondary schools. Indeed, it had been very successful in this endeavour. CAIS had agreed with secondary schools to bid for all schools in the authority. Despite this agreement, however, the Service had not 'won' all the contracts with its secondary schools. The Director of Education, in a report to the Education Committee, noted that the competition for secondary contracts was 'very fierce'. He reminded the Committee that contract prices had fallen by 'approximately 15 per cent' over the first two years of the secondary OFSTED inspection cycle.

The Assistant Director noted that the greater emphasis in the work of CAIS was on advisory rather than inspection activities. However, much of the advice given to schools by Havensham advisers was in relation to OFSTED inspections. The service, for example, continued to provide what was termed 'intensive pre-inspection support and post-inspection advice on action planning'. Additionally all advisers across all three phases were involved in a review process, either of whole schools or of departments or sections. This part of the Service's activity was driven by the OFSTED timetable and the process of review had become much more focused on the formal inspection procedures and criteria. The Director of Education in a report on the work of the CAIS claimed that schools were 'increasingly looking to such reviews to prepare for inspection'. While monitoring in this way allowed advisers to give specific advice and support in specific schools, it also helped identify issues which had implications and an impact across

the authority as a whole. In addition, advisers in Havensham had a significant role in organising and providing INSET workshops/courses through the LEA's INSET agency. This will be discussed in more detail subsequently.

Advisers continued to be involved in what the Director of Education termed 'day-to-day work'. This encompassed advice to governing bodies and headteachers on appointment, work with teaching staff on curriculum development, governor training, and the induction and support of newly qualified and newly appointed staff. However, detracting from the time which the latter could allocate to pursue INSET work was the involvement of all advisers with headteacher appraisal. As the Director of Education highlighted, this process was 'inevitably time consuming'. Indeed it was likely to become even more so from 1997 because the grant funding for conducting such appraisals was about to end. The authority had employed an Appraisal Co-ordinator through the latter grant. This individual was responsible for the organisation and co-ordination of appraisal in Havensham. The loss of this person meant, as the Director of Education noted, that 'some adjustments of adviser and officer time will be needed to pick-up this administrative work'.

Havensham LEA and change

The pace of change in Havensham had been slow until three years previously. The LEA had been a reluctant accommodator of Government policy. The authority's management of change was underpinned by its own values. In particular the LEA had placed a value on 'partnership'. In July 1996 the Havensham Education Service had organised a conference entitled 'Achievement Through Partnership'. In his report to this conference the Director of Education suggested that the time was right for 'a [Havensham] agenda for Education'. He made the following points:

A child entering nursery education in [Havensham] and leaving full-time education as a graduate of the University of [Havensham] will have passed through up to six institutions (up to four schools plus college and university). If we are to increase participation and reduce educational wastage we must work together to provide clear pathways through the system.

[Havensham] has the inestimable advantage of a strong identity, a series of locally-focused agencies (for example the City Council, University,

College, Training and Enterprise Council and Careers Service) and an abundance of community and professional commitment. The time is right to set a shared local education agenda which meets [Havensham's] needs, and mobilises the energy and goodwill of all to a common end.

This conference is the starting point. It can set an overall agenda and identify common principles and a process. It should become an annual event; an exercise in dialogue, communication and accountability, charting the way ahead and reviewing progress. not least, it should be a celebration of all that is achieved through commitment, skill and goodwill to advance education in [Havensham].

The Director of Education had called for the establishment of a 'partnership advisory group' to support educational development planning in [Havensham]. In general, the delegates who attended the conference were in favour of the proposal. Where concerns were raised, these referred to effective communication systems from cluster groups of schools 'upwards' and the size and manageability of any LEA forum. The conference was held in the Autumn of 1996. At the time when the researcher completed his data collecting in Havensham further work was being undertaken in order to add more detail to the Director of Education's proposal. As the Assistant Director noted, the LEA's CAIS had certainly been committed to working in 'partnership' with other LEAs in the North-East since the introduction of OFSTED:

One of the things that is worth saying is that in the northern region we have a consortium called NECCE, which stands for Northern Counties Committees of Education. This works together at all levels, so there is a Chief Officers level, there is a Chief Inspectors and Advisers level. We took the decision collectively that we would not cross bid into other LEAs. We would contract for our own schools, we would buy in each other's inspectors to make up our teams etc. So we would work together in partnership. We have maintained that for three coming up to four years and it works well. So the authorities which have bid into [Havensham] have come from elsewhere. So we had [Shirebridge LEA] up here. So its an open market here.

Partnership also appeared to be flourishing between the LEA and schools. The Assistant Director talked with pride about Havensham's consultative

arrangements based on group meetings. They played an important part in the identification of schools INSET needs by the LEA:

About February time, perhaps a little bit earlier, I am saying to advisers around this table, now is the time to start identifying next year's needs. We get to work and organise, whatever their meetings will be. I hold responsibility for negotiation with the secondary heads. Two primary colleagues who are Inspectors for key stage one and key stage two, they take that function in relation to primary schools. There will be consultation with in-service co-ordinators. Subject advisers meet with their heads of department and subject co-ordinators. Where we have holes in our structure I buy in a PE Inspector who runs that meeting for me and I buy in a art inspector who runs that meeting. They feed back to the team. We then notionally feed that back to head teachers meetings. I say notionally because it tends to be fairly brief. [...] There are various structures. I meet in a three to four week cycle with all of the secondary and special heads. Primary schools, because of their numbers, meet in geographical groups. They meet and they have a chair, a secretary to each of those groups. They invite the Director to that, they invite me to that. (Assistant Director)

Havensham had sought to work in collaboration in relation to INSET from the time when GEST was introduced in 1991. However, the first forums for consultation had not been a great success. Finding the right method for networking was still being considered by the senior management of the LEA:

We had a fairly bureaucratic system of groups. So we had what was called the In-Service Steering Committee. It was a talking shop. [...] everybody was on it. It was a union-based thing, it was a headteacher based thing. There were in-service co-ordinators, there was the authority, there were officers. Some were elected on to it and some were not. It was a group, if they all ever came which I don't think they did, of about 30 strong. [...] It tended to receive reports and ask questions how things were going but it ground itself into a bit of a talking shop. What we have tried to do over the last couple of years, and we are not back to where we want to be, what we would like to establish, is in fact a proper steering group which is about six or seven strong, is involved in the provision either providing or receiving, and actually can steer where we

are going, is part of the consultations process, what do you need, and is part of the evaluation process. (*ibid*)

The Director of Education in Havensham had been appointed in 1995. Since that time greater emphasis had been placed on collaboration and partnership. Shortly after his appointment, in a report to the council's education committee (June 1995), he noted that headteachers and governors of the local schools had 'a strong loyalty to the City of [Havensham] and to a 'community of schools' within a framework of local accountability; but [...] processes of consultation, policy development and prioritisation need to reflect the greatly increased responsibilities now exercised at school level'. He went on to remark that an essential element of any successful education service must be 'partnership and a shared vision'. He then appeared to make a plea to heads and governors for increased dialogue in order to ensure that, what he termed, 'meaningful partnership' could be established. Certainly the Assistant Director in Havensham highlighted that while schools had the opportunities to consult with the authority, he was 'not sure if, as yet, they have taken them up in the way [that the] new Director and those in the advisory team would like them to have'. As he noted, in regard to INSET he still got schools saying to him, 'fairly regularly, you know what our priorities are, tell us, make provision, go on'.

Havensham's INSET Agency

By 1992 Havensham LEA was delegating relatively large amounts of its INSET budget to schools. The introduction of OFSTED and further reductions in the LEA's budget at that time triggered a debate within the authority about the allocation of funds in the future. In particular the notion of an agency to provide INSET to schools was proposed. The schools were then approached. As the Director of Education noted 'all schools expressed the wish to benefit from the economics of scale and to buy into an LEA provided In-service Agency'. The INSET agency had been an idea which was generated from within the Havensham advisory service:

Rather than find ourselves at the waterfall's edge thinking what do we do now, do we paddle backwards, we asked where do we want to be. We don't want to be at the edge so how do we stop ourselves getting there. We decided to take the plunge at that stage and say to our schools, this is going to happen, are you likely to stay with us? We would like to

devolve this money to you but we want to know what the chance is of setting up a programme for you to buy-back into. (Assistant Director)

The agency made INSET provision for all the subjects of the National Curriculum across all phases. In addition workshops/courses were provided in other areas including IT, RE, management and the induction of newly qualified teachers. Furthermore, the LEA was involved in organising DfEE designated courses for primary school teachers. All of these were provided through local HE institutions. As noted earlier, the LEA's programme of INSET was, in the vast majority of cases, organised and provided by Havensham advisers. Additionally, where required, the agency provided funding to bring in external expertise not available from within the Havensham CAIS. Art and physical education were areas where such practice had been required. Advisers in Havensham were all salaried employees of the LEA. The INSET agency, however, was funded through 'recouped' GEST resources from schools. Havensham schools paid an agreed amount of their GEST resource back to the LEA. The authority used this money to finance the INSET agency, which did not involve a Service-Level Agreement:

The principal source for main-stream provision is buy-back through GEST. The other major source is through the advisory service which is a main stream provider of in-service. The advisory service is funded and retained centrally at the moment. We [Havensham LEA] recouped back in this year [1996-97] about £54,000 out of a GEST budget of well over £1.5 million. (Assistant Director)

Almost all of the INSET programme organised through the INSET agency was provided at the Havensham Education Development Centre (HEDC). As the Assistant Director noted, the LEA had:

purposely went for a broader title than the Teachers' Centre. We did that nine years ago when we moved in here. It is a central training centre. It is made available to anyone who wants to use it from within the authority. We also let out facilities on a small scale. [...] [The HEDC was funded] partly through the authority, partly through the GEST buy-back, and partly through renting out accommodation to other organisations. So if you went out of here [a room in the HEDC] to the other side of the corridor you would find the Educational Psychology Service based here. Down on the ground floor you would find the Social Work Service. So it was in that context that we went for the title of Education Development

Centre because it's a broader thing than just a Teachers' Centre. I know teachers are very important and all of that but we were trying to give a wider message.

The LEA monitored the use made of the HEDC. However, with the loss of staff this had become more and more haphazard:

Every course has its attendance sheet and people have to return that attendance sheet. One of the faults of the system is that it is paper-based at the moment rather than computer-based. So retrieval of information can be done but it takes up a lot of time. When we did have an inspector for in-service, one of his tasks each year [...] was to produce an annual report. The final report they did was about three years ago and at that stage there were something like 145,000 attendances. The authority, at that time had something like 3,5000 teachers. That is quite an attendance figure. It says nothing about quality, of course, but in the world we live in, where numbers mean everything, it says something. (*ibid*)

A lack of staff also meant that the LEA made a token attempt at evaluating the quality of the workshops and courses provided through its INSET agency. Evaluation was aimed at what were termed 'substantial courses' by the INSET agency. The Assistant Director explained:

We have a paper-based system here. Not on every course but on what we call substantial courses. People are asked to feed back evaluations. That tends to be paper-based. But on some substantial courses, for example, we've just had a residential course for deputy heads and heads of secondary schools, there is a follow-up evaluation day. It's not straight after, it is usually two or three months after where they are asked to evaluate the course, but not only the course but how they have used the benefits of that course. The heads course was about two or three weeks ago the follow-up is at the end of November. So it gives them until the end of November to have been doing things and to give a response.

The Assistant Director outlined why the LEA placed an importance on providing INSET to schools:

In actual fact it [INSET] is very important. One of the reasons why I think there are no [GM schools] in this authority is, well I think you've got to give schools reasons for staying with you, let's put it like that. One of them is in-service. I think that if you can provide a reasonably good quality of in-service, that schools are aware that they are getting, and it represents good value for money, and through our system they are left with more of their money than they give back to us, quite substantially more. [...] So in that context I see in-service being very important. Secondly, I see it as being the major lever by which the authority can actually change things. To have a drive on standards or achievement or a particular curriculum aspect. It's a major lever for the authority in that context. And, finally, I think in terms of bringing and holding people together, and bringing, if you like, keynote speakers in, that's a major factor.

However, financial realities had certainly made the authority's commitment to providing INSET difficult to maintain. In a report to one of the LEA's sub-committees the Director of Education had noted that 'as budgets had become more stretched the GEST funding has become more important'. He pointed out that for many schools it was 'almost the only development funding available to them, it provides the major source of staff development and is often the only opportunity for many teachers to share debate, discussion and practice with other professionals'. (Director of Education, November 1995) The Director's comments were clearly designed to put pressure on the education committee to increase the LEA's GEST budget 1996-97. The LEA had actually scaled down its expenditure on INSET in previous years. After setting an initial figure the authority had reduced its contribution (40% of the total) to the GEST in the 1994-95 programme to meet budget targets. In 1995-96 it was initially proposed that the authority not bid for GEST grant, thereby saving the 40 per cent contribution which the LEA would have to make to the programme. Subsequently, however, cash from the CAIS staff budget, the Havensham Education Development Centre budget, the strategic initiatives budget and from the Havensham TEC was obtained allowing the authority to make a GEST 1995/96 bid. The financial resources provided by these budgets provided for the 40 percent contribution required by the DfEE to qualify for the 60 percent grant under certain 'activity' areas. Following the above comments by the Director the LEA's contribution was 'restored' for the 1996/97 GEST bid.

The Chair of Havensham Education Committee remarked that decisions over resources and their distribution were becoming more difficult every year. Each year there was greater 'dissension'. The Chair noted that 'common sense' needed to be used when prioritising. The Chair highlighted the dilemma into which making decisions about finance placed him and the Senior Officers of the LEA. This stemmed from the dreadful realisation that by 'paying Paul to rob Peter' he was effectively 'making some people redundant'. The Assistant Director emphasised that there had been 'enormous amounts of consultation with schools' during the times when GEST budgets had been considered. They had been kept 'well informed' while the authority had been taking decisions about GEST. Indeed, the Assistant Director claimed that this was one of the reasons why schools 'had stayed with the authority'. While interviewing the Chair of the Education Committee and the Assistant Director together the researcher suggested to them that other LEAs were operating within the same financial context as Havensham and yet they had not totally withdrawn the 40 per cent LEA contribution to any of their GEST bids over the last five years. As noted above, at one point Havensham had done this in relation to GEST 1995-96.

At this point the Assistant Director became a little irritated and asked where the line of questioning was heading. Before the researcher could answer the Assistant Director claimed that 'most local authorities fiddled the amount which they put into GEST'. He observed that Havensham had 'never got into that'. He noted that if the authority had continued with GEST during 1995/96 then this would have resulted in redundancies being made by schools because of the reduction in resources delivered to them by the LEA. The LEA therefore scaled down its GEST bid for 1995/96 funding. The decision by the authority to fund its 40 per cent contribution to GEST 1997/98 was also going to involve some 'hard decisions'. Indeed, it was very likely that the authority was again going to have 'to look around the margins' before a final decision was made. The Assistant Director conceded that the constant financial prioritising had 'placed a strain on the emerging partnership which the LEA was developing with schools'. Indeed the Chair of the Education Committee observed that 'solidarity might be worn away by financial decisions'.

Rivendell LEA

The pace of change in the London Borough of Rivendell had been slow in comparison with the other LEAs discussed in this, and the previous, chapter. 'Relatively centralist' (Harland *et al*, 1993) was a useful term to use when

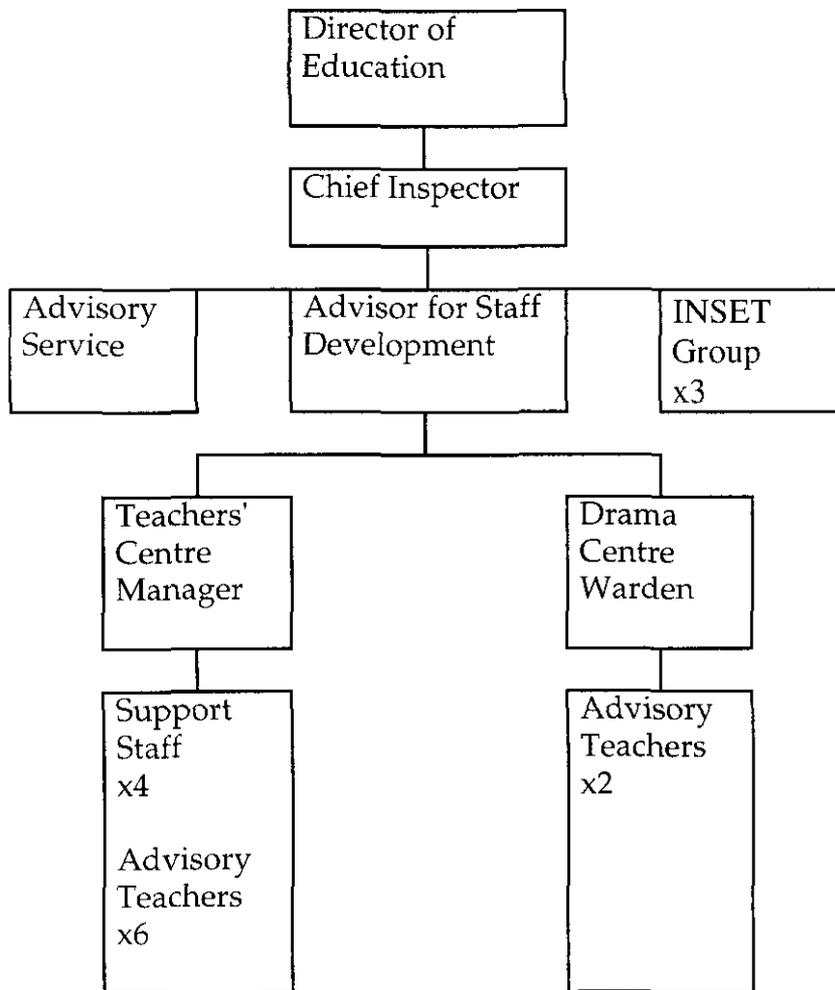
describing Rivendell LEA's INSET arrangements at the time of this study. As will now be shown, though, major re-structuring, both across the authority as a whole and in the LEA's advisory service in particular, were imminent in the autumn of 1996. At the time of this study an Organisational Review Working Party had just produced a draft 'Outline Organisational Structure' following a year of 'extensive consultations' with members and staff of Rivendell Council. The Council's organisational structure had remained intact since 1982. These developments were to have significant ramifications for the Rivendell advisory service's structures and practices.

Rivendell Advisory and Inspection Service

As part of the restructuring proposals management lines within 'Service Areas' such as the Advice and Inspection Service were to be made as short as was practicable to ensure good quality service delivery, effective management, clear accountability, avoidance of delegation and effective communication with staff. At the time of this study (October 1996) the INSET structures in Rivendell were as indicated in figure five above. The prospect of 'de-layering' had apparently been welcomed within the Advisory and Inspection Service. As the Adviser for Staff Development observed:

The structure is actually being looked at. We have the new Chief Inspector who started on the first of December [1995]. The idea in the council as a whole is to flatten management, reduce the layers of management. We're looking at our lot, and we have a history of a very hierarchical, a very pyramidal, management structure within the advisory service. We have a Chief Inspector, two Principal Inspectors, three Senior Inspectors then a number of subject advisers all on various levels and then the rest and then advisory teachers. It was very like a pyramid. Now that fortunately is going. I see it more as becoming a flatter structure, in fact there will be just one Chief Adviser and the rest completely flat. [...] The new Chief Inspector is looking at the whole structure and how we work to consider how best to move forward into the future. It's very helpful because somebody coming in new can question why are you doing this. This is needed because you get into ways of working and in particular because there was no dialogue with heads which was not helpful. Particularly because we are in an era of working with head teachers and schools. We need to work out what that role is going to be in the future.

Figure 7.3: Rivendell LEA's INSET Structure



However, those who had traditionally been perceived as at the 'bottom' of the managerial structure were not totally convinced that restructuring would result in fundamental changes. As an advisory teacher remarked:

It is a very hierarchical organisation. Despite of all the talk about de-layering and flattening, we still have quite a lot of layers in the advisory service. The layer above me is an adviser. Then we have senior advisers and principal advisers and then we have a chief inspector. What has happened over the last few years, we have now become a part of the advisory service. What happened before was very much the them and us. We had advisers and we had advisory teachers. We still have advisers and advisory teachers, you will note we're in a different building [advisers in Rivendell House, advisory teachers in the teachers' centre], now we are involved in advisory service meetings. We were very much second class citizens.

Over the previous five years there had been a determination to improve consultations with schools. The LEA, for example, made a unsuccessful bid for GEST funding to support a literacy centre. It was a competitive grant. The Director of Education in Rivendell, in a report to the education committee about this bid, insisted that the authority would present a strong case because of a range of 'key factors'. One of these 'key factors' was that 'recent senior level appointments within the Education Directorate and the advisory service had led to a renewed emphasis upon more integrated approaches and partnerships in working with schools'.

The advisory service's main function was to provide 'high quality advice, support and training for the benefit of [Rivendell] schools and their pupils. In its vision statement the Rivendell advisory service said it was seeking to: raise standards of educational achievement for all; improve the quality and range of educational opportunities for all; promote equality of access to all educational services. To achieve these aims the advisory service facilitated curriculum development with the aim of raising educational standards in the Borough's schools. It had sought to promote the effective implementation of the National Curriculum and its associated assessment arrangements and inspected, monitored, evaluated and reported on the quality of teaching and the provision of resources. To support schools across all phases the advisory service planned, managed, and reviewed the LEA's INSET programme. The advisory service responded, as necessary, to schools' INSET requests and assisted, as required, with the provision of school-based INSET. The number of advisers and advisory teachers in Rivendell had declined since 1991. At the time of the study the authority had 15 advisers, including the Chief Inspector, and eight advisory teachers. All were full-time. The nature of the Rivendell advisers' work in schools had changed. Schools had much more control over advisers' work:

Every school has an entitlement. We receive requests from schools each term. The schools buy back advisory services. We do the systematic visiting programme but this now is changing. Since schools now have more say, it's their agenda rather than our agenda. So whereas five years ago we were programmed to go into schools each term on our agenda, which might have been in relation to key stage three, assessment or special needs, we can't do that any more. It is not as systematic as it was. Before I would approach the school by telephone and suggest what issues we would look at during a visit. It never was imposed. Generally agreement was reached. It was always responding to needs. This is the

evaluatory bit. From the visits you evaluated where a school was at. It was an informed decision. Now, for example, as OFSTED inspections come up there are particular things which schools want you to approach. (Adviser)

The Rivendell advisory service did relatively little OFSTED work in comparison with other authorities. The amount of OFSTED inspections which advisers from Rivendell participated in had declined since 1993. This had pleased the adviser who was interviewed:

I'm quite grateful that I haven't been involved with as much this year. Going back to the first year which OFSTED inspections started, I would say that it took up nearly fifty per cent of my time. This particular year we have not done as much because we generated income in different ways. It's interesting because if your doing OFSTED for 50 per cent of your time then you cant be in Rivendell schools for 50 per cent of your time. So, this is where the use of the three of us [science adviser + two science advisory teachers] is the key. When I was doing OFSTED inspections I was totally dependent on advisory teachers to organise the INSET and keep it running. That's how having the three people worked particularly well. The advisory teachers took on much of my classroom responsibility when I conducted inspections.

The Chief Inspector and up to six advisers were also members of the Rivendell INSET Advisory Committee (RIAC). The composition of RIAC also included one nominee from each professional association, two staff development co-ordinators from each of the primary, secondary and special stages, two persons from further and higher education and the teachers' centre leader. RIAC was established in August 1992 and members served for two year periods. The terms of reference of RIAC were:

- to offer advice to the Council on the professional and educational implementations of in-service education and training for schools.
- to act as a consultative body in connection with the Authority's annual bid to the DfEE for GEST funding.
- to review regularly the state of [INSET] programmes in the Authority.

-to encourage, monitor and evaluate the use of the Teachers' Centre by teachers, governors and support staff as a place for personal and professional development.

-to consider issues relevant to new developments in INSET.

The RIAC had a cycle of meetings throughout the year. Meetings took place in February, June and September.

Rivendell INSET Programme

The Advisory and Inspection Service produced three booklets outlining the Rivendell INSET programme of workshops/courses for schools each year, one a term. Provision was offered across all core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. In addition, there were workshops/courses in areas such as Assessment, Post-16 education, Management and Appraisal and Induction for Newly Qualified Teachers. There was no charge for workshops/courses to teachers in Rivendell schools unless otherwise stated. This was because schools agreed to provide the authority with a certain amount of money allowing the LEA to provide an INSET programme. This resource also funded the LEA's advisory teachers' salaries. As the Adviser for Staff Development noted:

The schools buy back into our central INSET programme and advice and support. So that's advisory teachers' they pay for and the central training programme. All schools have brought back into the LEA's services. Money goes out to schools automatically, as required, and then we ask them to pay back an amount of it. It actually doesn't go out and is held centrally but they can say no. The grant-maintained school in Rivendell also buys into the central INSET programme. The teachers in the school did not want to lose contact with other teachers in other schools.

The co-ordination of the central INSET programme had been the responsibility of the Adviser for Staff Development for several years. However, as more responsibilities were added to his brief the co-ordination of the LEA's workshops/courses had become more difficult. An INSET Group had been established within the advisory service to help solve this problem:

My role is very wide. Primarily I am responsible for co-ordinating staff development and training throughout the authority. Particularly that

includes responsibility for the GEST submission, ensuring that the GEST submission reaches the DFEE by the stated date. Also I organise the central INSET programme. I don't do this alone. We have a number of working groups within the advisory service and one of those is an INSET Group which is concerned with the overall planning of our central INSET programme. [...]

[The INSET Group was established] to ensure some co-ordination of the central INSET programme. It had tended to fall to me and it was becoming too difficult a task for one person. I was not managing it because the programme was getting so wide. It was impossible to manage on one's own. Also, people would opt out saying it's [the Adviser for Staff Development's] responsibility. [...] The thing that I find a struggle is the amount of work. I don't say no and in consequence I have said yes to many things which I then find very difficult. Every moment in the next few weeks is filled. (Adviser for Staff Development)

In addition to the Adviser for Staff Development there were two other advisers on the INSET Group. The role of the INSET Group involved receiving a range of information and making proposals to the senior management of the advisory service on the scope and type of the LEA's INSET programme for schools. It also organised the LEA's INSET programme and monitored and attempted to ensure the quality of provision. The INSET Group managed a budget for the engagement of course tutors and the delivery of courses. Quality had been a major focus of the INSET Group over the previous year:

We [the INSET Group] focused last year on clarifying what is good quality INSET. We produced a number of little guides. We produced a criteria for quality INSET. We are now producing an INSET agreement with schools in terms of our central INSET programme. (Adviser for Staff Development)

The features of what the advisory service's literature termed 'high quality INSET' included the following:

-When planning activities/courses try to cater for different learning styles. The key principle should be 'fitness for purpose'.

- Whenever possible provide pre- and post- course information, such as programme, pre-course reading and post-course booklet.
- Create a good relaxed purposeful learning atmosphere.
- Check domestic arrangements, including equipment, beforehand.
- Start on time and, more importantly, finish on time.
- Make sure everyone goes away with some new knowledge, skill or understanding.
- Ensure any materials or handouts are of the highest quality.
- Make sure you provide enough time for participants to complete an evaluation.
- Consider what went well and what improvements could be made.

Apparently there had been a move within the advisory service to 'get things written down'. The LEA had no stated policy for INSET:

We have no policy for staff development. We have no policy overall for INSET. I started to draft a policy three years ago but that has not been completed. We have never had a policy and I'm conscious that we should really have objectives. We haven't. It's like having a curriculum statement for the LEA, and the staff development should be part of that. I started and drafted something in the first place but it was very difficult when it was in isolation. [...] Your asking me this question makes me really conscious that we have not done a policy or even any objectives because I think it would be useful to have that. It is typical of [Rivendell]. We have got to get more written down about what we do. I mean we haven't a curriculum statement as an authority. We need policies which state what we do. We need to state what our INSET is about. (Adviser for Staff Development)

In addition to the INSET Group an administrative team produced the INSET folder each term. They received course description forms from course organisers, processed them and organised the production of the course folder. They arranged

venues to be booked for courses, monitored course attendance and received and collated summative course evaluations. All the workshops and courses provided by the authority were evaluated. All attendees at courses filled in an evaluation form. In the past, for certain courses, specific evaluation had been commissioned by the LEA. Furthermore, a Staff Development Co-ordinator in each school was asked to complete a *termly evaluation of the central INSET programme*. The identification of schools' INSET needs by the authority was through consultation. The advisers identified needs on their visits to schools. Furthermore, the advisory service asked all schools in the Spring term to identify staff development priorities in the context of their school development plan. The LEA asked schools to make clear the INSET needs of groups, teams, departments and individuals. The advisory service, and in particular the Adviser for Staff Development, provided schools with help and guidance in identifying INSET needs during the course of the year.

Certain courses within the LEAs programme were accredited by HE institutions. These were in the areas of IT and middle management. The LEA was hoping, subsequently, to arrange a formal general accreditation for the INSET programme as a whole through a local University. Most contact with HE providers of INSET was at a more personal level and had been built up over the years. An adviser in Rivendell felt there was a disadvantage to people from 'outside' the LEA providing parts of the programme. The advisory service attempted to be self-sufficient in terms of providing its 'own' INSET:

We do try and invite in speakers who we think are relevant and appropriate to current developments. We use ASE [Association of Science Education] speakers. Really, over the years we have looked at ownership. You know, wanting people to feel that they are developing within a group. [...] We do involve people from the schools in our workshops. We've had people who we have invited, and been disappointed. [...] It didn't work mainly because those people didn't know the people on the course. There have been a number of people who I have tried to get, but you've got to be careful of inviting them at the right time. Trying to time events where speakers appear is not easy. So it's not a case of being totally against inviting outside speakers, but, I feel, like the advisory teachers, that we should use teachers expertise from within the borough as much as possible.

Rivendell Teachers' Centre

The venue for the vast majority of workshops/courses provided in the LEA's INSET programme and for large meetings of educational personnel and advisory service staff was the Rivendell Teachers' Centre (RTC). The RTC was opened in 1980 following the closure of a school. A number of LEA support services were brought together. These included the Teachers' Centre, a Teachers' Art Centre and the equivalent of what would now be termed the Language Support Service. Since 1980 the LEA's IT Support Services, remaining advisory teachers and Teacher Recruitment Service had also been moved into the RTC site. The aims of the RTC were listed as being the following:

- to enhance the education of the authority's children through the training and support of its staff;
- to be responsive to the identified needs of schools;
- to ensure that educational development is set in a local and national context;
- to facilitate networking through the help and guidance of those working at the Centre, and in the education service generally;
- to promote a physical environment which is both functional and comfortable.

The RTC had eight meeting rooms and a conference hall which held up to 120 people. Resources and artefacts were held in the RTC library for teachers' reference and loan to schools. This service was intended to support curriculum development and to reduce the costs of holding such items in all schools. The RTC also provided a reprographics service of design, print finishing and laminating. The centre had a cafe area for refreshments and light snacks and a dining room capable of seating thirty for lunches and other meals. Larger buffets were accommodated in a hall adjacent to the cafe area. The centre held a stock of audio-visual equipment that could be loaned to schools or hired to other services and departments. The RTC had five staff at the time of the study: a head of centre, a manager, two administrators and a 'building superintendent'. The head of centre was the line-manager of the centre manager. However, the centre manager indicated that he was usually left to do his own thing. Indeed, he appeared to

resent close scrutiny from the head of centre and there had been disagreements in the past. When asked what the differences between the role of the manager and head of centre were, the former remarked that:

I work very hard. He [the Head of Centre] was in charge of recruitment. He moved into the Teachers' Centre and somehow he got another hat to wear which was Head of Centre. He's very rarely here, he's off recruiting. I do not like him to make decisions, I like to carry on running the centre and then say to [the Head of Centre] look what we're doing. [The Head of Centre's] role is basically to sell the centre while mine is more the day-to-day management of it. [...] My line manager is the Head of Centre. The person above him is the Chief Inspector and then the Director. I am left very much on my own.

The main duties of the centre manager included: ensuring that the centre's policy for quality assurance was implemented and maintained; being responsible for the supervision and management of the support staff based at the centre; being responsible for the allocation and authorisation of Centre budgets in consultation with the Adviser for Staff Development; assisting in the promotion of centre activities across the borough; training and supervising centre users in the use of resources, including printing, photography, display and graphic design; having overall responsibility for reprographic, audio visual and other loan resources at the centre; undertaking training of school technical staff as requested by schools; advising school staff on the suitability of equipment, working in co-operation with the authority's Central Purchasing Officer and; undertaking other duties as required by the appropriate adviser or officer from the Directorate of Education. The RTC manager noted, however, that his role incorporated much more than the duties listed on his job description. He also, for example, acted as an 'agony aunt':

There is much more to my role than what is stated in the job description. It's giving people the opportunity to come to one person for whatever reason. So, people ring up and ask if we can chat. I may not be able to give them the information they require, but they know that, like the AA man, I probably know someone who can. It's a bit like an agony aunt.

As will be noted below, the duties of the centre manager were likely to be open to review following significant changes in the RTC's financing. The Teachers' Centre had a management committee. This included ten representatives appointed by the education committee, namely; six representatives of the authority who were

members of the education committee; two heateachers representing schools in the borough (one primary and one secondary representative) and; two representatives of teachers' professional associations. The Head of the Teachers' Centre was the *principal professional adviser to the management committee* and was expected to be present at all meetings of the committee. Each representative was appointed for four years. The committee met once a term, although 'special meetings' could be called at the request of the chair or any three members of the committee. The general conduct of the RTC was under the direction of the management committee. The latter was expected to keep under review the work of the centre and facilities provided and report annually to the Rivendell education committee on the work of the centre. The RTC management committee was a relatively new initiative. The RTC manager was not on it and he questioned its purpose:

They've only had two meetings so far. It has been established for about two or three months. It's made up of councillors, secondary, primary and special heads, union reps, and LEA reps. I'm not on it. [the head of centre] is on it. I do not really know what it does to be honest. It's supposed to deal with policy and the direction we are taking. But, nothing has happened as yet. It just seems to me to be a very cumbersome way of managing the centre. I mean there are 12 people and they will only meet three or four times a year.

A 'question mark' about the future of the RTC had hung over it for a number of years. The centre manager doubted the commitment of those in senior management within the Education Department to continue providing the centre. He was adamant, though, that Head Teachers and councillors valued the RTC's services:

There is an axe hanging over the centre and it is political stuff. When local authorities need to save money they will look at easy targets. I think sometimes the Teachers' Centre has been perceived as an easy target because we didn't fight before. But now I think it's not the case because the heads will say we want the Teachers' Centre. A few years back people were not really aware of what was going on and it could have shut overnight. But now heads know that if the centre was lost they would never get it back again. I think the Director of Education in this local authority is toying with the idea of shutting the centre. But he is not stupid, he knows that his job is very much dependent on whether the heads are going to support him. So, he sees that the heads do

support this place. [...] There is also support from some councillors. Labour councillors support it. We have a hung council and our support depends on the Lib-Dems. They mainly vote with Labour. The Chair of Education is a Labour person. He supports us. The threat to the centre came up at an education committee meeting a few months ago. After that I started to compile paperwork to justify our existence.

The RTC manager was enthusiastic about schools being asked to pay specifically for the centre:

What I think will happen is schools will buy into us in a big way. One hundred percent of our funding will come from schools. That will give them total control over the centre. That is a good thing because the day we forget that we are here for the schools is the day we die. The local authority presently funds the centre. Money is held back from schools, it's not earmarked for a specific purpose. In the future the schools are going to pay X amount of money which is to be used to supply a teachers centre.

Indeed, the Rivendell Borough Council, in light of its budget allocations for 1996/97, approved a method for charging schools' the cost of the RTC. A meeting of the Council in March 1996 removed the LEA budget allocation for the RTC, with the expectation that the cost of the RTC was to be met by the charge to schools with effect from 1st April 1996. Rivendell LEA schools were charged in 1996/97 for the use of the RTC at a rate of £1,000 per school plus £42 per full-time equivalent teacher in post on 30th September 1995. Charges for all other users of the RTC were to be set at a rate determined by the Teachers' Centre Management Committee.

Review

This chapter records what the position in the three metropolitan LEAs was at the time of the study and how things had changed in each authority over the previous five years. As with the two county councils discussed in the previous chapter, the metropolitan authorities continued to operate in a changeable context. While chapters six and seven describe INSET provision in the five LEAs, the purpose of the next chapter is to identify reasons for the similarities between LEAs and also to explain the reasons for the differences which were evident in their INSET policies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

An Explanation for the Similarities and Differences in LEA INSET Provision.

The previous two chapters include a number of descriptive claims about the arrangements made for providing INSET to school teachers in all five of the sample LEAs. 'Descriptions are one of the most important sorts of argument to be found in research texts, since all other types of argument [...] depend on them'. (Open University, 1994: 34) It would have been impossible to explain the position in each LEA without first describing it. This chapter is concerned with explaining why the situation in each LEA occurred. It demonstrates how any changes and emerging INSET arrangements were the product of a number of factors operating directly or indirectly. Explaining the position in each LEA has been problematic. For any phenomenon a potentially infinite number of causes might be identified. In an attempt to focus this explanation, the concepts discussed in earlier chapters are employed. In testing out the relative importance of the various factors, identified in the literature review, the study is deductive. Concepts which were helpful in explaining differences in INSET provision between LEAs were: financial influences; culture; commitment and communications. But the study was also inductive because the in-depth interviews allowed for the probing of issues and the subsequent use of theme analysis. In addition to the themes which derived from the concepts above, two new themes emerged: the importance of the size of the LEA; and the significance of the differing political and professional influences in each LEA. Together these factors point to immediate causes for the direction which each LEA has taken and help one understand why an LEA preferred to adopt a certain approach rather than another.

The size of the LEA

The size of the LEAs used in this study varied a great deal. Size is a crucial factor because the number of locally-maintained and grant-maintained schools within an authority's boundaries, full-time pupils and the total size of the general population, are all extremely important in determining the overall education budget. The sample LEAs which had more LM-schools, more pupils and larger populations received more financial support. As will be noted subsequently, financial capacity remains extremely important when considering the level of advisory service which an LEA provides. As noted in chapter two, every year the Government sets an SSA for each local authority in England and Wales. To calculate this the Government uses a range of information including, for example,

the total number of people living in an area and the number of school children aged 5-10 situated within the authority's boundaries. The population size of an authority, then, is extremely important in determining the amount of financial resource it will receive each year. Financial resources also determine the level of human resources at the disposal of the LEA. This includes the number of people with an INSET responsibility. The variations between the sample authorities SSAs are highlighted in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: SSA for Education in each LEA, 1995/96.

LEA	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Post-16 Education	Under-5 Education	Other Education	Total SSA Education
Shire	94.2	101.1	26.6	12.5	10.1	£244.5m
Moria	84.6	91.1	10.4	10.7	10.1	£206.9m
Riven	35.9	38.1	10.1	5.3	4.8	£94.2m
Hobb	24.9	26.4	0.7	3.3	2.7	£58m
Haven	46.2	49.3	3.6	6.1	5.7	£110.9m

Source: Association of County Councils' Revenue Support Grant Team.

All of the five authorities in this study provided an advisory service. However, the numbers of advisers and advisory teachers employed in each LEA varied. In each of the five LEAs advisers were salaried employees of the authority. Moriadon and Shirebridge County Councils had advisers covering all phases and all National Curriculum subjects. It was clear that within the County Councils, because of their size and greater funding, the amount of the schools' budget which was retained centrally was large enough to ensure that a continuing, relatively comprehensive, advisory service was available to local schools. In comparison the smaller metropolitan authorities had all seen significant decreases in the number of advisers and advisory teachers. Hobbiton employed several advisers in a part-time capacity for only two days a week. Havensham did not have advisers to cover physical education and art. Schools within the boundaries of Moriadon and Shirebridge, then, seemed to benefit from 'economies of scale' where advisory support services were concerned. They remained secure in the knowledge that their LEA was large enough to continue to support an advisory service which covered the whole of the National Curriculum.

Indeed, it was interesting to reflect upon comments made by the Chief Education Officer (CEO) in Shirebridge in relation to the proposed local government review and its likely impact on the education service within the county. He noted that

'the best thing for education in [Shirebridge] would be to leave the present arrangements alone'. The CEO listed the range of services which the LEA provided. These included Professional and Administrative Support Services at county and area level. Advice and inspection, he observed, had 'expert staff organised on a countywide, cost-effective basis'. The CEO suggested that if Shirebridge was divided in the future into more than one local authority, then services such as advice and inspection could and should be maintained on a countywide basis and offered to the new councils as agencies. He noted that smaller councils than the County would not be able to afford to keep teams of advisers together and high quality staff might be attracted elsewhere. The CEO remarked that dismantling and reorganising teams of advisers would only end up disrupting for a number of years the continuity of the services which they had provided to schools. The above commentary, however, does not necessarily paint the whole picture. Having more advisers did not necessarily mean that those from larger teams spent more time participating in INSET work in comparison with advisers who were part of smaller teams. As will be noted subsequently, the amount of time which advisers in each authority devoted to providing INSET was determined by a number of other factors.

All of the authorities provided a central INSET programme of workshops/courses. However, the scale of each of these varied. The programmes of the two county councils included more workshops/courses than those of the metropolitan authorities. The areas covered in the authorities programmes, though, were remarkably similar. This will be commented upon below. There are a number of possible explanations for the differing scale of programmes. Obviously, if an LEA had fewer advisers then it was unlikely to be able to make as much provision. Another reason for the difference related to the diversity in the size of the GEST budget between each authority. All the LEAs 'recouped' GEST money, in one way or another (this will also be discussed below), to fund their INSET programmes. However, there was a great disparity between the amount of GEST funding which each LEA administered. Table 8.2 lists the revised total GEST allocations for each of the sample LEAs in the year 1996-97. The majority of grants in the 1996-97 GEST scheme were allocated to LEAs according to a formula. This meant that LEAs received more or less money in relation to each of these grants depending on their number of schools and full-time pupils. The School Effectiveness grant was the largest in the programme during 1996-96. Moriadon received £2,022,700 under this heading, Shirebridge £1,858,800, Havensham £886,200, Rivendell £548,400 and Hobbiton £533,500. The amount of money each of the authorities received through the GEST budget reflected differences in size. Moriadon, for example,

had three times as many schools as Hobbiton. Clearly there was greater potential for Moriadon and Shirebridge to 'recoup' larger amounts of GEST resources to fund their INSET programmes. Moriadon and Shirebridge had greater potential to provide the latter and it could be claimed that teachers in these LEAs were at an advantage because of this.

Table 8.2: GEST 1996-97 Revised Allocations

LEA	GEST Total 1996-97.
Shirebridge	£3,434,900
Moriadon	£3,813,900
Rivendell	£1,099,200
Hobbiton	£989,200
Havensham	£1,624,200

Source: DfEE

Financial Influences

Size, then, was an important factor which resulted in some of the disparities between LEAs which are listed in table 8.3 below. As the above commentary makes clear, there was a strong correlation between the size of an authority and its capacity in terms of finance and staffing levels. All five of the LEAs in the study made bids for GEST resources. Indeed, this was the main source of funding for the central INSET programme in all the authorities. From scanning the different prospectuses which each LEA offered, it was evident that the prescribed nature of GEST funding was having a significant effect on the subject nature of the workshops/courses which the LEAs provided. They all offered provision which reflected the various GEST categories. Each programme covered the subjects and assessment procedures of the National Curriculum in addition to SEN, management and appraisal related training. All of the LEAs had, to differing extents, made reductions in the numbers of advisory staff. This was especially the case in relation to advisory teachers. A combination of LMS, GMS, the introduction of GEST and OFSTED and, in relation to the county councils, ramifications stemming from the local government review, had all made an impact. Rivendell, Havensham and Hobbiton, in particular, were finding it difficult to operate a comprehensive advisory service. Both Moriadon and Shirebridge were losing some economies of scale following local government reorganisation. Interestingly, the largest authority, Shirebridge, had no

Education/Teachers' Centre. They had one previously, although this had been closed as a result of 'financial and political' decisions. (Adviser, CPD) All of the other LEAs had at least one centre. Moriadon, though, was 'consolidating' its use of centres, while the Rivendell Teachers' Centre had been under constant threat of closure throughout the 1990s. Indeed, schools had recently taken responsibility from the LEA for the funding of the centre. Even in Hobbiton, where the Education Centre appeared to be thriving, a feeling of insecurity was evident. As the administrator at the Hobbiton Professional Centre observed :

One thing that I have learnt working in the authority, over the years, is that there is not any, and I don't think they can do any, forward planning because of financial restraints. You can plan for a year at a time if you're lucky, you certainly cannot plan for any longer than that. Like I said, our new admin person started in September [1996] but because of the financial restraints we could not take her on a full-time contract.

Each LEA had 'streamlined' their services and a consequence of this had been restructuring. Restructuring had occurred in each of the five LEAs, however, the pace of change had certainly been quicker in some. The introduction of OFSTED was a key time for the advisory service of each authority. All had responded to this initiative although within Rivendell, for example, the response had only begun in earnest in Spring 1996. In each authority all of the advisory services and education centres were required to 'generate some of their income' although the amounts varied between LEAs. Each advisory service, for example, was involved in OFSTED inspection work. While Moriadon and Shirebridge were relatively heavily involved, the three metropolitan LEAs did not participate to any great extent. Indeed, in each of the latter, the pre-eminent reason for participating in OFSTED seemed to be less to do with generating income and more to do with 'professional' concerns. As the Chief Inspector of Rivendell noted:

We are not required to do OFSTED inspection work, we are required to meet an income target. It is this borough's policy that we engage in sufficient OFSTED activity, out of borough, to know what we are talking about and give good quality advice to schools in preparation and follow up. [...] From our point of view, we have to meet an income target and some inspection is involved there. But there are good professional development reasons why we should be involved in OFSTED. To give good quality advice to schools. So it's not actually a financial argument but a professional development argument.

Table 8.3: Disparities between LEA INSET Provision

LEA	INSET STRATEGY (VALUES)	SLA/ AGENCY	TOTAL GEST ALLOC. 1996-97	No. OF ADVISORS (F.T)	TEACHERS'/ EDUCATION CENTRE(S)	LEA FUNDING NON-GEST ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS OF ADVISORS/ INSPECTORS	GM SCHOOLS /LM SCHOOLS	OFSTED WORK	POLITICAL CONTROL MAY 1990- MAY1997
Mori	Interdependence Leadership Control Consultation	SLA	£3.8m	36	2 Education Centres MDC SciTech Centre	Yes	Monitoring and Statistical Analysis Evaluation	No GMS	Large Income Target	Labour Labour
Shir	Independence Competition Individuality Self-determination	AGENCY	£3.4m	27	No centre	Yes	Monitoring of 'Quality' Some Advice and Support	17:340	Large Income Target	Conservative Conservative
Hobb	Interdependence Consultation Collaboration Inter-relations	SLA(s)	£0.99m	9	Professional Centre	Yes but reduced	Advice and Support Limited Evaluation	No GMS	Limited	Labour Labour
Hav	Interdependence Reduced emphasis on leadership Consultation	AGENCY	£1.6m	11	Professional Centre	Yes but reduced	Advice and Support Limited Evaluation	No GMS	Limited	Labour Labour
Rive	Interdependence Reduced leadership Increased Consultation	SLA	£1.1m	14	Teachers' Centre	Yes but reduced	Monitoring Some Advice and Support	1:63	Reducing	Conservative NOC

The size of, and facilities offered by, each LEA Education/Teachers' Centre(s) varied. Rivendell Teachers' Centre was the largest with eight rooms and a conference hall. It 'housed' the LEA's remaining advisory teachers and an IT centre. It also had catering facilities. In contrast, the Education Centres in Hobbiton, Havensham and Moriadon were small scale with only two or three meeting rooms and no on-site catering facilities. Hobbiton and Havensham Centres also shared their site with other LEA departments such as Social Services. The staffing of each LEA centre had declined as financial pressures had necessitated further rationalisation. One interesting similarity was that the centres no longer had a warden or leader as a day-to-day manager. Management in each centre, across all LEAs, was the responsibility of an administrator. Whereas in the 1980s the centre manager was almost certain to have come from a teaching background, at the time of the study each had a manager from an administrative/secretarial background who was not involved in training teachers. *In each centre the administrator had taken on the responsibilities of a previous warden/leader.* Whilst they had received a increase in salary, this was still not as high as the wage received by the previous warden/leader. All of the administrators felt that their lack of teaching experience was not a hindrance to them in performing their role. The response of the administrator at Hobbiton Education Centre echoed the thoughts of her contemporaries in other centres across all the LEAs:

All my academic background is secretarial, admin and accountancy really. It was quite different moving into the educational establishment, although, having said that, to actually run a centre like this, isn't teacher-based anyway. I mean you do know about what the national curriculum is and all the rest of it. [...] My background fits very well into what I'm doing. I'm not standing up in front of a room of teachers trying to tell them about national curriculum. That isn't my role. [...] Let's turn the scenario around shall we? A head teacher was an educationalist, they had no secretarial accountancy background, yet they were expected to totally reverse their roles and look at managing the school basically like a private company.

The introduction of GEST had reduced the autonomy of LEAs in the field of INSET. However, all the sample LEAs had used 'local initiatives money' to finance additional INSET opportunities and resources which were in addition to those activities covered by GEST. Often, though, it was misleading to refer to them as 'local' initiatives. Many of these initiatives involved the LEAs developing

some aspects of central Government policy for their own purpose. Moriadon, for example, had done this in 1996. The authority had successfully bid for a competitive GEST grant to establish a Numeracy Centre. GEST resource was also available for the setting up of Literacy Centres. Moriadon had not received any funding for this purpose, although, it had launched a five year development project for the improvement of literacy skills for all pupils. It was difficult for the authorities, though, to plan and establish long term initiatives. Financial restrictions meant that the LEA budget might contract at short notice. Indeed, when savings were required local initiatives money, like the funding for Education Centres, seemed to come near the top of lists for proposed savings. In 1996, for example, the Chair of Rivendell Education Committee listed a number of options for reduced spending. The proposed savings were designed to help the LEA balance its revenue budget and included 'local initiatives' money which had been used to support advisory service work in 'encouraging the curriculum'.

Changes in funding and a reduction in the resources available to LEAs had also meant that the role of each person interviewed had undergone a significant reorientation. In particular, an increasing multiplicity of tasks had been added. These tasks were usually those which had been the previous responsibility of some other person who had taken early retirement or who had been made redundant. So the responsibility for INSET was just one which made up a wide-ranging role. The following observation was typical:

In terms of myself and my work load, in-service is peaks and troughs. It's getting the programme together, getting the bid together, is a big peak before the [summer] holiday and immediately afterwards. Once that's in and it's running I can then say to people how's it going, what are you doing or occasionally there is a little peak for me because I'm running a conference or whatever. (Assistant Director, Havensham)

Delivering INSET featured to a greater or lesser extent in each of the interviewee's job role. It was interesting to note that all seemed to be involved in the provision of management-related training. Also amongst their new tasks was the responsibility for a number of new initiatives such as appraisal and Investors in People (IiP):

I have responsibility for delivering part of the INSET programme. This year, for example, I have delivered aspects of the middle management courses for secondary teachers and primary teachers. [...] I do a lot of

work with schools on development planning and I help schools which have been inspected with their action plans. [...] I'm also now known as the Internal Consultant for iIP working across the council on iIP.
(Adviser for Staff Development, Rivendell)

Advisers in all five LEAs were salaried employees and were funded through the authority's central LEA budget and from the generation of income from OFSTED. Each of the LEAs 'recouped' GEST resources through the setting up of a commercial transaction between the authority and schools. However, while each LEA was involved in such a transaction, the form it took varied between each authority. Moriadon, Hobbiton and Rivendell had entered into at least one SLA for INSET with schools. Each school could contract to buy into the LEA's programme of workshops/courses. In addition, they could contract for supplementary support and/or they could provide resources for the upkeep of the Education/Teachers' Centres'. Alternatively, Shirebridge and Havensham had established INSET agencies. These offered workshops/courses in the 'INSET market' in the hope that there would be sufficient registration by schools to ensure the financial viability of the agency. So, in this sense, there was a clear distinction between the LEAs in the sample. Some preferred SLAs and others an agency approach. However, the nature of the SLAs offered in Moriadon, Hobbiton and Rivendell differed. Hobbiton, for example, offered three SLAs and felt that schools should have a degree of choice. Moriadon and Rivendell each offered only one all-encompassing SLA. These were not as specific and varied as the SLAs in Hobbiton. Furthermore, as will be discussed in more detail shortly, while Havensham and Shirebridge had established INSET agencies there were subtle differences. There were, then, disparities in the nature of the commercial transactions between all of the sample LEAs and schools regardless of the strategy adopted. Without doubt these differences reflected each LEA's culture and values. The latter had a significant influence in policy terms across all the authorities and will now be considered.

Culture

As noted in chapter five, each LEA had a distinctive culture which was supported by several values. Values, while implicit, were extremely important as they underpinned the policy and working practices of each authority with regard to INSET arrangements. The dominant values of the LEAs in this study were diverse and had a significant impact on the management of change in each case. A market framework had decisively changed the roles of, and power relationships between,

all those who have traditionally been perceived as partners in providing INSET for school teachers. These changes had also brought into play a new set of values. 'Public service [was] intended to be replaced as the dominant organising concept for educational provision, by competitive self-interest and entrepreneurship'. (Radnor *et al*, 1996: 3) As will now be highlighted, the internalised set of values of each of the sample LEAs had come into contact, and in some cases conflict, with those of central Government. All of the LEAs placed an emphasis on working in 'partnership' with schools to provide INSET. However, implicit in each LEA's approach were the beliefs, standards and wishes which made up the authority's dominant values. They provided the motivational force behind the framing of the LEAs' relations with schools and other organisations with an interest in INSET. Whilst, partnership was evident in each LEA, it was framed in different ways.

A major development theme of the Moriadon Education Department had been partnership. Over recent years the LEA had sought to build and sustain what it termed 'mutual partnership, based on the new balance of duties, powers and responsibilities, with and between all stakeholders in education and training'. The LEA had used the term partnership to refer to the interdependence between itself and other educational stakeholders. Moriadon's use of the term partnership, though, was clearly framed within the notion of 'civic provider'. In their report, *Local Education Authorities: Accountability and Control*, Radnor *et al* focused on the issue of democratic accountability and concluded that all four of their case study LEAs used 'the language of partnership'. However, the concept was framed differently across each of the LEAs. Radnor *et al* claimed that 'partnership' could be framed within the 'notion of civic association, that is the living with others in a way that respects autonomy [...] but with a consciousness of the existence of one another in a civic situation'. It was also built upon the notion of the 'civic producer' defined as 'continuing to retain a strong corporate identity as an all-purpose unitary local authority which seeks to meet all the educational needs of its area'. Finally 'partnership' was framed 'within the notion of the civic condition as a market; a form of enterprise culture'. (*op. cit.* 20) The findings of Radnor *et al* proved useful when it came to considering the culture of each LEA involved in this study. Indeed, the findings of this study tended to support and add validity to those of Radnor *et al* noted above. Moriadon LEA respected the autonomy of schools and other educational 'stakeholders'. The desire of the LEA to remain a 'civic provider' was evident in its mission statement. The County Council was 'to make Moriadon the best place to live, work and bring up children'. The authority was to provide 'an effective, efficient and economic education service, ensuring

access to facilities and services for all, in order to enable fulfilment and achievement through learning'.

Moriadon had attempted to redefine its relationship with local schools. However, values were difficult to adapt and old habits die hard. A reading of the authority's literature highlighted that a relatively strong element of control was still defining the LEA's preferred relationship with schools and its style of management. As noted in chapter six, despite the talk of partnership there was still a strong commitment by the LEA to monitor the work of what were referred to as 'its establishments'. Some of the terminology used by the LEA was very rich in nuance. For example, Moriadon 'required' schools to identify their INSET needs annually. In addition, as an LEA catalogue supplying information to parents about primary and secondary schools remarks; 'we demand high standards and have a system to check they are met'. The authority kept a record of all continuing professional development activities undertaken by every teacher in every school which was involved with the service-level agreement for INSET. It used a data base to store this information which was provided by schools on what were termed 'GEST 5 forms'. Even school-based INSET activities were logged. As the Co-ordinator for Continuing Professional Development observed:

through [a] service level agreement [...] when schools wish to spend money we have a system whereby we approve the expenditure. We still have a right to do that because we are accountable for 40 per cent of tax payers' money. [...] We run a data base and the GEST 5s feed this data base which keeps a complete record of all attendance at any kind of professional development. Even in-school professional development. Any activity that they do in school which they see as professional development is registered on a GEST 5 and it goes on the data base. So when OFSTED come knocking at the door we can give them, from the computer, a complete print out by staff or individual of attendance at in-service training or professional development activity.

Moriadon wished to continue being a leader in the local educational context. In its INSET relations with schools the LEA perceived of itself as the senior partner. As noted earlier, in the recent past a number of LEA initiatives had been established. The LEA took pride in its consultative arrangements for INSET with schools. Dialogue, for example, was maintained through a GEST Consultative Group. However, it seemed that this group could have become a forum for LEA staff to explain decisions which they had already taken. As the Co-ordinator of

Continuing Professional Development observed: 'often it's very much getting them [the schools] to understand why decisions are being made. Once they understand they can see why they have been made and why they are working to their advantage, rather than, as they think initially, their disadvantage'.

The values of collaboration, community and interdependence shaped the strategy for INSET within Havensham. Traditionally, like Moriadon, the LEA had continued to place a value on its position as a leader in the local educational context. There were signs, however, that the LEA was attempting to develop more equal relations with schools. As the Director in Havensham observed, the LEA's developing role involved 'leadership through strategic planning, policy setting and quality assurance, together with the provision of support services'. The Chair of the Haversham Education Committee felt that schools looked to the authority to provide leadership but by 1996 they had begun to question the LEA's motives much more. The Chair observed that there had been a subtle adjustment from the political side 'from a boss to an overseer'. The Assistant Director, present at the interview of the Chair, took up this theme. He noted that 'a boss tells schools what to do, a leader offers guidance'. Rivendell was in a similar position to Havensham. LEA officers were also trying to negotiate the authority's changing role with schools. Financial changes and reductions in the LEA's central budget had been a spur for the authority to seek to reinvigorate its partnership with local schools. The local INSET network, therefore, was in an obvious state of flux. The LEA managerial culture had continued to epitomise the 'civic producer' model discussed earlier. However, the authority was seeking to redefine its relations with schools. Greater interdependence with schools was now the desired aim. Up until late 1995, as the Adviser for Staff Development in Rivendell remarked, 'there was no dialogue [between] schools and the LEA'. The authority had, however, entered 'an era of working with headteachers and schools'. Restructuring within the advisory service was part of this process. This was important, as the Adviser for Staff Development recognised:

We are really looking at our structure and restructuring, not only in line with the council restructuring but in line with [the new Chief Inspector] coming in and taking a fresh look at the advisory service. The original structure was antediluvian. If it had continued as it had it would have been kaput. Schools would say we don't need you thanks very much. It wasn't in dialogue with schools. It was getting more and more anachronistic and it wouldn't have continued. So unless we look at what

we do and how we do it there wouldn't be a future for us because schools would not have us.

While Hobbiton Council also placed a great emphasis on 'partnership' and 'collaboration' with other 'appropriate agencies', there were subtle differences in its strategy in comparison with Moriadon, Havensham and Rivendell. The mission statement of the Hobbiton Education Department noted that 'the LEA, in partnership with its schools and the community, will secure opportunities for all individuals to develop fully their aptitudes and abilities enabling them to meet their needs and to enrich their own lives and the life of the community'. In a report outlining the major policy issues for developing the local education service Hobbiton's CEO observed that the council would continue 'to seek to maintain a locally managed and democratically accountable service by maintaining [a] 'family of schools' in partnership with governing bodies and headteachers'. The Hobbiton concept of partnership regarded the main educational stakeholders as complementary and of equal status. As noted in chapter seven, this belief was evident in the arrangements it made for INSET. Partnership in Hobbiton was framed within the notion of 'civic association'. This was described as 'the living with others in a way that respects autonomy but with a consciousness of the existence of one another in a civic situation'. (Radnor *et al*, 1996: 20) Commitment to regional networks will be discussed in more detail subsequently. Hobbiton had wholeheartedly attempted to broker long-term community partnerships and co-ordinated collaborations. The general INSET accreditation scheme which it offered through a local university was an example of this aim.

In sharp contrast to all of the above, the LEA's policy for organising and providing INSET for school teachers within Shirebridge was significantly different. The approach was underpinned by a belief in competition and a wish for schools to be independent. The attitude of the political leadership in Shirebridge very much reflected the Conservative Government's policies for local education at the time of the study. (Autumn, 1996) As a result, the LEA could be regarded as what Radnor *et al* termed 'an enthusiastic accommodator to change'. (*op. cit.* 30) The authority's INSET service, like all the other services which the LEA provided, was operating and competing in a market place. Therefore, Shirebridge appeared to be functioning like a model Conservative authority under a Conservative Government. However, as already indicated, there were tensions and an incompatibility between the monitoring role and the business development ethos of the Shirebridge advisory service. A reason could be given for this. The strategy for INSET within Shirebridge had 'changed dramatically' in the early 1990s.

(Adviser CPD) Internalised values, therefore, had to change in response to a newly developing situation. In 1990 the LEA continued to retain a 'large central INSET budget':

The LEA managed central courses that it thought the customers wanted. Now we have totally turned that around. We have stream-lined the whole thing. Basically what we now do is devolve a high percentage of the money to the schools rather than hold it centrally. We then sell to the market. (Adviser CPD, Shirebridge)

The apparent tensions within the advisory service seemed to be an indication of the conflict of values which was manifest in Shirebridge. It resulted from the speed of change and a shift in the underlying beliefs on which the practices of the LEA were based. A modification of values did not happen overnight. The Senior Adviser CPD in Shirebridge, for example, was quite explicit that LEA advisers continued to know better what schools needed in terms of INSET. However, at the same time, he also believed that 'customers' (schools') preferences were the best indicator of the performance of the LEA in providing INSET. This was a clear contradiction and, as in Moriadon, an example of old habits and beliefs being hard to revise and/or change. The dominant cultures of the LEAs in the sample were subtly different. However, in the sense that their cultures were undergoing modification and even change, each LEA was in a similar situation. It was a lengthy process. As Ryan observed, once values 'become embedded in the culture of an organisation, they become a resistor to change'. (1992: 261) While each LEA had responded to legislative changes in the period 1991-1996, one could still point to evidence which highlighted an innate conservatism. This was a characteristic of all the sample authorities to a greater or lesser extent.

Political and professional influences on INSET arrangements

Within all of the sample authorities INSET was not traditionally seen as a political issue. The Chair of Education in Hobbiton echoed the views of others when he noted that INSET issues were 'not politically contentious'. The Chair confirmed that specific INSET issues rarely cropped up on the agenda of the Education Committee. Indeed, the Chair of Education in Hobbiton observed that INSET was 'dealt with at the professional level'. In each of the sample LEAs the only INSET-related issue which seemed to come before the Education Committee each year was the debate relating to the GEST budget. However, in each case this simply seemed to be a 'rubber stamping' exercise. The remark made by the Shirebridge

Chair was typical. 'By and large the committee approves the [GEST] bid through a vote by the majority of members'. In each LEA INSET issues such as GEST were usually considered by a sub-committee or panel which met when required. GEST, though, had become embroiled in wider political debates about an authority's overall spending in a particular year. This, for example, had been the case in Havensham. As noted, the Education Committee had decided, in 1995, to cut back on the LEA's forty per cent contribution.

While specific INSET issues did not stir up partisan feelings within any of the Education Committees, all the Education Departments nevertheless needed to devise a policy for INSET which reflected the political culture of the authority. Havensham and Shirebridge, for example, both had chosen to establish INSET agencies. However, the rationale underlying their mode of operation was very different. The agency in Shirebridge was in competition with other INSET providers. The establishment of an INSET agency in Shirebridge was predominantly underpinned by the commercial/business strategy of the local authority. However, the dominant rationale for the agency in Havensham had been a desire to ensure (in a time when there were reductions in central Government grant for education) that schools received some support to enable them to meet their statutory requirements. The Havensham INSET agency had been established as part of a collaborative strategy with schools. As will be noted in chapter nine, this was reflected in the survey returns from schools in Havensham. Despite the absence of an SLA for INSET, almost half of the respondents from Havensham schools thought there was one operating.

A further means of exercising political influence was through the appointment of new staff. Political Members of the authorities sat on recruitment panels. The appointment of a new Chief Inspector in Rivendell appeared to have been made with such a change in mind. As noted, the authority had been slow to alter its practices and recognise changes in power relations as finances were devolved to schools. New appointments at the senior management level appeared to have been made with the deliberate intent of changing direction and introducing new changes and practices within the LEA. The appointment of a new Chief Inspector in December 1995 was one of these. She certainly saw her job as being about changing things. As she remarked, 'I'm new in the job, and I see it as my job to change things, because if people around here hadn't wanted things to change then they wouldn't have appointed me'. The political ideology of an LEA, then, did appear to have some bearing on the policy for INSET adopted by an authority. However, its influence should not be over-emphasised. There were, for example,

differences in the extent to which LEAs expected their advisers to become involved in OFSTED inspection work. However, the differences were not noticeably split along party political lines. The advisers in Moriadon, a Labour controlled County Council, and those in Shirebridge, a Conservative controlled County Council, for example, were both involved with OFSTED to a greater extent than those in the other three authorities. The decision to become involved in OFSTED seemed mainly to have been based on financial criteria and a desire to preserve the level of advisory service staff rather than as a reflection of political ideology *per se*:

When OFSTED came along this authority went big into OFSTED inspection to actually earn enough money to pay for an inspectorate. [...] They generate a hell of a lot of money for the inspection service. They do earn a lot of money from the Inspection and Advisory Service salary bill through the OFSTED inspection process. (Coordinator of Continuing Professional Development, Moriadon)

The advisory has a target set to generate some of its own income. This target is high in terms of the advisory service. It really comes down to what we can earn through OFSTED contracts. (Senior Adviser Continuing Professional Development, Shirebridge)

As was noted in chapter four, confusion and ambiguity continued to surround the powers and duties of the LEA with regard to ensuring the quality of educational provision. Consequently, the relationship between local democracy and the accountability for making sure that INSET arrangements made by schools were of a high enough quality was blurred. It was evident that some of the authorities adopted a more proactive strategy than others in monitoring what schools were doing with regard to INSET. Again, though, there was no obvious strong correlation between the authority's political complexion and the level of control exercised through monitoring procedures. Labour-controlled Moriadon closely monitored INSET in schools. Also, the Adviser for Staff Development in Rivendell, which had been Conservative controlled in the early 1990s, noted that the work of the authority's advisers in schools was predominantly focused on monitoring:

[The work of advisers] rarely comes under the umbrella of high quality INSET because it is more a monitoring role. The advisers have aspects of a developmental role. For example, one of the primary advisers may

do a visit to a school and look at their assessment and then work with the staff and give feedback to the staff about what they've seen. This is staff development, but it's part of the systematic visiting so, as I say, it's a monitoring and evaluation role.

It must be remembered that reductions in overall levels of funding had resulted in a diminution in the numbers of each of the LEAs' advisers. With this the ability of the LEAs to deal with their responsibilities for ensuring the quality of education had been restricted. However, despite reductions in financial and human capacity signs of a desire on behalf of the sample authorities to continue to provide, monitor and evaluate INSET were evident.

The commitment of the LEA

Commitment, therefore, was important. All of the LEA personnel interviewed claimed that their LEA had an on-going commitment to provide INSET to support schools. They all shared a common objective of raising pupils' levels of achievement through the provision of INSET. The following response was typical:

The main priority for in-service training is to ensure that the teaching force is kept informed, up-dated in order to deliver the best possible curriculum coverage. Our objective for in-service training is to ensure that children get the best possible deal in the classroom. (Co-ordinator of Continuing Professional Development, Moriadon)

However, not all of the LEAs had a written policy statement for INSET. Moriadon and Hobbiton had one, Rivendell, Havensham and Shirebridge did not. In the case of Shirebridge, though, the decision seemed deliberate. The LEA offered advice but believed that schools should develop their own approach to CPD. It was not for the LEA to impose, or require schools to do, anything in relation to INSET. The Adviser for Staff Development and Training in Rivendell noted that a policy statement for INSET was needed. He had attempted to write one, however, time and a lack of support had meant that it was not completed. As table 8.3 showed, though, all three of the authorities without a policy statement had more advisers than Hobbiton and each received larger amounts through SSA and GEST each year. The lack of a policy statement, then, did seem to suggest that INSET provision for school teachers was not the highest of priorities within these LEA. It appeared that Moriadon and Hobbiton had both worked hard to implement the priorities listed in their INSET policy statements. These were noted in chapters six

and seven. One noticeable feature was the difficulty which financial restrictions and a reduction in staff were having on Hobbiton's efforts in this endeavour. In its statement, for example, the LEA had pledged to 'monitor, review and evaluate staff development provision'. However, with the loss of staff, evaluation had become haphazard. All of the sample LEAs made some attempt at evaluating their annual INSET programme within given resources. They all obtained instant feedback by employing 'happy forms' which teachers filled in immediately after workshops/courses. Each authority's advisers would monitor and evaluate while in schools. Moriadon had actually attempted to evaluate the impact of its provision in the classroom by using a team of advisers. Personnel from other authorities noted that their LEA's commitment to evaluating the impact of INSET needed to be developed further. As the Chief Inspector in Rivendell observed:

I think we need to move from an input model to one that is reflective and thinks about the effect of INSET upon the reason for schools being there, which is all about teaching and learning and the wider education of young people. We have to ask the question, was it anything other than a performance. So it is a research model that I am moving towards. [...] There is a short term measure, in that all participants in INSET are encouraged very strongly to fill in an evaluation sheet. This asks whether, in that person's view, the INSET has fulfilled the courses objectives. Whether courses run. If nobody wanted to come then you wouldn't run it. But I am concerned that we set up a more medium and long term evaluation strategy. Not just the quick fix, or did you enjoy this course approach. This, I think the immediate evaluation can do. It can tell you the response of the participant, it can't tell you whether the INSET has made a difference.

Despite these good intentions, though, what the Senior Adviser for Hobbiton termed 'full-blooded' evaluation was not evident in any authority. It was likely to be time consuming and involve the development of criteria for 'measuring' impact. This would, without doubt, be a complicated process and the framework would need to be tested. None of the LEAs appeared to have the resources, financial and human, to complete such an undertaking. Faced with these realities one option seemed to have involved sampling a selection of workshops/courses:

On some substantial courses, for example, we've just had a residential course for deputy heads and heads of secondary schools, there is a follow-up evaluation day. It's not straight after, it is usually two or three

months after where they are asked to evaluate the course, but not only the course but how they have used the benefits of that course. The heads' course was about two or three weeks ago the follow-up is at the end of November. So it gives them until the end of November to have been doing things and to give a response. (Assistant Director, Havensham)

All of the LEA staff interviewed appeared to welcome the changing power relations between adviser staff and schools within local INSET networks. The change had resulted from the requirement on LEAs to devolve large proportions of the schools and GEST budgets to individual institutions. Heads held the 'purse strings' and all the LEAs had sought to improve the channels of communication for articulating INSET needs. These had proved of paramount importance. In each authority one or two individuals seemed to have a pivotal role in ensuring that consultations went ahead smoothly. The comments of the Assistant Director in Havensham were typical:

My direct role is the organisation of [meetings with schools]. So, about February time, perhaps a little bit earlier, I am saying to advisers around this table, now is the time to start identifying next year's needs. We get to work and organise, whatever their meetings will be. My duplicate role if you like, I still hold responsibility for negotiation with the secondary heads. Two primary colleagues who are staff inspectors for key stage one and key stage two, they take that function in relation to primary schools.

Communications

The changing financial situation had, therefore, resulted in an increased LEA commitment to improving communications with schools through the local INSET network. In all the LEAs a distinction seemed to have been made between democratic accountability and service accountability. The former was evident when Education Departments presented the annual reports on GEST, or a report outlining the work of the advisory service, to their respective Education Committees and Sub-Committees. Service accountability, however, was directed at schools. It took the form of consultations and dialogue. In addition to helping LEAs identify school INSET needs, meetings allowed school representatives the opportunity to raise any problems which they had regarding the quality of LEA INSET provision. While most of the authorities preferred to establish INSET

Groups as forums for heads and others to express their opinions, Shirebridge was an exception, viewing schools as individual clients or customers and predominantly meeting with heads as individual purchasers of their INSET service:

We don't have an INSET Management Group. The nearest, although it's not really the same thing, is that we sometimes consult with the professional associations. You see in some ways having a INSET Group is harking back to the old model of a large central budget and everyone sitting around and trying to get a slice of the cake. (Adviser CPD, Shirebridge)

The commitment of the sample LEAs to regional INSET networks varied considerably. Shirebridge was not involved in any regional network. This reflected its wish to be an independent competitor in the INSET market. However, the authority did continue to organise an annual conference for school INSET co-ordinators. Guest speakers were invited. 'Each year we have an annual conference for school co-ordinators and this year we had Anthea Millett speaking. It was the first in a series of three conferences across the county and very well attended'. (Senior Adviser CPD, Shirebridge) There were still some links between Rivendell and other LEAs although the level of collaboration was much reduced. The Adviser for Staff Development still, on occasion, met with colleagues from other authorities. The LEA had been a member of the Thames Regional INSET Network. However, pressure of work following rationalisation and the cost of membership meant that this had 'lapsed' and opportunities for collaboration between Rivendell advisers and those from other LEAs had diminished:

Thames Regional INSET Network. That is lapsed at the moment. It's a shame because that was very useful. I've not been able to get to any of their things for two years now. When, in 1987, I first took up post it was very helpful. Twenty three authorities were part of the Network and we met once a term. It could be a day conference or even residential. We met to look at issues related to staff development. It was very helpful because you met with your counterparts in other authorities, you talked about how they were doing things. I learnt a lot from them, we did some work together, across LEA courses. I do now still meet with my counterparts in [two neighbouring LEAs]. We have a meeting for about two hours once a term. We exchange course booklets, we advertise our courses in the other authorities. (Adviser for Staff Development)

There appeared to be something of a North/South divide in the level of enthusiasm which each LEA demonstrated towards being involved with, and preserving, regional networks. As noted in chapter seven, within its policy statement for INSET Hobbiton had pledged a strong commitment 'to strengthen and extend opportunities for all staff to benefit from contact with networks within and beyond the LEA'. As a result the authority had close relations with several neighbouring LEAs and Universities. Those between neighbouring LEAs, however, had become a little strained in recent years:

There was a regional network for about five years. We have, from this, continued a sort of self-help group called RIG, Regional INSET Group. It's very informal and we take it in turns to Chair. But it is useful to find out things and it gives some peer support. [...] We have some schemes with one or two authorities. We have a very thriving scheme whereby we offer each other reductions. Teachers from Hobbiton can go to [a neighbouring LEA's] courses for a discount. What is more important, I think, is that there are good working relationships between us and these other authorities and so, for example, we have advisers from them who work in this authority. This is important and is a bonus in such small authorities like ours. There are several curriculum areas where there are good working relationships existing. [...] We used to have an agreement in the west of the North West, around Merseyside and Lancashire. All LEAs worked together for a while. I mean we still operate very well with some [of these] authorities but with some it's gone the other way. (Senior Adviser for Staff Development, Hobbiton)

Moriadon and Havensham were both involved in the same North Eastern regional network. Indeed, the Co-ordinator for Continuing Professional Development in Moriadon was the Chair of the group:

I'm actually chair of the regional INSET group. We meet once a term. We talk about in-service across the region. As much as anything to make sure that we are not treading on each other's toes. We have a code which operates across the region in terms of poaching etc. etc.. It's a network which helps us find our way through the GEST circular every year and place an interpretation on it. [...] I think that there are Inspector Groups that meet. Whether that covers the whole range of the curriculum I'm not quite sure. I think it does virtually. Again it depends on having the

time to meet because of involvement in Inspection work. (Coordinator for Continuing Professional Development, Moriadon)

It is important to recognise the strong link between geographical location and culture when one is trying to explain the continued relatively close relations between those LEAs in the North of England. The geographical isolation of the North-East and North-West has resulted in a tendency for local communities to be naturally inward looking. Both areas have a strong regional identity and the actions of central Government policy makers have traditionally been viewed with suspicion. This was especially the case when the central policy makers were the Conservatives, a party which since 1979 had increasingly been perceived to be hostile to the North of Britain. The Assistant Director of Havensham, for example, remarked on a bid which his LEA made for resources in relation to headteachers' training. He noted that 'Southerners' assessing the bid could not understand why Havensham was not competing with other LEAs and higher education institutions in their area. Over the years, through political accountability LEAs have come to reflect local priorities and their electorate. The regional culture of the North East and North West had remained very different to that of, for example, the South East of England. Solidarity and co-operation were the dominant values of the large Northern conurbations. This was evident in the commitment of the authorities in the sample to continue supporting their regional INSET Groups.

Review

There were, then, some striking and some more subtle similarities and differences between the five LEAs included in this project. All of the advisers and political members interviewed noted that their authority, through its provision of INSET opportunities for school teachers, wished to raise the standards of pupils learning. Each bid for GEST resources and 'recouped' some of this after it had been devolved to schools. They all employed advisers whose role, to some extent, included an INSET brief. Each LEA was involved, to varying degrees, in OFSTED inspection work. They all had central LEA INSET programmes of workshops/courses and the areas covered were very similar. As Bird *et al* noted, these 'similarities were not surprising [...] because they reflected central Government policy and as the old saying goes those 'who pay the piper call the tune'. (1997: 11) Each LEA's discretion and autonomy in the field of INSET had been reduced. However, there were still significant differences between authorities. These are highlighted in Table 8.3 above. In chapter 10 a spectrum will be employed to illustrate the differences in LEA responses to changes in their

functions. Before that, though, chapter nine will examine the perceptions of schools with regard to the INSET provision offered by their LEA and other agencies.

CHAPTER NINE

A Survey of Schools' INSET Co-ordinators.

This chapter outlines the findings of a postal survey of all GM and LM schools in each sample LEA. As noted in chapter five, the main purpose of the survey was to ascertain the perceptions of schools in relation to several areas of interest. The questionnaire asked schools to provide information on their INSET structures; the use made by them of their LEA's INSET provision and that of other agencies; their attitudes towards the LEA continuing to provide INSET; their perceptions of the local INSET 'partnership' and; their involvement, or not, in inter-school arrangements for organising and providing INSET. General information about the response rates and the types of schools returning the questionnaire are outlined in Table 9.1 below. The overall response rates from schools in each of the sample LEAs can be described as adequate. It varied between 40 per cent in Hobbiton to 52 per cent in Moriadon. This response compared favourably to that which Glover and Law received in relation to their survey of schools' INSET arrangements (a 28 per cent response from secondary schools (1995a) and a 25 per cent response from primary schools (1995b)) and even more favourably with the TTA's postal survey of a sample of 7,800 headteachers/INSET co-ordinators. (a response rate of 22 per cent) (1995: ii)

Table 9.1: The response from schools across each sample LEA

	Riven (n=63)	Haven (n=133)	Hobb (n=92)	Shire (n= 340)	Moria (n=360)	ALL (n=988)
Response Rates.	44% (28)	47% (62)	40% (37)	46% (158)	52% (190)	48% (475)
Primary	(n=43) 41% (19)	(n=108) 49% (50)	(n=73) 37% (27)	(n=277) 45% (126)	(n=312) 51% (159)	(n=813) 47% (381)
Secondary	(n=14) 57% (8)	(n=17) 41% (7)	(n=14) 57% (8)	(n=43) 51% (22)	(n=43) 56% (24)	(n=131) 53% (69)
Special	(n=5) 40% (2)	(n=8) 63% (5)	(n=5) 40% (2)	(n=20) 50% (10)	(n=11) 64% (7)	(n=49) 53% (26)

INSET structures in schools

As is indicated by the data in Table 9.2 below, the great majority of schools in each LEA had a person designated as an INSET co-ordinator. Indeed, as noted in chapters six and seven, some of the authorities had actively sought to ensure that all schools had a co-ordinator. The Adviser for Staff Development in Rivendell, for example, had noted that each school had an INSET co-ordinator whom he regularly consulted. Certainly each school responding from Rivendell indicated that they had a co-ordinator. Across all the LEAs it was evident that not all of the INSET co-ordinators received a financial allowance in relation to their additional responsibilities for INSET within their school. A significant number of INSET co-ordinators had to manage and perform their INSET role alongside a teaching responsibility. This was the case even in those schools which did not formally designate a person as the INSET co-ordinator. Eleven per cent (53) of schools responding had an INSET committee. Within the different sectors the proportions of schools having an INSET committee were: secondary schools 35 per cent; middle/primary schools seven per cent; and special schools 23 per cent. Approximately a half (48%) of the INSET committees comprised between two and five members. Most of the others (42%) had between six and 10 members and there were a small number (10%) with over 10 members.

Table 9.2: Schools' INSET structures.

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
INSET co-ordinator	100% (28)	97% (60)	81% (30)	93% (147)	97% (184)	95% (449)
INSET co-ordinator post was funded	64% (18)	52% (32)	38% (14)	31% (49)	31% (58)	36% (171)
INSET committee	14% (4)	26% (16)	14% (5)	6% (10)	9% (18)	11% (53)

Use of LEA INSET provision.

Table 9.3 below indicates for each LEA the percentage of a school's external INSET which was provided by the LEA. The most extensive users of LEA INSET were schools in Moriadon and schools in Hobbiton; 55 per cent and 46 per cent

respectively, used LEA provision for more than 80 per cent of their external INSET. The schools least likely to use LEA-provided INSET were Havensham and Shirebridge; only 13 per cent and 20 per cent respectively, used LEA provided INSET for more than 80 per cent of their external INSET. In Rivendell there were 39 per cent of schools who used LEA-INSET for more than 80 per cent of externally provided INSET. The strength of the relationship between the two variables LEA and the per cent of each schools external INSET provided by the LEA was tested. This involved the 'Cramer's V' test of association which yields a coefficient varying between zero and one. The closer to +1 the coefficient, then the stronger the relationship between the two variables. As indicated in Table 9.3, the coefficient for the variables LEA by the percentage of external school INSET provision provided by the local authority is 0.22, indicating a small association between the variables LEA and use of LEA for external INSET provision. The relationship existing between the two variables was not a particularly strong one. The reason for this, it can be hypothesised, was that a number of variables were having an influence on the use made by schools of their LEA for external INSET. As will be noted subsequently, some respondents from schools indicated that they welcomed the INSET market and the increased freedom to choose from a greater range of providers. Shirebridge was one such authority where more than a half of schools (56%) used LEA-provided INSET for less than 60 per cent of their external INSET. However, in addition to cultural factors, financial capacity also appeared to be influencing schools decision to use the LEA-provided INSET. As noted in chapter six, Havensham LEA found it difficult to provide a 40 per cent contribution to the 1995-96 GEST budget. It appeared that schools in the authority were seeking alternative providers as the amount of provision which the LEA could make had declined as a result of financial restrictions.

Table 9.3: What percentage of the school's external INSET is provided by the LEA?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
0-20%	11	18	0	21	6	12
21-40%	14	19	8	15	6	12
41-60%	29	27	22	20	9	17
61-80%	7	23	24	24	24	23
81-100%	39	13	46	20	55	36
ALL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Cramer's V: 0.22

(p= <0.05)

With regard to school-based INSET, each LEA provided relatively little. As the data in Table 9.4 below indicated, the great majority of respondents from schools across each authority observed that less than 20 per cent of their school-based (internal) INSET was provided by the LEA.

Table 9.4: What percentage of school-based INSET is provided by the LEA?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
0-20%	78	81	77	71	74	75
21-40%	10	11	14	20	11	14
41-60%	4	3	3	6	5	5
61-80%	4	5	3	1	4	3
81-100%	4	0	3	2	6	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Listed in Table 9.5 below are the proportions of respondents from schools across each LEA who felt that their school's use of LEA INSET had changed over the last five years. In four of the five authorities between a third and a half of all schools reported a reduction in their use of LEA INSET. As reported in chapter seven, the smaller metropolitan authorities were struggling to provide a wide-range of INSET provision as a result of financial reductions. Schools in Shirebridge were among those least likely to report a change in their use of LEA INSET but they had historically used a greater range of INSET providers. Interestingly only 13 per cent of Moriadon respondents indicated that their school's use of the LEA provision had declined. This suggested that the schools in Moriadon were remaining loyal to the LEA and were satisfied with the LEA's provision. This will be elaborated on subsequently.

Table 9.5: Has the school's use of LEA INSET provision declined in the last five years?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
yes	56	40	43	37	13	30
no	44	60	57	63	87	70
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Several reasons were given for the decline indicated in Table 9.5. Some were common to schools across all the authorities. There had been an increase in the number of alternative sources of provision. Among new providers of INSET were: examination boards as new syllabuses were introduced; organisations such as Rotary International; commercial companies such as Heinemann; associations such as the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT); and local primary/secondary head teacher associations. Respondents from schools in each

authority noted an increase in the use made of University provision through the GEST-designated courses. Schools commented favourably on the range of provision being made by other agencies. It was often, as a respondent from a primary school noted, 'more suited to our specific needs'. Some respondents from schools in the smaller authorities remarked upon a decline in the overall amount of LEA INSET provision. They pointed to the reduction in the number of LEA advisers and advisory teachers. In addition several respondents from schools in the metropolitan authorities indicated that they were having difficulties funding supply cover due to reductions in the school's income. As noted in chapter seven, for example, Havensham schools paid an agreed amount back to the LEA from their GEST budget. The LEA then used this money to finance its INSET agency. This meant that schools did not pay directly for provision which was delivered through the agency. Schools did, however, have to pay for supply cover and as a respondent from a Havensham infant school noted, 'a reduction in funding had meant fewer supply teachers could be afforded to release class teachers for LEA INSET provision'. Indeed, the information provided in Table 9.6, below, suggests that schools in the smaller metropolitan LEAs were more likely to use their own staff to provide school-based INSET than those in the larger county councils.

Table 9.6: What percentage of school-based INSET is provided by staff from the school?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
0-20%	21	10	30	27	31	26
21-40%	14	15	14	27	25	22
41-60%	19	17	13	15	13	15
61-80%	25	31	24	20	17	21
81-100%	21	27	19	11	14	16
ALL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

This finding is supported by the information in Table 9.7. Those authorities most likely to use neighbouring LEAs for INSET were schools in the smaller metropolitan authorities and those least likely were schools in the larger county authorities. Again, it appeared that a number of factors were having an influence. As noted in chapter six, Shirebridge had intentionally distanced itself from neighbouring LEAs. It might be hypothesised, therefore, that schools in the Shirebridge area did not receive as much advertising from other LEAs. Moriadon, however, did disseminate information from neighbouring LEAs to its schools, although Moriadon schools had not used this provision to any great extent. This, perhaps, suggested a high level of satisfaction with the provision offered by their own LEA. The fact that schools from the smaller authorities were more likely to

use provision from neighbouring LEAs may have been further evidence to indicate that the declining capacity of smaller authorities to provide INSET opportunities for local schools was resulting in their having to find alternative providers. However, a note of caution needs to be given. The schools were not asked to indicate exactly how many times teachers from their schools were attending INSET provided in another LEA.

Table 9.7: Does the school use INSET provided by neighbouring LEAs?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
yes	64	63	51	41	35	44
no	36	37	49	59	65	56
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Why did schools use their LEAs' INSET provision?

The great majority of schools in all sample LEAs felt that knowing the LEA advisers; value for money; a recognition that the LEA had expertise in certain areas; and the opportunity for teachers to network with colleagues from other schools were all very important/important when they decided to use their LEA's INSET provision. As Tables 9.8-9.11 spotlight, the responses from schools in each authority were not dissimilar in these respects.

Table 9.8: How important is it to know the LEA advisers who provide INSET?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Very Important	25	33	28	31	16	25
Important	46	40	36	32	38	37
Of some Importance	21	22	27	29	34	29
Not Important	8	5	9	8	12	9
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 9.9: How important is it that the LEA gives value for money?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Very Important	50	49	51	48	52	50
Important	37	40	41	43	41	42
Of some Importance	8	11	5	8	6	7
Not Important	5	0	3	1	1	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 9.10: How important is it that the LEA has expertise in certain areas?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Very Important	47	39	38	47	46	45
Important	33	48	35	44	44	43
Of some Importance	19	13	24	7	8	10
Not Important	1	0	3	2	2	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 9.11: How important is it that the teachers have the opportunity to share INSET with colleagues from other schools?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Very Important	25	48	38	42	52	46
Important	39	44	40	38	34	38
Of some Importance	32	8	19	17	9	14
Not Important	4	0	3	3	5	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Another reason which schools had in common for choosing to use their LEAs provision was the proximity to schools of LEA venues for workshops/courses. As a respondent from a primary school in Hobbiton noted, for example, 'this meant that half-day courses really were half a day' and 'twilight sessions were viable because of the close proximity'. Travel was therefore relatively easy to arrange and 'costs were not so high'. Schools from all authorities also noted that knowledge of the local system influenced their decision because they were familiar with how to enrol for, pay for, and receive notification of provision.

The attitude of schools towards the future provision of an INSET service.

Of the people responding, those from schools in Shirebridge and Havensham expressed the greatest concern about the deterioration in the quality of their LEAs' INSET provision. In Shirebridge 30 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that the quality of the County Council's provision had deteriorated over the previous five years. The largest proportion of schools strongly agreeing/agreeing with the view that their LEA's INSET provision had deteriorated in quality could be found in Havensham, 32 per cent were of this opinion. But the great majority (97%) of Havensham schools strongly agreed/agreed that the LEA should continue to provide INSET. Indeed, no school disagreed with this view.

Table 9.12: To what extent would you agree or disagree that the quality of LEA INSET provision has deteriorated in the last five years?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Strongly Agree	0	3	3	13	1	5
Agree	21	29	11	17	10	15
No View	11	23	5	22	13	16
Disagree	39	40	54	42	54	48
Strongly Disagree	29	5	27	6	22	16
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

As shown in Table 9.13, however, over 95 per cent of all the schools responding in each of the LEAs also believed that the local authority should continue to provide INSET. Only in Shirebridge and Moriadon were there schools which believed that LEAs should not continue to provide INSET, two per cent and one per cent respectively. An LEA role in providing INSET, then, had overwhelming support from the schools responding to the survey (which included GM and LM schools). All seven respondents from GM schools in Shirebridge agreed that LEAs should continue to provide INSET. Schools demonstrated, however, a concern about their LEA's involvement in other activities such as OFSTED. Some respondents indicated that this was having a detrimental effect on their LEA's ability to provide high quality INSET. This helped explain why, over the last few years, all the LEAs had come to place such an emphasis on quality. As noted earlier, for example, Shirebridge had promised schools that it would deliver 'quality INSET'. Therefore, the LEA appeared to be aware of schools concerns but the survey responses suggested that the authority still had work to do to satisfy all its

'customers'. Some schools in Havensham felt that the LEA had been placed in a difficult position by reductions in their budget. As one respondent from a secondary school noted, 'the quality had only declined because the LEA did not have the same number of advisers and advisory teachers, due to declining budgets'. Another respondent from a secondary school in Hobbiton also made a similar comment. The INSET Co-ordinator at the school observed that a decline in the quality of LEA INSET provision had resulted from 'a loss of valuable [advisory] staff'.

Table 9.13: To what extent would you agree or disagree that the LEA should continue to provide INSET?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Strongly Agree	68	61	65	61	65	63
Agree	28	36	32	34	33	34
No View	4	3	3	3	1	2
Disagree	0	0	0	1	1	0.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	1	0	0.5
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The schools' perceptions of an INSET 'partnership' with the LEA.

The great majority of schools in each authority agreed to some extent that their particular LEA was working in partnership with them to both plan and deliver INSET opportunities for teachers'. (Tables 9.14 and 9.15). Overall, 90 per cent agreed/strongly agreed that the LEA works in partnership with schools to plan INSET provision. Indeed, in Rivendell not a single school responding disagreed with this view. The responses suggested a high level of satisfaction (in schools in Hobbiton, Rivendell and Moriadon) with the provision offered through the LEA. It appeared that each LEA's consultations with schools over INSET had resulted in local authority provision largely addressing the needs for CPD in schools.

Table 9.14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the LEA works in partnership with schools to plan INSET provision?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Strongly Agree	43	39	57	32	54	44
Agree	50	48	40	51	41	46
No View	7	4	0	7	1	4
Disagree	0	7	0	8	4	5
Strongly Disagree	0	2	3	2	0	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 9.15 shows that overall, 89 per cent of schools agreed/strongly agreed that their LEA works in partnership with schools to deliver INSET.

Table 9.15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the LEA works in partnership with schools to deliver INSET provision?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Strongly Agree	32	31	41	25	43	35
Agree	54	52	50	57	52	54
No View	14	10	3	8	3	6
Disagree	0	7	3	9	2	4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	3	1	0	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

However, this did not necessarily mean that those responding from schools did not feel that their particular LEAs could not improve their provision and match it even more closely to schools' requirements. Some respondents from schools in Rivendell, for example, indicated that their school had used provision offered by other organisations because this was 'more relevant to [their school's] needs'. A respondent from a Rivendell primary school noted that 'the LEA was slow in arranging appropriate courses in relation to SEN. Furthermore, a Rivendell respondent from a comprehensive school remarked that as the school had focused more specifically on certain issues identified as part of their development plan, they had 'sometimes had to take the opportunity of training by external agencies as these issues were not being addressed by the LEA'. Also in Hobbiton, despite

the high level of consultation between schools and the LEA over INSET, 16 per cent of respondents from schools disagreed that the LEA was paying more attention to schools INSET needs than it was five years ago. The same six respondents (16% of the total) also disagreed with the view that LEA central course provision was more responsive to their school's needs than five years ago. The six respondents included three from primary schools, one secondary school, one nursery and one special school. This dissatisfaction, it is suggested, may reflect Hobbiton LEA's lack of advisory service staff to cover across all phases.

In Shirebridge 10 per cent of respondents did not feel that their school was working in partnership with the local authority to either plan and/or deliver INSET provision. Interestingly, though, all those responding from GM schools agreed that their school was working in partnership with the LEA to both plan and deliver INSET. As noted in chapter six, Shirebridge's Senior Adviser CPD and Adviser CPD felt that the LEA's inspectors were in the best position to identify schools' INSET needs. However, as Table 9.16 highlights, the data gathered from respondents in Shirebridge schools suggested a significant level of dissatisfaction with the procedure for identifying needs; they were perhaps frustrated at not being consulted more fully. Thirty per cent of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that Shirebridge LEA was paying more attention to identifying their needs than it did five years previously. This compared unfavourably to 21 per cent from Havensham, 16 per cent from Hobbiton, seven per cent from both Rivendell and Moriadon and 17 per cent overall.

Table 9.16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the LEA pays more attention to identifying the INSET needs of schools than it did five years ago?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Strongly Agree	14	7	24	4	25	15
Agree	54	44	46	33	54	45
No View	25	28	14	33	14	23
Disagree	7	19	16	26	6	15
Strongly Disagree	0	2	0	4	1	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Indeed, as Table 9.17 shows, 17 per cent of those responding from Shirebridge felt that the INSET provision offered in the LEA's central programme was no more responsive to their school's needs than it had been five years ago, which compared

with 10 per cent overall. However, the level of dissatisfaction was greatest among those responding from Havensham. Twenty one per cent of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that their LEA's INSET booklet was more responsive to their schools INSET needs than five years previously.

Table 9.17: To what extent would you agree or disagree that the provision offered in the LEA's INSET booklet is more responsive to schools INSET needs than it was five years ago?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Strongly Agree	21	2	27	3	27	16
Agree	64	48	52	53	61	56
No View	11	29	5	27	9	18
Disagree	4	16	16	14	2	9
Strongly Disagree	0	5	0	3	1	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Co-operation between schools in the provision of INSET

The two authorities where schools were least likely to report more co-operation between schools in the provision of INSET than five years previously were those in Havensham and Shirebridge (37% and 36% respectively disagreed/disagreed strongly that there was more co-operation). However, as Table 9.18 indicates, 42 per cent of the respondents from Shirebridge strongly agreed/agreed that there was greater cooperation between schools in their area with regard to the organisation and provision of INSET than there was five years ago. A substantial number of schools from the first and middle phase (39% of the total) were involved in a consortium which organised and delivered INSET. Less likely to be involved in consortia were special schools and secondary schools. Only one of the respondents from the nine Shirebridge special schools noted that their school made arrangements with other schools. The respondent indicated that these joint ventures were 'not as frequent as [they] used to be'. None of the 14 Shirebridge secondary schools were involved in a consortia. However, a respondent from a comprehensive school in the large town which was to have its own unitary authority from April 1997 noted that with the impending reorganisation of local government there had been 'an improvement in liaison between secondary schools with a view to improving training and development in the town'. As one respondent noted, 'the INSET arranged through consortia was usually provided

by school staff although external providers were used on occasion'. The consortia in Shirebridge were termed 'liaison groups' although one respondent noted that they were involved in a 'community of schools'.

Table 9.18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is more co-operation between schools in organising and providing INSET than there was five years ago?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
Strongly Agree	7	2	6	5	12	8
Agree	50	27	48	37	45	40
No View	21	34	27	22	25	25
Disagree	18	36	16	30	17	24
Strongly Disagree	4	1	3	6	1	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Only 29 per cent of those respondents from schools in Havensham strongly agreed/agreed that there was more cooperation over INSET than five years ago between schools in the authority. Thirty four per cent gave no view and 37 per cent strongly disagreed/disagreed with this statement. Indeed, only 18 per cent of respondents noted that their school was involved in a consortia of schools providing INSET. Some schools were involved in 'cluster groups' which did, on occasion, organise and provide some INSET on non-contact days. Each cluster group was made up of secondary schools and their feeder primary schools. The cluster groups appeared to be a relatively new initiative and, as such, several had not developed sufficient liaison with other members. As a respondent from a primary school indicated, 'closer links would be further developed in the next few years'. There seemed to be a difference between clusters in the level of co-operation in relation to INSET. A respondent from a primary school observed that their particular cluster of schools had shared INSET over the past two years. Indeed all core subject co-ordinators and head teachers from each school involved had met regularly, once per half term.

Sixty seven per cent of those responding from schools in Moriadon strongly agreed/agreed that there was greater co-operation among local schools over INSET than five years ago. Only 18 per cent strongly disagreed/disagreed. Many schools in Moriadon had participated in what were termed 'cluster groups'. As

one respondent from a primary school observed, 'we are in a cluster group of schools which are sometimes willing to get together, when appropriate, for their professional development days'. The cluster groups were similar to the liaison groups in Shirebridge. They were set up by geographical area. Primary, secondary and special schools in a town or district would form a cluster if they wanted to be involved. The topics which cluster group INSET provision focused upon were broad and ranged, as one respondent noted, 'from SEN to creative arts'. The LEA had actively encouraged the formation of clusters. This was a policy which had a relatively long history in Moriadon. As one respondent from a school remarked, their particular school's involvement in a cluster had been ongoing for over eight years. The LEA had used local initiatives money to fund INSET through clusters and, simultaneously, this helped reinforce the authority's position as the local education leader. Each cluster was able to 'bid' for financial support from the LEA. Each cluster had a committee which prioritised the ideas for bids from all schools involved in the group. They were then forwarded to the LEA. The 'convenor' of one cluster noted that bids could be made for up to £3000, but their cluster had been successful in actually attracting £5000 the previous year. They were 'over-funded' and the 'convenor' of this particular cluster noted that 'not all areas had enjoyed such success'.

The response from schools in Rivendell was quite striking. While 57 per cent of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that there was more co-operation between schools in relation to INSET, only 11 per cent of respondents indicated that their school was involved in a consortium. The latter was a special school and its INSET co-ordinator noted that on occasion all special school INSET co-ordinators met with LEA advisers to plan INSET together. The cluster/liaison group culture appeared to be something which was alien to the vast majority of schools in Rivendell. Similarly, relatively few schools in Hobbiton (27%) were involved in a consortium, although 54 per cent of those responding did strongly agree/agree that there was more co-operation between schools than five years ago in relation to organising and providing INSET opportunities for teachers. One respondent from a Rivendell primary school noted that a schools' association existed. The association organised training on non-contact days using the expertise of staff from schools participating in the association. Topics covered during the INSET sessions were broad and usually focused on general issues such as, for example, drugs awareness training. The associations were small. A respondent from one primary school noted that the association their school belonged to was the largest and it consisted of only five schools.

Table 19.19: Is your school involved in a consortium of schools which organise and deliver INSET provision?

	Riven (n=28)	Haven (n=62)	Hobb (n=37)	Shire (n=158)	Moria (n=190)	ALL (n=475)
yes	11	18	27	39	50	38
no	89	82	73	61	50	62
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Review

The evidence obtained from schools, then, did corroborate a number of the findings outlined in earlier chapters. All of the LEAs placed an emphasis on 'partnership', although the term was framed differently across each authority. Indeed, the majority of schools in all five LEAs felt that they were working in partnership with their authority to plan and deliver INSET opportunities for teachers. The evidence from the survey also indicated, however, that the LEA's existing INSET arrangements were not perceived to be as successful by the respondents from schools as they were perceived to be by the advisers interviewed from the authorities. Hence, each LEA perhaps still needed to consider its procedure for identifying schools' INSET needs. The survey findings also supported the view that a number of variables were influencing each school's and LEA's arrangements for INSET. In particular, financial capacity, or the lack of it, seemed to be having a very substantial impact. This was especially evident within the smaller LEAs. The final chapter of the thesis will draw on the findings from both the qualitative study of advisers and the quantitative study of schools to consider the conclusions which can be drawn from this case study of five LEAs.

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusions

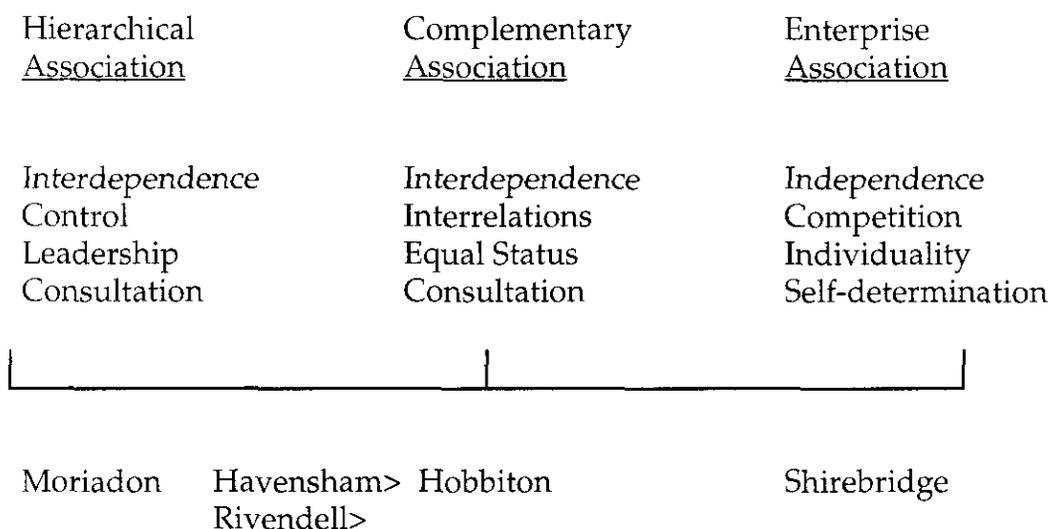
With a focus on INSET policy, organisation and provision, this study has addressed the following questions. What were the responses of LEAs to changes in their functions? From this main question a number of sub-questions flowed. In particular, what were the similarities and differences in LEA INSET provision? What was the rationale which underpinned the implementation of each LEA's INSET policy? Drawing on the findings of the study this chapter begins by addressing the above questions highlighting what the responses of LEAs in the sample to changes in their functions have been. A discussion of LEA INSET provision is given. Several new initiatives with ramifications for the LEAs are reflected upon in relation to the researcher's findings. Finally, reference is made to further work which might be undertaken in the future.

The responses of LEAs to changes in their functions

As noted in chapter eight, all of the LEAs had responded to changes in the funding mechanisms for INSET, but the strategy for change which each of the LEAs in this study adopted was different. Each LEA's principles, practices and priorities very much depended on the authority's size, resources (financial and human capacity), history, culture, commitment and avenues for communications. Even where similar structures were developed, disparities in the mode of operation were evident. LEA INSET organisation has been illustrated by models such as relatively centralist and highly delegated agency based. (Harland *et al*, 1993) These models, it is suggested, are simplistic and overlook considerable diversity in the ways in which LEAs organise their INSET services. A more useful way of representing the full range of responses to change which each LEA had adopted involves using the concept of a spectrum. All of the LEAs sought to establish a 'partnership' with schools. However, in each case, associations were framed according to a distinct set of values. At one end of the spectrum is an 'hierarchical association'. While based on a recognition of interdependence, a strong element of LEA control and leadership is evident which defines the LEA's preferred relations with schools, and shapes its interaction with other INSET providers. Of the LEAs in this study, Moriadon was nearest to this model. The emphasis on leadership and control diminishes as movement is made to the other end of the spectrum. Clearly, Havensham and Rivendell were seeking to move in this direction to a

position at the centre of the spectrum occupied by Hobbiton which was involved in a 'complementary association' with its schools.

Figure 1: INSET Spectrum



This association entails a recognition of the need for interdependence between the LEA and school staff where the LEA and schools' relationship is more one of equals. 'Complementary association' also involves greater communication than in the 'hierarchical association' and schools are more likely to be involved in the decision-making processes for INSET within the LEA. There is a greater likelihood that their ideas will be adopted by the LEA. At the other end of the spectrum is an enterprise association with schools. This is characterised by a strong belief in the INSET market, competition and independence. Schools are viewed as autonomous institutions by the LEA. While it is possible that the aims of the LEA might correspond with those of schools, self-determination and individual identity are emphasised. Shirebridge occupied the position nearest to this end of the spectrum. The situation, though, was in a state of flux and each LEA's policy for managing INSET was continually under review.

LEA INSET provision.

As noted in the previous chapters, all the LEAs in the study continued to provide INSET. This provision had taken the form of workshops/courses or conferences presented in teachers'/professional centres, residential centres or even some venues which the LEA rented (hotel conference rooms). INSET services were provided through the LEA advisers and advisory teachers entering schools to present workshops/courses. They also worked on a one-to-one basis as

consultants with teachers in schools. In each authority advisers were 'attached' to a number of schools which they visited systematically each term. Despite the loss of many staff over the last five years each LEA employed advisers and advisory teachers who had a high level of experience and expertise in providing INSET. They often brought wider perspectives to familiar professional problems. LEA staff could, time permitting, keep abreast of new educational ideas and changes and disseminate these, whether through external workshops/ courses or school based INSET, to teachers. The LEA could also promote collaboration between schools. An example of this was the 'cluster' scheme in Moriadon.

In the period 1990-1997 LEAs and schools had experienced financial constraints. The proportion of the school's budget spent on staff employment has increased gradually. In consequence expenditure on other budget items, including INSET, had reduced as schools had sought to retain staff-student ratios. Although school-based INSET had become more popular for some sound educational reasons, there was little doubt that its growing popularity was also related to the fact that it remained an attractive cheaper alternative in cost-conscious times. External course provision was more costly for schools. While the amount of school-based INSET had increased, data gained from interviews and the questionnaire suggested that it was only occasionally conducted by 'outside' providers. In many cases staff within the school provided it. There must be some doubts over the expertise of staff within schools in this respect. There was a danger that INSET, increasingly based within the school, might foster a sense of academic and professional isolation. As Kirk observed:

All of us working in education need the impetus that comes from exposing our practice to the scrutiny of people working in related but different contexts. The critical analysis of practice needs the perspectives that come from critical outsiders. Such perspectives, deriving possibly from a more intimate knowledge of the literature of education, should contribute to teachers' exploration of possibilities for action that may not arise directly from the scrutiny of their own immediate professional context. (1992: 142)

Some of the respondents in the survey of schools raised concerns about isolation and the dwindling opportunities for teachers from their authority to meet and share ideas. Other research has also highlighted this problem. Harland and Kinder found that many teachers were very concerned about the reduction in what they termed 'cross-fertilisation of ideas across the LEAs'. (1994: 57) The *TES*

noted that 'the loss of so many LEA advisers and advisory teachers had a significant effect on teachers' morale'. It continued by observing that 'the decline in the advisory service has seriously harmed schools'. (1995b: 8) Chapter two pointed to the findings of two House of Commons Select Committee on Education reports published in 1995. The *Performance in City Schools* and *Science and Technology in School* reports both expressed concern about the dwindling LEA advisory services and the adverse effects of this. All these sources identified the importance of LEAs continuing to provide INSET. This could also be emphasised by pointing to other policy developments. OFSTED inspection and appraisal procedures have also called for action which can only be met through INSET. The need and demand for INSET increased dramatically in the period following the ERA in 1988. Evidence that LEAs could offer valued provision to meet this increased demand was indicated in the response to the survey in which 97 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that the LEA should continue to provide INSET. LEAs were well placed to enable schools to improve the quality of education in ways identified by action plans and appraisal reports.

As chapter nine noted, the great majority of respondents from schools felt that their LEA offered INSET provision which was good value for money. It could provide schools with INSET at a range of financial levels through arrangements such as service-level agreements. The larger LEAs in the sample, especially, provided INSET which benefited from the economies of scale. The LEAs had also provided INSET for which there might not otherwise have been any commercial demand. SEN provision was an example of this. Many alternative providers, such as commercial companies, might be motivated by profit rather than a desire to support schools with a comprehensive range of services. There is a danger in removing either the power or financial ability of LEAs to provide services such as INSET as alternative providers might not find attractive or profitable the provision of a comprehensive range of INSET. As the Assistant Director in Havensham noted, schools paid back a small amount of their GEST budget to the authority and by doing so were secure in the knowledge that 'they are getting guaranteed provision to ensure that they are fulfilling the statutory requirements'. There remained, then, a strong case for concluding that LEAs should continue to provide INSET. This was not to imply, however, that they should be the only provider. LEAs offered value for money and had the requisite expertise. LEAs were valued by schools but there were areas where some of the smaller authorities in this study had gaps in their advisory service's cover. Respondents from schools reported that alternative providers to the LEA had been used and their provision was favourably commented upon. LEAs needed to remain aware of their own

limitations in relation to providing INSET. These limitations inevitably varied between each of the LEAs in this study.

Each LEA's commitment to making a key contribution to school improvement was manifest in their continued provision of INSET opportunities for teachers. The advisory staff interviewed expressed a desire to continue providing support for schools to the best of their abilities. Despite this commitment, though, a lack of financial resources had reduced staffing and levels of expertise. Labour's standards minister, Stephen Byers, stated at the 1997 CLEA conference that 'what is clear from [the Government's] analysis of LEAs is that some are doing very much better than others with similar socio-economic backgrounds and similar amounts of money'. He was convinced that this meant 'there is no correlation between performance and spending per pupil' and added that 'money is not the answer to everything'. (*TES*, 20:6:97, 7) Clearly money should not be seen as the answer to everything. There remains a need for the dissemination of good LEA practice. Indeed one area where further research is needed is in relation to identifying what constitutes high quality INSET. As noted in the earlier chapters, each sample LEA had found it difficult to conduct meaningful evaluation of provision. INSET could take several different forms including short and long courses, workshops, conferences, consultancies, distance learning and action research. Little is known about the relative strengths and weaknesses of these methods for improving teachers practice. Hopefully, the more positive findings of what makes for effective INSET from OFSTED's inspections of LEAs will be widely distributed.

However, while increasing finances are not in any way a panacea for increasing schools effectiveness through the provision of INSET for teachers, it would be facile to underestimate the importance of adequate resources. As noted in earlier chapters, reduced funding had raised concerns about the quality and scope of LEA INSET support for schools. The requirement on LEAs to delegate more of their budgets to heads and governors had resulted in less money for the authorities to support schools. All of the LEAs studied continued to centrally fund their advisory services. However, the Labour Government's White Paper *Excellence in Schools* (1997) proposed that even higher proportions of finance should be delegated to schools from LEAs. This study found that the smaller metropolitan LEAs, in particular, were struggling to provide advisory cover across each phase and in all curriculum areas. All of the authorities in the sample had closed venues where professional development activities had previously taken place. Even more delegation would likely result in authorities having even fewer resources to carry

out their important responsibility of supporting schools and helping to raise standards. Their INSET structures were likely to be further rationalised. If the LEAs are genuinely regarded as essential to the task of raising standards, then serious consideration needs to be given to determining a solution to this dilemma. For it is possible to claim that further financial delegation could turn out to be the most serious threat to the Labour Government's plans to raise standards through 'partnership'.

The need to clarify the LEA's 'quality' function

Since 1944 the LEAs have continued to have a statutory duty to provide efficient and sufficient schooling. This suggested that they needed to be concerned about the quality of education. There are also duties of the employer in general under, for example, the Health and Safety at work legislation (such as Sections two and three of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974). The latter place responsibilities on the LEA as an employer to give employees, school staff, training, guidance and practical help. In the case of Heads and Senior Teachers this training might be relatively substantial. As noted, one way in which LEAs have attempted to fulfil the above requirement is through the continued provision of INSET opportunities for school teachers. In being responsive to schools they employed advisory service staff who supported institutions in raising standards by facilitating school- or centre-based INSET. However, as noted in chapter four, the legal *vires* of LEAs to provide such services remain vague and open to different interpretations. Under the provisions outlined in the 1997 Education Act OFSTED and the Audit Committee are given powers to scrutinise the work of LEAs. However, as Morris (1997) pointed out, the lack of clear *vires* in respect to the quality of teaching and learning might lead to problems. OFSTED inspections might examine how each LEA was discharging its quality functions but if the definition of this function remained ambiguous this task would be extremely difficult.

The solution seems to be to state unambiguously all LEA *vires* regarding quality issues. The alternative would see OFSTED conducting each inspection 'against the LEA's distinctive interpretation of its functions'. (Morris, 1997: 4) This might result in a great deal of unhelpful confusion and diversity. It would certainly be a challenging task for ministers to decide whether or not an LEA was taking, or not taking, sufficient action to improve schools. The need for such clarity is made evident with the publication of *Excellence in Schools*. The White Paper seemed to outline a significant role for the LEA with regard to raising standards and improving schools. Unfortunately, though, the Labour Government has not, so

far, proposed to place any statutory duty on local authorities to raise standards. They will draw on existing powers. If, however, the machinery for ensuring that LEAs are doing everything they can to raise standards is to operate satisfactorily then the vague *vires* surrounding the LEA's quality function needs to be properly defined in statute.

As noted in chapters two and three, in the period 1990-1997 LEA powers and duties were reduced. One can certainly highlight several areas where this was undoubtedly the case. An example is the removal of the LEA's explicit power to inspect schools at will. Paradoxically, though, given the ambiguity surrounding the legal position of LEAs in relation to quality, it is possible to suggest that the responsibilities which the LEA has in relation to INSET might be an exception to the perceived trend. While, generally, the LEAs' powers and duties have been reduced, several functions formally ascribed to the LEA during the 1990s implied an INSET involvement. These included the GEST arrangements and the work of the LEA as the appraising body for teachers. This was also true of several activities in which the LEA's responsibilities and tasks were so firmly at the centre of things that no other body was well-placed locally to provide INSET. An example of the latter was the introduction of the SEN Code in 1994. Other developments such as the introduction, and constant modification of, the National Curriculum had also required the LEA to facilitate INSET. The validity of the claim that LEA INSET functions have increased since 1990, though, is in doubt. The LEA has the responsibility as the appraising body to promote 'the quality of education of pupils through assisting teachers to realise their potential and to carry out their duties more effectively'. (OFSTED, 1996: 7) Is, though, this a significant departure from what LEA advisory service staff were doing in schools prior to the introduction of appraisal? Unfortunately little is known about the involvement of LEAs with regard to INSET prior to 1990. Not knowing exactly what authorities were doing at this time makes it impossible to form an opinion on whether or not their new activities increase their INSET responsibilities. One can claim, though, that between 1990 and 1997 there has been a formalization with regard to the LEA's role in relation to INSET following central Government's legislation in relation to appraisal, SEN and GEST.

Benign and malign centralisation.

As noted in chapter three, whilst some commentators had attacked what they perceived to be an unacceptable increase in the power of central Government to frame INSET policy through mediums such as the TTA (Graham, 1996), others had

expressed concern about the absence of a central Government strategy for the organisation and delivery of INSET:

Perhaps reflecting the low status of policy-making about INSET, the introduction of a national framework for the provision of inspection services throws into sharp relief the absence of a corresponding national strategy for the organisation and delivery of in-service training and support. Whilst the funding parameters and priorities for INSET have been set out in a series of annual DFE circulars, the structural and mid-to long term strategy aspects of INSET management and organisation have received little attention in the national arena and government policy documents. (Harland and Kinder, 1994: 53)

Certainly, by the mid-1990s, increased central involvement was needed with regard to providing a national framework for the management and organisation of INSET, especially as the alternative was simply to ignore planning and rely on *laissez-faire*. The Conservative Governments in the 1980s and early 1990s had made slow progress in putting in place a national framework for INSET. Harland and Kinder noted that 'the structural and mid- to long- term strategic aspects of INSET management and organisation received little attention in the national arena and Government policy documents'. (*loc. cit.*) By the summer of 1996, though, progress had been made. The GEST circular 13/96 praised the work of the TTA in highlighting how school development plans, appraisal and standards for the key points in the teaching profession should be closely linked together in a national programme for teacher training and school improvement. Through the work of the TTA it appears, at the time of writing (November 1997), that a national strategy for INSET is taking shape. Morris remarked that greater national control might result in 'a more effective use of resources, more concerted initiatives to help under-achieving schools, and enhanced status for teachers'. However, he added a warning which this researcher wholly endorses. Recognising that that 'what may be lost are individual choice or even the freedom for schools to plan their staff development', he suggested that a 'delicate balance' was needed (1995b: 3) GEST is an example of a more malign form of centralisation. As noted in chapter three, the scheme's rationale was underpinned by a desire on the part of central Government to control LEAs. The designation at the national level of categories for INSET expenditure through GEST has been restricting. Since 1995/96 the specification of areas for grant has been reduced with many smaller grants amalgamated in to the school effectiveness element of the scheme. There has been some relaxing of the GEST criteria with part of the school effectiveness

grant being directed at 'local priorities' identified by the LEA. There is no indication in *Excellence in Schools*, however, that the incoming Labour Government is going to relax any further the restraints associated with the GEST scheme.

Excellence in Schools supported the strengthening of the TTA's position through its confirmation that the Labour Government would require the Agency to continue the structuring of qualifications and competencies for teachers at various stages of their careers. The introduction of these qualifications is likely to have ramifications for arrangements made for INSET locally. The profile of INSET is likely to be enhanced further. Clearly, the introduction of the the new qualifications raises questions about the LEA's place following any future reorganisation. There is much speculation about how the work of the TTA is going to impact on the field of INSET in the future. Some of this has focused on how the resourcing of INSET might be further developed. As noted in chapter three, the financing of teachers' INSET through quangos was evident during the 1980s and early 1990s. From September 1985 until April 1987 (when LEATGS came into operation) TRIST was administered through the medium of the Manpower Services Commission. In addition, TECs provided funding to LEAs for INSET purposes, as in Havensham. (Chapter 7) Until recently, however, few would have suggested that any existing quango was well placed to relieve the LEAs totally of the administration of GEST funds. Since 1994 and the establishment of the TTA, however, this has become a real possibility. One can speculate whether GEST will continue to be channelled through the LEAs or, as with TRIST in the early 1980s, did the introduction of the HEADLAMP scheme in 1994 signal the DfEE's thinking on how to fund INSET in the future? If it did, then the TTA is likely to become the medium for funding INSET through GEST. It is possible, therefore, that TTA accreditation will become a prerequisite for LEA INSET programmes.

Collaboration rather than competition as a guiding principle

In the Autumn of 1994, when the researcher began this project, a period of uncertainty about the continued existence of the LEA was coming to an end. As highlighted in chapters two and three, the previous decade had witnessed changes in the funding of LEAs and the introduction of specific grants for INSET. Both these developments were part of a comprehensive realignment of the whole base for funding education with the intent of creating self-managing schools in an educational marketplace. With regard to INSET, 'marketisation' had necessitated

'a policy of privatisation' (Harland and Kinder, 1994: 54) It is worth recalling what the White Paper, *Choice and Diversity* envisaged:

6.7 LEAs offer a range of educational advice, support and training services to their own schools and to others [...]

6.8 The Government expects that increasingly the private sector will step in to provide such services. (DfE, 1992: 32)

Following the publication of the White Paper, though, schools decided not to opt-out in great numbers and remained as members of 'LEA clubs'. The LEA's position, therefore, seemed more secure. From 1994 onwards 'with rapid change, demands for high standards, and calls for improving quality, teachers have a need, as never before, to update and improve their skills through in-service learning'. (Craft, 1996: 5) By the time of the May 1997 election there was emerging consensus across the political divide that the LEA was well placed to set about *undertaking locally the raising of standards and improvement of schools*. Indeed, just 68 days after the Labour Government was elected, *The Guardian* was claiming that the White Paper, *Excellence in Schools*, would result in the restoration of the LEA 'to a pivotal role in driving up standards'. (8:7:97) Each LEA was to agree annual improvement targets with every school in their area. The authority would then provide a three-year 'education development plan' to satisfy the DfEE. Whenever a school was failing to make progress the LEA was expected to intervene with support for heads, including sending in teams of specialist advisers. If this did not work the LEA would be able to call in OFSTED for an emergency inspection. As a last resort, the LEA would be allowed to take control of the school's budget. If any LEA was not seen to be fulfilling its requirement to support schools, then the White Paper proposed machinery for the Government to step in and take over the relevant powers for dealing with schools. LEAs would be expected to discharge these duties using the existing vague powers.

In many ways *Excellence in Schools* proposed to strengthen machinery inherited from the Conservatives for identifying problems in schools. However, the incoming Labour Government had set about adopting a significantly different approach to finding the solution to problems. 'The tone of the White Paper is optimistic, meliorist and consultative'. (Morris, 1997: 3) The new Labour Government wanted future developments in the education service to be instigated through 'partnership'. The White Paper was to send out the clear message that it was no longer enough to rely on market forces to lever up standards. Schools

needed the support of outside agencies, who were referred to by the Council of LEAs (CLEA, 1997: 3) as 'critical friends'. Schools would continue deciding how to spend their resources for professional development. They would choose the proportion of LEA or other agencies INSET provision which they wished to use. The LEA would, though, have a strategic 'role' bringing together the targets set by individual schools into an overall set of goals for the authority which would be set out in the 'education development plan'.

At the 1997 CLEA conference Stephen Byers, Minister of State for Standards, emphasised the Labour Government's desire that 'old divisions were [...] forgotten' and that 'LEAs and all schools in their area [...] work together in a new partnership'. (*TES*, 20:6:97, 6) The new Government's stress on collaboration between LEAs and schools should be welcomed. The notion of schools as 'customers' in an INSET marketplace worked on the premise that self-managing institutions were operating satisfactorily and could identify their own needs. Problems, however, would arise if the school's, and individual teacher's, needs for INSET were not being addressed. Furthermore, it was possible that the market strategy might result in important local INSET needs being ignored. As noted in the earlier chapters, even in a model Conservative authority such as Shirebridge the LEA, while supportive of a market strategy for INSET, had continued to rely heavily on its advisers to identify schools' INSET needs. This helped the LEA identify any INSET issues across the whole authority which might need to be addressed. The Labour Government's emphasis on 'partnership' and collaboration, then, was designed to improve liaison and support for schools. Schools remained at the centre of the moves to improve standards. However, the recognition that they, and their staff, should not become isolated was encouraging. The market, especially when underpinned by a belief that the LEA should eventually no longer provide INSET, risked much for little apparent gain. Indeed, evidence to justify the move appeared to be less important than ideology. ACSET had astutely called for 'area INSET committees' to 'bring together' LEAs and alternative providers of INSET in different geographical areas. (1984, para 66) Instead, however, tightening financial restraints and the competitive INSET market place intensified the struggle for providers to 'sell' their services. Collaboration between LEAs and other providers of INSET was placed under severe strain in this context. There was a chance that INSET providers might prefer to optimise their own position rather than worry about working in partnership with their market competitors. There were signs that Shirebridge had adopted such an approach.

LEA discretion rather than agency

A slight relaxation of the GEST criteria in 1995/96 was indicative of a recognition by the previous Conservative Government that LEAs could perform a useful role in raising standards. As Maden remarked, 'there was a degree of acceptance, somewhere between grudging and almost warm, of the value of an expert cadre of officers and advisers, especially in relation to school review and improvement strategies'. Just before the May 1997 general election, with the opinion polls predicting a Labour victory, Maden asked the following question. 'Would Labour trust the Tories' problem child [the LEA]?' (1997, 18) The central/local 'partnership' envisaged by the Labour Government looks likely to remain one in which the senior partner, the Government, continues 'to hold a big stick'. (*TES*, 20:6:97, 6) If the Government consider that an LEA is failing to improve standards then it can send in what have already been described as 'hit squads' to take over the authority's relevant powers for dealing with schools. The Labour Government, through *Excellence in Schools*, has attempted to re-found educational 'partnership' on a basis of mutual trust. However, as Walker observed, 'the hit squad philosophy denies the autonomy of elected local authorities'. (1997: 14) Morris noted that the acceptance that it may be necessary for the Secretary of State to enable 'hit squads' to perform some functions of the LEA was 'the extreme example of a theme' recurring throughout *Excellence in Schools*. This theme was, 'the LEA as agent of central Government'. (1997: 4)

Despite a change of Government, the view that one could not trust local judgements based on local intelligence to operate local systems of schooling prevails. The first policy document of the Labour administration indicates that 'the Tories' problem child' continues to be viewed in a less than positive light in Government circles. LEAs could still not be treated as wholly responsible. It appears at the time of writing (November 1997) that the LEA's INSET activities will largely continue to represent the bureaucratic arm of central Government, despite the change to a Labour Government. As standards minister Byers was quoted as saying at the CLEA conference, 'where LEAs help to raise standards they are part of the solution, but where they don't they become part of the problem'. (*TES*, 20:6:97, 6) 'While there is an emerging consensus about the tasks that can be usefully undertaken locally in relation to school improvement, few of the tasks appeared to require the intervention or judgement of elected members'. (Maden, 1997: 18) The re-shaping of the GEST criteria in recent years suggested there was greater trust in educational professionals. As noted in earlier chapters, however, the LEA comprises both professionals and (mainly) elected members.

This study found that INSET is very much a professional matter at the LEA level. This raises questions about the role of the elected members of education committees. The Chair of Education in Shirebridge noted that 'the role of the education committee is to do with policy. The role of the education department is to implement that policy'. However, his subsequent remarks cast doubts on this arrangement with regard to INSET:

Obviously, with regard to things like INSET, the policy was determined a long time ago, that is to collaborate or not to collaborate with any initiatives which are going on. We are talking really about programmes, in particular the GEST programme. That is always presented to the services sub-committee for approval and discussion. When the finance is settled the sub-committee is informed about what the programme is to be for the next twelve months.

The Shirebridge Chair noted that 'by and large the education committee approved the [GEST] bid'. Shirebridge is not an exception. In each of the sample authorities the role of the education committee comprised approving a GEST package largely determined at central Government level. In this sense the LEA's professionals appear to be acting as agents of the DfEE. One could argue that Government allows LEAs to continue because the local authority officers/advisers are essential to the smooth administration of policy initiatives such as GEST, whereas the involvement of the LEA's education committee is seen as undesirable as it cannot be trusted to follow the agenda of central Government. Maden noted a distinction drawn by the Conservative Government of the early 1990s between local authority officers and elected members. It appears that the Labour Government, in November 1997, also endorses this distinction. To use Maden's term, 'the role of councillors and, therefore, the value of the democratic process continues to be treated with suspicion and profound scepticism'. (1997: 18) Yet this lack of trust in the democratic process would appear to be at odds with the spirit of the Government's other commitments to decentralise power to Scotland, Wales and regions across England.

It could be argued that in order to enhance the quality of continuing professional development, and thus the standard of learning, INSET needs once again to be recognised as a local, as well as a national, priority. As the findings of this study show, there is diversity across LEAs. Even a national scheme such as GEST needs to take into account local needs. While national priorities provide a broad framework for INSET, local needs still have to be considered. All the LEAs in the

sample, for example, found it necessary to use local initiatives money to fund some extra INSET activities. The right balance still had not been found. Whether a local INSET service is provided within a national policy framework, or is determined autonomously, it is more likely to articulate local aspirations and needs through an elected body. Central Government clearly has a role to play in terms of a national INSET framework. However, GEST in the period 1991-1997 offers an example of how centralisation can be taken too far. There is certainly scope for the GEST funding criteria to be modified to allow schools and LEAs greater discretion to meet local needs.

Areas for further study

Reflecting on the findings of this study, and with an eye on a backcloth of continued changes in local government and the education system, two areas where further research might be considered can be identified. The first stems from local government reorganisation. As noted, the smaller metropolitan authorities in this study were finding it difficult to continue providing INSET opportunities and advisory service cover across all curriculum areas. As responses from the questionnaire highlighted, this had caused some anxiety in schools. Unlike the county councils, the metropolitan authorities did not benefit from economies of scale. While some of the new unitary authorities will be larger than most existing metropolitan LEAs, many will be smaller. Unless entering into joint-arrangements with neighbouring authorities it is difficult to envisage many unitary LEAs having the resources to continue providing anything other than token support to schools. The findings of this study suggest that LEA advisory service support is widely valued by schools. It is possible to hypothesise, however, that the establishment of smaller LEAs is likely to damage efforts to raise the standards of learning in many areas. A case study of the provision made by several unitary authorities would help test this supposition. It might also highlight examples of successful arrangements between authorities undertaken with a view to overcoming the problems of scale and limited resources.

As noted none of the authorities in this study had the resources to undertake any substantial evaluation of the INSET provision which they delivered. It is often assumed that all INSET provision, regardless of the form in which it is presented and its content, is a good thing. But little is often known about the impact which provision has on the institutions involved and the effectiveness of individual teachers. The TTA has hinted that in future an assessment of the impact on practice of CPD will be one of the criterion for the funding of INSET programmes.

Does provision really improve a teacher's performance and does it have any effect in terms of the institution's practice or of pupils' subsequent progress? In addition, is one method of delivering INSET more effective in terms of impact than another? Therefore, a second area where future research is needed is in relation to evaluating the impact of INSET. One could, for example, focus a study on CPD for educational management and leadership. The NPQH can be completed in two ways. A student can take the NPQH modules through supported open learning with the Open University or at one of 11 Regional Training and Development Centres. To what extent, though, does each route prepare participants for preferment? Which route gives the greatest encouragement to students to seek promotion? In addition, which method has the most beneficial impact upon recipients' personal and professional understanding and capacity to function as a headteacher? Undertaking research which would address these questions would be particularly important in light of the present shortage of head teachers. These, then, are two areas where further research on INSET would be useful. It is clear that the profile of INSET has been raised and it is likely that it will no longer be regarded as a 'Cinderella' (Burgess *et al*, 1993) subject by educational researchers. The attention paid to INSET is set to increase dramatically by the end of the twentieth century and, therefore, the importance of this study is self-evident.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE: KEY PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR INSET IN THE LEA.

ROLE OF THE KEY PERSON :

- (a) How would you describe your role as _____? **(role)**
- (b) What are your responsibilities in relation to this role?
- (c) To whom are you accountable in terms of the managerial structure within the LEA INSET organisation? **(control/accountability)**
- (d) Are there any individuals or groups who are accountable to you? If so, what is their role?
- (e) Which aspects of your role do you consider most important?
- (f) Which aspect of your role do you consider least important?
- (g) Do you deliver any INSET workshops/courses? (subject area)
- (h) Has your role as _____ changed in the last 5 years?
(If yes, in what way?) **(history/cultural change)**
- (i) Do you envisage that it will change in the next 5 years? (If so, in what way?)
(definition of the situation)
- (j) Which individuals or groups 'outside' the LEA do you liaise with?
(HE institutions, other LEAs, Regional INSET Network, individual INSET providers) **(communication)**

2) LEA INSET STRUCTURES for decision-making, communication (Groups, committees)?

(a) Who are the key people or groups involved in shaping the objectives which are set for INSET within the LEA? (officers, advisers, inspectors, headteachers, NUT and other teachers reps)

(organisation/communication)

(b) What is your role within the decision-making process? **(role-set)**

If there is an INSET group/committee- **(structure/organisation)**

(c) Who are the members of the INSET group/committee and what position within the LEA do they hold? **(commitment)**

(d) What role does the INSET group/committee play within the organisation of LEA INSET? **(role-set)**

(e) What aspect of this role do you consider the most important? **(culture)**

(f) What aspect of this role do you consider the least important?

(g) How long has the INSET group/committee been in operation?

(h) Who decided that an INSET group/committee was required?

(i) Why was it considered important to form an INSET group/committee?
(culture/history)

(PROBE if dual roles : Do you ever experience tension in your role in relation to the dual commitment of being_____ and a member of the INSET group? Can you give an example?)

3. OBJECTIVES

(a) Does the LEA have stated objectives in relation to INSET? (PROBE : Do you have a policy for INSET? Obtain a copy if possible) **(objectives/culture)**

(b) What is the main priority of the INSET which the LEA provides?

(c) Have the priorities changed significantly over the last 5 years?
(If they have ascertain how and why) **(commitment/value changes/history)**

(d) Do you have any documentation on this?

(e) What process is there for evaluating the INSET which is undertaken?
(organisation/communication)

(f) How do you measure whether the objectives for INSET are being achieved? (PROBE : LEA provision, school-based, externally provided INSET)

(g) In what ways do you see the LEAs objectives in terms of INSET changing over the next 5 years? **(objectives/organisational and cultural changes)**

4. FINANCIAL ISSUES

(a) Do you have any documentation relating to the LEAs funding of INSET?
(For LEA priorities, any Teachers' Centre, GEST and its distribution to schools etc.) **(commitment)**

(b) What are the sources of LEA INSET funding? (GEST, schools 'buy back', central LEA budget)

(c) Do you have any LEA advisers/inspectors? (PROBE : What is the source of their funding?) **(capacity/size)**

(d) Are they involved in OFSTED inspection work? (PROBE : How much of this ?)
(commitment)

(e) Does the resourcing of the LEA INSET organisation depend on the willingness of schools to purchase LEA expertise? (PROBE : What proportion of the budget is raised in this way?) **(financial organisation)**

(e) What arrangements (formula) exist for the distribution of GEST funding between schools in the borough?

(f) Are there any other sources of funding which you can identified which have not already been mentioned? **(capacity)**

5. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

- (a) How long have you worked in _____?
- (b) How long have you held the post of _____?
- (c) Why were you originally interested in applying for the post of _____?
- (d) What positions have you previously held in _____? **(socialisation)**
- (e) What were the reasons for your changing position?
- (f) Where were you employed before you came to _____?
(In what capacity?) **(frame of reference)**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- (a) Do you mind telling me how old you are?
- (b) Do you mind also telling me what were your original academic/professional qualifications? (BA, Teachers Cert etc)
- (c) Have you obtained any further qualifications? **(commitment)**
- (d) How do you measure your success in the post of _____?
- (e) Where do see your future career path leading?

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME YOUR TIME AND HELP IN THIS WAY.

APPENDIX 2

AN EXAMPLE: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH THE SENIOR ADVISER FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT, HOBBITON LEA (17:7:96).

Role of the key person :

R: Right. Well I came into the LEA in 1990 as a general adviser with responsibility for staff development. I've got a lot of different functions. But my two major ones, I guess, are the general advisory role and that for staff development. The latter has expanded quite a bit over the five and a half years from a fairly defined limited area of stuff for training when I first came in but now I'm actually responsible, well the chief adviser is optionally, but I am actually responsible for staff development and training for all staff in the LEA.

I: Which groups does that include, teachers and who else?

R: Well I've sort of got general oversight of the programme which we offer to schools. I'm responsible, I suppose if you want to start with the money end of it really, I'm the one who actually negotiates the oversight of the programme that we offer. I'm specifically responsible for bits within that, including appraisal and management courses. I'm also now wholly responsible for the Professional Development Centre (PDC). That has never been my formal management responsibility. It has done since the person who ran the PDC retired three years ago. I took on some of his functions then. I was responsible for it jointly with someone else who left the LEA. He was not replaced so now I have the whole responsibility for the centre. When I came here we had 17 full-time advisers, we now have nine.

I: When did you join [Hobbiton]?

R: In January 1990. The advisory team halved in my first two years in the job. It went from 17 to nine.

I: What were the main reasons for that?

R: Purely financial. They mostly went on early retirement deals, but it was purely financial. Teacher advisers, they've been desimated.

I: Well can I come onto that. First, can I just ask what your responsibility is in relation to identifying schools' INSET needs?

R: Well I suppose I manage that process. There are four mechanisms really. The main one ought to be their school development plan. One of my colleagues analysis these. It ought to be these but they are not always as explicit as we would like. I have to say that that is the main way in which we get the needs through, it should be anyway. Another mechanism we have are meetings with school staff. A lot of the identification of subject specific support comes through this network. We also have a group that I'll probably refer to a number of times, the schools management group. They actually monitor our provision and therefore they actually play an increasingly large part in defining our provision. And the fourth mechanism is the GEST seminars which we have every term.

I: To whom are you accountable in terms of the managerial structure within the LEA INSET organisation?

R: Well I'm accountable to the chief adviser. It's a fairly flat structure here.

I: How often do you actually meet with the chief adviser?

R: Formally. We meet as an advisory team every three weeks.

I: How often do you speak with the chief adviser on INSET related matters.

R: To a very large extent the chief adviser lets me get on with it. But we are next door office wise. So we often have informal chats. We have a formal meeting for the two seniors and the chief. So there is a formal structure there but really I'm delegated fairly full power.

I: Are there any individuals or groups who are accountable to you? If so, what is their role?

R: Right. Well there are some people who are directly line-managed and there are a lot of people who are accountable in staff development terms. In one sense you could say that all advisers, consultants, both full and part time, are accountable to me for the training they offer. But they are not necessarily line-managed to me. The part-time advisers are actually line-managed to me. and the PDC staff are now, the staff at the centre since June are directly accountable to me.

I: What form does that accountability take.? In terms of the PDC staff, for example.

R: The PDC staff. Well I'm actually there most days. An administrator is actually in charge of the place on a day-to-day basis. There are not many days go by without she or I talking together.

I: What about the advisers?

R: Well we have nine full-time advisers and we also have about 10 part-time advisers, who work one day a week on the whole. Each of the part-time staff and all of the consultants are actually line-managed by a full-time adviser. So obviously the Maths consultant, he is responsible to me for the staff development and training, if you like.

I: But what form does this accountability take? Do they have to write reports for you, for example?

R: Well in two ways in terms of training. The first is through compiling the guide. So I can see what is being provided for next term. Secondly through the feed back forms. I get a termly summary form of these. As I said we have advisory meetings once a month. I also have about two or three meetings a year when we have the whole team together and I can actually thrash out training specific issues. We would probably talk about those in full-time advisory meeting as well but not always.

I: Which aspects of your staff development role do you consider most important?

R: I think it's become managing the training side to be honest. Because with the delegation of the GEST funding in 1993 and the setting up of our service level agreements for that. Since then the biggest part of the job has been managing that. In one way it's been quite easy because most of our schools are very supportive and positive about what were doing. It's most important in the sense that if I was not successful in doing that nothing much else would happen we wouldn't be here. So yes I think it is the most important.

I: Do you provide any INSET provision?

R: Yes I run the management development programme. I do other bits and

pieces here and there but that is the main part which I run. It's evaluated by [a local] University, it's the first stage of a Masters. It's been a huge undertaking. It's my main in-service role.

I: Has your role as Senior Adviser SDT changed in the last 5 years?
(If yes, in what way?)

R: Yes, I think that it has shifted. It partly changed because of becoming a senior and that had implications. But I think it has shifted. I would have to hold my hands up and say that I spend less time physically in the schools. The reality is that there is so much more to actually organise, like the centre. Organising the central training programme is very time consuming.

I: Which individuals or groups 'outside' the LEA do you liaise with?
(HE institutions, other LEAs, Regional INSET Network, individual INSET providers) I note that you have links with some universities.

JR: With [a local] University, Poly as it used to be. That has always been our strongest link. They accredit our management programme, and they accredit our special needs training, that's for both teachers and classroom assistants. [See GEST categories 1996-97] [The] University also provides an accreditation scheme that can cover all other training that we have. We buy into that scheme along with most [local] LEAs. That provides an accreditation umbrella for any of the training which any teacher does.

I: Who initiated this partnership. Whose idea was it?

R: It was the [local] university's idea in that they tried to sell it to us. We put it to the schools, we asked do you think this is a good idea. They wanted to pay for it because it costs a £1,000 a year and we added that onto the cost of their service agreements. So those schools that buy into the service agreements, also buy into the accreditation. I mean it only works out at an average of ten pounds a school. So it's not very expensive. The up-take has not been enormous, in fact it has been a little disappointing. But it's there if people want to make use of it. In cost terms it's not a bad deal really. Basically I think if people want to be able to build towards a Masters degree, or simply want to get some certification, then that seems to be perfectly right and proper. Where it has become very appealing to some schools is in those schools which are pursuing IIP. This requires

some evidence of accreditation opportunities and this scheme provides it.

I: Why do you think up-take has been disappointing? In the past, after all, one of the criticisms by teachers of LEA INSET was that it was not accredited.

R: It may be that we have not cracked how to make staff aware of it. It is available for all staff, not just teaching staff. Indeed, in some ways its been more attractive to non-teaching staff. It may be publicity. It may be that not a lot of teachers are actually that career concious. I don't know. But as far as I'm concerned it's worth our while actually offering the opportunity.

I: I'm going to come onto the financial side, but could you just say how much of the overall LEA budget gets devolved.

R: From the whole budget quite a lot. It's about 93 per cent so we are well over the 85 per cent figure. But the schools in this authority repeatedly say they don't want any more delegation. [The previous CEO] would have delegated 100 per cent.

Objectives

I: Does the LEA have stated objectives in relation to INSET? (PROBE : Do you have a policy for INSET? Obtain a copy if possible)

R: The authority has a mission statement. We have a policy statement for schools. We've almost got a policy statement for all staff. The two policy statements are not very dis-similar from one another. But they are slightly different in that one of them is the statement of our policy about how we will work with schools in terms of staff development and the other one is a statement of how we will work with all staff. So the latter is more about central staff really. So there is a lot of overlap between the two of them but they are slightly different policies. You're quite welcome to copies. the school one we drew up a year ago but the other has not yet gone to committee so it's still in draft form.

I: Where did the push to draw-up these statements up come from?

R: I suppose from me. The LEA one came about because I think, rightly or wrongly, central staff are feeling a bit neglected in all this. In terms of

the schools policy. Well we had a schools policy dated about 1987 and it was so out of date. It was important to have a policy as that is a way that people judge you. I mean we say to schools that you should have a policy.

I: What do you think is the main objective for INSET within the LEA?

R: That is an interesting question. I think it moves.

I: So it's changed over the last few years?

R: Yes. I think it was at one time, and still is to some degree, a management and assessment thing. That has been a major in-service focus. Certainly it was management driven. Now I think, I mean one of the objectives in our training, in our development plan, is that we are focussed on the correct things. I think one of my slight concerns was that we had done a lot of work on planning, on schemes of work, on management and assessment, all of which, if you're not careful can be round the outside. You are not actually getting at the heart of the classroom. I'm not sure that we were not but I felt we needed to remind ourselves that we should be concentrating on that. So, I shall be pushing that with curriculum area people to make sure that their in-service is actually focused on teaching and learning. Does that make sense?

I: Yes in relation to the actual focus of the LEAs INSET. But is there, for example, the wider objective of raising standards.

R: Well yes ultimately it has to be. There are three major objectives. The first is raising standards. On the way to that it has to be about staff moral. That is the second objective for me. Then, thirdly, a high level objective has to be about selling what we deliver. If we don't then we are not going to achieve either of those first two goals. But they are all interdependent. If what we are giving does not seem to them at least to be about raising pupil standards then they are not going to buy it. But, I think, raising learning opportunities is the main objective. I mean that is why we are here. The third one has become much more up-front in recent years. I mean five years ago selling ourselves was not an issue as the LEA held the money. I actually have no problem with the fact that we have to sell. In many ways I really really generally welcome that because that means that if we are not meeting the first two objectives then we don't

deserve to survive. I'm quite happy about that. I have to say that a lot of the training in the past, I don't think in this authority so much, was pretty ill-focused. It did depend on the adviser simply saying, it would be nice to run a course. We can not afford that indulgence any more.

I: In the past did [Hobbiton] actually experiment with delegating funds before requirements to do so?

R: Not in terms of staff development. It was centrally controlled.

I: Ok. I've seen the form for evaluating in-service. Is that given to teachers directly after a course?

R: It's supposed to be given to them at the end of every course.

I: How long do they have to return it?

R: We ask them to do it straight away. It's a happy hour form. We don't pretend it's evaluation, it's instant feedback.

I: What other mechanisms are used for evaluating your INSET?

R: Not many. I have to be honest. Once again that is one of the things on our development plan to try to look at some things which we could do to evaluate impact. It's very difficult. It's a very skilled job. It's a very time consuming job and we have not got anybody to do it.

I: But your advisers obviously go out into schools.

R: Yes, at an informal level you get that kind of feedback. But I can't say that we do much in the way of formal full-blooded evaluation. We did up until 1992.

I: What did that involve?

R: Well we had an INSET evaluator then. She did a major evaluation, for example, on the management programme when we first set it up which was very valuable. In that particular instance she went through the course with the group, she devised evaluation sheets on each

module, and afterwards she went and interviewed their heads. That was quite a big job.

I: Do you have a systematic visiting programme here? Does each adviser have a group of schools which they are allocated to?

R: Yes we all do. The number of visits varies enormously. I mean we don't have an official figure of commitment. The current notional figure was three times a term.

I: Do you still inspect your own schools on top of OFSTED inspections?

R: No. We don't inspect our own schools at all. We do a decreasing amount of OFSTED work. We started off doing quite a lot when OFSTED first came into being. Though still nothing like as much as some other authorities were doing. We gave up tendering for secondary contracts over a year ago, because we were not winning any and it was a waste of time. So the chair of education agreed. We still work for other LEA teams on OFSTED contracts. I've just done one with another authority too. We [advisers] do four inspections a year in this way. We did do six at one point. We do them for two reasons. One is to recoup some money that the Government nicked off the LEA. But, the education committee here is very generous to us in a sense, we have a low income figure to generate compared with many other authorities. We also do it for the experience so that we can give feedback to our own schools. I mean we do a lot of pre-OFSTED training and the street creed for that is that you are an inspector and you know the system.

LEA INSET structures for decision-making, communication (groups, committees)?

I: Who are the key people or groups involved in shaping the objectives which are set for INSET within the LEA? (officers, advisers, inspectors, headteachers, NUT and other teachers reps)

R: I mean in terms of sort of committee structure we've got an overall management team for staff development which the deputy chief education officer chairs. I am on that and it kind of sets the parameters really. It deals with GEST bids and things like that. That is strictly an internal

management. Then there is the schools management group which has nine teachers on it. When we set the budget at the beginning of the year, the budget for staff development, and when we know how much money we've got in buy-back from the schools, which is the major source of income, part of the budget, a set figure, is then at the disposal of the schools management group. It's not an enormous figure. I guess it's somewhere in the region of £30,000 to £40,000. So say the Maths adviser wants to buy in somebody to do some maths training he would go to them. They also, more broadly, oversee the overall provision of training. I would see them as my main consultation group as to whether we are providing what they want. They meet about twice a term.

I: What is your role within the decision-making process? You are a member of the senior internal management group and the schools' management group?

R: Yes but I have to request funding from the latter the same as anyone else.

I: So does the schools management group actually shape the direction of policy for INSET within the authority would you say?

R: Well they do in a sense. They don't totally. We do work on the basis of well he's responsible for maths so he knows his job. So the maths adviser decides what he's going to offer in maths. But, if he wants additional money to go and buy additional people in then he has to go and ask for that and say why he wants it and what he wants it for. They will not normally say no as they trust his judgement. They can do. And equally they could say we think you are not providing x or y in maths. Why not? So they have that ability to do that but by and large the relationship works on the basis of trust I think.

I: And the money they have control over is all gathered in through the buy back arrangements for GEST?

R: All the money they have control over comes from the schools buy back, so it's GEST grant one money.

I: So it's not money from central LEA sources?

R: They don't control the LEA bit of it. Do you want me to explain the

staff development budget at that point?

I: I'm just about to come onto financial issues, so, yes please.

R: Since 1993 our funding, for staff development and training, has been made up of round about a third of LEA money. The advisory service as a whole remains funded centrally by the LEA. The staff development and training budget which covers all the consultants and the PDC, all PDC costs, the training costs, is about one third funded by LEA funds and about two thirds by income. Most of the income generated comes through our own schools. So most of the money now is coming from schools buying our services out of their GEST budget. Every year there is a bit less LEA money in. The advisory service though is completely separate. We are funded, we are not part of any kind of buy back arrangements.

I: You mentioned that the CEO would have delegated all the advisory service money to schools.

R: The chief has offered to delegate our budget to schools. I guess people got a bit of the jitters when they realised that they had a CEO who wanted to do this, or was prepared to offer that sort of delegation. At the end of the day the schools said no we would rather have the service.

I: Would the elected members have actually welcomed the delegating of the advisory budget?

R: Well I think it's changed again now, has it not. I think now there is more emphasis on support from the LEAs to schools. I'm not actually sure whether the LEA could in reality delegate its advisory budget. If the schools didn't buy back in I don't know how the LEA could fulfill its statutory responsibilities. I may be rash, and I may be wrong, but I think it's highly unlikely that a local authority could actually fully delegate its advisory service. Some group would have to be responsible for monitoring quality in schools. If the LEA is not going to do that then I would love to know who is.

I: Just returning, briefly, to the schools management group. What aspect of their role do you consider the most important?

R: I think the most important function is in helping us to make sure our provision is up to scratch. They are our regular touch stone. A member of the group also sits on the overall management group for staff development. He sits on the highest decision-making level if you like. For me that is the most important part because I've always argued that whether or not schools actually trust my judgement, they've elected those people and they will trust theirs.

I: Who actually decided that this group was necessary?

R: I did.

I: Did you have to go through the elected members to do so?

R: No, but can I just say that the money that they have responsibility for is buy back money. So it is their own money. They are not allocating the LEAs money.

I: How long has it been in operation?

R: Four years.

I: OK. But why did you consider it important four years ago to set it up?

R: I mean I suppose it was a hunch at the time, but I now think it is one of the best decisions I ever made. My feeling at the time was that if we were going to be reliant on schools money to run the service then we have got to be seen putting schools representatives in a position of measuring how we do that. They have got to have a hands on quality control mechanism if you like. A monitoring function any way.

I: Do you think that schools would have refused to buy back if they had not got this type of representation?

R: I don't know if they would have refused but it might have been harder. It would have been more difficult. I suppose the other enormously important side of it is that because we do go through with them why we make the global decisions, there is greater understanding on the schools part about

why we are doing what we are doing. I think that is important too. There was always a lot of behind closed doors about LEAs money before. I've tried to work on the basis of a totally open budget. I've tried to say here is all the money on the table. I really believe that that openness has paid off. So there are no hidden pots.

Financial issues

[SEE ANSWERS GIVEN ABOVE IN SECTION 3]

I: You have four service-level agreements this year. Have you had any others in the past?

R: We've had others. But the main one is the first one obviously. We have 4 agreements this year. We could roll it all up into one but I think, in the end, it's fairer to offer the schools a degree of shopping lists. There are some schools who buy into the smaller ones and don't buy into the big packet. There are some schools who buy into all of them apart from the governor one. We decide to offer an agreement with schools for some GEST grants with a training implication.

I: The actual professional development centre, how is that funded?

R: In terms of the building and the staff who work in the building it's the split funding. It's budget comes from LEA funding and largely out of generating its own income. It sells places on courses, rents rooms out, and does a lot of printing. So there is a lot of income through that. We have a technology centre within it which also generates a lot of income.

I: It's a professional development centre, was it designated as a teachers' centre before that?

R: It was not. There was a teachers' centre before but it was somewhere else. What happened was, when I first came to [Hobbiton] in 1986, all the consultants, a huge number of these teacher advisers, and all the support services were moved on the instruction of the old chief adviser to the present PDC. It was an enormous operation. Come 1992 with the cuts it came right down now to a very small building. It's now far smaller than it was. So we only occupy a small part of the centre now, but when I first started in the job

we had the whole centre.

I: Are the courses which you offer to schools based at the PDC?

R: The great majority are. Almost all.

I: Do other directorates from the authority use it?

R: Yes from time-to-time. Outside private people do use it too but not a lot because we don't have a lot of rooms and it is very busy. We have a lot of vacant space in the holidays of course. Some weekends it is used. But what we don't have is catering facilities.

I: Are there any other sources of funding for LEA INSET provision which we have not talked about?

R: I don't think so. The great bulk of it comes through buy-back from schools. We get about £150,000 back through the service agreements.

I: Just to digress slightly. Do you think that the advisers work in schools is a developmental role?

R: Oh yes. The advisers don't actually spend a lot of their time training. I do more than most. When we do it can often be in the schools. The advisers are involved in providing the training but they are more involved in managing it.

I: So you have nine full-time advisers and ten part-time.

R: Yes.

I: Does that figure include advisers and advisory teachers?

R: No. We call all of those advisers although some of the part-timers are teachers. So I guess in a way the part-time advisers are what many would call teacher advisers. In most authorities they would have been known as teacher advisers, in [Hobbiton] they are known as consultants. There are not many of them left. They were never on secondments either. most teacher advisers in other authorities were on secondments.

I: So they've traditionally been called consultants in Hobbiton but they are really advisory teachers?

R: They are.

I: How many of them do you have left?

R: As of September we will have two full-time IT ones. We will have about six part-time.

I: Do they spend more time in schools than advisers?

R: Yes. They spend a lot of their time training and giving in-class support. They were originally seen as in-class support really but they now also do a lot of central training.

I: But the numbers have come down dramatically?

R: Yes, but that is another thing that I'm quite comfortable with really in a way. I mean you can say that on the one hand we are at risk of schools not buying back. If that was not the case we would be at risk of the LEA cutting. But if we are providing what the schools want then you could argue that we are safer than if we were LEA funded. I think there are some advantages in it actually.

I: How often does INSET come up as an issue on the education committee?

R: Not very often. We try and make sure that they are aware of what we do. So if councillors are at the PDC for one reason or another, we make sure that they know we are running out of money. But it is not something which features on the political debate.

I: Has the PDC been under any threat? You mentioned that the LEAs contribution to the staff development budget was reducing annually.

R: Not explicitly under threat but I think people have felt very insecure there. As the service contracted we evacuated most of the buildings on site. The site is now secure but at one point we were almost the only occupant on the site. To my knowledge nobody has ever explicitly explored idea of closing it down.

I: How supportive are schools in relation to the centre?

R: I think now they are very supportive. I think five or six years ago there was a mixture of being very appreciative because they had got a lot of good things but they were very critical about the size of the operation as well.

I: How many outside providers do you use for INSET?

R: Not a lot. We mainly use them for management training and they are people who I know are good quality.

I: Just one thing I meant to ask earlier. Is [Hobbiton] a member of any group of LEAs, any network.

R: There was a regional network for about five years. We have, from this, continued a sort of self-help group called RIG, Regional INSET Group. It's very informal and we take it in turns to chair. But it is useful to find out things and it gives some peer support.

I: Do you disseminate your course booklet to these LEAs?

R: We have some schemes, as you may have seen in the documentation on service agreements, with one or two authorities. We have a very thriving scheme whereby we offer each other reductions. Teachers from [Hobbiton] can go to [a neighbouring LEA's] courses for a discount. What is more important, I think, is that there are good working relationships between us and these other authorities and so, for example, we have advisers from them who work in this authority. This is important and is a bonus in such small authorities like ours. There are several curriculum areas where there are good working relationships existing.

I: When you did OFSTED was there any agreement not to bid in certain authorities?

R: We used to have an agreement in the west of the North West, around Merseyside and Lancashire. They worked together for a while. I mean we still operate very well with some other authorities but with some it's gone the other way.

Previous experience

I: How long have you worked in [Hobbiton]?

R: I came to [Hobbiton] as a deputy head in 1986.

I: How long have you held the post of Senior Adviser SDT?

R: I've been a senior adviser since Easter 92, although I was a adviser for staff development from 1990.

I: Why were you originally interested in applying for the post of adviser for staff development in 1990?

R: That is interesting. I was not particularly interested in becoming an adviser. But I had got particularly interested in staff development. That dates back to the late 1970s when I was the head of English. A local adviser there set up a branch of the National Association for Teaching English. I was the first chair. From that I used to do INSET sessions. After that when I became deputy head I was responsible for staff development. Then I thought I could have a go at being an adviser.

I: So you became an English adviser?

R: No I was staff development adviser from the beginning. The job I applied for was staff development. I wouldn't have applied for English adviser. At the end of 89 when I left school, the job I got was general adviser, main responsibility staff development. In April 92 when the authority shed loads of staff I got the senior job which didn't, at that time, change my staff development role much. That didn't make much difference to that. It gave me other things to do but it didn't change that much. When the staff development job changed dramatically was in 93 really. A number of things happened. One was when the guy I worked with who was in charge of the PDC went. The other thing was the money being compulsorily devolved. Both of those things happened almost simultaneously. Those were the two things which changed my job.

I: So you were a teacher first.

R: Yes I started my teaching career in Hampshire, then I came to Manchester,

a dramatic cultural change from a grammar school in Hampshire to a school in Moss Side in 1970. Then I spent a long time in Rochdale before coming to [Hobbiton].

Background information

I: Do you mind telling me how old you are?

R: Not at all. I'm 52.

I: Do you mind also telling me what were your original academic/professional qualifications? (BA, Teachers Cert etc)

R: A degree from Southampton University. I then went back to Southampton after I'd been teaching for six years and did an M Ed.

I: Have you obtained any further qualifications?

R: I was seconded to Norwich University in 1980 to do a diploma which was English specific.

I: How do you measure your success in the post of Senior Adviser for Staff Development and Training?

R: I suppose going back to the objectives and turning them on their head really. First of all I would have to say that the fact that we are still going is important. Secondly I think that it matters a lot to me that schools not only buy in but say increasingly frequently that they buy in no longer out of loyalty. I mean the first year they bought in out of loyalty but now its because they value our service. There are all sorts of other measures. I mean I do use the feed back forms as a measure too, of customer satisfaction.

I: Where do see your future career path leading?

R: Nowhere much I don't think. I don't see promotion as an option anymore. I'm in the job that I want to do. I'm not sure which direction I would go in any way. I think the option is how long I will decide to continue in this job for. There is a political perspective on that. The result of the general election may determine my future. Although I'm not sure if the result will have that greater

impact on our work. But it will change the ground rules. I believe in LEAs. I don't think LEAs have always been brilliant and always done the job well. But I actually believe in the concept of a local accountability.

I: That's why I pursued the point about the schools management committee having control of some of the budget for staff training.

R: Yes it's interesting that. It's a delicate balance, isn't it, between, it brings up the whole question about the balance between schools self-determination and the fact that local council tax payers put their money in. Now I think it's right that there is a balance of those two things. I think it's right that schools do have significantly more control over the way that schools spend their money. But I equally think it's right that there should be local elected organisation. Their ultimate responsibility should be to monitor the quality of what those schools provide. And that is what is missing from the GM situation. Yet that is not to do with the training side of it. I don't mind the training side of it being almost kind of privatised, although we are not privatised as we are still with the LEA. I don't mind the fact that we have to sell that.

I: I've asked more or less everything which I wanted to ask. Can I just clear up one or two points before we end.

R: No go ahead.

I: Do you think the authority has any gaps in advisory cover?

R: We have not got gaps as such, we don't think. We did have for a time after the first round of cuts. We have an insufficiency of time. That is more acute in some areas than others. We have every curriculum area covered by somebody but a lot of those areas are only covered by somebody who works for two days. Even where we have a full-time person they have not got sufficient time.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME YOUR TIME AND HELP IN THIS WAY.

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL INSET CO-ORDINATORS

1) School Characteristics

1(a) Name of school: _____

1(b) Type of school (Comprehensive, Grammar etc) _____

1(c) LEA-Maintained or Grant-Maintained?: _____

1(d) Co-educational (**PLEASE CIRCLE**): YES NO

1(e) Number of full-time teaching staff: _____

1(f) Number of part-time teaching staff: _____

1(g) Number of pupils attending the school: _____

1(h) Age range of pupils at the school: _____
(11-19 YRS, 4-11 YRS, etc)

2) School INSET organisation (PLEASE CIRCLE)

2(a) Does the school have a person with the role of INSET co-ordinator?: YES NO

IF NO GO TO QUESTION 2(e)

2(b) Does this person receive any funding in relation to their responsibilities as INSET co-ordinator?: YES NO

2(c) What is the post of the INSET co-ordinator in the school? (Headteacher, Deputy Head, Head Of Dept): _____

2(d) Does the INSET co-ordinator also have a teaching responsibility? YES NO

2(e) If the school has nobody with the title INSET Co-ordinator, who is responsible for INSET? (Head, Deputy, Head of Dept) _____

2(e) Does the school have an INSET committee? YES NO

IF NO GO TO QUESTION 3(a)

2(f) How many members does the INSET committee have? _____

2(g) What range of positions within the school do members of the INSET committee hold? (Head, Deputy Head, Department Head etc)

Please specify below:

3) Use made by the school of LEA INSET provision

3a) Indicate the percentage of external INSET provision (ie. based at a teachers' centre, residential centre, hotel, etc.) attended by teachers from the school which is delivered by the LEA. **(PLEASE TICK BOX)**

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3b) Indicate the percentage of external INSET provision (ie. away from the school premises) attended by teachers from the school which is not delivered by the LEA but by universities, educational consultants)

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3(c) Has this situation changed over the last five years? **(PLEASE CIRCLE)** YES NO

If yes, please give reasons for change below:

3d) Indicate the percentage of school-based INSET (provided on school premises) which is provided by the LEA. **(PLEASE TICK BOX)**

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3e) Indicate the percentage of school-based INSET (ie.on school premises) which is provided by other organisations such as universities or educational consultants.

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3f) Indicate the percentage of school-based INSET (ie. on the school premises) which is delivered by staff from the school itself.

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3(g) Have teachers from the school been involved in external INSET (delivered away from the school premises) provided by an LEA from outside the local area? **(PLEASE CIRCLE)**

YES NO

3(h) Has an LEA from outside the local area delivered any school-based INSET?

YES NO

3(i) Is there a service level agreement operating between the school and the local LEA in relation to the provision of INSET?

YES NO

If yes, please give details below:

To what extent would you agree, disagree or have no view about the following statements? (**PLEASE TICK BOX**)

3j) The LEA should continue to provide INSET

agree strongly	agree	no view	disagree	disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3k) The LEA works in partnership with schools to plan INSET provision.

agree strongly	agree	no view	disagree	disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3l) The LEA works in partnership with schools to deliver INSET provision.

agree strongly	agree	no view	disagree	disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3m) The quality of LEA INSET has deteriorated over the last 5 years.

agree strongly	agree	no view	disagree	disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>				

4) Reasons for using LEA INSET provision?

How important are the following? (**PLEASE TICK BOX**)

4a) Knowing the LEA Adivers and personnel who provide INSET

Very Important	Important	Of some Importance	Not Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4b) The LEA gives value for money.

Very Important	Important	Of some Importance	Not Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4c) The LEA has expertise in specific areas.

Very Important	Important	Of some Importance	Not Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4d) Teachers like to share INSET with colleagues from other schools.

Very Important	Important	Of some Importance	Not Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (PLEASE SPECIFY BELOW):

5) Identification of school INSET needs by the LEA

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following views?
(PLEASE TICK BOX)

5a) The LEA pays more attention to identifying the INSET needs of the schools in the authority than it did five years ago.

agree strongly	agree	no view	disagree	disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>				

5b) The provision offered in the LEA INSET booklet is more responsive to schools INSET needs than it was 5 years ago.

agree strongly	agree	no view	disagree	disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>				

5c) Induction provision offered by the LEA for newly qualified teachers is adequate in relation to their training needs.

agree strongly	agree	no view	disagree	disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>				

6) Co-operation with other schools

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following view?
(PLEASE TICK BOX)

6a) There is more co-operation between schools in the authority with regard to the organisation and provision of INSET than there was 5 years ago.

agree strongly	agree	no view	disagree	disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>				

6(b) Is your school involved in a consortia of schools which organise and deliver INSET provision?:

YES

NO

If yes, please give details below:

Please return the completed questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope by **Friday February 28th 1997** to:

**Donald Simpson
School of Education,
Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes,
Buckinghamshire,
MK7 6AA.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND HELP IN THIS WAY.

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