

Human resource management in English local government.

LOWE, Martyn.

Available from the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19982/

A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

Please visit http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19982/ and http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html for further details about copyright and re-use permissions.

CITY CAMPIUS, HOWARD STREET SHEFFIELD S1 1WB

101 715 585 2

REFERENCE

Fines are charged at 50p per hour

2 2 AUG 2003

4 08pm

1 5 MAY 2004

5.00 pm.

17 JUN 2004 Spx

23 All 2004 4.48pm

2 8 JUL 2006

Spen

0 9 MAY 2007

1-26pm 29 JUL 2008 Spm

ProQuest Number: 10697289

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10697289

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

I recognist undertaktopy of the author.	stion for Research or Private study for Non Cos see that the copyright in this thesis belongs to the see not to publish either the whole or any part of it see whole or any substantial part of it, without the see that making quotations from unpublished work or criticism or review' is not permissible.	author. , or make a consent of the
Purposes I recognis I undertak copy of th I recognis dealing fo	tion for Research or Private study for Comments e that the copyright in this thesis belongs to the act on to publish either the whole or any part of it e whole or any part of it, without the consent of the that making quotations from unpublished worker criticism or review' is not permissible. consulting this thesis are required to complete the sign to show they recognise the copyright declar	author. , or make a he author. s under 'fair
Date	Name and Institution /Organisation (in block letters)	Signature
-		
	,	

Sheffield Hallam University

Title/Thesis Number:

Copyright Declaration

Author:

Degree:

Year:

Human Resource Management in English Local Government

Martyn Lowe

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Sheffield Hallam University, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2002



* * . :.*

;;. ·

> **3** •

ADSETTS C

Abstract

This thesis analyses Human Resource Management (H.R.M) in English local government. The research shows how H.R.M in local authorities has been influenced by the development of New Public Management (N.P.M) that has adopted some but not all of the characteristics of H.R.M. N.P.M and H.R.M appear to have important differences arising from the unique nature of local government culture, organisation and structure. These differences were found in this study to prevent the full implementation of a strategic and effective form of H.R.M.

As a result of these differences local government in England has developed a hybrid form of H.R.M suitable to the particular to the needs of local authorities.

The study presents evidence that some cultural change has occurred in local authorities under H.R.M, particularly in the structure of organisations, and in the relationship between HR staff and managers. However, the inability of local authorities to overcome specific barriers to H.R.M means that the contribution H.R.M might make to the organisational performance of local councils is still unknown.

These barriers are the inability of councils to produce integrated business and H.R strategies; underdevelopment of line managers; incomplete processes of devolution and decentralisation of HR responsibilities and issues arising from the political nature of local authorities.

Acknowledgements

This study has been undertaken over more than four years, during which time many changes have occurred in the lives of those participating in its creation and development. I am grateful to my family and friends for their support and understanding during this time. I am also grateful to my supervisors, Dave Morris and Bob Haigh for their endurance and encouragement. Similarly, I am indebted to those many HR professionals throughout local government, many who I have come to know quite well, for their much valued comments, opinions, perceptions and remarks over the years. The study involved over 60 hours of interviews during the two phases it passed through and the co-operation, hospitality and patience of those primary and secondary contacts is very much appreciated. I need also to thank the many friends and colleagues in local government who assisted me in the construction of the questionnaire, interview schedule and requests for information as well as allowing me access to information, group meetings and public council papers which made this study possible.

Contents

	Page Number
Abstrac	xtii
Acknow	vledgementsiii
Conten	tsiv-xiii
List of	Figuresxiv-xv
List of	Tablesxvi-xix
Chaj	oter One – The Changing Face of Local Government People Managemen
1.0	Introduction1
1.1	Overview and Plan of the Thesis4
1.2	The Impact of Change on English Local Government
1.3	The Introduction of Managerialism in Local Government6
1.4	The Influence of the State as an Employer on Local Government H.R.M8
1.5	The Influence of State Economic Management on Local Government H.R.M
1.6	The New Right, Monetarism and its Influence on Local Government H.R.M9
1.7	Legislative Changes supporting the Introduction of Managerialism
1.8	The Conservative Approach to People Management in Local Government and the Introduction of Commercial Management and Organisational Structures
1.9	Commitment to the Public Service – An Employee Driven Culture11
1.10	Fragmentation of Local Government Structures12
1.11	Changing Local Government Culture – From Service to Commercial Orientation

1.12	The Effect on the Management and Organisation of Local Authorities Caused by C.C.T14
1.13	The 1990s Local Government Review – Change and Uncertainty
1.14	Modernisation and New Forms of Local Governance
1.15	Best Value and Human Resource Management19
1.16	Conclusion21
	Chapter Two – Human Resource Management – An Infinite Variety?
2.0	Introduction22
2.1	What is Human Resource Management?24
2.2	The Origins and Nature of Excellence and Human Resource Management
2.3	In Search of Excellence Argument26
2.4	Concern over the Excellence and H.R.M Argument28
2.5	The Concept of HR Strategy30
2.6	The Two Versions of H.R.M – Hard (Strategic) and Soft (Commitment Oriented) H.R.M
2.7	Different Organisational Cultures33
2.8	The Infinite Variety of H.R.M – Core Elements of H.R.M35
2.9	Different Types of Business Strategy – Different Types of H.R.M37
2.10	How Different Organisations Use Different Key Levers In their Version of H.R.M40
2.11	Devolved and Decentralised Management and Organisational Structures under a H.R.M System42
2.12	Union Responses to H.R.M46
2.13	Institutional Strategies and Collective Bargaining48

2.14	Line Managers within Devolved Structures – The Barriers to the Successful Implementation of H.R.M?
2.15	Models of H.R.M and Personnel Management52
2.16	Conclusion56
C	Chapter Three – Cultural Change in English Local Government – Public Administration to Public Management
3.0	Introduction58
3.1	Background to the Changing Management of Local Government
3.2	Public Administration as Management61
3.3	New Public Management and its Fit with Local Government63
3.4	The Traditional Management of Staff Employed in Local Government65
3.5	Corporate Management in Local Government66
3.6	Structural Change in Local Government – Types of Managerialism and H.R.M68
3.7	The Private Sector as the Model for the New Public Management70
3.8	The Emergence of New Public Management71
3.9	Two Versions of New Public Management73
3.10	Executive Management73
3.11	Market Management74
3.12	Compliance or Conflict – New Public Management and the Local Government Professions
3.13	Executive Style of New Public Management and Industrial Relations
3.14	Market Style of New Public Management and Industrial Relations

3.15	Devolution, Decentralisation and Cultural Management in Local Government
3.16	Decentralisation in Human Resource Management Structures82
3.17	Devolution in Human Resource Management Structures83
3.18	Conclusion - The Future of Local Government Structures85
Cha	apter Four – The Change from Traditional People Management to Human Resource Management in English Local Government
4.0	Introduction89
4.1	The Traditional Approach to People Management90
4.2	Origins and Development of H.R.M in Local Government92
4.3	Implementing Change
4.4	H.R.M and Industrial Relations in Local Government96
4.5	Changes in Collective Bargaining and Moves to Decentralise Industrial Relations in the 1980s
4.6	Functional Areas of Human Resource Management
4.7	Recruitment and Selection
4.8	Performance Management and Pay102
4.9	Reward Packages
4.10	Changes in Labour Utilisation
4.11	Management and Staff Development
4.12	The Importance of the Line Management Role106
4.13	Establishment Level Union Organisation
4.14	Equal Opportunities
4.15	Conclusion

Chapter Five – The Research Problem and the Methodology used in the Thesis

5.0	Introduction	109
5.1	The Research Problem	109
5.2	H.R.M Models	112
5.2.1	Descriptive Models	112
5.2.2	Analytical Models	113
5.2.3	Normative Models	113
5.2.4	Prescriptive Models	114
5.3	The Research Aims and Objectives	114
5.4	Identifying Specific Issues in Achieving the Research Objectives	117
5.5	The Choice of Research Tools	117
5.6	Advantages and Disadvantages of Surveys	118
5.7	Advantages and Disadvantages of Case Studies	120
5.8	Linking the Choice of Tool with the Research Objectives	120
5.9	Surveys, Sample Size and Sampling	121
5.9.1	Quantitative Research	121
5.9.2	Qualitative Research	122
5.10	Preventing Bias on the Sampling Frame	122
5.11	Response Rates and Bias from Non-Response	123
5.12	The Interview Process	124
5.12.1	The Pilot Study	124
5.12.2	The Focus Groups	125
5.12.3	The Main Semi-structured Interviews	125
5.12.4	The Interview Questionnaire	127
5.13	The Role of the Interview Questionnaire	127

5.14	Questionnaires
5.14.1	Planning the Use of the Survey and Interview Questionnaires
5.15	Collection of the Information, Checking the Reliability and Validity of the Information and Interpretation of the Results
5.16	Conclusion
	Chapter Six – The Findings of the Study and Analysis of the Results
6.0	Introduction
6.1.0	Demographic and Organisational Issues140
6.1.1	The Survey Population140
6.1.2	Organisational Issues141
6.2	Strategic Issues
6.3	Management Roles and Training147
6.4	Human Resource Management Support149
6.5	Questionnaire to Second and Third Tier Line Managers
6.6	Conclusion166
	Chapter Seven – The Local Government Model of H.R.M
7.0	Introduction167
7.1	The Development of the Local Government H.R.M Model167
7.2	The Differences between Ideal Models of H.R.M and H.R.M in Local Government – the Model of Local Government H.R.M
7.2.1	Time and Planning171
7.2.2	Employee Relations Perspective175

7.2.3	Preferred Structure Systems176
7.2.4	Rules within Local Government H.R.M
7.2.5	Supervisory Style of Local Government H.R.M179
7.2.6	Predominant Management Style180
7.2.7	Preferred Method of Staff Control182
7.2.8	Status, Authority and Pay Differentials with Nearest Subordinate184
7.2.9	Career Opportunities
7.2.10	Contracts of Employment187
7.2.11	Workplace Rules and H.R.M188
7.2.12	Guide to Management Action190
7.2.13	Managerial Tasks vis-à-vis Staff
7.2.14	Conflict within Local Government under H.R.M193
7.3	Conclusion – The Model of Ideal-type H.R.M and the Local Government
	Model195
C	hapter Eight - Local Government Structure and Culture under HRM – Decentralisation and Devolution
8	Introduction198
8.1	Definitions of Decentralisation and Devolution200
8.2	The Extent of Devolution
8.3	Devolution Across Different Functions
8.4	Devolution of the HR Budgets206
8.5	Attitudes of HR Staff to Devolution
8.6	Attitude of Line Managers to Devolution
8.7	Decentralisation in Local Authorities and the Role of HR Specialists212

8.8	Strategy or Service Delivery215
8.9	Typology of Decentralisation217
8.9.1	Decentralised Staff Located in Departments Managed by Heads of Department
8.9.2	Decentralised Staff Located in Departments Managed by Central HR
8.9.3	Decentralisation without Physical Relocation219
8.10	Conclusion
Ch	apter Nine – Human Resource Management in Local Government – The
	Effect of H.R.M on Local Government Employment
9.0	Introduction
9.1	Traditional Industrial Relations224
9.2	Changing Industrial Relations Structures in Local Government225
9.3	The Changing Employment Environment in Local Government228
9.4	Continuing Confrontation between Managers and Employees - New Public Management Attitudes to Employees
9.5	The Attitude of Employees and Unions to New Public Management232
9.6	Evidence of a New Industrial Relations in Local Government236
9.7	A Shared Understanding – Partnership in the Workplace237
9.8	The Future Role of Local Government Trades Unions in the New Industrial Relations
9.9	Conclusion

Chapter Ten – Strategic Involvement of H.R.M in Local Government – The Contribution of H.R.M to Business Strategy

10.0	Introduction244
10.1	Evidence of HR Strategy in Local Government245
10.2	The Integration of HR and Business Strategy in Local Government246
10.3	The Attraction of Strategic Involvement for the HR Function253
10.4	Influence on Strategic Involvement-Chief Officer Group Membership255
10.5	The Nature of Strategic Involvement for Line Managers257
10.6	Involving Line Managers in Strategy260
10.7	Impact of the External Environment on HR Strategy262
10.8	Conclusion
	Chapter Eleven – Line Management and Human Resource Specialists
11.0	Chapter Eleven – Line Management and Human Resource Specialists Introduction
11.0 11.1	
	Introduction
11.1	Introduction
11.1 11.2	Introduction
11.111.211.3	Introduction
11.1 11.2 11.3 11.4	Introduction
11.1 11.2 11.3 11.4 11.5	Introduction

Chapter Twelve - Overall Conclusion - The Future of H.R.M in Local

Government

12.0	Introduction
12.1	H.R.M as a Function of Size
12.2	Local Government H.R.M as a Hybrid289
12.3	Absence of Devolved Management291
12.4	Poor Line Management Training292
12.5	Underdevelopment of H.R.M Strategy and Poor Integration Of H.R.M in Strategic Planning
12.6	Negative Influence on H.R.M of Political Control295
12.7	Future Research295
	Appendices
1.	Appendix One - Postal Survey Questionnaire on H.R.M in Local Government
2.	Appendix Two - Semi-structured Interview Question Pro-forma
3.	Appendix Three -Follow up Interview Questionnaire

Bibliography

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.0	Assets of New Local Governance22
Figure 1.1	The Options for a New Council Structure24
Figure 3.0	Basic Characteristics of H.R.M69
Figure 3.1	Attributes of H.R.M73
Figure 3.2	Attributes of H.R.M Applied to Local Government74
Figure 3.3	Themes of H.R.M Philosophy and Integration
Figure 3.4	Main Features Associated with H.R.M in Organisations82
Figure 3.5	The Link Between H.R.M Strategy and Employee Behaviour87-88
Figure 3.6	Different Applications of Key Levers of H.R.M
Figure 3.7	Factors Affecting the Structure and Style of H.R.M93
Figure 3.8	The Difference in Management Responsibility under H.R.M and Personnel Management
Figure 3.9	The Differences Between the HRM and Personnel Function in Bureaucratic Organisations
Figure 3.10	A Model of H.R.M and Personnel Management103
Figure 3.11	Differences Between Personnel Management and H.R.M104
Figure 2.0	Change in Intergovernmental Relations 1960s to 1990s34
Figure 2.1	Changing Management Styles in the Public Sector38
Figure 2.2	Unique Characteristics of the Public Sector39
Figure 2.3	Local Government Similarities with the Private Sector40
Figure 2.4	Main Features of New Public Management45
Figure 2.5	Growing Similarity between Public and Private Sectors45
Figure 2.6	Impact of the Market Dimension of N.P.M on Local Government52

Figure 4.0	Recommendations for Improved Personnel Management109
Figure 4.1	Barriers to H.R.M in Local Government112
Figure 4.2	Influences on Centre/Line Allocation of H.R.M Functions113
Figure 4.3	The Search for Flexibility in Local Government Employment115
Figure 4.4	Reasons for Opting Out of National Agreements120
Figure 5.0	Representation of Different Types of Authority139
Figure 5.1	Advantages of Case Study and Advantages of Surveys142
Figure 5.2	Research Chronology
Figure 5.3	Survey Tactics for Four Design Tests
Figure 5.4	The Schedule of Semi-Structured Interviews161
Figure 11.0	Reasons for Devolution and/or Decentralisation276
Figure 12.0	Main Differences Between H.R.M and N.P.M285

LIST OF TABLES

Table 6.0	How would you best describe your organisation?140
Table 6.1	Local Government Organisation in England 1999140
Table 6.2	Would you say your organisation was single/multi-sited?141
Table 6.3	Would you describe the HR function in your organisation as?141
Table 6.4	Is your organisation managed from the centre, devolved or a combination?142
Table 6.5	Is the HR function represented at Chief Officers Management Team in your organisation?143
Table 6.6	Does your organisation have a HR strategy?143
Table 6.7	Is the HR strategy formulated centrally, by managers with devolved responsibilities or elsewhere?145
Table 6.8	Are your managers provided with a co-ordinated training/ development programme, including HRM as routine?148
Table 6.9	How effective are line managers in your organisation in operating personnel policies and procedures?148
Table 6.10	Where does your organisation employ its HR specialist staff?149
Table 6.11	Who is responsible for the industrial relations/employee relations aspects of HR policy being implemented?150
Table 6.12	What type of qualifications do the HR staff in your central HR function possess?
Table 6.13	HR functions performed by central HR, line managers and others
Table 6.14	Do you think that there has been a change in the skills needed to be a local authority manager or not?
Table 6.15	Have you been required to adopt a more flexible approach to working methods and hours of work for your staff?157
Table 6.16	Have you received training in HR management policies And procedures within your council?

Table 6.17	Have you needed to develop a broader range of HR knowledge and skills than prior to devolution?
Table 6.18	Is a broader range of management skills required in your Management role than prior to decentralisation?159
Table 6.19	Do you have a role in the development of your councils HR strategy?
Table 6.20	Is your relationship with central HR specialists mainly one of conflict (yes) or non-conflict (no)?
Table 6.21	From your experience do you believe that there is a difference between the work of managers in the private sector and those in local government?
Table 6.22	Do you work directly with trades union representatives yourself?162
Table 6.23	Size of council and service provision - effect on H.R.M163-164
Table 8.0	Is your organisation managed from its centre, devolved or a combination?
Table 8.1	Would you describe the HR function in your council, currently as centralised, decentralised or a combination of control?213
Table 10.0	Does your organisation have a HR strategy?247
Table 10.1	Is the HR function represented on the Chief Officer Management Team?
Table 10.2	Do you have a role in the development of your councils HR strategy?
Table 10.3	Is the HR strategy formulated centrally, by managers with devolved responsibilities, or elsewhere?
Table 11.0	Do you think there has been a change in the skills needed to be a local authority manager?
Table 11.1	Is a broader range of management skills required in your management role than prior to decentralisation?
Table 11.2	Have you received training in H.R.M policies and procedures within your council?
Table 11.3	Have you been required to adopt a more flexible approach to working methods and hours of work for your staff?272

Table 11.4	Have you needed to develop a broader range of HR management knowledge and skills than prior to decentralisation?272
Table 11.5	Do you work directly with trades union representatives?273

Chapter One

The Changing Face of Local Government People Management

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to analyse H.R.M in local government. This analysis will reveal the characteristics that identify H.R.M in local government and the main issues which have influenced the form it has taken. A model of local government H.R.M produced from this analysis will add new information to the continuing debate on the rhetoric and/or reality of H.R.M.

H.R.M is still a controversial concept, with no clear consensus over its actual meaning. Definitions of H.R.M abound. Legge (1995) suggests that under H.R.M, line managers are at the centre of devising and implementing people management policies which are integrated with business strategy and unlike personnel management, H.R.M has the management of organisational cultures as a prime activity.

Rosemary Harrison (1993) argued that whereas personnel management is about maintenance of personnel and administrative systems. H.R.M is about the forecasting of organisational needs, the continual monitoring and adjustment of personnel systems to meet current and future requirements and the management of change (Mumford 1994). Within this debate H.R.M must be seen to be linked to the strategy of the organisation and the employment systems used must be consistent with one another and aligned with the business strategy. Some suggest that the differences between personnel management and H.R.M are not so clearly identifiable. Fowler (1988a) for example, was of the view that substantively there is little new in H.R.M. Guest also argued that the term carries no particular distinctive meaning when placed alongside terms such as personnel management, management of people, or employee

relations. Storey (1992) argued that the term carried no special significance and it tended to be used more or less interchangeably with personnel management. The picture painted by some of the above definitions demonstrates the difficulties associated with the term H.R.M. This process involves an investigation of current practice, through empirical research amongst Human Resource Specialists and Line Managers in different local authorities, and an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative information they provide.

In the second half of this chapter and in Chapters Two, Three and Four the research is set in context through a literature review of local government and H.R.M to provide greater meaning, both to those unfamiliar with local government and to those unfamiliar with H.R.M.

The last twenty-five years has seen tremendous change in the structure and form of the world economy. This change has caused the transformation of national institutions, such as the welfare state, and the organisational and occupational structures, which supported its function. In this thesis this process of change has been examined within the context of English local government. The advent of a Conservative administration in 1979 heralded a radical shift in government policy towards the public sector, which centered on a rejection of the keynsian welfare state consensus which had dominated British politics since the Second World War (Gamble, 1988; Hall, 1988). This examination is set against this background of the restructuring of British society. This restructuring moved the state from a position where it was involved in the determination of economic affairs, the provision of welfare and a corporatist approach to industrial relations to one where it sought to distance itself from this role in favour of market forces as the prime determinant of policy (Savage, et al. 1990).

The role of the state in economic affairs was widely accepted as being that of managing the mixed economy, a system that incorporated both private and public sector organisations. State ownership of particular parts of the economy; government subsidies to strategic industries; and control over prices, incomes and credit were considered to be acceptable extensions of the role of the state at this time. The reason that this degree of involvement was unquestioned lay in the expressed intention of governments of all persuasions to maintain full employment and to undertake vital functions that, because of commercial and other considerations, the private sector did not, or was unwilling, to perform.

As for corporatism, this involved an approach to decision making based on a consultative climate covering a broad spectrum of policy areas, a feature of the postwar restructuring of the British economy and wider society. Valid areas for consultative decision making ranged from economic policy through to more specific subjects such as industrial policy. Corporatism involved the government seeking the views and opinions of interest groups which possessed specialised relevant knowledge and seeking their participation during the process of policy formulation and implementation. This corporatist approach led to the development of 'tripartism' in industrial relations, the creation of a forum in which the government and the two sides of industry, management and labour, jointly negotiated as, seemingly, partners. This established system of consultation was, however, to become the subject of a number of assaults throughout the 1970s, mostly due to factors beyond the power of its that which was to last well beyond the 1970s, and which were to prove the death of the corporatist approach in its post-war form. The oil crisis of 1973 and its ramifications for the British economy initiated the realisation that the national economy could no longer support the welfare state in its existing form. The then Labour Government, at

the insistence of the International Monetary Fund, sought to control expenditure in the public sector to assist a national economic recovery.

1.1 Overview and Plan of the Thesis

In this thesis the model of H.R.M in local government will be defined and its key characteristics identified and compared with descriptive models taken from H.R.M theorists. A fuller discussion on the research problem and methodology lies in Chapter Five.

Chapter One provides an overview, by means of a literature review, of how local government has changed in the last twenty years in terms of its culture and structure and approach to people management. The impact of central government policy and legislation on local government is explored in regard to how local authorities approach the management of their employees. Chapter Two provides a literature review of H.R.M and offers an analysis of the different models of H.R.M and those characteristics, which define it. The differences between H.R.M and personnel management are also shown in models, which identify the particular traits and characteristics of H.R.M and personnel management, which are used later in Chapter Seven in describing the general model of people management used in local government. Chapter Three examines in greater detail and with a narrower focus how local public administration became local public management and provides a detailed literature review of styles of new public management in the context of people management in local government.

Chapter Four describes through an analysis of relevant literature the process of change from traditional personnel management to H.R.M in local government and how the approach taken by local government to specific areas of people management changed. Chapter Five examines the research problem in detail and discusses the methodology

used in meeting the aims and objectives of the research described in that chapter. Chapter Six presents the results of the survey used in the research and analyses the responses received. The chapter provides a picture of H.R.M in local government across the different types of local authority involved and prepares the ground for the following chapters which introduce the qualitative research set within the context of the theory used in Chapters Two, Three and Four. Chapter Seven examines a model of local government H.R.M through a comparison of the survey findings and interview information with theory from the literature reviews. Chapter Eight looks at the specific issue of devolution and decentralisation as part of H.R.M using the same comparative technique. Chapter Nine follows the same format but examines and discusses in detail the impact of H.R.M on the local government employment environment. Chapter Ten focuses on the evidence of local government H.R.M being strategic or not. Chapter Eleven looks at the relationship between H.R.M professionals and line managers in local government from a critical perspective. Chapter Twelve concludes the thesis with a discussion of the main points discovered and points towards the future of H.R.M in local government.

1.2 The Impact of Change on English Local Government

Anthony Crosland, Minister for Local Government, in 1975, introduced proposals to make local authorities contribute to cuts in public expenditure through reductions in their capital spending programmes.

Prime Minister Thatcher held the conviction that the market was the best mechanism for the efficient, effective and economical distribution of finite resources. This meant to her that the market was therefore supreme over state run or state directed processes in all sectors of the economy. She reasoned that welfare state organisations, protected

as they were from market forces, and the need to be competitive, were in market terms, inefficient and sustained only by an ever-growing subsidy from central government. The strategy adopted by the Conservative government in achieving its objective of encouraging a market style competition within the public sector produced a policy of increased managerialism, the introduction of private sector executive management to the public sector.

Managerialism brought with it the compulsory competitive tendering of previously publicly run services, market testing, privatisation and all the structural and cultural change that the adoption of such a strategy requires. The principle obstacles to the successful implementation of this strategy were the professions and trade unions. The Conservatives believed that only strong government could cut through the constraints imposed upon both public and private sector by the professions and trade unions that prevented flexibility and high work performance. Bearing in mind these three new factors it is not surprising that H.R.M and the excellence message promulgated by Peters and Waterman (1982) has been applied to public sector organisations through mechanisms which reflect the market, unitarism and strong central control of the Conservatives. As the public sector has been increasingly impelled toward the criteria of 'excellence' discerned by Peters and Waterman (1982) as the hallmark for success in the private sector, so the long standing traditional administration of local authorities has given way to an approach to management supposedly more familiar to those employed in the private sector.

Such changes were bound to alter the role of local authorities as a model employer, that favoured consensus in working practices such as collective bargaining, ensuring that employees' pay was in line with that of the private sector and encouraging the use of arbitration to resolve disputes.

of arbitration to resolve disputes.

Public-sector employment has been altered with the increased outsourcing of local authority services and through Voluntary and Compulsory Competitive Tendering (C.C.T) of services.

1.3 The Introduction of Managerialism in Local Government

Apart from the external pressures for change referred to above, there were also internal organisational pressures for change. These came from factors such as the political ethos of the elected members, the council's size and the range of services the council provided. These elements determine the form and characteristics of management and approach to H.R.M, the choice of H.R.M policies, and how such policies might change over time (Gennard and Judge, 1999).

Managerialism, as Chapter Three will discuss in greater detail, was introduced to ensure both greater cost control of local government services and remove the barriers to change imposed by generations of professional staff. New Public Management (N.P.M), supposedly based on the private sector model, was the style of management adopted within local government managerialism. N.P.M seemed to offer a proactive, rational and focused approach to people management and many other positive attributes associated with the soft form of H.R.M discussed in Chapter Two (Farnham and Horton, 1996). N.P.M also offered the potential for work intensification, reduced job security and de-professionalisation, characteristics that can also be found in the hard version of H.R.M.

In Chapter Three the similarities and differences between N.P.M, traditional administrative/personnel management and H.R.M will be explored more fully. Clearly, though the model employer role which local government had enjoyed for

The Complete Section is something and period to the control of the

order i State deletario del crista e e estali del 1

ng frankling pagement og flesk kalle og kombon av skillere i som en en skillere i flerhade. Det

on the company of the comment of the particle of the company of th

ne dan in hina kerapatan dalam mengahan pelangan berarah dalam binan dalam bigan kebilan

From the first section of the control of the section of the sectio

the second of the second second is a second to the second second

Booking this parameter was a marketing the m

ng la kan Sana sa Makalawa na mpakan kan pangan ang manah aki sa an Mahala ka Ajara Ayda man Ajar.

2. Consider the April of the second of the constitution of the Second of the Constitution of the consti

1.4 The Influence of the State as an Employer on Local Government H.R.M

At one time, the state as a major employer in its own right, pursued the role of 'model employer', encouraging collective bargaining, ensuring that its employees' pay was in line with that of the private sector and encouraging the use of arbitration to resolve disputes. In recent times this concept has changed with the outsourcing of local authority services through the imposition of C.C.T and the spread of privatisation having diluted the concept of the public servant and changed the notion of what is a 'model employer'.

Most of this change has resulted from the determination of successive Conservative administrations in the 1980s and 1990s to decentralise the role of the UK Government, keeping itself out of the industrial and employee relations' arena. However, through its own HR practice as a major employer, the Conservative administrations set a pattern for other employers of H.R.M. Under H.R.M local government sought to de-recognise collective bargaining, pay comparability and arbitration as central to its industrial relations policies. All these changes have impacted on the nature and style of H.R.M in English local government throughout the 1980s and first half of the 1990s.

1.5 The Influence of State Economic Management on Local Government H.R.M

The inability of successive governments to manage economic policy and industrial relations effectively was a major contributor to Britain's increasing uncompetitiveness during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Donaldson and Farquhar, 1991). Attempts by these Governments to limit wage settlements at this time was seen as a deliberate

attempt to shift the balance of bargaining power towards the employer, a move resisted by the trade unions, often through strike action (Gennard and Judge, 1999). By 1978-79 an increasing number of people felt that the power of unions had to be curtailed if the UK were to regain competitiveness setting the ground for the Conservative Government of Margaret Thatcher.

1.6 The New Right, Monetarism and its Influence on Local Government HRM

The Conservatives duly won the 1979 election, and under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, and began the process of applying monetarist policies to the management of the UK economy (Gennard and Judge, 1999). Conservative Governments from 1979 onwards had a twin-track policy to achieve their objectives. Firstly, through abolishing the post-war consensus in such areas as the welfare state, and, secondly, by letting the market decide the level of unemployment (Ridley, 1988). Monetarist policies were introduced as a means of reducing inflation, which meant increases in interest rates, increases in indirect taxes, and cuts in public expenditure. Their effect was large increases in unemployment, especially in the country's more traditional industries such as shipbuilding and coal mining. The restriction on trade union behaviour was also to be two-pronged. Firstly, the Government made it clear that it was no longer prepared to fulfill its traditional role as 'model employer'. The idea that the state should be a model to the private sector remained, but the notion of what constituted a 'model employer' changed. Secondly, a series of changes in employment law were enacted to restrict the power of trades unions and, at the same time, enhance the opportunities for employers to address employment issues directly with individual employees.

1.7 Legislative Changes Supporting the Introduction of Managerialism

Statutory rights for individual employees relative to their-employer began to emerge in the early 1960s. Parliament justified such rights on the grounds that private arrangements (for example, by collective agreement) had failed to provide an adequate minimum acceptable level of protection to individual employees against certain behavior by their employers. At the same time it sent a clear message to employers that they must act with just cause and be 'fair and reasonable' in the treatment of their employees on those matters where statutory minimum standards were being established for their employees. While these hard won individual rights were retained with comparatively few in-roads, the Conservative Government of 1979 developed the notion of individual rights in another, not entirely new direction (Ridley, 1988). Legislation came at regular intervals and between 1980 and 1993 there were seven acts of parliament designed to restrict trade union activity and prevent industrial action.

1.8 The Conservative Approach to People Management in Local Government and the Introduction of Commercial Management and Organisational Structures

Burrage (1992), Ackroyd and Soothill (1994) suggested that what offended the Conservatives most about local government in the 1970s was the clear hegemony of autonomous professional groups over managers and, to a lesser extent, the public as consumers (Loughlin, 1996; Pratchett & Wingfield, 1994). This hegemony represented, as the Conservatives saw it, political and public sector intrusion into areas where the private sector and the market mechanism could and should prevail and operate far more efficiently.

C.C.T and the associated contractualisation of most council services sought to replace professional power in service provision with new public management. Political

opposition to this programme was muted by the fact that many Labour Party councillors also wished to remove the predominance of the professionals in local government. This group, however, lacked any real alternative project to C.C.T other than plans for the decentralisation of services to the greater proximity of services to users and communities (Lansley, Goss and Wolmar, 1991).

1.9 Commitment to the Public Service – An Employee Driven Culture

The traditional motivation to provide a high level of work performance and quality of service in local government arose, according to many commentators, from a public service ethos common amongst council staff. This ethos was rooted in a belief in providing a service to local communities, ideals of professionalism and the notion of a greater collective 'public good' that transcends the concerns of the individual (Pratchett & Wingfield, 1994). The core elements of such an ethos were perceived to be public accountability, legal-rational bureaucracy and procedural stability, a sense of community, an essentially altruistic and public-oriented motivation and a loyalty to both the council and the wider community (Pratchett Wingfield, 1994). In addition, a public service ethos emphasises equity, citizenship and the democratic process (Stewart, 1995).

The Conservatives perceived this ethos to be vague and ill-defined and in effect non-functional since it did not provide either the quality or quantity of work performance or responsiveness of service required from local government (Hood, 1995). As such, the prevailing ethos, which governed the professionalism of all of the disparate groups in local government, was attacked through a range of policy initiatives such as compulsory competitive tendering, the local management of schools, universal capping and the council tax. The intention behind this attack was the replacement of

traditional mechanisms for controlling local government resources and their replacement with a managerial regime and quasi-market arrangement.

1.10 Fragmentation of Local Government Organisational Structures

The impact of managerialism and C.C.T was, in the opinion of many commentators, the creation of greater fragmentation in local government organisations (Coalter & McNulty, 1995). This was caused by the limited success of private contractors in securing contracts to provide council services and from externally-imposed pressures like the local management of schools, and setting up the Police and Further Education as autonomous bodies (Walsh, 1991; LACSAB, 1990, Walsh, 1993).

Internal fragmentation also took place, as Alexander (1991) argued, with the new found financial and management independence of direct service organisations (D.S.Os). Many of these changes created a threat to the overall cohesion of local councils only heightened by the widening of C.C.T to include professional staff (Coalter & McNulty, 1995).

Brooke (1989) viewed this fragmentation as an opportunity, rather than a threat, providing councils with more time to concentrate on wider issues such as strategic management and local and corporate governance. Cochrane (1991) suggested the creation of a strong and coherent political/professional/managerial leadership based around a central core of strategic planners and regulators, to run each Council. A second tier of 'entrepreneurial' officers or managers would run service departments either as independent agencies, private sector companies, voluntary bodies or direct service organisations (Cochrane, 1991).

Both Brooke, (1989) and Cochrane, (1991) proposed that if these services were to remain in-house, elaborate systems of internal trading accounts, business units,

support units and the devolution of operational budgetary control would be used as directed by the strategic core. The thrust of this decentralisation would take place within the strictly defined criteria laid down by the centre through accounting mechanism, performance measurement and other internal control devices (Hambleton, 1994).

Clearly for the mangerialists and proto-generalist professionals at the strategic core, this may prove to be an attractive role to play within local councils providing a continuing public service ethos within a regime based firmly on new public management (Eccles & White, 1988). In people management terms such an approach achieves two objectives, it both enhances the role of managers and the strategic core at the expense of the new 'peripheral' staff employed in the contractor business units (Waldergrave, 1993).

1.11 Changing Local Government Cultures – From Service to Commercial Orientation

There was a clear attempt by the Government to remove the public service ethos from local government and replace it with a commercial ethos, which, it believed would ensure a more responsive service to consumer needs. Professional staff who had become managers themselves have, apparently, assisted with this project to further their own cause as they develop as a new profession, management itself.

A survey carried out for the L.G.M.B in 1990 found that 63 per cent of authorities had either introduced or planned to introduce more devolution of authority to line managers in accordance with the advice given in these reports and papers (Kessler, 1990). The decentralisation and devolution of management responsibility was required to enable the development of an internal market based on contracts for

services between units or sub-units within the authority. This 'contract culture' requires an organisational structure that supports business units, cost-centre accounting, trading accounts and service level agreements, the first steps in preparation for C.C.T. The implementation of such structures represent a new awareness of the need to ensure that the management of staff is more closely linked to the commercial and business considerations of local government. In the following section C.C.T will be described in more detail as will the process by which it was introduced to local government.

1.12 The Effect on the Management and Organisation of Local Authorities Caused by C.C.T

The overall picture of the impact of C.C.T varied from one council to another, depending upon their size, type and their political inclinations. Conservative local authorities such as Westminster, Wandsworth, Bedfordshire, Bromley and Rochford were keen to put as many services as possible out to tender. Services not referred to within the legislation were prepared for C.C.T, often well in advance of the deadlines set by central government. Labour authorities, were less enthusiastic and focussed on retaining as many services in-house as possible to protect existing staff. Both Labour and Conservative authorities found, the impact of C.C.T in terms of contracts won by or lost to outside organisations was of secondary importance to the impact on the internal structure and management of local authorities during the preparation for C.C.T (Hoggett, 1990; Flynn, 1999).

The major change local authorities faced was the separation of the client and contractor roles. Clients were those responsible for the specification and monitoring of services; contractors were those responsible for the direct production and delivery of the service. The separation of these roles had to be made within a single department or by creating separate contractor departments. Such upheaval created the question in the minds of many staff at all levels as to whether the reduced job security

and work intensification created by competitive tendering for ancillary workers would be repeated in their own working conditions under C.C.T (Hoggett, 1987, 1990). These fears were well realised as changes were introduced to professional practice and the local government work environment and employment relationship (Murray, 1989; Vincent-Jones and Andrew Harries, 1996). Professional staff in local authorities saw the C.C.T split as creating new job roles and skills requirements which reduced the opportunities for their career advancement (Cochrane, 1993a). Compulsory redundancies resulted in many councils as a result of these restructuring exercises and the introduction of new and different skills at all levels (Clarke, Cochrane and McLaughlin, 1994a). C.C.T did not just threaten individual in-house services directly, contractor units quickly realised that the loss of major internal customers, who also faced competitive tendering, would impact on them (Coopers and Lybrand, 1993).

1.13 The 1990s Local Government Review - Change and Uncertainty

A further source of organisational and cultural change in local government came about in 1992 when the Local Government Commission embarked upon a county-by-county review of the structure of non-metropolitan local government. Its final proposals were approved by government Ministers in the summer of 1996 to become operational in April 1998. Few people in local government felt any compelling need for further structural reorganisation, faced as they were already with the upheaval of the poll tax and other reforms of education, community care and C.C.T (Leach, 1995). The Conservative government made it clear in its original Policy Guidance that it expected to see a substantial increase in the number of unitary authorities as a result of the Commission's reviews. Indeed, initially it looked as though it would succeed in its aim. The L.G.C.E's first set of recommendations was for the creation of 99 new unitary authorities covering more than two-thirds of the population of English shire

N

counties, and based primarily on single or merged existing district councils. The final outcome of the deliberations of the L.G.C.E and the ministers to whom it reported was, however, very different. The initial network of 99 new unitary authorities ended up as a total of just 46 as the Commissioners were confronted with evidence that majority support for the principle of unitary authorities was non-existent (L.G.C.E Report 1992-5 Structural Review). In the end, therefore, only five of the 39 English counties were abolished. Although special transfer arrangements were produced by central government to protect staff moving between authorities, as a result of reorganisation, not all these staff were found employment with their continuing or new authorities. With the final recommendations of the review only being implemented in 1996, local government was to have only a short break before the Labour government of 1997 opened a new cycle of change.

1.14 Modernisation and New Forms of Local Governance

The Labour Government's first Queen's Speech in May 1997 included several bills with important structural and constitutional implications including referendums paving the way for a Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, and later an elected authority for London; as well as proposals for development agencies in the remaining English regions (D.E.T.R/H.M.S.O, 1998). The idea behind the modernization programme was to improve the strategic and executive management of local authorities through encouraging the greater involvement of councillors. This could be achieved through three recommended patterns of structure (shown in table 1.1) that meant different roles for councillors and a change in the constitution of local authorities to recognize these new roles and responsibilities (Leach/L.G.A, 2000). For the most part the greater involvement of the community in local government and vice-

versa was required, partly through the requirement for councils to produce a community strategy, education development plan, local transport plan and a local performance plan. The Best Value (BV) process was to be the other way in which continuous feedback on the quality, quantity and projected need of the local community for services was to be received. The published material on the modernisation programme brought to local councils by the Local Government Act 2000 promised new forms of local governance that would mean:

FIGURE 1.0 Assets of New Local Governance

1	Strong leadership for local communities	
2	Powerful roles for all councillors	
3	High standards throughout local government	

The White Paper, "Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People" (D.E.T.R, 1998) promised a programme for the reform and modernisation of local government in England, which would be implemented over a period of ten years or more. This programme would see councils developing partnerships with Central Government, business, the voluntary sector and others, in providing local council services. The Bill to implement best value and to abolish universal council tax capping was introduced in November 1998 into the House of Commons at the same time the beacon quality scheme was introduced in partnership with the Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency (I.D.E.A/D.E.T.R, 2000).

FIGURE 1.1

These new structures and roles were supposed to place elected members in a stronger position to determine and drive the strategy of the council and to scrutinise the effectiveness of services. The emphasis on consultation and development did not lie just within the relationship between the council and the community but also, it was recognised, in the relationship between the council and its staff. A major change in emphasis came about in local government between the core/periphery workforce ideas

of C.C.T to the consultation, development and nurturing of the workforce ideas of B.V. In the next section the new ideas on people management and the relationship between B.V and H.R.M are investigated.

1.15 Best Value and Human Resource Management

1999).

In 1998 the Local Government Association (L.G.A), the Employers' Organisation for Local Government (L.G.E.O) and the Improvement and Development Agency (I.D.E.A) have produced, in consultation with local authorities, a national framework for Human Resource Management in local government (I.D.E.A/D.E.T.R, 2000).

The purpose of the Framework is to reflect the needs of local authorities but not to propose tasks at the national level that are more effectively undertaken locally. The framework relies upon recent reports (I.D.S, 2000) to validate its message that successful organisations adopt a strategic approach to people management (Business Intelligence, 2000). The Framework suggests that the practice of strategic H.R.M has a clear business benefit and can effect or sustain significant organisational performance through alignment of H.R.M and Organisational Strategy (D.T.A Report,

This approach to H.R.M is shared by other guidance coming to local authorities from central government, such as that from the Department of the Environment and Transport (D.E.T.R, 1998). This advice promotes the importance of a well-trained and motivated workforce for the delivery of high quality services and the role of H.R.M in achieving continuous improvement. Various quality standards have been recommended to authorities in support of a strategic approach to H.R.M and Best Value.

Prescribed quality standards such as 'Charter-Mark' and Investors in People include various people factors including employee involvement, training and development as

part of their assessment criteria. More generally, developing a culture of service excellence, continuous improvement and innovation is strongly associated with good people management. BV services are also thought to require a new focus on learning and development for all staff and managers to support new services and working arrangements (D.E.T.R, 1998; S.O.C.P.O, 2000).

The Labour Government has offered not only guidance but also legislative pointers to the sort of employment relationship local authorities have with their employees, and the sort of management style required in local government to sustain that relationship. The Employment Relations Act 1999 has introduced major enhancements to statutory employment protection and rights for employees and 'workers' as individuals and as members of trade unions. The Act is part of the Government's 'Fairness at Work' employment programme (D.T.I, 1997). Since 1997 a host of new regulations have been introduced (as set out in "Modern Local Government in Touch with the People", White Paper, 1998) which significantly increase the legal obligations of local government and commercial employers. These regulations make it important for authorities to consider the legal and contractual implications relating to the workforce when approaching Best Value or other potential changes.

The I.D.E.A/L.G.E.O BV Initiatives Survey has also included questions asking local authorities if they have yet developed any arrangements for the involvement of both trade union representatives and staff in general as stakeholders in the B.V process.

1.16 Conclusion

The objectives of H.R.M and N.P.M to focus on the role of line management to improve organisational performance seemed to integrate well with the right to manage arguments of the Conservative government and the cost-centre approach to financial control which was producing decentralized and devolved council structures. The Conservative ambition that council services should mirror the claimed efficiencies of the employment relationship and working environment in the commercial sector also fitted in well with the introduction of H.R.M. The arguments deployed in this chapter also reveal the two main concerns over H.R.M in local government. Firstly, the inherent contradictions that exist between the objectives of N.P.M and H.R.M. Secondly, the loss of political accountability as managers in local authorities are refocused away from the needs of the local electorate as consumers towards that of quasi-commercial manager seeking to reduce costs.

The modernisation of local government under the Labour Government of 1997 reveals not just a re-emphasis of accountability through greater involvement of councillors in the quality and quantity of services, but also greater contact between service providers and the local electorate through the consultation machinery that forms part of the new Best Value regime.

Chapter Two

Human Resource Management - Infinite Variety?

2.0 Introduction

As the introduction above stated, the change that the national economy has gone through in the last twenty-five years, has required major changes in the practice of industrial relations and people management. Seemingly, the evidence of change is obvious. Trade union membership has declined; management seems to be in the ascendancy; the economy appears more buoyant and less regulated; and those people employed in jobs are producing and earning more. There is also no disguising the fact that the alterations made to the legal framework of industrial relations during the Thatcher years supported these changes. The pressure from economic competition, both domestic and global, has proved to be the vehicle which created the political climate under 'Thatcherism' which has driven those radical transformations made in the nature of traditional industrial relations. Against this backcloth, discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, the main point of consideration is the extent to which the revised industrial relations climate, and managerial/workforce relations, are genuinely affected by these transformations. Legge (1989) and Keenoy (1990a,b) identify the ideological underpinning of H.R.M as one which aligns with the rise of Thatcherism and the 'New Right' in the 1980s. If this is true, H.R.M appears to have a deeper meaning within the context of the definition of the way individual employees relate to their employers and the way in which industrial relations has evolved in recent years. The question of what values from the past may have been lost during the introduction of H.R.M is also addressed in part by Keenoy (1990b) who sees the agenda underpinning H.R.M as being distinct from that of personnel management, a distinction that causes him to question the morality of the H.R.M agenda. Some

Conservative Government to create a picture of overstrong public sector trade unions, disabling professions and weak quasi-professional management. Such a picture was a prerequisite for the Conservatives' in creating a climate in which legislation could be introduced supporting the right of the manager to manage. This strategy was a necessary pre-cursor to the introduction of market disciplines to the public sector, disciplines customarily experienced by the, seemingly, more efficient private sector. While H.R.M, as the subject of this chapter, is discussed in more detail below, it is appropriate that Human Resource Management is introduced here. The four functions set out below form the basic characteristics of H.R.M and will appear throughout the discussion on the form of H.R.M in local government in the following chapters and in the survey and research methodology in Chapters Four and Five.

indication of the nature of this agenda might be drawn from the efforts of the

FIGURE 2.0

Basic Characteristics of H.R.M

1	The management of human resources is integrated with corporate strategy. Staff selection, appraisal, reward systems and other common functions of HRM are in alignment and meet the needs of this strategy		
2	HRM seeks to elicit the commitment of employees to organisation objectives and not merely secure their compliance. A concept which in itself has repercussions for an organisations culture and approach to people management		
3	Commitment is attained through a systematic and careful approach to recruitment, selection, appraisal, training, reward and communication. That is, managerial attention is fundamentally shifted from reliance on collective forms of accommodation with labour to more individualistic ones		
4	Unlike traditional forms of personnel administration and approaches to industrial relations, HRM is the possession of line managers and not that of staff employed specifically to deal with personnel issues		
Adapte	Adapted from Guest (1989a)		

These four functions may also represent the anchor stones of H.R.M, not just in the UK but globally, as Chapter Seven will discuss (Guest, 1989a). Having said this, it might be that function three will differ in some detail due to local cultural or legal

restrictions, but the basic process will be uniformly recognisable worldwide.

The final factor of these four can only be put in place through a shift from administration to management in the local government context. This is a key issue in the development of H.R.M and in the change process taking place in modern local government organisations, as described in Chapters One, Three and Four. With this shift in the nature of management is the adoption of a more strategic and long-term approach to people management. Through this mechanism the traditional personnel administration and industrial relations marked by short-term reactions to people management issues, would be reformulated into a planned, strategic approach to the management of employment. It is clear that this traditionally pragmatic approach to industrial relations and personnel issues was responsible for many of the failures of organisations, both in the public and private sector, to perform adequately in the past (Purcell and Sisson, 1983; Thurley, 1981). While this overall description of the aspirations of H.R.M is simple to describe, it has been more difficult to find a comprehensive definition. In the next section the search for such a definition begins.

2.1 What is Human Resource Management?

The nature of human resource management is still regarded as ambiguous (Marginson et at., 1998a). Sisson (1990) suggests that the term H.R.M refers way in which the policies, procedures and processes involved in the management of people in work organizations are applied. The term, apparently, embraces many areas of organisational life including management, industrial relations, personnel management, organisational behaviour and industrial sociology, suggesting perhaps that H.R.M has a wide cultural influence on the organisation. Poole (1990) sees H.R.M as forming the link between business policy and strategic management, involving a synthesis of

elements from international business, organisational behaviour, personnel management and industrial relations, repeating the notion that H.R.M seeks to influence all or many aspects of the organisations culture. H.R.M as a cultural control device appears not only to be a strategic activity in itself, but one which is now central to the achievement of business objectives. Whereas lip-service has been paid in the past to people being an organisations most important asset, H.R.M suggest that this might be true. As such, such expensive and unpredictable assets as people need engaging and used in a more proactive way by managers and their individual production rate increased rather than issues around their management being left to specialists outside the management chain. In essence then H.R.M from these examples seems to be an approach to management of the culture of organisations in the pursuit of developing people who focus on performance and quality. In the next section the origins and nature of H.R.M will be examined.

2.2 The Origins and Nature of Excellence and Human Resource Management

The term 'Human Resource Management' is one that came to be increasingly used in organisations in the US in the 1980s. Essentially it replaced the terms 'personnel management' or 'personnel administration' which had been used previously. The American origins of the term inevitably mean that the definitions, scope, coverage and themes of US literature plays a major role in setting the parameters on human resource management in Britain. The US H.R.M literature is generally of a more prescriptive nature than that found in the UK literature. Accordingly, in this section, an attempt will be made to identify the origins of H.R.M in the US, its inherent flaws, and the forms that H.R.M has taken upon its adoption within the UK.

The supposed financial success of organisations in the US which had adopted

Japanese style management practises produced enormous interest in public and private sector enterprises worldwide. By copying the Japanese experience of cultural management and through the adoption of the eight attributes described by Peters and Waterman (1982) or the six pillars of Japanese employment practice (lifetime employment, company welfare, quality consciousness, enterprise unions, consensus management and seniority-based reward systems), it was thought that any organisation could obtain similar success (Ouchi, 1981). It was recognised that these themes had to be suitably adapted to local circumstances, however, after such adaptation it was considered that any organisation could reproduce the results experienced by the Japanese companies. Such an idea seems plausible on the surface, however, whether success can be so easily achieved through the adoption of such attributes is problematic, the concerns attached to the *In Search of Excellence* message is discussed in the next section.

2.3 The In Search of Excellence Argument

In their book *In Search of Excellence*, Peters and Waterman (1982) describe the business practices of a number of leading American companies and in particular identifies eight attributes common to most of these excellent companies. These attributes are the component parts of Human Resource Management, a philosophy that underpins, drives and operates the excellence argument. The attributes of excellence feature in the models of H.R.M described below. H.R.M and excellence both cover cultural, structural and industrial relations aspects of organisations with an emphasis on an unchallenged right to manage. The eight factors shown below cover cultural and structural factors within organisations. Factors one, two, four and five seem to suggest a model management style, innovative, autonomous line managers

situated near the customer in a delayered structure supported by a strong organisational culture with a clear vision and objectives. Factors three, six, seven and eight suggest an organisational model based on small business units, cost/profit centres, focussing on the service they provide, within a lean structure reminiscent of the core/periphery structure (Atkinson, 1984).

Briefly summarised, these attributes are featured below in FIGURE 2.1:-

FIGURE 2.1 Attributes of H.R.M

	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	, the same of the
1	A Bias for Action	A preference for getting on with it and doing something rather than
		engaging in excessive analysis of a problem or allowing committees and
		other bureaucratic manifestations of large organisations to cause delay
2	Close to the	Companies show considerable concern for and interest in the wishes of
	Customer	their customers. The emphasis is on customer service
3	Autonomy and	The company is broken down into small units in which initiative is
	Entrepreneurship	encouraged. Innovative behaviour is highly valued
4	Productivity	Employees are seen as the key resources of the organization and this is
	through People	emphasized by involvement programmes and through activities designed
		to reinforce in employees the importance of their contribution to the
		success of the organisation and therefore to their own rewards
5	Hands-on	Value driven senior executives promote a strong corporate culture and
		obtain feedback by keeping in touch with core business activities
6	Stick to the	Successful companies stay close to the business they know best and avoid
	Knitting	the temptation to become conglomerates
7	Simple Form.	These companies maintain a simple organisation structure avoiding the
	Lean Staff	complexities of matrix organisation and employ relatively few senior
		head office staff
8	Simultaneous	Core company values are strongly emphasized but those who adhere to
	Loose-tight	them are given considerable freedom and errors are tolerated
	Properties	
And	Management	Rejection of the rational model of management which places weight upon
		the importance of centralised strategic planning, control systems and
		complex formal organizational structure
Peters	and Waterman (1982	
		/

Working within the literature review provided in Chapters One, Three and Four the actual changes which are documented as having occurred within local government can be compared with the requirements for change identified within these eight attributes. These principles employed within the English local government context seem to suggest the following structural, cultural and managerial objectives should be aimed for, in order to implement the excellence attributes:

FIGURE 2.2 Attributes of H.R.M Applied to Local Government

1	A devolved and decentralised organisational structure		
2	A reduction in senior managers and the greater involvement of line managers		
	in the design and implementation of business and HR strategies		
3	A concentration of core business areas		
4	Small, autonomous cost-centre business units		
5	Moving decision-making nearer the public interface with the council and		
	concentrating on customer care programmes		
6	Involving staff in the business in order to improve their commitment and by		
	relating their pay to their performance ensuring higher productivity		
Audit	Audit Commission (1990)		

If Peters and Waterman's (1982) ideas are wrong, then Human Resource Management, as part of this system aimed at achieving high performance may, itself be flawed, and the objectives sought will not be achieved. The later chapters of this thesis will identify the success or failure of H.R.M, and the attributes which make it what it is, through analysis of the results of the research survey literature review and interviews with participants. Having gained some idea of what excellence and H.R.M are supposed to be and what they are supposed to do, the next section raises the general concerns over the excellence model arising from analysis of Peters and Waterman's ideas. This critique may well provide a foundation for analysing any shortcomings of H.R.M in its application within local government.

2.4 Concern over the Excellence and H.R.M Argument

Guest's (1987) criticisms of Peters and Waterman's (1982) ideas are fundamental. His concerns lay principally, but not exclusively, with the methodological aspects of the study, including the research design. This criticism is important because it suggests that the attributes of H.R.M as described in their book, and listed above, are limited in their application. This arises due to the sample organisations they selected in identifying these themes being restricted to those in the high technology, consumer

goods, general industrial, service, project management and resource-based sectors of the economy. The assumption is that common themes identified with the successful companies in these sectors can be generalised to the rest of industry and even the service and public service sector. These themes might, for example, include the existing organisational culture and ethos, tradition of management, aspects of public service employment and local governance (within the context of this research) as well as aspects of the external environment such as central government intervention. It is this area of the external environment which forms the second area of concern for Guest (1987). There is no account taken in Peters and Waterman's (1982) work of the influence of events beyond the organisations boundaries which might influence the effectiveness of the attributes, such as the political, legal and economic factors that affect both public and private sectors. While Peters and Waterman (1982) explain the necessity for a shift in emphasis from the traditional focus on the hard s's' of H.R.M as strategy and structure in organisations. The hard view is that employees are assets of the organisation to be used and disposed of as required. Employees need to be monitored for performance and closely supervised. The soft s's' of H.R.M are offered as an alternative model. Under this approach employees are encouraged by their managers to develop a commitment to the organization and its aims and objectives. Staff are trained and developed and encouraged to participate in the way the organisation is managed. Guest's (1987) third concern is about whether all the eight attributes are equally important. Different combinations of these attributes were considered by Guest (1987) to be more appropriate for different organisations at different times in their history and in different external environmental situations. One example is the emphasis placed in, In Search of Excellence, on the role of managers, especially at middle ranking levels in the organisation, in achieving high performance

(Legge, 1989). Their role is to shape the employee and his or her values so that they conform and become committed to the values of the organisation. Managers also attempt through change management processes to increase productivity, flexibility and teamwork. It is not clear, though, whether this is the predominant role of line managers at all stages of a business strategy or within different strategies deployed at different times in response to threats from the external environment (see Storey, 1992). The excellence literature does not appear to address these issues, fundamental though they are to developing an understanding of the way in which H.R.M refocuses between H.R.M and personnel management in response to external environmental changes (Mitchell, 1985). This emphasis on the role of managers as leaders and, within that role, as negotiators with employees on industrial and employee relations issues reflect the managers role within soft and hard H.R.M strategies (Mitchell, 1985). In the next section this distinction will be more closely analysed.

2.5 The Concept of HR Strategy

A strategic approach, to the management of human resources, as opposed to the more traditional administrative approach and the implementation of 'best personnel practice', has been perceived as offering added value to the organisation (see, for example, Guest 1987, 1991; Poole, 1990; Sisson, 1990; Storey, 1989). Beardwell and Holden (1997) contend that H.R.M is about shaping and delivering corporate strategies with commitment and results. One of the three major perspectives on H.R.M which Guest (1994) was that H.R.M is distinctive because it highlights the strategic perspective of people management. The literature and interest in human resource strategy needs to be set within a context of increasing interest in business strategy (Johnson, 1987). He proposes that strategy is likely to involve the long-term

direction of the organisation; the scope of the organisation's activities; the matching of the organisation to its environment, and matching to its resource capabilities.

This, according to Torrington and Hall (1998) involves a central philosophy of the way that people are managed in an organisation, and the translation of this into personnel policies and practices, and its integration with business strategy and within itself. This accords with the view that human resource strategy operates as a set of ideas, policies and practices which management adopt in order to achieve a people management outcome in the form of a philosophy of management (Tyson, 1995). Handy (1989) and Hendry and Pettigrew (1986) both draw out the themes of a central philosophy and integration. Handy notes that this requires a strategic view of the role of personnel management in the organisation. A recent, more detailed study of this issue in eight case-study organisations reported the following findings (Buller, 1988):

FIGURE 2.3 Themes of H.R.M Philosophy and Integration

1	There was a greater degree of integration in firms operating in more dynamic
	and less stable environments
2	There were notable differences within individual organisations between the
	views of planning and H.R.M respondents concerning the actual degree of
	integration
3	The degree of integration was influenced by an organisations overall culture
	and philosophy towards human resources including the traditional level of
	regard for the personnel function
4	In organisations where the senior HRM executives had considerable line
	management experience there was a relatively higher level of integration
Buller	(1988)

The latter two points are particularly important in suggesting that the 'internal politics' of managerial decision-making processes within individual organisations plays a far from insubstantial role in helping to bring about (or not) a relatively close linkage between human resource and business strategy planning (Buller, 1988).

2.6 The Two Versions of HRM - Hard (Strategic) and Soft (Commitment Oriented) HRM

Legge (1989) discussed these two versions of H.R.M as soft and hard H.R.M. The first, soft Human Resource Management, she saw as meaning strategies aimed at increasing employee participation and involvement in the organisation. While still emphasising the importance of integrating HR policies with business objectives, Guest (1987) suggests that soft H.R.M involves treating employees as valued members of the organisation. By encouraging organisations to see employees as a source of competitive advantage, he believes managers may attempt to engage employee's commitment to organisational objectives and thus cause them to become more adaptable and to produce high quality performance (Guest, 1987). The emphasis for managers is therefore on generating commitment via good two-way communication, and their use of motivational and leadership skills (Storey, 1987). Treating employees of the organisation as resources to be nurtured and developed by humanistic policies makes good business sense if this produces high levels of performance and quality (Beer and Spector, 1985; Walton, 1985; and, Guest, 1987). The second version, hard H.R.M, Legge saw as a match between: strategy and environment; H.R.M policy; H.R.M procedures and practices, and business strategy (Legge, 1989). Implementing either version, or both together, in the form described in Peters and Waterman's (1982) attributes list, requires substantial structural changes in organisations and in individuals work roles. Hendry and Pettigrew (1986) seek to reconcile the contrast between the two models by suggesting that the humanistic personnel policies, systems and practices which were the predecessor of H.R.M, were themselves logically consistent with and supportive of business objectives, when need be. The soft model of H.R.M seems to offer nothing new from personnel management management in that both regard the motivation and leadership, training and involvement of an organisations human resources, by line managers, as an essential part of achieving both high work performance and business objectives. This view differs widely from the hard H.R.M view that employees are largely a factor of production, along with land and capital and as such an overhead or 'expense of doing business' (Tyson and Fell, 1986).

2.7 Different Organisational Cultures

As stated above the contrast between soft and hard versions of H.R.M identified by, amongst others, Guest (1989b) and Storey (1989) creates interesting anomalies in any discussion on cultural management and H.R.M. Despite the views of Hendry and Pettigrew (1986), it is difficult to imagine an organisational culture where such diverse values as support these two different versions of H.R.M can simultaneously co-exist. Keenoy (1990a) for one identifies the divergence between the soft version of H.R.M as a method of increasing employee commitment, participation and involvement and the hard version as a method of maximising the economic return from the labour resource. Kochan and Barocci, (1985) have identified the management of organisational culture and, the linking of business planning and competitive strategy with H.R.M planning, as the two leading themes which dominated the US H.R.M literature in its formative years. Essentially this focus followed on from Peters and Waterman's (1982) ideas on the positive relationship between 'strong cultures' and the performance of individual organisations. The essence of this focus is that employees' patterns of behaviour are guided by and consistent with the values and philosophies of the organisation, or at least those who manage the organisation and thereby set its cultural norms. One clear messages which

emerges from the In Search of Excellence material and subsequent literature on organisational culture and performance is the strong influence the values of senior managers have in shaping an organisations (Schein, 1983; Ouchi, 1981). The second major theme running through the H.R.M literature in America concerns the linkage between business planning and human resource management planning. This predominantly prescriptive body of literature indicates that human resource issues should be considered in the formulation of business plans, and that human resource issues are particularly important in strategic planning/long-range business planning which is aimed at achieving a major change in an organisation's direction or emphasis (Walker, 1980). H.R.M in most organisations does not appear to be the consistent, integrated package deriving from a long-run, coherent management strategy driven by focussed senior management, as represented in much of the early H.R.M literature (Storey, 1992). Evidence of functioning H.R.M strategies have often been based on a small group of atypical organisations such as those which operate on greenfield site locations which have comparatively high levels of organisational resources, or which have been blessed by charismatic founders. This has led to the strong belief that H.R.M is most applicable in non-union organisations, where resistance to change may be limited, and where it may be easier to introduce change without the opposition that might be found in highly unionised organisations (Kochan et al., 1986). Some clue to this proposition is evident in the absence of discussion on the notions of pluralism and of collective representation through a trade union or by any other organised group in Peters and Waterman's book (Kochan et al., 1986). H.R.M would appear to be less relevant to managers working in highly unionised settings or those with high levels of established group representation such as in the public sector, where a strong culture may already be in place based on formalised industrial relations practices.

2.8 The Infinite Variety of H.R.M - Core Elements of HRM

Legge's (1989) research and later critique of H.R.M and the associated excellence literature (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Goldsmith and Clutterbuck, 1984) concentrates on the practice rather than the theory of H.R.M. Sisson (1990) in examining both the theory and the reality of H.R.M suggested that there are four main features increasingly associated with H.R.M, which are core elements around which other H.R or personnel functions exist as and when appropriate. It is worth placing his suggested four features here both for comparison with the earlier listings and because they will appear frequently in the following discussion, these are:

FIGURE 2.4 Main Features Associated with H.R.M in Organisations

1	A stress on the integration of personnel policies both with one another and with		
	business planning more generally		
2	The locus of responsibility for personnel management no longer resides with		
	(or is relegated to) specialist managers but is assumed by line management		
3	The focus shifts from management-trade union relations to management-		
	employee relations, from collectivism to individualism		
4	There is a stress on commitment and the exercise of initiative with managers		
	taking up the role of enabler, empowerer and facilitator		
Siss	Sissons (1990)		

The first of these points suggests that those attributes relative to strategic integration of H.R.M, and which appear in the Peters and Waterman's (1982) list, shifts people management away from a self-contained activity carried out by HR specialists. In stead the activity becomes one which is central to the achievement of business objectives. Therefore, all managers are involved in HR strategy and policy development and operation. The second point emphasises the responsibility of managers in directing their human resources and their key role in the integration of cultural and business management with HR strategy. The third point indicates a

general move away from 'industrial relations' to 'employee relations', shifting the focus from the collective to the individual. The fourth point suggests that the distinct approach to the management of people defined by H.R.M creates an organisational culture where individuals are offered the opportunity to realise their full potential with the active assistance of their line management. These points are contained within the Harvard model of H.R.M (Beer et al., 1984) which Poole (1990) endorses as the most influential and familiar approach to H.R.M in both academic and business circles. This model is based on H.R.M as strategic involving all managerial personnel (and especially general managers) in its regard for people as the most important single asset of the organisation. H.R.M is proactive in its relationship with people and it seeks to enhance company performance, employee 'needs' and societal well-being (Poole, 1990). The final section of this quote reveals perhaps the origin of soft H.R.M in the human relations school. The emphasis on communications, teamwork and the utilization of individual talents being prominent in this model of H.R.M. The quote also suggests a wider ethos and philosophy behind H.R.M of shared values. This version of H.R.M does not sit well with the more strategic approach proposed by the Michigan School (Fombrun et al., 1984). This 'utilitarian-instrumentalism' view supports a managerialist perspective at odds with the notion of the Harvard school (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990), a view suggestive of earlier models of industrial confrontation and conflict and a personnel management compliance/control approach. Guest (1987, 1989a,b, 1991) attempts to reconcile and combine these contradictory objectives when he defines H.R.M in terms of four policy goals: high commitment. high quality, flexibility and strategic integration. Guest argues that a coherent strategy containing these four policy goals fully integrated into a business strategy supported by all levels of line management will result in the high productivity sought. Further to

and stated the professional control of the company of the profession of the company of the compa ngaineach ann ann an am aire ann an t-airean ann ann an t-aireann ann ann ann ann an t-aireann an t-aireann an From Light Separation and the rest of the second of the se A contact segment of the property of the contact of ing a situative transfer and a complete of the contract of the i granici dan dangan kecampatan kengalah dan kengalah kengalah kengalah kebangan kengalah kengalah kengalah ke in the companies of the analysis of the contract of the contract of the contract of in a fine consistencia a qualificación de la combinación de la combinación de la combinación de la combinación a contrate to expend the contract of the contr The extra a regularity of a solution of the so the profession of the professi NOT SERVICE TO A CONTROL OF A C of Carlon, was to provide a survival and the configuration of the configuration of in the angle of the control of the c And the process of the analysis of the second of the secon with the commence of the with the second of the second and the first of the first of the second the particular process of the first property of the second consistency and the of explorations and the exploration of the explorat ja kerala kujut sebas jalan kerala sebah jahit dalam keta Musika di Kabupat grant and the state of the series of the ser The Control of the Co gradina i distribución de la procesión de la propriada de la procesión de la composición de la procesión de la

the idea that these two approaches and four policy goals can be combined within one HR strategy is the question of whether the balance between these approaches and goals is consistent or whether it changes in response to external or internal organisational drivers and changes in the organisations external environment. This issue is discussed in the next section

2.9 Different types of Business Strategy - Different types of H.R.M

It appears that organisations may have to change business and HR strategies over the course of time in response to changing circumstances either within or outside its boundaries (Schuler and Jackson, 1987). The literature on matching H.R with business strategies, emphasises the need of organisations to shape employee behaviour patterns to fit the correct strategy option. The three basic strategic options identified by Schuler and Jackson (1987) which will gain an organisation 'competitive advantage' are, innovation, quality-enhancement or cost-reduction.

The Schuler and Jackson (1987) model [FIGURE 2.5] suggests that where an organisation has chosen innovation as a means to gain competitive advantage, certain predictable required patterns of behaviour are identified. Innovation requires behaviours such as creativity, a capacity to focus on longer-term goals, a relatively high level of collaborative action, a high tolerance of ambiguity and a high degree of readiness to take risks. This theory of the link between business strategy and human resource strategy goes on to identify the H.R.M policy choices which will be needed in order to evoke and maintain these requisite behaviour patterns. Hence for each of the main behavioural dimensions as listed in the central column there is also an accompanying H.R.M policy-option as shown in the third column. As a way of illustrating the contrasts with other strategic choices one might note that where a cost-

reduction business strategy is chosen then the behaviour patterns at a premium will conversely hinge around a short-term focus and a willingness to perform and tolerate repetitive and predictable job cycles in a standardised undeviating way. The associated H.R.M policy choices to encourage this set of behaviours will include job design principles, close monitoring and control, and an appraisal system which rewards and punishes in accord with short-term results. In order to ensure that this link between H.R and business strategy exists Dyer (1983) and Tichy (1983) argue that the human resource management function should be integrated into both the strategy formulation process and at the stage where HR policies and practices are implemented within the organisation. They stress the importance of having a HR director at board level; they look for proactivity from the HR function; and they look for coherence between all the practices and policies within the organisation's strategic thrust.

Dyer (1983) also concentrates on the outcomes of human resource strategies. As he says, 'the acid test' is whether there are 'identifiable combinations' of environments (and settings) and particular types of HR strategy which consistently yield better results than their alternatives. It might be considered that in the context of local government that a historical perspective needs to be taken, as described in the next chapter, in order to compare phases of local government development with the different business strategies described below. Different stages in a local authorities history may find it employing the innovation and quality enhancement policies relevant to that particular stage in its development. Since the contraction of local government services began in 1974 the cost reduction model may seem the most frequently applied across all local authorities, and the only one applicable to local authorities during C.C.T. A shift to the quality enhancement model under BV, with its

focus on consultation and development, may be under way if the rhetoric of BV expressed in Chapter One is translated into reality.

FIGURE 2.5 The Link Between H.R.M Strategy and Employee Behaviour

Strategy	Employee Role Behaviour	Human Resource
		Management Strategy
Innovation	A high degree of creative behaviour	Jobs that require close interaction and co-ordination among groups of individuals
	Longer-term focus	Performance appraisals that are more likely to reflect longer-term and group-based achievements
	A relatively high level of co- operative, interdependent behaviour	Jobs that allow employees to develop skills that can be used in other positions in the firm
	A moderate degree of concern for quality	Pay rates that tend to be low, but that allow employees to be stockholders and have more freedom to choose the mix of components that make up their pay package
	A moderate concern for quantity an equal degree of concern for process and results	Broad career paths to reinforce the development of a broad range of skills
	A greater degree of risk taking, a high tolerance of ambiguity and unpredictability	
Quality Enhancement	Relatively repetitive and predictable behaviours	Relatively fixed and explicit job descriptions
	A more long-term or intermediate focus	High levels of employee participation in decisions relevant to immediate work conditions and the job itself
	A moderate amount of co- operative, interdependent behaviour	A mix of individual and group criteria for performance appraisal that is mostly short- term and results orientated
	A high concern for quality	A relatively egalitarian teatement of employees and some guarantees of employment security
	A modest concern for quantity of output	Extensive and continuous training and development of employees
	High concern for process low risk-taking activity, commitment to the goals of the organisation	

FIGURE 2.5 (continued)

Cost Reduction	Relatively repetitive and predictable behaviour	Relatively fixed and explicit job descriptions that allow little
		room for ambiguity
	A rather short-term focus	Narrowly designed jobs and career paths that encourage specialisation expertise and efficiency
	Primarily autonomous or individual activity	Short-term results-orientated, performance appraisals
	Moderate concern for quality	Close monitoring of market pay levels for use in making compensation decisions
	High concern for quantity of output	Minimal levels of employee training and development
	Primary concern for results	
	Low risk-taking activity	
	Relatively high degree of comfort with stability	
Schuler and Jackson (198'	7) Model of Employee Role Bel	naviour

2.10 How Different Organisations Use Different Key Levers in their Version of H.R.M

Below is part of a table taken from the work of Storey (1995) which identifies the key levers of H.R.M across a variety of organisations operating in different public and private sectors. Bradford City Council, the local authority representative in the table seems to operate most of the key levers identified as characteristic of H.R.M (see above FIGURES 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10). Interestingly, perhaps with this local authority representative, the areas most associated with collective bargaining, individual contracts, marginalisation of trades union stewards and performance pay, fail to be fully implemented. The assumption behind their omission, in brief, is the continuing voluntary participation of local authorities within central, national negotiating bodies on pay and terms and conditions of employment, preventing significant change in these key areas. At the time of this research local authorities, in the main, are not

seeking to opt-out of national bargaining arrangements. This remained the case in the late 1980s even though forty local authorities based in specific regions of the country, did move towards independence (Stoker, 1990).

FIGURE 2.6 Different Applications of Key H.R.M Levers

Key HRM	Austin Rover	British Rail	Bradford	Eaton Limited	ICI
Levers			Council		
Business Need Prime Guide	Yes	Yes	Yes	In Part	Yes
Beyond Contract	Yes	In Part	Yes	Yes	Yes
Values/Mission	Yes	In Part	Yes	Yes	Yes
Impatient with Rule	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Standardised	Yes	In Part	Yes	Yes	Yes
De-emphasised Conflict	Yes	In Part	Yes	In Part	Yes
Untarist	In Part	In Part	No	No	No
		Strategio	Aspects		
Customer Care	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Integrated Plan	Yes	No	Yes	No	In Part
Corporate Plan	Yes	In Part	Yes	No	In Part
		Line M	anagers		
"To the Fore"	Yes	Yes	Yes	In Part	Yes
Facilitation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Other Ke	ey Levers		
Cultural Strategies	Yes	Yes	Yes	In Part	Yes
Teamworking	In Part	In Part	Yes	Yes	Yes
Marginalise Union Stewards	Yes	In Part	In Part	In Part	In Part
Individual Contracts	In Part	Yes	In Part	No	In Part
Performance Pay	Yes	In Part	In Part	In Part	No
Training	Yes	In Part	Yes	No	In Part
Storey (1995)					

It would appear from the information given in this table that the communication of strategic decisions within H.R.M into policy and practice, depends, as the table above [FIGURE 2.6] shows, on many factors.

Foremost among the key levers is, once again, the role of the line manager and his or her responsibility for people management. The importance of this role has been strengthened by the introduction of flexible firm models to organisational structures and the devolution and decentralisation of responsibilities for operational matters. As noted above, these structural and cultural changes place extra emphasis on the line managers function. This greater emphasis on the management role has tested the limited skills of some line managers in local government and shown a requirement for greater expertise in the key lever areas highlighted in the table (see Chapter Seven). In many respects the implementation of H.R.M Policies and Procedures and business strategies described in the Schuler and Jackson (1987) model and the key H.R.M levers described above, are influenced by the managers role within a devolved and/or decentralised organisational structure. This aspect of H.R.M is discussed in the next section.

2.11 Devolved and Decentralised Management and Organisational Structure under a H.R.M System

The difference between decentralisation and devolution are important in the discussion on the manner in which line managers influence the shape and form of H.R.M and thus the nature of industrial relations within organisations. While these issues will be developed in chapter seven, it is worth noting here the opinion of many writers that the terms devolution and decentralisation are broadly synonymous. Kinnie and Lowe (1990) argue, however, that a decentralisation of structures is not necessarily associated with a devolution of genuine discretion. Decentralisation applies, therefore, to changes in departmental structure, whereas devolution applies to changes in the allocation of authority. In this study a clear distinction is made. Decentralisation is to do with where personnel specialists are located, whether their function is centralised or decentralised by being spread around the business, working

very closely with line managers and identifying themselves with individual departments. In contrast, devolution is to do with the responsibilities and activities of the personnel function being moved, in whole or part, to line managers. The term devolution is used here only in the context of the reallocation of personnel activities to line managers. In local government the emphasis behind devolution of management responsibilities has been financial control, in part associated with the introduction of internal markets and as a preparation for Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT). So. within local authorities the excellence process of devolving HR and other responsibilities complements and supports local authority policies of financial control under managerialism. As noted above one of the main features of H.R.M drawn from the In Search of Excellence material is that responsibility for managerial decisionmaking including personnel administration and a range of other issues are devolved to line management working in organisational sub-units with a high degree of autonomy. Often this process of devolution is accompanied by the introduction of a small number of HR specialists to the organisation operating from local decentralised units as distinct from those operating from the centre of the structure. Many organisations have decentralised HR functions to such autonomous units in order to improve the HR service to those staff in immediate contact with the local community. Such a strategy is also introduced to reduce overall costs and move financial and other resources from the corporate support departments to those directly serving the public. Evidence exists confirms this general trend towards the decentralization of management and organisational structures (Channon, 1982) both in public and private sectors (Audit Commission, 1990). Hill and Pickering (1986) found that virtually all major UK companies now operate with decentralised organisational structures with corporate personnel functions, being relocated within divisions or smaller operating units

(Evans and Cooling, 1985; Francis, 1995). Goold and Campbell (1986) refer to at least three possible types of decentralisation, namely strategic planning, strategic control and financial control organisations. Such decentralisation varies in extent across a continuum of low to high decentralisation respectively. Financial control organisations, on the highly decentralised end of the continuum, place greater emphasis on applying financial performance targets to business units, allowing them a greater level of autonomy, characteristic of portfolio style management and represents a model particularly relevant to the later discussions on local government devolution (Purcell, 1989). In contrast, strategic planning and strategic control (Sisson and Scullion, 1985) organisations stress internal integration with higher levels of corporate centre involvement in the management of divisions. Regardless of any distinctions between these types, It seems that all sucumb to the pressures of cost minimisation eventually and adopt a form of decentralisation more in line with financial control.

The likelihood of finding a hybrid model of decentralisation within local government is high since this process is a matter of degree and has reached different stages of development in different organisations (Farrell, 1997). Marginson et al. (1988b) argue that the process of decentralisation is itself confusing and traumatic, often without any clearly definable separation between corporate and operational decision-making. This suggests that many organisations are transitional 'half-way house configurations' in which HR is neither fully decentralised nor totally centralised. A great many corporate HR departments are still playing their traditional role of monitoring and instructing operating units on core policy. Certain corporate functions may also maintain 'dotted line' relationships with personnel departments in operating units while at the same time limiting their own role to one of providing internal consultancy

services (Evans and Cooling, 1985; Marginson et al., 1988b). In this sense it is therefore still justifiable to talk about a clear trend towards decentralising H.R.M. Research by Purcell and Alhstrand (1987) considered how far HR policies, which they describe as third order strategy, are taken into account when first and second order strategies, which basically determine organisational structures, are decided. The 'critical choices' concerning human resources which need to be made as part of third order strategy include:

FIGURE 2.7 Factors Affecting the Structure and Style of H.R.M

1	The structure of collective bargaining		
2	The organisation of the personnel function		
3	The issue of organisational culture (style)		
4	4 Internal labour markets		
Purce	Purcell and Alhstrand (1987)		

The role for strategic H.R.M, will vary between two extremes on a continuum of relative decentralisation. Within strategic planning organisations the existence of a clear 'institutional style' based on the need for internal integration may preserve some strategic influence for personnel in areas like manpower planning, internal labour markets and corporate culture. Financial control organisations, at the opposite end of the continuum, adopt a more pragmatic approach and a greater level of decentralisation to operating divisions which tend to exclude personnel from any kind of strategic role. Interference by centralised personnel departments would be seen as nothing less than an incursion on the autonomy of operational units creating a further impetus to devolve personnel issues from the strategic to the level of the operating units. By this means there can be greater linking of policy with specific human resource needs and short-term goals. Such moves obviously carry implications for the clear, consistent and corporate-wide approach to personnel issues implied by the pure model of H.R.M, in areas such as pay, conditions and internal labour markets.

2.12 Union Responses to H.R.M

Much of the debate on the characteristics of H.R.M in Britain has centred on new work environments on greenfield sites. With these new work environments have come new industrial relations systems that have had as their objective higher efficiency and productivity via formal arrangements between management and workers. Overmanning, inflexible practices and industrial conflict are supposed to be left behind by these new systems (Bassett, 1987). H.R.M can be seen as the basis of restructuring this problematic past set as it was against the background of a hostile political and legislative programme towards trade unions (see Chapter Four). These developments gave rise to a conciliatory and concessionary trade union approach, with a specific strategy of embracing much of these managerially led developments (Storey, 1995).

Adversarial industrial relations were considered antiquated compared to this new climate of compromise and concession, the concessions by workers and their respective trade unions on economic issues were seen as contributing to a new labour-management relation that could facilitate even broader and more deep-seated changes in employment and work itself (Moody, 1987). There was also a macro-level reflection of these responses to assertive management and H.R.M in the form of the 'New Realism' that was debated during most of the 1980s (McIlroy, 1988). Compromise and partnership with employers was considered by the unions to be the best response to increasingly assertive managerial styles as well as a hostile Conservative Government (McIlroy, 1988).

H.R.M-type practices and the new political framework were perceived as being incompatible with traditional industrial relations and even presaging non-unionism.

To overcome this dilemma the unions adopted specific policies which were to complement this new managerially led initiative.

In the report produced by UNISON (1999) on its interpretation and response to H.R.M it contests that objective of this new form of people management is to reshape the workforce and to marginalise trade union influence at work (UNISON, 1999).

UNISON's concern was that HR policies may be introduced as part of a planned approach or in a more piecemeal way causing major changes in work organisation, employment policies and management attitudes to the role of UNISON.

UNISON policies to address H.R.M include improving the quality of service provision by effective staff development policies and the maintenance of job security rather than via the expansion of insecure, temporary and casual forms of employment. UNISON is against schemes aimed at linking performance to pay and has demonstrated how many of the changes associated with H.R.M lead to increased stress for employees.

UNISON like many other public sector unions believe that H.R.M policies aim to marginalise the union often by replacing bargaining arrangements with other forms of employee involvement from team meetings and focus groups to staff councils. To avoid being pushed aside, union representatives have set an agenda where they demonstrate to members the continuing relevance and activity of the union. This means constantly raising questions with management about proposed changes, talking with members and engaging them in union activities and strengthening links with members who may work for different employers and business units and be located in a variety of workplaces and departments.

This response from trades unions has been the actual basis of a new system of representation of interests at work. This has been through the attainment of a much

sought for consensus through claims of a common interest between managers and workers, realised in such ways as the single-status agreement between unions and local government employers at national level. Underpinning these developments was a symbolism providing the basis for a break with the inefficient and conflict-ridden past which sought to attract involvement and participation from parties on both the left and right of the political spectrum (Dunn, 1990).

2.13 Institutional Strategies and Collective Bargaining

Regardless of the reaction of trade unionism it would be premature to consider new management strategies as having created a new form of trades unionism. Other responses are also evident which are partly a response and reaction in accordance with individual trade union traditions. The starting point for the union's strategy was the realisation that it was becoming irrelevant to an increasing number of issues across the employment relationship. The developments in management techniques along with the changing expectations of workers themselves have challenged the relevance and effectiveness of collective bargaining. At the heart of the 'New Agenda' is the intention of extending the scope of collective bargaining into such areas as training, careers and recruitment issues. H.R.M has offered the possibility of a basis for broader, formal involvement by trade unions through collective bargaining structures, broadening the understanding and role of employees and their needs (I.R.R.R., 1991). Furthermore, the approach envisages bargaining and the union's role being extended into areas such as the quality of production as in Best Value consultation (L.G.A, 1998). The implications for the workplace are that the established and extended joint regulation would tie it closer into the broader concerns of the enterprise apparently socialised by the union's new role. The link between trades union members and local authority elected councillors through mutual political affiliations have had an influence on new patterns of industrial relations and the maintenance and extension of bargaining. In respect of this thesis this relationship acts as a moderating factor in the relationship between managers and unions, especially since councillors are often members of joint negotiating committees within local authorities. This involvement can, in authorities without a history of trade union participation, also be a moderating factor which works against trades unions.

Any evaluation of the success of union strategies towards developments in H.R.M. practices must take account of two factors. First, the implementation of such a strategy represents a qualitative change in the existing industrial relations framework, with its traditional institutions of joint regulation covering a broader range of strategic, long-term issues. As H.R.M strategies seek to integrate workers into a managerial led agenda that is closer to the needs of the market, then this approach would seem to be at odds with H.R.M, given the union's objective of a 'socialisation' of the employment agenda. The accommodation of wider social and economic dimensions is not central to H.R.M as it stands and therefore if such a policy as that of the New Agenda is pursued it would require compromise on the part of management in pursuing their goals. Secondly, the 'New Agenda' was the product of the union's leadership which had to contend with diverse interests and strong officer traditions within its own organisation. In recognition of this unions have developed a coherent training programme for its officers as a means of securing the adoption and implementation of strategies to address H.R.M.

2.14 Line Managers within Devolved Structures - The Barrier to the Successful Implementation of H.R.M?

Guest, (1987) recognised the underlying problem of H.R.M in its reliance on line management commitment. The pressure to achieve results in strategic and financial terms is in contradiction to the longer-term developmental activities relevant to the soft motivation and commitment-oriented aspects of H.R.M. An example of this arising as a consequence of decentralisation is the profit centre with its own budget expected to cover its own overheads. This situation can result in many line managers arguing that the less relevant soft areas of policy should be dropped and personnel costs kept under control so that overheads could be kept down to a minimum. In such situations most issues have been judged in quantitative, cost-conscious terms. Attempts to integrate developmental human resource work into the line management role, has required an acceptance of the long-term and qualitative content of this work. This process requires line management commitment in both time and energy, set against the requirement for managers to deal with issues on a short-term cost-effectiveness basis.

In a succession of policy areas, including appraisals, staff consultation and equal opportunities, H.R.M specialists receive only grudging compliance from line managers who could not see the relevance of these policies and resented wasting time on them. Some policies were accepted only half-heartedly, while other attempts to develop flatter structures, flexible-working and human resource planning have been rejected completely. Against this background local authorities have found it difficult to convince managers that they should accept more responsibility for HR. There is a growing body of evidence of the type of culture generated by organisational structures which push financial responsibility down to relatively low levels. In addition to the

"好事正是我会会,这个这种知识,但是我们的,我也不是我们的。""我们也不是我们的,我们是我们的。" "

ndari sete di entre la compositione del of the configurations, and the company of the section of the configurations and the configurations of the configurations and the configurations are configurated as the configuration of the configura and the state of the state of the second of the state of the season of the one of the design of the season of the s ent la company de la compa the Development of the Control of th efform on a second of the present of the second of the sec and the second of the second o

ting and the contract of the contract of the second of the contract of the con The first of a factor of gardy the considerability and the excitations. to the first of the contract of the second o A CONTRACT SERVICE CONTRACTOR CONTRACTOR OF THE PROPERTY OF TH the state of the s en de la filipa de la filipa de la companya de la

short-termism that typically accompanies such structures, the nature, as well as the time scale, of decisions is likely to be framed by this context (Mintzberg, 1979). As Legge (1978) and more recently Armstrong (1989) have argued, the promoters of H.R.M still face the basic need of utilitarian values and bureaucratic relations prevelant in business culture (Armstrong, 1989). Characteristic of the business culture is an ethos in which hard, quantitive information is weighted more heavily than other forms of information, hence disadvantaging policies geared towards outcomes that are difficult to measure. Typically, personnel practitioners are forced to justify activities and policies in cost-effectiveness terms, to the detriment of innovative H.R.M activities. Normative H.R.M ignores the reality of the line manager as a budget holder and the fact that his or her performance is primarily evaluated in budgetary terms (Armstrong, 1989). In H.R.M though, line managers act as business managers with responsibility for coordinating all resources in pursuit of the bottom-line objective. As such, a clear relationship is drawn between the proactive use of human resources and the achievement of the business units results. The ability and training of these managers in the role of implementers of H.R.M goals is in question and the continuing absence of the professional manager in the devolved organisational structure will prevent or impede and not facilitate the integration of some aspects of personnel management into the role of line managers.

The range and variety of H.R.M systems in organisations, as FIGURE 2.6 seeks to illustrate supports the proposition that there is no one model of either personnel management or H.R.M. The effect of the change in organisational structure and culture from personnel management to H.R.M are shown below in FIGURES 2.8; 2.9 and 2.10, below. These tables also show the differences suggested by their authors in the functions of personnel management and H.R.M in both the old and new

organisational forms. These tables reveal the areas where personnel management and H.R.M are said to differ. The comparisons shown in the table between compliance and commitment; mechanistic and organic; centralised and devolved; defined roles and flexible roles; specialist and largely integrated into line management are said to reflect the shift in organisational configuration and culture from the hierarchical bureaucratic form to that of a post-modernist devolved management structure. The managers task vis-a-vis labour, and the change from a monitoring role to one of nurturing, as discussed above is reflected in each model of H.R.M illustrated in these tables. This change of task and role de-emphasises the manager as policeman and emphasises him or her as coach, enabler and facilitator. This switch of emphasis is reflected in the change from bureaucratic coerciveness to that of the employees personal control of individual and team performance. The employee relation perspective of pluralist and unitarist, collective and individual shown in the table is intended to reflect the shift in approach to trade unions from traditional collective bargaining to the position of low tolerance of trade union involvement associated with H.R.M. The next section examines the differences between personnel management and H.R.M in its various forms.

2.15 Models of H.R.M and Personnel Management

This section begins with three normative models of H.R.M and Personnel Management being depicted in order to show how theorists have identified the key comparative levers illustrating the change from traditional personnel/administrative bureaucratic structures to those representative of H.R.M.

FIGURE 2.8. The Differences Between the H.R.M and Personnel Functions in Bureaucratic Organisations

Factor	Personnel Management	Human Resource Management
Time and Planning Perspective	Short-term, Reactive, Ad-hoc	Long-term, Proactive, Strategic,
	and Marginal	Integrated
Psychological Contract	Compliance	Commitment
Employee Relations Perspective	Pluralist, Collective, Low Trust	Unitarist, Individual, High Trust
Preferred Structure System	Mechanistic, Centralised,	Organic, Devolved, Flexible
	Defined Roles	Roles
Roles	Specialist	Largely integrated into line
		management
Torrington and Hall (1987)		

FIGURE 2.9 The Difference in Management Responsibility under H.R.M and Personnel Management

Factor	Personnel Management	Human Resource
		Management
Supervisory System	Man-in-the-middle	Front-line manager
Predominant Management Style	Policeman, Overseer, Enforcer	Coach, Enabler, Facilitator
Preferred Method of Staff	Bureaucratic Controls	Personal Control
Control		
Status, Authority and Pay	Low	High
Differentials with nearest		
subordinate		
Career Opportunities	Closed	Open
Guest (1993)		

FIGURE 2.10 H.R.M and Personnel Management

Dimension	Personnel Management	HRM
Contract	Careful delineation of written contracts	Aim to go beyond contract
Rules	Importance of clear rules and mutuality	Can do outlook and impatience with rule
Guide to Management Action	Procedures consistency and control	Business need, flexibility and commitment
Behaviour Referent	Norms, customs and practice	Values and mission
Managerial Task vis-à-vis Staff	Monitoring	Nurturing
Nature of Relations	Pluralist	Unitarist
Conflict	Institutionalised	De-emphasised
Storey, Peccei and Thomas (1993)		

Like all these models, that produced by Torrington and Hall (1987) support the argument that personnel management and H.R.M are different in key respects. They believe that personnel management is workforce and employee centred. This is in contrast with H.R.M's concerns with the overall, perhaps strategic, human resource needs of the entire organisation. Personnel is not totally identified with management interests and operates at a functional level, whereas the latter is a central management concern which is resource driven and of concern above operational level (see FIGURES above). Torrington and Hall (1987), Guest (1993), and Walton, (1987) also emphasise the proactive rather than reactive, goal rather than relationship-oriented, commitment rather than compliance aspects of H.R.M and personnel respectively, illustrative of the wider focus of H.R.M. The different levels at which H.R.M and personnel management seem to operate are picked up by Keenoy and Anthony (1993) who sees personnel management as merely tactical or pragmatic and operates in a pluralistic perspective while H.R.M operates in a unitary framework and is strategic. Keenoy (1990a), on the other hand, questions how personnel and H.R.M, which are both directed to the effective use of human resources, can be in conflict. The contradictions between these theories and theorists disappears once it is realised that H.R.M and personnel management can be viewed as complementary rather than mutually exclusive forms of practice. Set within this flexible personnel management and H.R.M framework policies may be unitary or pluralistic, collaborative or conflictual, or any other combination of contradictions, depending upon the business strategy used by the organisation (Scholes and Johnson, 1997). The political or attitudinal disposition of management (Salaman, 1992) the nature of the external organisational environment (Schuler and Jackson, 1987) its individual industrial relations history (Millward et al., 1994) and the legislative and economic policies of central government all may affect this balance. When H.R.M and personnel management are viewed at the normative level, here Legge (1989) gives qualified support to Keenoy's (1990a) proposition, concluding that there is relatively little difference between personnel management and H.R.M. Much of the seeming contradictions can be reconciled by the flexible and situational application of H.R.M and personnel management approaches. Legge (1989) herself, states her belief that only four significant differences exist:

FIGURE 2.11 Differences Between Personnel Management and H.R.M

1	HRM applies to managers as well as the main body of employees	
2	HRM is concerned with the management of people	
3	And all other resources in a business unit in search of the bottom line	
4	HRM emphasises the management of culture as a central function of senior	
	managers	
Legge (1989)		

Torrington and Hall (1987) use the same language as Walton (1985) from his H.R.M model in suggesting that both H.R.M and personnel management make use of policies that promote mutuality in order to elicit commitment. Both models identify placing the right people into the right jobs as an important means of integrating personnel management and H.R.M practice with organisational goals. Glueck's (1974) and Cuming's (1975) statements about personnel management's function in this respect are virtually identical to that of Tichy et al. (1982) that an essential process of strategic H.R.M is matching people to jobs. The recognition that this matching process is nevertheless a dynamic one given the rate of environmental and organisational change, and that employees really should be selected and developed in ways that enhance their adaptability and flexibility is common to both H.R.M models and to models of personnel management (Guest 1987; Legge 1978).

2.16 Conclusion

Human Resource Management, as discussed in this chapter, is clearly flexible in its meaning, changing its form to reflect, amongst other factors, the cultural message of senior managers and the business strategy they have chosen to implement. H.R.M clearly attempts to emphasise management of the organisation's culture as a managerial led series of H.R Policies which are supposedly integrated with the organisation's business strategy or style of operation at least. Managers have adopted this notion of cultural control with the intention of determining employee role behaviour towards producing desired outcomes, such as commitment to the organisations objectives, high quality, performance and flexibility. It would seem that this control is exercised through a process of objective setting and other directive techniques aimed at engaging employees, although the link between cultural control and implementation of this new performance culture seems vague. Peters and Waterman's (1982) linking of strong cultures with success has ensured that the development and management of an appropriate culture for the organisation has created much activity amongst those responsible for devising and implementing strategic missions and values. The success or otherwise of the psychological appeal to employees sense of commitment is also vague.

In most organisations this strategic role has been represented as focussing on the production of an integrated and internally consistent set of H.R.M policies. These policies operate in relation to recruitment, selection, training, development, reward systems and communications, the same operational functions found in personnel management. Such systems are then used to convey to employees and line managers the organisation's core values.

Throughout the chapter references to different theorists has exposed the lack of clear definitions on soft, hard H.R.M and how these seemingly different approaches can be reconciled.

No clear answer is forthcoming on how soft and hard models of H.R.M can be integrated. So integration, therefore, is an important issue here, both integration of H.R.M policies with strategy and also the internal integration and consistency of H.R.M policies themselves to enact this strong culture. How such cultural change has been implemented in local government and the effect of such change on traditional personnel management is considered in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Cultural Change in Local Government - Public Administration to Public Management

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes how traditional administrative management was replaced by what has been referred to as New Public Management (N.P.M). This executive style of private sector management was the tool through which the Conservative Government of 1979 intended to control resources and achieve results. This approach took little or no consideration of the unique nature of local government and individual local authorities as both democratic institutions with a community leadership role, and as service providers to that community. The introduction of a different form of management combined with the structural and cultural change commensurate with its introduction, cannot be effected without considerable industrial relations implications. These implications will be discussed in detail in the next two chapters, however, the form, style and composition of N.P.M has determined, at different times, the style and character of H.R.M within different local government organisations.

Throughout this chapter and later in this work consideration must be given to the differences in their individual agenda's and origins of N.P.M and H.R.M (see Chapter One). One apparent similarity is the importance in both N.P.M and H.R.M of the role of the line manager. But the role as envisaged in the model's produced by Guest (1987) and Blyton and Turnbull (1993), which are pivotal in making H.R.M work and in determining its form within the local authority, may not be that created under N.P.M. One of the differences between H.R.M and N.P.M line manager roles is the broader political role of a local government manager which can encompass interaction

with elected councilors and the type and degree of accountability required of a manager in the public service (see conclusion). Another difference worthy of note here is the affect of the role of the manager on both the strong tradition of collectivism and trades unionism in many authorities and the equally strong influence of professionalism.

The introduction of N.P.M was intended to introduce private sector concepts, terms and ideas to the public sector that were intended to convey the impression that local government was in business and as such seeking business efficiencies. Terms such as internal market, commercial services, customer and consumer awareness and quality were introduced to all aspects of local government at various times (Deakin & Walsh, 1994; Hoggett, 1994). Local government has adapted to these changes in a manner which reflects its traditional forms of organisational structure, management and culture, a distinctiveness which is reflected in the manner in which strategic business planning and Human Resource Management has been adopted in local government Loughlin (1994). In the next section the traditional organisational structure, culture and management of local government is introduced prior to the discussion in the next chapter on the process by which H.R.M was introduced to local government.

3.1 Background to the Changing Management of Local Government

As discussed above, one weakness in the excellence material, identified by Guest (1987) was the disregard of external environmental factors on the form of H.R.M within organisations. The changes that have occurred in the work environment of local government over the last twenty-five years or more, listed below, illustrate the extent and influence of the pressure applied to local government organisations from external sources:

FIGURE 3.0

Theme of Period	Character of the Period	Intergovernmental
		Financial Relations
Consultation 1960s and early 1970s	Increasing local service spending and employment, much of it encouraged and financed by central government	Considerable local discretion permitted by general (ie non specific) grant funding; central direction and intervention more the exception than the rule
Corporatism late 1970s	Accelerating economic decline; inflation – partly through oil price rises – necessitating a loan from the International Monetary Fund and tough public expenditure cuts	Labour Government; incorporation of local authority representative associations into policy making, notably the Consultative Council on Local Government Finance (CCLGF) to try to secure councils' voluntary expenditure restraint
Confrontation early 1980s – Central direction and local defiance	Conservative Government search for means to control local and thereby overall public expenditure mainly through manipulation of the grant system	Consultation replaced by unilateral ministerial decion making; CCLGF turned into forum for government announcements of further block grant reductions, spending guidelines for every council grant; penalties for overspending even if using their own tax revenues; increasing use of specific grants and directive legislation
Control mid 1980s onwards – if you cannot persuade, abolish	Government recognition that local current spending only fully controllable through statutory limitation of rates and their eventual abolition	Introduction of selective and potentially general rate/tax and expenditure capping; first community charge; legislation to reduce local authority responsibilities and discretion
Taken from Montanheiro, Haigh and Morris (1997)		

As the figure (FIGURE 3.0) above indicates, as the financial and economic aspects of the period worsened, and local government expenditure was more tightly controlled by central government, so the relationship between local and central government deteriorated. The influence of central government on the employment relationship in local government organisations was strong with authorities facing a barrage of legislative changes to its role and functions, as well as the strong possibility of virtual abolition of services through C.C.T and financial restrictions. Certainly, while the "poll" tax to some extent backfired on the Conservative government, its intention was to show the way local authorities spent public money, making local democracy both

more open and more accountable to its electorate. This table shows the decline in both central and local government relations and the changing mood from consensual decision-making and management to the confrontational management which was in place as H.R.M and N.P.M were introduced. The tools of C.C.T like Best Value were introduced along with other initiatives to improve the cost-effectiveness and quality of local government services. In part over-staffing in local government was perceived as a problem as was and the ability of various staff groups to resist initiatives aimed at increasing performance and the quality of service (Hall, 1984; du Gay, 1994a).

3.2 Public Administration as Management

Advocates of the 1974 reorganisation wished to replace traditional administration with corporate management and a new committee system in order to counteract the fragmentation of councils (see Bains Report, 1972). Adoption of a business management style had already been suggested at this time as one solution to traditional administration precisely because it held out the promise of order, hierarchy and leadership, control, co-ordination, and integration based upon simple principles and clean-cut structures (Stanyer, 1976).

It was not until the early 1980s, however that a notably new approach to local government management became reality. The differences between traditional administrative management and N.P.M are listed below in FIGURE 3.1. The agenda for N.P.M in this model is one of change, performance management, adoption of a customer-based orientation, and, by inference, a unitarist approach to staff management. The contrast between N.P.M and traditional administration is that of the external work environment, the former exists in an era of change and cost-efficiency whereas the latter suited a period of relative stability and predictability. Clearly, the

involvement of trades unions, the professions and councillors in this change process has been covered in other texts (Mabey and Salaman, 1995), however, Chapter Four of this thesis will explore the reaction of these groups to managerialism and H.R.M within the context of workplace industrial relations.

FIGURE 3.1 Changing Management Styles in the Public Sector

Changing Management Styles in the Public Sector	Administrative Management	New Public Management
Management Goals	System Maintenance and Stability	System Performance and Change
Resource Strategy	Reliance on State Resources	Pro-active search for non- state resources
Resource Allocation	By Rules of Eligibility and Professional Needs Judgements	By Target Norms and Charges
Financial Management Objectives	To Ensure Probity	To Inform Management Decision-Making
Cost Reduction Pressures	Internal Search for Cost Efficiency	External Search for Opportunities
Incentives	Rewards for Conformity	Rewards for Innovation
Supervision Style	Rule/Procedure Based	Review Based Achievement
Employment Relationship	Long Career Hierarchy	Short Term Contracts
Orientation to Customers	Defensive Paternalistic	Receptive Responsive
Kelly (1991)		

The different styles of traditional administrative management and New Public Management, shown in this table, reflect the different requirements of local government in the Corporatist and Confrontation periods shown in the first table in this chapter (FIGURE 3.0). Such a change in management style could be said to

reflect the organisational strategy forced upon local government by the new relationship between central and local government in the 1980s. This organisational strategy may be related to the model shown in Chapter Two (FIGURE 2.7), of the different H.R.M techniques deployed in relation to organisational strategy. In effect local government in the 1980s and 1990s might be said to relate at times in recent local government history, to both the cost-reduction and quality enhancement model shown there.

3.3 New Public Management and its Fit with Local Government

Whether New Public Management is compatible with local government has been the subject of some speculation, mostly based on arguments that commercial styles of management cannot function within local government due to its unique nature which does not, apparently, lend itself to the introduction of managerial practices developed within private sector organisations. Lawton and Rose (1991) noted a number of arguments which have been advanced to indicate the unique character and characteristics of the public sector. These arguments are worthy of review and comparison with the needs of the business strategies set out in Schuler and Jackson's (1987) model as well as the basic tenets of excellence set out by Peters and Waterman (1982).

FIGURE 3.2 Unique Characteristics of the Public Sector

1	Public sector organisations are not exposed to the competitive world		
2	Their objectives are usually ill defined by reason of their service to the public		
3	Their short-term aims make it difficult for them to engage in strategic planning		
4	They are susceptible to greater and more open accountability		
5	Their functions are limited by statute		
6	They are funded from taxation and not by charging the market price for their products and services		
7	Certain services can only be provided by the state and such service cannot be left to the vagaries of market forces for, if such was the case, those services would not be provided		
Lawton an	Lawton and Rose (1991)		

Certainly, if these restrictions are accurate it seems that H.R.M as portrayed in the ideal-type models shown in Chapter Two, cannot be applicable to local government. Those who promote N.P.M, as opposed to those advocating a uniquely local government style of management, have pointed to the convergence between the public and private sectors as evidence that a hybrid style could exist which met the special needs of local democracy. As Lawton and Rose (1991) suggest, the advocates of this convergence thesis would indicate that the distinctive features of the public sector have been blurred over the two decades of Conservative Government and that similarities with the private sector are becoming ever more pronounced, even under the Best Value regime of the Labour Government (LGA, 1998):

FIGURE 3.3 Local Government Similarities with the Private Sector

1	Increasingly, the organisations of the public sector charge for some of the services they offer	
2	The private sector also operates within an environment in which government policy and decisions have a direct impact upon its services	
3	Constraints imposed by statute are also a feature of the private sector	
4	Joint public and private schemes and programmes are a feature of certain areas of activity	
Lawton and Rose (1991)		

The advocates of both of these differing perceptions would agree that the changes that have taken place in local government suggest a continuing movement away from public administration toward N.P.M. With this fact in mind, consideration must be given to how the professionally trained employees, and other staff members, will react to the new managerialism and its programme to implement an effective Human Resource Management system. In the next section, the reaction of these employees to H.R.M is considered, initially through an analysis of the employment relationship under traditional administrative management.

3.4 The Changing Approach to the Management of Professional Staff Employed in Local Government

The implementation of a commercial management model sought by the Conservative Governments of the 1980s and early 1990s, was promoted through a series of Audit Commission and Local Government Management Board (L.G.M.B) reports and papers, as well as legislation (Audit Commission, 1990). Papers such as the Audit Commission's 'Competitive Council' series (1990) proposed increased managerial control over professional staff as the means to achieve more effective and efficient services. The implementation of such structures represents a new awareness of the need to ensure that the management of staff is more closely linked to the commercial

and business considerations of local government. This represents an attempt to achieve the 'engaged professional' required by local authority members through an alignment of the professionals commitment to the organisational objectives of the authority (Glover and Hughes, 1996).

The process of managerialism has forced a reconfiguration of professional power within local authorities with a shift in power towards line managers who sought to standardise and formalise professional practice in the interests of cost control. Strategies to realign the public service values of the local government professions, towards a more commercial and organisational set of values and objectives, were also implemented during the preparation for C.C.T.

N.P.M saw the introduction of time-recording, service-level agreements, longer hours, work intensification, delayering, de-skilling of professional work, outsourcing and the devolution of financial responsibility to contractor units (Murray, 1989; Alexander, 1991). These changes created a new employment environment for local government where work relationships became more contractual than collegial and more competitive than co-operative (Vincent-Jones and Andrew Harries, 1996). Opportunities for career advancement and job security came under threat in many authorities as the result of N.P.M even as those authorities promoted the commitment and shared values message of H.R.M to their staff (Cochrane,1993a; Clarke, Cochrane and McLaughlin,1994).

3.5 Corporate Management in Local Government

Corporate management within local government was designed to deal with three key issues facing local authorities. This new emphasis on strong central management was intended to break the organisational boundaries set up by the bureau-professions, shift

the emphasis from growth to restraint in service provision and quell the growing public criticism of local government services (Glover and Hughes, 1996).

Bureau-professional regimes were known to be relatively weak institutional arrangements for the exercise of the fiscal discipline thought to be needed in local government. Hoggett (1994) in supporting this view believed that local government was a hybrid organisation, based on an uneasy marriage between a pre-Fordist craft Taylorised (rational-bureaucratic (professional) productive system and a administrative) system, and as such would be unable to exercise the central management control required to keep spending under control. Attempts to impose financial control and discipline increased the lines of internal fracture, especially between administrators and professionals. Such financial pressure exposed tensions between professional discretion and administrative control more explicitly. These tensions were overlaid with the effects of the decline of consensus both at national and local level, producing new conflicts over the direction of welfare policy at the local level and the control of its implementation. The truces between political representation, bureaucratic administration and professional discretion which formed the uneasy but stable condition of the organisational settlement of the post-war welfare regime were becoming de-stabilised in the face of the complex pressures of public spending restraint, growing politicisation, increasing social diversity and challenges to the neutrality of representation of the public and its needs. The effect of these multiple tendencies was to produce a crisis in the traditional welfare state not merely in the collapse of the political consensus but in the intersection of crises in all three settlements, political-economic, social and organisational.

3.6 Structural Change in Local Government - Types of Managerialism and H.R.M

The main focus of those concerned with traditional administration and management is on a succession of structural changes. Most studies take a sequential view, with organisational reform (such as the devolution of finance through the Financial Management Initiative - FMI) being followed by broader attempts to bring about cultural change (e.g., 'Citizen's Charter', consumerism) and with later stages bringing a greater use of market mechanisms (Jervis and Richards, 1995; Metcalfe, 1993; Pollitt, 1993). Many accounts have distinguished between this early stage of reforming the machinery of government and the later, market-based phases of reform. Markets were introduced in a variety of ways, including direct privatisation, contracting out selected services and the introduction of charging for services. The immediate result was that local authorities experienced for the first time in the 1990s mass redundancies and loss of staff through early retirement (Pollitt, 1993; Jervis and Richards, 1995).

Government thinking clearly evolved during this period of the late 1970s to early 1990s revealing a dynamic interplay between policy changes and successive attempts to reform the machinery of local government. The danger of such sequential analysis is that it can tend to underplay the importance of earlier themes, especially the overriding focus on controlling costs, which has continued even in the later stages of this change process. Managerialism has been a central thread throughout these changes, taking on different inflections and forms in each of the stages of this process. Pollitt (1993) views the initial period of changes as characterised by cost control and decentralised management underpinning a neo-Taylorist form of managerialism (see cost-reduction strategy of H.R.M FIGURE 2.6 Chapter Two). He also views the later reforms as a 're-evaluation' of neo-Taylorism, leading to the introduction of quasi-

decentralised management underpinning a neo-Taylorist form of managerialism (see cost-reduction strategy of H.R.M FIGURE 2.6 Chapter Two). He also views the later reforms as a 're-evaluation' of neo-Taylorism, leading to the introduction of quasimarkets, a greater emphasis on decentralisation, a constant emphasis on the need to improve quality, and insistence on greater attention being given to meeting the wishes of the individual service users (see quality strategy of H.R.M FIGURE 2.6 Chapter Two). As the application of market mechanisms became the dominant strand of reform, managerialism as an array of business techniques and H.R.M strategies came to be seen as a version of private sector management within local government (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). New Public Management when contrasted with traditional public administration and personnel management can be seen to feature an obvious need for skills, knowledge, training and a business orientation well beyond anything remotely like administration. The main features of N.P.M are summarised by Dunleavy and Hood (1994) as follows:

FIGURE 3.4 Main Features of New Public Management

1	Reworking budgets to be transparent in accounting terms, with costs attributed to outputs not inputs, and outputs measured by quantitative performance indicators
2	A chain of low cost principal/agent relationships (rather a fiduciary or trust beneficial ones) network of contracts linking incentives to performance
3	Disaggragating separable functions into quasi-contractual or quasi-market forms, particularly by introducing purchaser/provider distinctions, replacing previously unified functional planning and provision structures (Decentralisation and Devolution)
4	Opening up provider roles to competition between agencies or between public agencies, firms and not for profit organisations
5	De-concentrating provider roles to the minimum feasible sized agency allowing users more scope to exit from one provider to another rather than relying on voice options to influence how public service provision affects them
Dunlea	avy and Hood (1994)

and the second and th

FIGURE 3.5 Growing Similarity between Public and Private Sectors

1	A shift in the degree to which the public sector is distinctive from the	
	private	
2	A change in the extent to which the discretionary powers of managers are	
	limited by uniform and general rules of procedure	
Dunleavy and Hood (1994)		

An example of the difference between N.P.M and administration is in the devolution of discretionary management responsibility from both senior managers and even council committees. Linked to budget control, managers are required to consider the problems of staffing costs, the on-cost of common administrative services to the organisation and the issue of rationing and choice in service delivery. Evaluations of the New Public Management from within the public administration tradition focus on the benefits or drawbacks of these, and other, design changes for the delivery of public services. One recent survey of welfare changes found that the traditional system based upon the practices and values of public administration has been replaced by a new set of practices and values. These practices and values are based upon a language of welfare delivery which emphasises efficiency and value for money, competition and markets, consumerism and customer care (Butcher, 1995). The problem here is that these systems are based on practices and values which are separated from the content and character of the welfare services that they deliver. The next section examines the background to N.P.M.

3.7 The Private Sector as the Model for the New Public Management

Originally N.P.M was considered to have its roots in the commercial sector using the techniques and practices of business management with its in-built Human Resource Management role. This notion appealed to the Conservative Governments of the 1980s and 1990s which considered the preoccupation of local government managers

with an administrative style of management as part of its reactive and negative response to planning and resource allocation. Parry identified the undue emphasis placed on the constraints on managing in a public sector context rather than expressions of the need for improved performance (Parry 1992)

Indeed, one of the hallmarks of Thatcherism became the extent to which the principles of good private sector management were seen as worthy of emulation within state operations reconstructed along business lines. Yet, the belief in the distinctiveness of the public services still widely persists, and although public service management was believed by many not to be totally different it remained the contention of many that the prescriptions of generic management would only fit local government after considerable change (Pollitt et al., 1992)

3.8 The Emergence of New Public Management

As described above, the process of radical change in the way in which the public services were organised came in phases, the first phase lasting from 1979 until the late 1980s (Cousins, 1987). During this period, government reforms concentrated on privatisation and the imposition of tight controls over public spending with an emphasis on financial control, accountability and the use of performance indicators and external audits (Carter, 1991). The second phase began in the late 1980s and involved a shift in priorities: restructuring those parts of the public sector which could not be privatised, along market lines. The objective of this restructuring was to transform the state's role in the delivery of welfare services, facilitating and enabling others to provide rather than direct service provision (Osbourne and Gaebler, 1992). Specifically, it involved creating new arrangements through which the planning of services was separated from their actual delivery. This meant breaking up vertically

integrated hierarchies and replacing them with a nexus of contracts negotiated through a quasi-market of (public, private and voluntary) providers. By this mechanism the delivery of welfare services became a managerial, not professional, task, separated from the political job of planning, allocating resources and deciding overall priorities. The creation of C.C.T in Local Government and an increasingly mixed economy of social care were legitimated by a rhetoric involving quality improvement, consumer rights and diffuse notions of excellence and cultural change based on performance and accountability (Harrison and Pollitt, 1994).

It would appear that an executive form of N.P.M was developed during the first phase of government reforms, specifically to deal with the need for fiscal control, efficiency and accountability, tasks requiring a hard, strong and rational form of line management (Isaac-Henry, Painter and Barnes, 1997). Later, however, in the second phase of the government's reforms, the development of a market oriented management form was better equipped to handle the decentralisation of management responsibilities (Hoggett, 1991, 1994). It is during this second phase of change that managerialism adopts the strategies aimed at selling notions of quality improvement and cultural change (Wilson, 1993). Overall the two phases of the conservative government's reforms rested on different normative ideas about management roles, The two phases also suggested radically different and objectives and styles. contrasting institutional environments for management. The first characterised by vertically integrated hierarchies an inheritance from the bureaucratic structures that went before. The second featured decentralised structures with quasi-markets and varying degrees of devolution of authority and accountability. Managerialism has developed in an uneven way with examples of these two versions of new public management both co-existing and developing variants in style resulting from

structural, geographical, political and cultural differences across and within local government organisations.

3.9 Two Versions of New Public Management

As noted above, the Conservative Governments of the 1980s and 1990s determined that the reforms they wished to make to local government would be implemented by a stronger, more professional and more powerful form of public sector management (Hood, 1991; Gunn, 1988). This plan complemented the Conservative's drive within the economy as a whole to ensure the right of managers to manage across all sectors (see Chapter Three). This plan found its expression in the employment law reforms introduced throughout the 1980s aimed at curbing trades union power, developing a unitarist H.R.M approach to industrial relations and reducing the employment rights of many employees. By establishing the authority of managers over the local government bureau-professions, the state could drive through its programme of reform (Stewart and Walsh, 1992). The two types or styles of New Public Management developed during the years of successive Conservative Governments have been described as the executive and market versions.

3.10 Executive Management

Each version corresponds to the broader phases of Conservative Government policy as described above, but represent, in their own right, a distinct shift difference to the model of passive administrative management that existed in local government prior to 1979. The executive version typified by the control over expenditure and attempts to improve efficiency through devolving budgetary responsibility to managers of cost centres and devising internal markets between internal organisational business units

(Ackroyd and Soothill, 1994). This version was developed due to the assumption of the new right and public choice theorists that public sector bureaucracies were inherently inefficient and wasteful. The response was strong management, modelled on the private sector, which would overcome these deficiencies through cost-cutting, a pattern of management activity suggesting a hard form of H.R.M.

3.11 Market Management

The second strand of new public management, the market dimension, developed from the executive, but adopted a more diverse set of ideological claims. Management, in this context, was no longer strictly about command and control through a formal hierarchy. The emphasis instead was on designing service specifications, negotiating contracts and finding new ways to influence and direct the behaviour of providers (Appelby et al., 1990; Wilson, 1993). Management objectives had to be achieved in an environment where operational decisions are decentralised and strategic (resource based) decisions are highly centralised (Hoggett, 1991). A further aspect of this market dimension of N.P.M was the rhetoric of cultural change, service quality and notions of the sovereign consumer (Keat and Abercrombie, 1991; Du Gay and Salaman, 1992). Public managers, the argument went, were accountable to the individual consumers of services and responsible for ensuring that prescribed standards of quality were met. Cultural change, thought necessary in some cases, to overcome the dysfunctions of bureaucracy, making it more open and responsive to the perceived needs of internal and external customers (Du Gay, 1994). Such arguments were associated with techniques such as Total Quality Management, internal marketing, customer care and Human Resource Management.

FIGURE 3.6 Impact of the Market Dimension of N.P.M on Local Government

	Typical Justification	Impact on Local
Unbundling of the public sector into corporatised units organised by product	_	Government Disintegration of the corporate whole, elevation of importance of the corporate centre and strategic management
More contract based competitive provision with internal markets and short term contracts	and better standards contracts as	Compulsory and Voluntary Competitive Tendering, quasi internal markets, contractor/ client split, fragmentation of the workforce, removal of proximity of council to service delivery
Stress on private sector styles of management practice	Need to apply proven private sector management tools in the public sector	Downgrading of public service ethos; Assumed convergence with private sector. Emergence of proto-managers from local government professionals — devaluation of professionals. Clash with democratic framework of accountability
More stress on discipline and frugality in resource use	Need to cut direct costs, raise labour discipline do more with less	Deification of bottom line accounting. Introduction of private sector HRM ideology. Dilution of role of unions. Dilution of judgement of professionals
More emphasis on visible hands-on top management	Accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility not diffusion of power	Undermines role of elected members and democratic accountability. Elevates role of managers and lessens focus on professionals, elected members and users of services
Explicit formal measurable standards and measures of performance and success	1	Rise of corporate and strategic management to detriment of the public service ethos, the democratic framework, the role of elected members and accountability to users
Greater emphasis on output controls Hood (1995)	Need for greater stress on results	Undermines public service ethos, the role of professionals, members and service users. Introduction of performance indicators, performance related pay and other scientific measurements of output — undermines user needs and public service ethos

As FIGURE 3.6 shows, the introduction of management practices from the private sector model is recorded as a form of fragmentation whilst denying access to the mechanism which determines service delivery to users of those same services, the professional staff delivering the service and councillors representing those receiving the service.

While strategic and corporate management are exalted within this table, the processes of devolution and decentralisation militate against such a concept. Of particular note is the recognition of the appearance of the proto-managers, converts from the various local government professions who have adopted managerialism and managerial roles, often with little or no training. Such roles are different from the career administrative roles which once would have led to the chief executives job. Such involvement in managerialism raises the question of how the local government professions have responded to N.P.M and H.R.M in their various forms, and how some professionals have handled the conversion to management themselves.

3.12 Compliance or Conflict - New Public Management and the Local Government Professions

As stated above, the executive and market versions of N.P.M were informed by New Right thinking which stressed the self-interested nature of public sector professionalism (Dunleavy, 1990; Burrage, 1992). The new style managers, therefore, might be deemed to be anti-professional, as most certainly, the style of resource allocation under corporatism (see FIGURE 3.0) and administrative management (see FIGURE 3.1) which the Conservative Government wished to remove was based on the power of the local government professions. Another, and alternative reason for the

new managers to choose conflict with their professional employees was suggested by Ackroyd and Soothill (1994) who considered that the professions were impediments to the development of rationalised managerial control in local government.

3.13 Executive Style of New Public Management and Industrial Relations

The pro-active style of executive management has been shown to create negative relations with professional staff. This was because it discarded the consensus style of passive administration to one which stressed the right to manage without consultation, and complete control over objective setting and resource allocation based on non-professional criteria (see FIGURE 3.6) (Lee and Piper; 1988).

This reversal in the fortune of the professions caused Pollit to term the new relationship between professional expertise and management to be one where the professional was now subordinate to managers (Pollitt, 1990a). The techniques used in devolved cost-centre management appeared tantamount to the imposition of bureaucratic controls on professional staff. The imposition of quasi-financial costing and time-recording systems, for example, were aimed at standardising professional work and closely monitoring its cost-effectiveness as well as individual and group performance (Davies and Kirkpatrick, 1995b). As cost reduction pressures increased in the 1980s and skills shortages occurred amongst local government professions, a further programme of deprofessionalisation took place in many hard pressed authorities through the utilisation of new technology and quasi-professional staff in what were previously professional areas of work (Harrison and Pollitt, 1994). All of these measures combined with the enduring pressure of C.C.T increased the conflict between professions and management. The conversion of many professional staff into managers was a further factor in the maintenance of workable industrial relations.

These managers have proved more willing to accommodate professional discretion and other work practices due to their identification with professional needs (Lee and Piper, 1988).

The autonomy these managers hold within devolved and/or decentralised structures, allow them to shape harmonious working environments thereby avoiding industrial relations problems (Ackroyd and Soothill; 1994). As the next chapter will show, other factors prevented the professions from resisting the incursions of the new managers. These factors include the high unemployment in the national economy during the 1980s and early 1990s and concerns regarding job security; the weakening of the trade union movement due to the Conservative Governments' employment law measures; and, the ongoing C.C.T agenda for professional services.

3.14 Market Style of New Public Management and Industrial Relations

The market style of N.P.M also created poor profession-management industrial relations, although there exists the potential for a strong ideological accommodation (Bennett and Fertie, 1994). The cultural change envisaged by the excellence material (see FIGURE 2.2) is more prominent in the market style local authority than that where an executive style of management is utilised (Bennett and Fertie, 1994).

Often in the development of the market approach the use of quality assurance rhetoric has been used to legitimate interventions into areas of professional work discretion to ensure professional compliance with managerial objectives (Pollitt, 1990b). The fundamental performance review, internal and external audit features, public consultation and monitoring associated with Best Value, extends the market dimension of the new management into contemporary local government. This means, in effect, that there is still pressure on managers to redefine professional work

objectives at the risk of disrupting industrial relations in the workplace (Lee and Piper; 1988).

Whereas the executive style of N.P.M increased the pressure on managers to control the costs of professional work within partially decentralised organisations the market dimension of N.P.M suggests less of a focus on cost and greater appreciation of innovative and quality led approaches to work. Where conflict under executive N.P.M was intensified as providers were placed under pressure to perform and meet contract specifications, market N.P.M had a less conflictual effect. Management under market N.P.M can draw upon wider ideological resources, such as ideals of service to the public and quality, to challenge the resistance to change of professional groups. This is because there are aspects of the ideology of market N.P.M which point towards accommodation or integration between professions and management (Lee and Piper; 1988).

3.15 Devolution, Decentralisation and Cultural Management in Local Government

The importance of a shared organisational culture, symbolism and ritual in everyday working life has generally been overlooked, even though the benefits of the public service ethos in local government have been espoused for many years (March and Olsen, 1984; Pettigrew, 1985). Contemporary and popular management theorists such as Charles Handy, refer to the sets of values and norms and beliefs that exist within cultures (Handy, 1976). Evidence exists that this view was taken up with enthusiasm in local government following the promotion of these beliefs in a variety of documents published by, amongst others, the Audit Commission and Local Government Management Board. Such documentation is briefly reviewed in Chapter Four. Senior managers and elected members in local government have sought means

to change the old culture of adminstration, professionalism and regulation in favour of a much more responsive and proactive style customer/consumer-oriented style (Metcalfe and Richards, 1987).

Managers now work to create the right climate, to encourage identification with corporate goals, high motivation, internalisation of constructive attitudes. Those who can comply with these set standards may be granted not simply higher pay but also discretion, status and other privileges (Salaman, 1981). Such a view accepts the belief that culture can be spread homogeneously throughout the various vertical and horizontal sub-divisions of the council's departments despite evidence that such large organisations are usually honeycombed with different and contrasting cultures. Many such sub-cultures are deeply embedded in the belief systems of the staff concerned and are unlikely to be greatly altered by short-term management campaigns to promote a new image, despite the propoganda that might be used (Metcalfe and Richards, 1987).

The coherence of public-service managerialism lies in its promises of, on the one hand, greater delegation to and autonomy for local units and, on the other, strengthened political and strategic control from the centre. The issue of decentralisation has emerged as a central feature of the exhaustive debate concerning change in human resource management and industrial relations (Marginson et al., 1988a). Emerging out of this debate is what the notion of the end of institutional industrial relations due to the declining interest amongst employers and government in centralised collective-bargaining with trade unions (Purcell, 1994). The very act of decentralisation (both in terms of collective bargaining and personnel structures) may be considered to be undermining traditional industrial relations frameworks and relationships within local government (Storey, 1992).

The extensive organisational restructuring which took place during the 1980s and 1990s within many local authority organisations, involved the implementation of decentralised or devolved structures which supported the new managerialism approach to service provision (Pollitt, 1990). These requirements coincided with the publication during the 1980s of popular management texts such as the excellence series, recommending, amongst other things, the adoption of decentralised organisational structures and associated management styles (Peters and Waterman, 1982). Changes were also internally generated by local authorities, some of whom introduced (to varying degrees) more decentralised forms of service delivery to encourage greater responsiveness to particular local needs/demands. These changes took place within a corporate strategic framework derived from policy decisions made by elected members, rather than being externally driven (Flynn, 1993; Stoker, 1991). Devolved budgetary management in local authorities increased significantly between 1980 and 1988. In 1980 12.4 per cent of responding authorities had devolved budgetting, whereas 26.2 per cent had implemented such a system by 1988. It is worthy of note that only 8.1 per cent of the districts reporting had implemented devolved budgeting (Stoker et al., 1988). A report from the Local Government Management Board (L.G.M.B) suggested further increases in the adoption of devolved budgeting within housing, social services and education departments had taken place due to specific legislation in those work areas by 1993 (L.G.M.B.1993a). By 1994, however, the actual devolution of budgets for staff costs was far from 100 per cent.

The devolution of budget and HR responsibilities prepared the way and complimented organisational decentralisation, in those authorities deemed large enough, brought about by the preparation for C.C.T (Child, 1984). Decentralisation followed a

common pattern with devolution of operational decision-making powers down the hierarchy to middle and junior managers in service departments with appropriate numbers of support services provided in discrete units within each department (Lowndes and Stoker, 1992a and 1992b; Issac-Henry and Painter, 1991). Berkshire County Council, amongst other authorities, empowered its middle managers to make more operational decisions including the deployment of financial, personnel and other resources.

They also became accountable for their performance against various criteria within a framework of clear organisational policies (Geeson and Howard, 1990). The aim of devolved management, as operated in this and other large authorities, was clearly to enable managers to improve the efficiency of their resource utilisation, and to achieve a more flexible and creative service provision which is more responsive to local community needs and demands. Moreover, given that managers tend to value opportunities for independent thought and action and for developing skills and competences (Stewart, 1982; Scase and Goffee, 1989), budgetary devolution is intended also to enhance the managers motivation and job satisfaction levels as well as strengthening their organisational commitment. Despite the definitions set out in Chapter One and Chapter Six, the following description and analysis of decentralisation and devolution will describe not only the processes themselves but also, where appropriate, their inter-relationship.

3.16 Decentralisation in Human Resource Management Structures

The introduction of a decentralised resource management system requires changes within the organisation's management control systems with detailed control giving way to more effective overall control. (Stoker, 1989). This overall control involves

more emphasis on managers taking greater responsibility for controlling their colleagues' performance through implementing and monitoring a framework of clear organisational policies and/or contractual objectives, service specifications and performance targets (Issac-Henry and Painter, 1991). Power is not given away easily and many senior managers and elected members concerned at losing power and status have weakened the autonomy of devolved units and their ability to make operational decisions. Such attempts to recentralise power have been accomplished by the increased use of internal procedural rules, regulations and increasingly tight and detailed specifications of work as well as the measurement of performance standards (Mintzberg, 1989; Robbins, 1987). It can be argued that these tendencies are likely to be exacerbated in local government by claims from the centre of public accountability (Stewart and Ranson, 1988); the high political sensitivity of certain operational areas; and, the need to be able to respond to external threats such as central government expenditure cuts (Flynn, 1993). Echoing these concerns, Stoker (1990) from his study into the extent to which budgetary and H.R.M authority actually does transfer to managers, found that there were problems associated with the transfer of responsibility, often resulting in the transfer not fully taking place.

3.17 Devolution in Human Resource Management Structures

The role of dedicated HR specialists is to provide help and support to their line management customers in meeting their objectives in those HR responsibilities devolved to them. On occasion those same specialists are required to ensure that HR management processes meet the authority's standards and statutory requirements for financial probity and integrity as set out by the centre. As Mintzberg (1983, 1989) suggests there are vertical, hierarchical tensions arising from the introduction of

devolved management, between middle management's desire for greater autonomy, potentially available from devolution, and with senior management's desire to increase levels of centralised control. The C.C.T split also generated a new set of horizontal tensions between contractor managers' desires to maximise their control over service specification, design and costs.

These tensions around middle management autonomy raise a number of important H.R.M issues, related to the changing nature of middle management roles. As the Local Government Management Board suggests (1993b), managers with devolved management responsibilities have had to acquire new knowledge and skills in the area of H.R.M, where they previously had only limited involvement. They have also had to acquire the new skills associated with the contractor or client management role under C.C.T. While it was recognised that training was required to ensure that managers developed financial, business, commercial and HR skills, it is far from certain that authorities had either the expertise or resources to provide such training (L.G.M.B, 1993b).

The mismatch that can occur within devolved resource management systems, between managers' responsibilities and their levels of authority over resource deployment decision-making can be as a result of inadequate training. Such constraints can frustrate managers' attempts to make more creative and innovative decisions about resource deployment. This situation has often reached a peak when views differ between the centre and line managers on the allocation of resources during times of expenditure cutbacks. Enforced restraint on managers who feel it necessary to reduce staff numbers in order to reduce costs can make them skeptical about cultural rhetoric, also emerging from the centre, urging them to adopt more entrepreneurial and risk-taking management styles, which in reality they do not feel empowered to achieve

(Preston, 1991). Such conflicting messages of management autonomy and central control or sanction has an effect on management motivation and job satisfaction. Typically, such interference by the centre ignores the fact that managers attach extremely high importance to opportunities for independent thought and action, and creates a loss of enthusiasm in them that prevents them operating efficiently (Scase and Goffee, 1989; Mansfield and Poole, 1991).

3.18 Conclusion - The Future of Local Government Management

The management agenda for the future of local government is laid out in the Modernising Local Government White Paper (1998) which talks of valuing public service, not denigrating it. Such a view is seemingly in direct contradiction to the approach to local government taken by the Conservative Governments of the last twenty years. Set against the employment legislation introduced since 1997, by the new Labour Government, the pendulum of power between unions and employers seems to have swung back in the unions favour (see Chapter One). However, there are indications that the replacement for C.C.T, Best Value, may not be the saviour of local government that it appears on the surface. The White Paper states that the government will revise performance management arrangements, tackle underrepresentation and build the capacity for innovation, which suggests that some form of managerialism will still have preeminence across local authorities. The Government also appears to be willing to tackle public sector employment issues through a forum bringing together key players across the sector.

Public expenditure planning and control will be revised with 3 year plans replacing annual ones, and resource accounting will replace cash-based accounting to allow better management of assets. The White Paper recognises pay as important and

promises to reform outdated, inflexible and inefficient pay systems. Good training and development, good career prospects, career breaks, flexible working, family-friendly practices and recognition through rewards and honours, locally and nationally will ensure that the best possible staff are recruited and retained (see Chapter One).

The lesson learnt from this chapter, perhaps, is that H.R.M changes in reaction to a variety of situations. N.P.M picks and chooses which aspects of H.R.M are the most cost-efficient to use and most effective in creating higher performance. As Chapter Two discussed, some characteristics of H.R.M attain greater emphasis in some contexts, depending on the needs of the organisation at any specific time. The chameleon like nature of H.R.M, illustrated in Chapter Two, FIGURE 2.5 and 2.6 has been exposed under N.P.M.

N.P.M seems to taken aspects of the hard version of H.R.M as its key components. These aspects are that employees whereas the latter is a central management concern which is resource driven and of concern above operational level (see FIGURES above). Torrington and Hall (1987), Guest (1993), and Walton, (1987) also emphasise the proactive rather than reactive goal, and relationship-oriented commitment rather than compliance aspects of H.R.M and personnel respectively, illustrative of the wider focus of H.R.M. The different levels at which H.R.M and personnel management seem to operate are picked up by Keenoy and Anthony (1993) who sees personnel management as being tactical or pragmatic in style, operating in a pluralistic perspective. H.R.M, however, operates in a unitary framework and displays a strategic approach to people management. Keenoy (1990a), on the other hand, questions how personnel and H.R.M, which are both directed to the effective use of human resources, can be in conflict. The contradictions between these theories and theorists disappears once it is realised that H.R.M and personnel management can be viewed as

complementary rather than mutually exclusive forms of practice if set within a hybrid context.

Set within this flexible personnel/H.R.M framework policies may be unitary or pluralistic, collaborative or conflictual, or any other combination of contradictions, depending upon the business strategy used by the organisation (Scholes and Johnson, 1995). The political or attitudinal disposition of management (Salaman, 1992) the nature of the external organisational environment (Schuler and Jackson, 1987) its individual industrial relations history (Millward, 1994) and the legislative and economic policies of central government all may affect this balance.

Torrington and Hall (1987) use the same language as Walton (1985) from his H.R.M model in suggesting that both H.R.M and personnel management make use of policies that promote mutuality in order to elicit commitment. Both models identify placing the right people into the right jobs as an important means of integrating personnel and H.R.M practice with organisational goals. Glueck's (1974) and Cuming's (1975) statements about personnel management's function in this respect are virtually identical to that of Tichy et al. (1982) that an essential part of strategic H.R.M is matching available human resources to suitable jobs. The recognition that this matching process is nevertheless a dynamic one given the rate of environmental and organisational change, and that employees really should be selected and developed in ways that enhance their adaptability and flexibility is common to both H.R.M models and to models of personnel management (Guest 1987; Legge 1978).

H.R.M as discussed in this chapter, is clearly flexible in its meaning, changing its form in local government to reflect, the dominant neo-taylorism characteristic of N.P.M. N.P.M uses those aspects of H.R.M which support the organisation's business strategy or style of operation which determine employee role behaviour towards

producing higher performance and flexibility through work intensification. It was noteworthy that in the period where N.P.M adopted a greater market orientation it changed slightly to adopt aspects of soft developmental H.R.M. This shows that N.P.M can and will adopt other approaches to people management if the cost of such an exercise permits and if such an approach is thought to increase organisational performance.

This chapter has discussed how traditional administration and traditional personnel management which espoused values such as career and job security and adopted a welfare and 'model employer' approach to its staff, have given way to N.P.M. N.P.M has changed the approach to people management in local government to one where employees are seen from a utilitarian-instrumentalism view which supports a managerialist perspective at odds with the notion of the Harvard school (Hendry and Pettigrew,1990). It might be expected that where trades unions are strong there may be industrial confrontation and conflict in response to the compliance/control approach adopted under N.P.M.

Chapter Four

The Transistion from Traditional People Management to Human Resource Management in Local Government

4.0 Introduction

In the last chapter the introduction of N.P.M and H.R.M into local government was discussed. The characteristics of this N.P.M at different stages of the change process was highlighted in the context of the effect of its different forms on the nature of H.R.M in local government organisations and managerial structures.

This chapter examines the introduction of H.R.M to local government during the last twenty-five years and how traditional personnel management gave way to H.R.M. It also examines how the Conservative Government sought to support the introduction of the right to manage and a particular brand of H.R.M through its political, economic and legislative programme. The impact of H.R.M on local government unions and employees will also be discussed in order that the nature of modern industrial relations within local authorities can be understood. The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed considerable amounts of employment law being placed on the statute books by the Conservative Governments of that period. This legislation was designed to weaken the power of the trades unions which had existed since the consensus days of the 1950s up until the economic crisis of the mid 1970s. The Conservative Government determined that the general public dissatisfaction with national industrial relations, especially following the Winter of Discontent in 1979, provided the right mood for them to introduce new anti-union legislation and to seek to reemphasise the right of managers to manage.

4.1 The Traditional Approach to People Management

This emphasis on the right to manage and the introduction of managerialism and H.R.M was part of the continuing effort by the government to control local government resource usage and allocation and prevent waste through inefficiency. As was discussed in the last chapter, many attempts had been made to achieve this aim, not least in the implementation of the Bains report recommendations (1972). The need to emphasise strong corporate management in local government and better efficiency and coordination in the use of public money and resources, therefore, was not a new concept to local government management, unions or employees. The Bains Report (1972) even sought to actively encouraged the development of the personnel function foreshadowing the H.R.M approach of the 1980s. Bains (1972) saw a major strategic role for the personnel function, with representation at the highest corporate levels, placing resource management, human resource planning and management training ahead of local governments traditional concentration on professional qualifications. The new management and organisational structures created in 1974 produced larger units of employment and the need for more sophisticated personnel management The enthusiasm in which these recommendations were adopted was systems. identified in a survey of the local government personnel function carried out in 1982.

The survey recommended that that personnel management would be improved by the following measures:-

FIGURE 4.0 Recommendations for Improved Personnel Management

1	Corporate personnel committees had been implemented as either free-standing	
	groups or were held within the remit of the policy and resources committee	
2	Independent personnel sections were part of the chief executives department	
	responsible for giving corporate and strategic direction	
3	Chief personnel officers were usually members of the management team	
Walsh, 1982		

The personnel function, under corporate management operated as an executive arm within a centralised function and despite an increase of 61 per cent in the numbers employed in local government personnel units between 1979 and 1984, there was little decentralisation or devolution of HR responsibilities or staff to line managers (Kessler, 1991b). The strong centralising tendency of the bureaucratic structure within local government, aided and encouraged by the new chief executive role, caused the personnel department to become a regulator of corporate rules intervening and operating at a tactical rather than strategic level (Storey, 1992). By 1988, this centralised and regulatory model of people management was under challenge. Pressure from managers for HR responsibility and control of resources to be devolved and/or decentralised increased as the need to prepare for C.C.T and internal market arrangements became a reality (Fowler, 1988b). Pressure for control of the human assets available to managers was particularly strong in the trading units of the Direct Works or Direct Services Organisations that were subject to Voluntary Competitive Tendering (V.C.T) from 1982 and to C.C.T subsequently. Managers in these units had urgent need to reduce costs and increase employee flexibility in order to win contracts in each round of the C.C.T tender exercises (White and Hutchinson, 1996). The additional cost of the corporate personnel unit as an overhead to their business was

4.2 Origins and Development of H.R.M. in Local Government

It was not long before the private sector management ideas promoted by the excellence publications began to permeate through to British local government. American local government produced a handbook in 1984 entitled *Excellence in Local Government Management* based on Peters and Waterman's criteria of success suitable for local government (White and Hutchinson, 1996). Local government in the UK produced its own version entitled *Getting Closer to the Public*, based on this publication. Local Government Training Board produced this work in order to bring about a review and reorientation of current services and practice in local government with the intention of promoting a consumerist approach (L.G.T.B, 1988).

The relevance of Peters and Waterman's (1982) work for local government lay in the identification of the eight attributes common to most of the excellent companies included in their study (see FIGURE 2.1). These attributes explain in many respects the cultural and structural changes discussed earlier, and later, in this text. The emphasis, highlighted by Mitchell (1985), on values and on the manipulation of symbols is telling managers that their judgements about people are crucially important for organisational success.

Standing in the way of the attainment of the criteria for excellence prescribed by Peters and Waterman (1982) set out in Chapter Two, is the past history of local government. This history includes:

FIGURE 4.1 Barriers to H.R.M in Local Government

1	Neglect of the management function and effective management training
2	The formal collective bargaining arrangements in many local authorities
3	The centralised collective bargaining machinery on pay and terms and conditions at national level
4	The political interference or influence of councillors in management and HR issues
5	The governance role of local authorities and the community leadership role requiring a redefinition but continuation of the model employer role
Mitchell, 1985.	

Local authorities have tended to be monopoly suppliers of particular services with a tendency to look inward rather than outward toward the external customer. At the operational level, their responsibilities and operations were governed by approved and standardised administrative processes which permitted little, if any, scope for creativity and initiative. This organisational climate had encouraged an emphasis on the reduction of unit costs as evidence of performance and not upon improvements in the quality of service offered to the customer. Furthermore, it had produced extended hierarchies with a strong emphasis being placed upon centralisation. These bureaucratic structures had emerged and developed in an environment markedly different from that in which they are now expected to function and where there are pressures upon them to change which had not previously existed or which had been ill-defined.

4.3 Implementing Change

The importance of H.R.M takes on a new significance at a time of change, and especially when introducing devolved management, which differentiates between the role of the centre and front line services. For many local authorities, this has meant a change in approach to people management with a new focus on the development of employees and the organisation.

Managing people through change requires the introduction of new plans and policies, and the allocation of responsibility for their design and implementation. As more and more management decisions are devolved, this allocation of responsibility between the centre of the authority and front line services has needed to be clarified. The appropriate balance will vary from authority to authority, being influenced by the factors shown in FIGURE 4.2:

FIGURE 4.2

	Influences on Centre/Line Allocation of H.R.M Functions
1	The culture of the organisation
2	Managerial capabilities of departments
3	The size of the authority
4	The ability of the HR Department to provide the strategic direction and functional support to managers
Aud	it Commission (1995)

Plans and policies are not the only concern though it requires commitment and a lead from the top of the organisation to ensure that H.R.M works and the complimentary roles of personnel specialists and line managers are understood by all. Every organisation's ability to achieve its aims relies on its securing a competent and motivated workforce. This is dependent on the quality of its management of people and on the compatibility of its style as an employer with its service delivery aims and

objectives. This will certainly require management skills but also leadership qualities, both to inspire and motivate staff to adjust to change.

The changes brought about by financial constraint and the impact of competitive tendering, denied local government the opportunity to retain their reputations as model employers. Leach et al. (1994) explained that many local authorities found it difficult to maintain national pay and conditions in services that became subject to competitive tender where private sector competition proved strong. In such circumstances a movement away from formal systems for the management of industrial relations towards more ad hoc approaches which reflected the organisational interests of management. Together C.C.T and the financial squeeze on local authorities brought unheard of amounts of compulsory redundancies from what had been one of the most secure sources of employment in the country (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990). In response to such dilemmas and the changing economic environment, many local authorities sought to introduce greater flexibility into their employment patterns as shown in FIGURE 4.3:

FIGURE 4.3

	The Search for Flexibility in Local Government Employment	
1	More flexible establishment control consisting of flexible staffing structures where chief officers can employ and deploy staff as required within limits on	
	numbers and grades set by the authority and controlled centrally	
2	More flexible contracts and job descriptions which enable the transfer of staff	
	from unit to unit and assistance for staff in adopting to new working practices and gain competencies through training	
3	Performance related pay linking pay to outputs. Other methods of performance management, peformance appraisal and performance indicators.	
	LGMB found in 1993 that half of all councils use some sort of performance management system and over a quarter use performance related pay systems	
4	Flexible working conditions and home-based working for certain categories	
	of staff	
Labour Force Survey (1996)		

The task of management is further complicated by the involvement of councillors in

the management and oversight of the authority (Fowler ,1988a). Involvement in matters such as these provide a double jeopardy for line managers in that they must both often face trades union representatives with greater employee relations experience and knowledge than they have. It would not be surprising if many managers saw these issues as outside of their role and within that of the HR Specialist.

4.4 H.R.M and Industrial Relations in Local Government

The basic underlying debate in industrial relations throughout the 1980s and 1990s turned on the nature and extent of change in the practice of contemporary industrial relations. The national system of industrial relations in local government has always been fragile and delicately balanced with 500 or so independent employers retaining the right to decide on some employment issues (Kessler, 1991b).

The evidence which has so far been published concerning change in industrial relations and personnel management in the 1980s in Britain, tends, on the whole, to give little support to the notion that a new industrial relations has dawned (Farnham and Horton, 1996; White and Hutchinson, 1996). But much of the survey work has been directed towards detecting any major abandonment of or departures from prevailing collective procedures. Even in those cases where extensive initiatives by management on selection, individual communication, the establishment of problem-solving groups and the like had been established, management had, in the main, kept their high-profile human resource management policies institutionally separate from old fashioned industrial relations. Thus, unions have typically not been de-recognised, collective bargaining machinery was still maintained, but the centre of gravity had shifted. The time, energy and other resources given by management were undoubtedly directed in favour of the former set of approaches to people management and not to

the latter (Farnham and Horton, 1996). Rapid growth of union membership combined with increasing friction over governmental controls on public-sector pay led to increases in industrial action (Laffin, 1989) culminating in the 'Winter of Discontent' in 1978-79. Localised disputes and industrial action remained less common, however (Ingham, 1985).

Attempts to move to a single agreement for the manual N.J.C and A.P.T&C group have now succeeded, with the Green Book Single-Status agreement arising from the single-table bargaining arrangement which met for the first time in 1994 (I.D.S, 1994b). The 1984 W.I.R.S showed little change from 1980 in the institutions of worker representation and collective bargaining, but the 1990 survey revealed a strong fall in collective representation (Millward et al. 1992). For example, since 1990 union density has fallen from 38 per cent to 30 per cent (in 1997), and union membership is now two-fifths below its peak in 1979 (Cully and Woodland, et al., 1999). There is now likely to be a much greater proportion of workplaces where there are either no union members present; and, where unions are present and recognised there is evidence for some workplaces they are rarely involved (White and Hutchinson, 1996). There are a large number of recognised trade unions, although their numbers fell during the 1980s and early 1990s. Union membership remains high, compared with the private sector.

4.5 Changes in collective bargaining and Moves to Decentralise Industrial Relations in the 1980s

Walsh (1981) noted that increasing financial control of local government had increased the pressures to centralise collective bargaining due to the need for contact with central government and central union bureaucracies (Walsh, 1981). This led to conflict between the centre and periphery amongst employers and unions and within the employers' central bodies. In the unions, the rank-and-file wanted decentralised bargaining, whilst full-time officers wanted centralised negotiations. The Conservative Governments wish that local authorities would act as independent employers voluntarily scrapping their right to national and regional representative institutions were dashed by this reality (Walsh, 1981). The major factors influencing decentralisation of bargaining for professional groups have arisen from two sources. Firstly, the labour market pressures around the skills shortage crisis of the late 1980s. Secondly, the political decision of the Conservative Governments to break the power of the local government trade unions. Conservative Governments have sought to reduce the power of public-sector unions through the removal of national agreements and the reduction of staff groups into local bargaining units within local authorities or regions, reducing the bargaining power of such groups. This process was found to be more difficult to achieve in local government than expected, however, the termination of cash-limited pay settlements in 1986, and the switch to a flexible policy of pay targeting, was introduced by Conservative Governments. The idea behind this strategy was to encourage decentralised bargaining; meet labour market pressures; while eroding the power of the centralised institutions (White, 1993). Whilst most councils did not move away from national bargaining immediately, there was a clear shift towards local bargaining in the late 1980s. The authorities leading the way in this

venture were reacting to the labour market problems in the south-east by introducing market supplements and special benefits to attract and retain key groups of staff such accountants, lawyers, surveyors and computer staffs. Surveys in 1987 (L.A.C.S.A.B, 1987b) and 1988 (I.D.S, 1988) revealed the spread and diversity of such innovations in pay and benefits. In addition, an increasing number of councils were introducing individual P.R.P for senior staff (I.D.S,1989). L.A.C.S.A.B, aware that national arrangements were under threat, issued a consultative document (L.A.C.S.A.B, 1988) and organized a conference in April 1988. A consensus emerged that all councils wanted greater flexibility within a framework APT&C agreement, with district councils and councils in the south-east wanting more local negotiations, whilst Metropolitan Authorities and those in the north wanted to keep most terms and conditions national (L.A.C.S.A.B, 1988). This split largely reflected the political complexions of the two groups, with Conservatives strong in the southeast and rural districts and Labour in the north and conurbations. Following the consultation exercise, L.A.C.S.A.B attempted to negotiate a new slimmed down national agreement with A.P.T&C staff in 1989. This proposal was strongly opposed by National Association of Local Government Officers (N.A.L.G.O) and led to its first national strike over pay. During the strike, the employers were split and several councils decided to break with the national agreement and settle. This gave them the opportunity to introduce changes addressing issues of recruitment and retention and new pay systems (Bryson et al., 1993). By 1993, 34 councils had opted out of the national agreement. The majority were small district councils but there were a few large county councils did also.

Griffiths (1990), indicated that the factors responsible for Kent's opt-out were as shown in Figure 4.4:-

FIGURE 4.4 Reasons for Opting-Out of National Agreements

1	The erosion of the public monopoly of services	
2	Compulsory Competitive Tendering	
3	Increased emphasis on customer care	
4	The need to relate pay to performance	
5	The shift from professionalism to managerialism	
6	The shift from central direction to more devolved management	
7	Changes in the funding of local government	
Griffith (1990)		

Four pressures seem instrumental in decisions to secede: ability to pay; performance; market forces and labour supply; and comparability. Whilst the decision to shift to local bargaining seems primarily officer-led, in a number of cases opt-outs were initiated by the local Conservative group on councils, which actively supported government policy for decentralised bargaining (Bryson et al., 1993). In the main, opted-out councils tend to be Conservative controlled at secession.

4.6 Functional Areas of H.R.M

Personnel policies and employment strategies in local government changed significantly in the 1980s. These were related to the financial and political pressures identified above. The most significant effect of these pressures was the change in the culture of local government. There was a new impetus to reduce the collective power of employees and shift the focus from producerism (Smith, 1986) where the basic priority in service provision was the employees' interests to a customer orientated focus. This attack on the perceived vested interests of employees was at its most direct in Conservative councils. However, Labour and Liberal Democrat councils

were not immune from conflictual relationships with their employees, especially white-collar professionals, in their pursuit of new working practices (McNulty, 1997). Whatever form the shift to new community-oriented authorities takes, it has implications for people management. Where authorities set out to achieve a new organisational culture focused on quality services to the public, a more sophisticated approach to the management of employees is required. A study of the personnel management implications of customer-care initiatives (I.D.S/I.P.M, 1989) found that employers understood the importance of securing attitude change amongst their staff through the promotion of appropriate core values and mission statements (I.D.S/I.P.M, 1989). The councils studied had taken the need for employee involvement to mean a policy of staff care and support. Birmingham City Council, for example, had instigated an extensive staff programme dealing with aggression which recognised that vulnerable front-line employees who have to deal with potentially difficult clients are more likely to adopt the council's consumer approach if they believe the council will ensure their welfare (I.D.S/I.P.M, 1989).

4.7 Recruitment and Selection.

Recruitment in larger local authorities has been devolved or decentralised, in the initial wave of change, in the early 1980s. In this and many other respects, local government recruitment and selection methods are little different from those in the private sector, with the line manager controlling the selection and interviewing process with administrative support. For senior professional, technical and management staff, selection methods are also more elaborate, although there is evidence that local government is perhaps more traditional in its methods than the private sector (Williams, 1992). Recruitment and retention problems in the late 1980s

prompted local authorities to review traditional methods and seek to attract recruits from specific groups, such as ethnic minorities, the disabled, older workers and less qualified people (L.A.C.S.A.B/L.G.T.B, 1990a). The combined effects of tight cash limits and the exposure of work areas to C.C.T had an impact on recruitment and selection in the 1990s. In a survey of 86 councils in 1994 (I.D.S, 1994a), over half reported net job losses, totalling some 23,000 over the year. Most council's cited C.C.T and government's public-sector pay policy as major reasons for job losses and non-filling of vacancies. Recent surveys of management selection in local government in England and Wales suggest that tradition remains a powerful influence on selection methods (Williams, 1992; L.G.M.B, 1992b).

4.8 Performance Management and Pay

In 1985, when the local authority employers' body carried out a consultation exercise on P.R.P, most council's were unenthusiastic about introducing it. By 1989, over 100 authorities were either operating or planning schemes (I.D.S, 1989), although in most cases such schemes applied only to senior staff. I.D.S (1989) identified three reasons why schemes were being introduced: a response to C.C.T; a response to recruitment and retention problems; and part of the shift to a performance management culture. A survey of 300 Councils carried out by L.A.C.S.A.B (Spence, 1990) concluded that performance management had been introduced because of legislation, consumer demands, demands for increased accountability, tighter cash limits and recruitment and retention problems. Performance management and P.R.P were viewed positively by local government managers as effective management tools for improving performance, although only 20 to 30 per cent of authorities in the survey were using performance indicators to monitor performance. A further survey in 1993 (L.G.M.B,

1994c) found that almost 60 per cent of responding authorities had introduced a formal P.M.S or were planning to introduce one, although only one-in-ten schemes included manual workers. P.R.P had been adopted in a quarter of authorities, a figure close to the 1989 I.D.S figure, with a further two per cent planning to introduce it. Only two authorities had P.R.P for manual workers but about 40 per cent covered most non-manual grades, with the greatest coverage amongst chief officers and deputies.

4.9 Reward Packages

Ingham (1985) found, for white-collar staff, extensive evidence of councils paying basic rates above national levels; holiday allowances superior to the national one; shorter hours of work than those stipulated in the national agreement; and supplements above national levels. For manual workers there was less variation, although 21 per cent of authorities provided above national holiday allowances and 25 per cent paid other supplements. The late 1980s saw a significant increase in benefits flexibility with many councils also began providing benefits previously found only in the private sector, such as mortgage subsidies, leased cars, free life insurance and A survey in 1989 private medical cover (I.D.S, 1988; L.A.C.S.A.B, 1987a). (L.A.C.S.A.B/L.G.T.B, 1990b) found greater use of flexible entry to scales, relating career progression to ability; selective pay enhancements; accelerated progression through grades; and longer salary scales to suit new recruits. With the reduction in labour market pressures in the early 1990s, and the reimposition of central government pay limits from 1993, many of the extra benefits have been withdrawn (Bryson et al., 1993; I.D.S, 1994a).

ALCEROLOGIC LOGIC

e de la comencia de maior a maior de la compania d the second of the second of the property of the second of "And Andrews",在Andrews 在一种,我们不是一个的人,我们就是一个的人。 un deur la lestificacións de la completa de <mark>Mass</mark>a esta de lestificacións de tribulares de la completa del completa del completa de la completa del la completa de la completa del la completa de la com The straight of a good or consist of which is also because it is provided as the constitution with The second the second of the second s A THE TOTAL AND THE RESERVE THE SHARE TO THE RESERVE AND A PROPERTY OF THE PRO and the property of the contract of the contra and the second of the second o A GARLOUS AND PROJECTION AND A CONTRACT OF THE e production de la california de la companya de la

4.10 Changes in Labour Utilisation

By nature of its work and the constitution of its workforce local government has operated and encouraged a flexible workforce. For many years, around two-thirds of its manual labour force has been part-timers. Kessler (1991b) suggests that examples such as this indicate that models of the flexible firm, such as Atkinson and Meager (1986) propose, with core and peripheral workforces, are already in place. Nevertheless, pressures exerted by the introduction of C.C.T, financial stringency and new customer-care strategies have led to considerable changes in labour utilisation, especially amongst manual workers.

C.C.T has led not only to major reductions in employment but also to less favourable working conditions and a major intensification of work (Clarke and Newman, 1997). Whilst basic rates of pay have been nationally determined, there have been reductions in bonuses and holiday entitlements and increases in working hours. Some authorities now have annualised hours contracts to allow for peaks and troughs in demand and seasonal variations in daylight hours. Overtime has also been significantly reduced (Ward et al., 1988; Colling, 1993). Strategies to alleviate staff shortages now include: job redesign; re-deployment of staff, such as upgrading and conversion of manual workers to staff status; and resource planning, such as conducting skills audits. Others introduced were: job shares; part-time working; flexible working hours; special leave; career break schemes; creche or nursery provision; and financial contributions to child-minding (L.A.C.S.A.B/L.G.T.B,1990b). Although these actions are seemingly compatible with soft H.R.M they are, in reality, a pragmatic response to recruitment and retention problems arising the identification of skill shortages in the labour market.

如"我们的"。在1995年在1996年中的1996年,第二章

¹⁰⁰

4.11 Management and Staff Development

The traditional emphasis in local government training has been on professional qualifications for white-collar staff. Both the Mallaby (1967) and Bains (1972) reports concluded that training was underdeveloped and viewed as a cost rather than an investment. There was a heavy reliance on outside professional bodies and educational institutions to provide training, with internal training very limited and in management development, there was very little training at all. This was surprising because local government had a long commitment to training, starting with the Local Government Examination Board (L.G.E.B) established in 1946. The L.G.T.B, whilst not a statutory body, followed the same principles of seeking increased efficiency by ensuring that training was provided and its costs spread through levies on employers. There was no uniformity, however, and while some authorities became heavily involved in training, other councils preferred to poach skilled, qualified staff from other authorities.

The L.G.M.B have offered a competency-based modular programme for chief executives, chief officers and managers identified as potential chief officers for some years. Provincial councils, as they were once known, also provide courses and tailor-made programmes to meet specific council requirements. There has been a general move in local government, as elsewhere in the public sector, to gain accreditation for all training, either within the N.V.Q framework or M.C.I so that a recognised standard of training can be embedded within a strategic framework (L.G.T.B, 1988). By this means individual development needs were to form part of departmental objectives which in turn would be supportive of the authority's corporate values and goals (Kessler, 1990).

4.12 The Importance of the Line Management Role

Under the new regime human resource management was to mean a more managerially directed utilisation of staff and other resources. The premier part played by line and general managers in human resource management became particularly evident in the market-trading parts of the public sector, and just as in the private sector the emphasis was placed, by these market managers, on the concept of 'managerial leadership' (McNulty, 1997). Cost and contract pressures caused line managers (especially in D.S.O's) to address the issue of how human resources should be utilised. Many local authority D.S.O's, especially in district councils, have contracted with central personnel for a certain level of service for a certain price (Stewart and Ranson, 1994).

4.13 Establishment-level Union Organisation.

Union organization at national level is still strong but important changes are happening at authority level. This high density means that local government remains fundamentally pluralist in its industrial and employee relations. Even in those councils which opted out of national bargaining, there were few examples of union derecognition and, where it did occur, it was where union membership was virtually non-existent. A layer of lay union representatives was developed in the 1970s and 1980s, in response to decentralisation and the expanding scope for local decision-making by line managers (Kessler, 1993). Despite the shift to local negotiations, however, Kessler (1991b) found that establishment-level trade unionism is relatively weak (Farnham and Horton, 1996). The dispersed nature of the workforce, its segmentation into occupational groupings and the large number of part-time employees have always been obstacles to effective workplace unionism, although not

4.14 Equal Opportunities

Local government has been at the forefront of good practice in equality of opportunity in employment. In 1987, a new job evaluation scheme was introduced, based on equal value considerations and included caring skills as well as more traditional male skills. This led to significant improvements in grading for many female, often part-time, manual employees (Lodge and Vogel, 1981). Job sharing is also more common than in other public or private organisations (Industrial Relations Services, 1989). Recruitment and selection procedures have been affected by equal opportunities policies with some Labour councils endeavouring to use contract compliance procedures, to ensure that contractors followed good equal opportunities practices (I.P.M, 1987). A survey of local councils carried out by the L.G.M.B in the early 1990s confirmed a continuing commitment by local government to equality of opportunity in employment, with 82 per cent of respondents having such policies (L.G.M.B, 1993b). The main reason cited by respondents for adopting equal opportunities policies was that it was part of a 'good employer policy'. Despite such ambitions, a survey of 41 councils published by the C.R.E (1995) revealed that twothirds were failing to reflect the ethnic composition of the local working population and one-in-four were unable to provide an analysis of their workforce by ethnic origin.

4.15 Conclusion - Models of H.R.M in Local Government

As in the private sector, attempts have been made to derive the direction for the management of people from corporate and managerial objectives rather than professional objectives. The shift towards a view of local authorities as 'corporate entities' stems, in no small measure, from the work of the Bains Committee (1972). The idea from the start was to have these new bodies headed by a chief executive, mirroring the position in private sector companies. At the same time, the integrative concept of 'general management' was being pressed by Stewart and Norton, (1973). This would facilitate integrative strategic planning at corporate rather than departmental level. An influential catalyst on this front has been the Audit Commission. Its insistent message is that bureaucracy is no longer an appropriate organisational mode for today's environment. The Audit Commission (1988) placed an emphasis is on the management of change rather than administering standstill or growth. It talks of developing a vision and deriving from this strategies, plans and budgets. For local government organisations which faced heightened competitiveness and straitened budgetary circumstances, the management methods, such as these adopted in the private sector must seem an attractive solution to issues of performance. Whether the management method has concentrated on customer-service initiatives or business unit based devolved budgeting, the underlying idea has been to mark a departure from overt centralised control to a more localised form of control. In the next chapter these issues, and others, involved in the research problem are discussed.

Chapter Five

The Research Problem and the Methodology used in the Thesis

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter the selection of research tools and the thinking underlying their choice is discussed. Where an alternative approach was considered an explanation of why that approach was rejected will be provided along with reasons for accepting the method used in the research. The research tools and methods of analysis explained here were those considered as the best to extract and then explain and illustrate the findings of the study. As such, elaborate methods of analysis have not been used in order to retain the simplicity and clarity of the information obtained so that the main trends discussed throughout the thesis remain transparent to those reading the text. Initially, this chapter will describe the research problem to be investigated, followed by a description of the aims and objectives of the research. Subsequently, the choice of research tools will be discussed, as will the programme of investigation used in obtaining the information.

5.1 The Research Problem

A number of issues arise from the previous four chapters of this thesis. Basically, local government has not moved from one constant state called traditional administration and personnel management straight to another constant state called N.P.M or one called H.R.M. These constants do not, as such, exist. As the employment relationship changes in response to the tensions within it, management seeks appropriate compromises, between the, sometimes, conflicting objectives of

N.P.M and H.R.M. The methodology used needs to identify these conflicts in order to assess how different they are and how much if any traditional administration and personnel management has been retained in N.P.M and what part H.R.M has in people management in local government.

These questions are posed against the background of the 1980s' changes to employment law encouraging competitiveness in local government and the influence of the economic recessions of the late 1980s and the decline of trade unionism.

The change from traditional administration and personnel management to N.P.M and H.R.M in local government has taken place against this wider picture of societal change reflecting the economic, political and legislative policies of the UK Government within a global setting (see Chapter One). As the impact of this change has filtered down to individual local authorities the culture of these organisations, their history and traditions, have reacted in different ways to the acceptance of H.R.M. The main characteristics of local government which have been confronted by H.R.M are: traditional administration and that part of this form of management dedicated to people management; trades unionism and a history of collectivebargaining at national, regional and at local level; bureaucratic organisation; an absence of strategic management over financial, human resource or wider business related issues; political leadership involved in personnel administration through central budgetary control and staff selection; an outdated notion of the model employer based on comparability with the best private sector/market rates without reference to performance criteria; the strength of the public service ethos as an intraorganisational culture providing a bond of commitment to traditional local government.

How local government has absorbed H.R.M and N.P.M and how the characteristics of

H.R.M have changed, or not changed, to accommodate N.P.M is the research problem addressed through the modeling exercise. One way to show the level of acceptance of H.R.M, and how H.R.M has adapted (or not) in response to the structure and culture of local government is to create models of the varieties of HRM revealed in this investigation. These models will permit and enable us to understand the form of management within local government organisations, and, hopefully, permit the generalisation of the results of the investigation across local authorities, or identify differences between local authority organisations. Such models may be in the form of ideal types in Weber's (1947) sense, which are represented in Chapter One (Guest, 1987), or may be constructed according to a dynamic principle which explains how changes to one variable will affect other variables. This latter model has not been adopted within this programme of research as it is not considered likely that models of human behaviour, actions, roles and relationships can be formulated which will capture all the variants of these human attributes. The greatest value from models in this sphere is therefore the ordering of knowledge, identification of relationship between and the description of the model's characteristics which help explain what is happening and why within local government H.R.M (Winter, 1966).

There are benefits to be gained from descriptive, analytical and normative models of human resource management. Each type of model examines human resources at a different level of analysis, although it is argued here that the descriptive model can best illustrate how H.R.M works across a number of organisations. It can also best illustrate the organisations dependence upon a range of variables, including the history of the enterprise, the values of the organisations leaders, the markets in which it operates, the technology used, the size and structure of the organisation, and the industrial relations traditions within which decisions about employees are made

(Denscombe, 1998). We also know from the work of Legge (1978) how significant these contingencies can be in determining what is the prevailing approach to personnel management (Legge, 1978). The recognition of the benefits that flow from studying human resource management at the organisational level is now well established (Tyson 1983, Tyson and Fell 1986). The problem which this brings is how to research at this level, and how to create a model which would permit generalisation across many organisations.

5.2 H.R.M Models

While the choice of descriptive models serves the objectives of this research, the results of other investigations revealed through the use of other forms of model were found to be both relevant and informative in preparing the methodology for this thesis.

5.2.1 Descriptive Models of H.R.M

Descriptive models at the organisation level typify distinctive overall approaches to H.R.M and personnel management. Tyson and Fell (1986) used such a model to discover whether there were any general principles in the way personnel work was done and to verify the wide variety of approaches adopted. Of interest to this investigation is the conclusion that followed on from the work of these theorists. Firstly, there is clearly no one correct model of H.R.M, the key issue is the appropriateness of the model for the organisation(s) being investigated. Secondly, at least for a time there may be different models existing in the same organisation or in very similar organisations. Finally, (a) the location of the personnel function within the organisational structure and its input to strategy; (b) the extent to which there is

decentralisation or devolution of HR functions or responsibility; and, (c) the extent to which there are divisional or business units will be influences on the accuracy of the model.

5.2.2 Analytical Models of H.R.M

Analytical models have been used to explore and to explain the differences in human resource management between organisations, revealing the significant differences in the way human resource management is performed, according to the organisational context. While this analytical approach is of interest the models it produced do no reveal the nature of H.R.M within organisations or the history of change from personnel administration to H.R.M, or the determining factors within organisations or groups of organisations which influence the form of H.R.M (Tyson, 1979; Tyson and Fell, 1986).

5.2.3 Normative Models of H.R.M

Normative versions of H.R.M are aimed at identifying the relationship between management's people values and corporate performance. Such models examine situations where employers make value statements stating, or espousing beliefs about the relationship between the employees and the organisation. The model determines how such statements influence the organisations relationship with its employees, and illustrates such circumstances as evidence of the significance attached by the organisation to the people who work for them. Such cases do not provide evidence of, or establish, the actual contribution, if any, that normative models make to business performance. A mission statement may be merely a bland representation of espoused values and ideas rather than operational policies. The rhetoric of such statements may

be exposed by the reality of the situation, regardless of whether managers and staff believe the officially sanctioned version of the organisations position and attitude towards them (Brewster, Gill and Richbell 1983). For the purposes of this thesis, such models do not contribute to the objectives of the research, nor do they inform the debate on the characteristics that may constitute H.R.M in local government and which may define it as a separate and recognisable form of H.R.M in its own right.

5.2.4 Prescriptive Models of H.R.M.

One of the characteristics of the normative models of H.R.M is their tendency to explain themselves in terms of a list of attributes which an organisation should have or develop which produces excellence. The methodological problems associated with Peters' and Waterman's (1982) work are referred too in Chapter One and Chapter Two of this thesis (see Guest (1992b). The objective of this thesis is not to seek to identify good practice through a prescriptive model but identify, if possible, the characteristics of local government H.R.M as they exist. This descriptive approach should ensure the avoidance of the potential rhetoric of mission statements which might profess values which the organisation, in reality does not hold.

5.3 The Research Aims and Objectives

In discussing the choice of model to be used in this thesis, the objectives of the research have been stated. Below, the aims and objectives are set out as an introduction to the research design and methodology. In the conclusion to the thesis, the aims and objectives will be reviewed against the findings, analysis and discussion to show how they have been achieved. It will be immediately noticeable that the issues addressed in Chapters Six to Ten, inclusive, are directly related to each of the

aims listed below, which are the main issues determined in Chapter One and afterwards, influencing the form of H.R.M in local government.

The aims of this research were:

- 1). To identify the extent to which Human Resource Management uses decentralisation or devolution of HR functions;
- 2). To identify the extent to which Human Resource Professionals in local government are involved in strategic management within their authorities and what strategic H.R.M in local government has evolved;
- 3). To identify what form or forms H.R.M takes within the context of different local government organisations;
- 4). To identify the characteristics common to H.R.M in local government to add new information to the continuing debate on the rhetoric and/or reality of H.R.M;
- 5). To identify how the influences within and external to local government have shaped the development of H.R.M within local authorities and so the employment environment that local government staff work within.

Each of these aims, and the chapters in the thesis which discuss each of the issues raised in achieving these aims, contribute to the final objective of the thesis which is to analyse H.R.M in local government and produce a model. Simply put the objective of the research was:

To analyse H.R.M in local government and produce a model showing the main issues, which will add new information to the continuing debate on the rhetoric and/or reality of H.R.M.

The total number of respondents was 163 authorities out of a possible total of 388 of all types, district, county, metropolitan, London boroughs and new unitary councils. It was decided to approach all authorities initially, although eventually, due to cost and

timescale issues, 75 per cent of each group of authority was contacted. Initially letters and telephone calls were made to establish willingness to participate, means of communication available and to verify contact names, job and personal titles, qualifications and to obtain detailed background information about the size, number of staff, structure, attitude to industrial relations and political complexion.

The decision was taken to use existing contacts of the researcher to create a pilot group for the questionnaire, outside those authorities to be involved in the survey. A database was created for the questionnaire mail-shot and ease of communication and to generate reports on the numbers and name of each type of authority in each category of the selection criteria (see below in sampling frame). A detailed record of the programme of work is shown in FIGURE 5.2. The authorities replying to the questionnaire were broken down by type as shown below:

TABLE 5.0 Representation of Different Type of Local Authority

District Council	107
County Council	26
Unitary Authority	7
London and Metropolitan Borough	23

A total of 50 interviews were eventually carried out, although only 15 were initially planned due to the need to verify information from multiple sources. Details of these interviews are in FIGURE 5.4. These interviews were with heads of HR in proportion to the number of different types of authority in existence. Seven interviews were carried out by telephone and three others with non-respondents where questionnaires were also completed. Managers from both corporate and service departments provided a balanced overview of actual H.R.M in practice. For example, on one vist to an authority a Direct Works Division (D.W.D) Manager and a second tier Social

Services Manager gave their opinion of H.R.M in the authority and the role of corporate or central HR staff. These views were, to an extent, validated by the researcher approaching, by telephone, five other D.W.D or D.S.O managers at random to confirm these managers views. Some initial difficulties were obtained in compiling a full-list. Many potential respondents found the subject matter and nature of the questions to be asked about H.R.M difficult, and, to two in particular, too theoretical, there being, in their opinion, no difference between the management role before H.R.M and now.

5.4 Identifying Specific Issues in Achieving the Objective

It was recognised that the information required to produce such a model, which could stand-up to rigorous challenge, needed to draw on representative samples from each type of local authority, their human resource staff and line managers. The decision to produce a descriptive model which could be used to produce generalised statements about local government H.R.M was to heavily influence the choice of research tools.

5.5 The Choice of Research Tools

A research tool or tools were needed which would permit the investigation of Human Resource Management within local government. The size of this investigation needed to be large in terms of the quantity of authorities approached to allow common trends in H.R.M within Councils to be detected. The examination of H.R.M within these authorities needed to be of a sufficient degree of depth to allow for a qualitive investigation to be carried out so that the common themes determined through the quantative research could be verified and important differences identified. The results of the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data would allow generalisations about

the characteristics of local government H.R.M to be made across different authorities. The main choice in selecting the research tool seemed to lie between a case study or survey approach. A survey, in principle, is suppose to allow a panoramic view of local government H.R.M to be taken in the form of a snapshot of how things are at the specific time at which the data is collected. The survey approach would also allow a research strategy, rather than a simple method to be adopted facilitating the use of a whole range of methods within the strategy: questionnaires, interviews, and documentary evidence. Through the use of the survey approach the desired breadth of study is combined with the snapshot effect based on dependable empirical data. The use of a case study was considered because it offered the opportunity to study in depth one instance of H.R.M in local government and focus on an individual instance rather than a wide spectrum of experience. The logic behind concentrating on one case rather than many is the benefit of the insights to be obtained from the detailed examination of the individual case. Through this approach the wider implications for local government of factors that might not have come to light through the use of a survey strategy can be revealed. The aim of the case study would be, therefore, to illuminate the general by looking at the particular.

5.6 Advantages and Disadvantages of Surveys

The survey provides wide and inclusive coverage of the local authorities in England covering the different structures and services they offer. It is this breadth of coverage and the span of vision it provides which is the major advantage of the survey approach for this study. The survey will offer the opportunity to get data based on a representative sample of local authorities, which means that the findings from good survey research information will score well when it comes to generalisability. If the

coverage is suitably wide and inclusive it gives credibility to generalised statements made on the basis of the research (Denscombe, 1998).

Surveys lend themselves to quantitative data obtained by using particular methods, such as the postal questionnaire, which can generate large volumes of quantitative, but does not exclude the valuable insight offered by qualitative research. Besides these factors consideration was given to the enormous amount of data they can produce over a short time for a fairly low cost. In fact one of the drawbacks to the use of the survey approach was its tendency to empiricism and the danger that the very wide and inclusive coverage sought could detract from a proper analysis of information and appreciation of the implications of that data for relevant issues, problems or theories. A further issue is that the data produced from large-scale research methods, such as the postal questionnaire, are likely to lack much by way of detail or depth on the topic being investigated. This, to an extent, is almost inevitable as the objectives and aims which can be achieved by detailed and in-depth investigation by case study would be different from those set within this study. It has been recognised that surveys tend to forfeit depth in favour of breadth when it comes to the data that is produced. This advantage of high representativeness of the data with its emphasis on wide and inclusive coverage, does also have the disadvantage of limiting the degree to which the researcher can check on the accuracy of the responses.

FIGURE 5.0

Advantages of Case	Study		Advantages o	f Surveys
Depth of study		Rather than		Breadth of study
The particular		Rather than		The general
Relationships processes	and	Rather than		Outcome and end product
Holistic view		Rather than		Isolated factors
Natural settings		Rather than		Artificial situations
Multiple sources		Rather than		One research method

5.7 Advantages and Disadvantages of Case Studies

The prospects of getting some valuable and unique insight from this in-depth study approach depends on being able to investigate things in a way that is different from, and in some senses better than, other approaches. The point of a case study is to do what a survey normally cannot do which is to study things in detail. When a researcher takes the strategic decision to devote all his or her efforts to researching just one instance, there is obviously far greater possibility that his or her selection of local authority(s) are not representative enough to allow wide sweeping conclusions to be made. The research, therefore, lies vulnerable to criticism in relation to the credibility of the generalisations made from its findings. The case study research needs to demonstrate the extent to which the case is similar to, or contrasts with, others of its type. This is not the only draw-back with case study data which is often viewed as focusing on processes rather than measurable end-products, as relying on qualitative data and interpretive methods rather than quantitative data and statistical procedures. This means that descriptive accounts of the situation under investigation can be very good, but the data itself will not allow useful analysis. Further, access to documents, people and settings can generate ethical problems in terms of things like confidentiality which would not be present or as important to the same degree in generalised investigations.

5.8 Linking the Choice of Tool with the Research Objectives

The selection of methodology for collecting data was guided by the research objectives and aim of this study. By selecting the production of a model on local government H.R.M as the aim, the need for the greatest number of contributions from

local authorities became important. While a case study could deliver in-depth insights that could reveal much about the operation of H.R.M in a limited number of authorities, it would be difficult to deliver generalisations about the nature of H.R.M across the many different types of local authority. Only with the widest possible investigation could these different authorities provide information that would allow a general model, applicable to most local authorities, to be produced. Once the decision had been made to approach representative samples of the different type of local authority currently in existence, the research strategy required decisions to be made on the kind of data that needed to be obtained as well as practical considerations related to time, resources and access to the sources of data.

5.9 Surveys, Sample size and Sampling

5.9.1 Quantitative Research

In chapter five of this study details are given of the total number of local authorities approached in this survey and the total number of each type of authority in the local government population. The number of the former as a percentage of the latter is also given. The target set was to obtain fifty percent of each category of local authority to respond to the first questionnaire aimed at heads of the HR function and sixty per cent to respond to the second questionnaire aimed at line managers. With the prospect of generating generalisations from the findings of this survey it was decided that only a total sample with a representative sample from each type of authority comprising the entire population would serve.

5.9.2 Oualitative Research

In preparing for the qualitative aspect of this research the works of Glaser and Strauss (1967), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Miles and Huberman (1994) were referred to. These researchers used non-probability sampling techniques justified by the notion that the research process is one of investigation and discovery rather than the testing of hypotheses that might attract statistical approaches to selecting the sample. Glaser and Strauss (1967) provide a foundation for this distinct approach to sampling which now characterises qualitative research. In their approach, the selection of people, texts or events to include in the research follows a path of discovery in which the sample emerges as a sequence of decisions based on the outcomes of earlier stages of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In preparing the selection of interviewees for the qualitative research stage those individual respondents to the first and second questionnaire, who could offer the maximum variation and range in the data that they offered, were chosen for interview. This seemed to offer a better quality and richness of information including a degree of complexity, subtlety and even contradictions to allow better analysis and criticism of the mainstream findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

5.10 Preventing Bias in the Sampling Frame

It was intended that a sampling frame should be devised which accounted for the rich diversity of local government organisations. To this end, local authorities were approached that represented urban and rural geographic locations, those run by different political groups, Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and independent authorities, and authorities representative of different structures and sizes. By including such a wide selection of different authorities, based on such criteria, the

danger of using a sampling frame which was incomplete was avoided. The frame, by not concentrating on H.R.M related factors within the selection process did not exclude authorities or include them on criteria which might prove itself to be biased. It was recognised that the completeness and accuracy of the sample frame was an essential feature of the research methodology as the final objective of the research was a model which should be generalisable across local government. To ensure this generalisability, the criteria for selection of authorities and the authorities used should be free of bias and nothing of significance could be missed from the frame.

5.11 Response Rates and Bias from Non-responses

When researchers talk of the response rate they are referring to the proportion of the total number of questionnaires distributed which are completed and returned as requested. Contacts with local government HR directors were facilitated by the researchers membership of the Institute of Personnel and Development and association with the Society of Chief Personnel Officers, a local government body of senior personnel practitioners and strategists. These bodies provided contact lists and/or common ground for introduction. The willingness of this target group, and the local government managers approached by questionnaire and for interviews, to be involved, was positively influenced by this initial contact. The researchers previous work experience in local government reinforced the connection between the researcher and the respondents helping avoid a low response rate.

A proportion of the non-respondents were pursued and eventually persuaded to provide telephone interviews. Their responses were checked against the mainstream replies to make sure that their responses were not different from other respondents in some significant and relevant. By this means the data received was checked for bias,

and steps taken to ensure that relevant data was not overlooked or significant fact and opinions from the non-response group ignored. When identifying potential respondents, measures were taken to ensure that there was little or no non-responses stemming from non-contact, or mis-contact, through the use of a data-base maintained and up-dated on a monthly basis. The sampling frame used to identify the number of people included in the sample, also identified job and personal title, contact address, telephone number and fax address. These details being confirmed through the Local Government Yearbook and the Personnel Manager's Yearbook ensuring all those who needed contacting were included on the data-base. This preparation was intended to prevent the common low response rates associated with large-scale postal questionnaire surveys (Denscombe, 1983).

5.12 The Interview Process

5.12.1 The Pilot Study

The objectives of the pilot study was to ascertain the nature of any available records, documents, descriptive material and other sources of evidence that might be drawn upon in addition to information created by new data collection exercises such as interview surveys, informant interviews, and observation. The pilot was important both to identify on-going issues in the change process relevant to H.R.M and personnel management in local government, and to identify issues that were specific to this issue. Further, the current organisation and structure of the function within local government and that of local government itself was ascertained by reference to the combined knowledge and experience of this group. The group itself was selected to be representative of both the senior HR professionals and junior staff to afford their different perspectives of change. The group was also representative of the overall local government HR profession in terms of critical criteria such as gender, age, length of tenure, private or public sector training and location. Location was identified

both in terms of the type of authority the individual was employed in and its geographic location within England (Denscombe, 1998).

5.12.2 The Focus groups

These four groups consisted of: senior HR/personnel officers on what was the client side of local authorities who met on a regular basis under the auspice of their local government network; practitioner level staff; contractor managers with devolved/decentralised responsibilities for HR/personnel management and a group consisting of client and contractor staff meeting as HR professionals. Contact was made and credentials of the researcher verified through a personal contact once employed in the same local authority as the researcher or through a colleague in each case. The group meetings were regionally based representing the South; West; East and Midlands of England to ensure local differences would not adversely influence the research. These groups were not set up for this research but time was allowed within two meetings for each group to pick up the views gathered during the review of literature, the design of the survey questionnaire and the pilot groups ideas on the survey questionnaire and the aims and objectives of the research. The second meeting with each group was arranged to feedback the survey responses and the interview questionnaire responses and receive the views of legal professionals on these responses and additional issues they wished to raise in the light of these responses and those of colleagues in the groups. Approximately twenty individuals attended each meeting (Lewis, 1992).

5.12.3 The Main Semi-structured Interviews

These interviews proved to be useful in that they provided the focus, detail and depth needed to ensure that the questionnaire was both valid and relevant to local authorities. The interviews also provided detailed questions that would expose the maximum detail in the shortest time, within an easy to use and attractive format,

thereby encouraging would-be respondents to reply (see Appendix). All the interviews used in this survey were arranged by personal contact between the researcher and the interviewee. This was done to ensure a high response rate. These individuals were interviewed in person or by telephone in addition to those selected for interview following the submission of questionnaire responses and who were included as part of the measures to check the views of non-responses.

Basic checks were made into the non-respondents and other information to see if the authority was in some way of a type that was not represented by other similar authorities which had responded. The impact, therefore, of the non-response was considered, to ensure that the authority did not differ in any systematic and relevant fashion from those who had responded to the questionnaire and agreed to be interviewed. The interview data was used in a variety of ways and for a variety of specialist purposes, as a source of information, to allow individuals to develop arguments, explain their own views, perceptions and theories, to give an opportunity for the expression of views they would wish to keep confidential. The data was also used as a crosscheck for accuracy of the other data provided checking it for consistency with the questionnaire response and with the information provided by other informant's from similar authorities.

The use of interviews was determined by the decision that, for the purposes of this research, the question of rhetoric or reality in the H.R.M debate surfaced so often (Legge, 1987) that the objectives of the thesis would be better served by getting interview material which provided an in-depth and realistic insight into the topic. This was the case in this study in that drawing on information provided by fewer, representative, informants from both HR specialists and management, provided a rich source of information on the true character and style of local government H.R.M. This

information greatly enhanced the quantitative information obtained, and by linking in the initial questionnaire investigation with the follow up interviews, a clear and targeted approach to finding information and verifying its validity was achieved. The decision to go for depth rather than breadth in the interview process was best suited to the specific needs of this thesis since it seemed from the literature review, quantitative and early pilot interview data that their were comparatively few themes to investigate which would not benefit from a wide range of opinion.

5.12.4 The Interview Questionnaire

Following the completion of the semi-structured interviews a questionnaire was sent to those chief officer grade heads of HR or Directors of Personnel not responding to the survey questionnaire asking them to confirm that the views given by those interviewed were generally representative of the HR profession in local government as a whole. In all 119 responses were received.

5.13 The Role of the Interview Questionnaire

Following the interviews a form was designed which encouraged the identification of themes in the transcript(s) of the interviews by a wider range of heads of HR and Managers. As themes emerged from across the responses, a clearer picture of recurrent themes, from a wider range and greater number or respondents helped identify the key issues shared among the interviewees.

5.14 Questionnaires

5.14.1 Planning the Use of the Survey and Interview Questionnaires

In this survey two questionnaires were considered necessary. Both questionnaires sought information in two broad categories, facts and opinions. The first was addressed to heads of HR and the second to line managers. Respondents to the HR questionnaire provided factual information about their organisation in response to direct HR and structure related questions, with an opportunity for free comment. They also provided a brief profile of themselves and their work history. Respondents to the management questionnaire were asked to reveal certain demographic facts about themselves, age, sex, post title, name of department, tenure, grade and previous service to allow confirmation of their position in the organisation, their profession and their experience of local government.

The questionnaires were planned to gain the most information as possible across all the issues expressed in the research objectives. The importance of getting these questionnaires right first time was evident. Bearing this in mind, the successful use of these questionnaires depended on devoting time at the planning stage, and having a clear plan of action in mind by the design stage. The idea was to triangulate the different issues which were identified in the research objectives, and by so doing, gain both a managerial and HR perspective on these issues, thereby highlighting contradictions between the two parties. It was considered that, as long as the small number of manager's approached were representative of all and each different type of authority, any inconsistencies in their responses would be noticed and investigated to determine the validity of their views. In considering whether their views were or were not representative of the majority of managers, the validity of their data was checked by feeding back less mainstream opinion to other managers to gain their view on its

validity.

A further, and important, advantage of the questionnaire used is that it encourages pre-coded answers, while this is not an essential facet of questionnaires, the value of the data is likely to be greatest where respondents provide answers that fit into a range of options offered by the researcher. These allowed for the speedy collation and analysis of the data and had an advantage for the respondents, who, instead of needing to think of how to express their ideas were faced with the relatively easy task of needing to pick from answers that are spelt out for them. It was identified in the process of devising the questionnaire that pre-coded questions can be frustrating for respondents and deter them from answering, an issue addressed by presenting a free comments area. Questionnaires, by their very nature, can start to impose a structure on the answers and shape the nature of the responses in a way that reflects the researcher's thinking rather than the respondent's. This issue was tackled through the use of the pilot group of HR staff who validated the questions as those that they agreed would reveal most about local government HR and as such the ideas of the researcher were filtered to reflect the thinking of these HR professionals.

FIGURE 5.1

Research Chronology

Time line of Research	Stage of Research	Respondents Involved
January 1997	Appointment of Supervisor	Early contacts with Society of Chief Personnel Officers; Society of Local Authority Chief Executives – construction of contacts list
March 1997	Initial discussion on project	Production of history of personnel in local government as deep background literature review. Attendance on research training courses at various locations, questionnaire design, interviewing techniques initial draft of methodology
June 1997 – July 1997	Creation of database and male merge facilities to	Contact prospective survey group and prospective interviewees by letter to confirm their role, status and willingness to participate and be part of a database
August 1997	Production of initial plan and start of research diary	Letters to all chief and deputy chief Personnel officers in district, county and other local authorities asking agreement to pilot the questionnaire and project plan – analysis of responses
January 1998	Set-up pilot group from willing respondents	Original drafts drawn up from literature and comments of participants, constructive criticism of questions and research objectives received by non-participants and line managers contacted through the participants to the study – amendments made
February 1998	Pilot questionnaire issued to pilot group for criticism and supervisors	Responses received and collated for trends amongst criticism, amendments made to questionnaire and invitation to attend local meetings of Personnel Officers as guest arranged in "focus group" forum
April 1998	Final draft questionnaire agreed with pilot group and supervisors	Draft proof read by colleagues. Interview list drawn up and schedule of interviews arranged. Primary question list designed. Attendance at focus groups to discuss questionnaire contents

May/June/ July 1998	Revision and expansion of literature review Draft of literature review chapters and methodology passed to supervisors	Interview questionnaire sent in draft along with project plan to respondents who had signified willingness to participate. Attendance at focus groups to discuss questionnaire contents throughout the autumn
August – December 1998	Revision of first draft of thesis after critique by supervisors	Interviews with representatives of S.O.C.P.O; L.G.A; Employers Organisation and research groups, local chairman from local government group C.I.P.D, District and County Council Secretary's Society and other groups all by telephone to discuss change in Personnel/HRM and questionnaire
January 1999	Survey postal questionnaire issued with covering letter, contact telephone number, coding system finalised	Respondents receive postal questionnaire with deadline, S.A.E and telephone contact number for assistance, freehand comments and letters, job descriptions, internal documentation on change exercises, C.C.T, personnel management and H.R.M changes, Decentralisation and/or devolution of H.R.M and personnel management responsibilities; examine non-confidential committee reports etc.
February 1999	Reminder and copy questionnaire issued	Receipt of above information and issue of reminder letter and S.A.E to non-returners — different letter and copy of questionnaire
March 1999	Telephone chase up and assistance given on completion of survey questionnaire where necessary	Format of interviews negotiated with respondents with those willing to be interviewed so that group or multiple interviews can be arranged all on one day. Those respondents not wanting to be interviewed pursued to agree to telephone interview or interview questionnaire

April 1999	Responses analysed and written up, comparison with literature and literature up-date arrangements made to attend focus group meetings. Second draft of chapters one, two, three and four passed to supervisors	Results issued in draft to respondents for initial response to views of colleagues - confidence protected – opinions on results sought by post and telephone interview anomalies and main trends identified and interview questions drawn up. Respondents deadline to confirm interview dates and venue and any internal meeting, documentation etc., they wish to supply to the study
May 1999	Confirmation of main issues to be addressed at interview Survey responses passed to supervisors copies of questionnaires etc.	Verification of main issues with pilot group and additional aspects arising from the responses and the draft interview questions added to list — potential supplementary questions list produced
June 1999	Confirmation interview time, date, venue	Respondents telephoned to confirm interview time, date, venue verbal confirmations some written received
July, August, September 1999	First round Interviews held	Face-to-face interviews held in council offices or public venues off-site all interviews hand written notes to secure confidentiality
October 1999	Collation and analysis of interview responses. Third draft of thesis chapters passed to supervisors with survey findings interview schedule etc.,	Thank you letters issued
November December/Ja nuary 1999/2000	Writing up results and updating literature review contact with central and local government agencies for support documentation referred to at interview	
February/Ma rch 2000	Responses received from focus groups and second round telephone interviews begin. Interview questionnaire drafted using all responses, literature updates and pilot group supplementary questions	Telephone interviews held to clarify differences between interviewees on factual matters and between interviewees and literature or documentation – first half of the focus group meetings were attended

April/May 2000	Focus database drawn up and coding, cover letter SAE prepared	Second half of focus group meetings attended and results obtained. Interview questionnaire issued to local council HR/Personnel staff at chief, deputy chief and practitioner level not previously approached
June/July/ August 2000	All review chapters in draft presented to supervisors. Results of focus groups meetings written up	Thank you telephone calls and further questions on anomalies made to focus group members. Interview questionnaire closing end of June telephone/fax follow-up. Analysis of results.
September 2000	Submission "final draft", corrections to literature review based on supervisors comments	Thank you letter to interview questionnaire respondents and focus group members findings from analysis added to results section and discussion chapters
October 2000	Write up of full thesis draft copies of all chapters to supervisor	Copies of draft survey and quantitative interview results issued to pilot group for comments return time one month
November/ December 2000	Write up of full thesis draft copies of all chapters to supervisor. Corrections on thesis from criticism by supervisor	Contact maintained with pilot and focus group about development of Best Value regime and councils still out-sourcing HR/Personnel services
January to April 2001	Supervisor not available	Contact maintained with pilot and focus group about development of Best Value regime and councils still out-sourcing HR/Personnel services
May to July 2001	Supervisor not available	Contact maintained with pilot and focus group about development of Best Value regime.
August to September 2001	Supervisor not available	Contact maintained with pilot and focus group about development of Best Value regime.
December 2001 into 2002	Supervisor not available	Contact maintained with pilot and focus group about development of Best Value regime.

5.15 Collection of the Information, Checking the Reliability and Validity of the Information and Interpretation of the Results

The results of the questionnaire have been broken down simply in the initial analysis in order to identify whether the original hypothesis was accurate and in order to provide simple evidence for the next stage of the study. Response by age, tenure, sex and type/size of authority will also be completed.

Consideration was given to existing surveys which specified topics which might be included in the postal questionnaire, since the questionnaire requested the perceptions on change, a measurement of personal attitudes to work and change, the individual respondent was addressed as a role-holder in the organisation. This was done in order to encourage the individual to report his or her perceptions on professional and organisational policies, responses, attitudes and perspectives to change (Glausser and Strauss, 1967) from the viewpoint of the role-holder. Consideration was also given in the case study design to the principal weakness of the structured questionnaire and the lesser depth and quality of information that it produces in the absence of the in-depth interview. However, it was believed that a simple postal survey questionnaires taking twenty minutes to complete (tested on the pilot group), with a space for open ended comments on the questionnaire format and contents, would not be too onerous for the population (Denscombe, 1998). The structured questionnaire meant that some degree of standardised measurement consistent across all the sample respondents could be obtained so that the responses of different groups can be analysed on a reasonably comparable basis. Also, conclusions could be drawn about the entire study population sampled (Denscombe, 1998).

Much of the contact, and some preliminary interviews, especially with the pilot group, were carried out over the telephone, a technique used and recognised, particularly in America (Denscombe, 1998). The postal survey proved to be a simple but effective link to the qualitative research and provide an excellent sampling frame for linked

studies which examine the particular situations of groups and processes within the overall sample population.

Advice on the choice of sample size was obtained from Bryman (1989), Irvine, Miles and Evans (1979) and Denscombe (1998), although some modification of this advice was required considering the practical issues involved in the case study design. The fact that this survey was focused on a well-defined group meant that the proportion of those interviewed from each type of authority had to be careful selected to ensure a suitable sampling frame was obtained. Administrative records such as the Municipal Yearbook and Local Government Management Board Database's proved useful as a mechanism for identifying the demographic features used in selecting this sampling frame. The following chart shows the survey tactics for four design tests used in testing the reliability and validity of the survey data and the stage of the research at which the tactic was deployed.

Survey Tactics for Four Design Tests

FIGURE 5.2

Tests	Survey Tactic	Stage of Research
Construct Validity	Use of multiple sources of evidence	Data collection stage
	Chain of evidence within research design between sources of	Data collection stage
	 information Key informants to the study review research evidence and draft findings while retaining confidentiality of all respondents 	Initial drafts of findings and completed work
Internal Validity	 Carry out patternmatching Carry out explanation building exercise Carry out time series analysis to check relevance of retrospective data 	Data analysisData AnalysisData analysis
External Validity	Use replication logic in mass survey response (large response rate) comparison with other similar surveys	Research design
Reliability	 Use survey design (tick box questionnaire) protocol Develop survey data base 	Data collectionData collection

FIGURE 5.3 The Schedule of Semi-structured Interviews

Schedule for Meeting Informar	nts for Semi-structured Interview
First Round	4 x group interview (3) head of HR and central
District/Borough Council (12 interviews, 24	services manager, line manager, HR practitioner;
informants in all)	4 x head of HR, 4 x deputy head of HR 2 x line
City Council	manager 2 x senior practitioner – contractor 2 x
	HR Manager
Second Round (Interview Questionnaire)	120 interview questionnaires issued
First Round	1 x group interview (3) head of HR, line manager,
County Councils	practitioner
(8 interviews, 10 informants in all)	3 x head of HR, 2 x line manager, 1 x senior
(content to the property of th	practitioner, 1 x HR Manager
Second Round (Interview Questionnaire)	20 interview questionnaires issued
First Round	1 x group interview (3) head of HR, HR
London Boroughs (10 interviews, 12 informants	Manager, practitioner: 3 x head of HR, 3 x line
in all)	manager, 2 x senior practitioner 1 x HR Manager
Second Round (Interview Questionnaire)	20 interview questionnaires issued
First Round	2 x group interview (3) head of HR, HR Manager,
Metropolitan Borough Councils (10 interviews,	Practitioner: 3 x head of HR, 2 x deputy head of
14 informants in all)	HR, 2 x Line Manager, 1 x HR Manager
Second Round (Interview Questionnaire)	20 interview questionnaires issued
First Round	2 m amount intermitons (2) hand a CUD. His amount
	2 x group interview (3) head of HR, line manager,
Unitary Authority (10 interviews, 14 informants	practitioner, other chief officer; 2 x head of HR, 3
in all)	x deputy head HR, 2 x senior practitioner, 1 x HR
Constant distriction of the continuity	Manager
Second Round (Interview Questionnaire)	20 interview questionnaires issued

5.16 Conclusion

The methodology chosen worked satisfactorily in terms of triangulating the views of a few managers, the head of HR in those authorities and official reports and documentation of those authorities, illustrating the difference between the rhetoric and reality on each level. Such information could be used to produce a normative or prescriptive model, however, for the purposes of this thesis the process provided the information required on the nature of H.R.M in local government across the major issues that form the aim and objectives of this research. The timescale used proved very tight and slippage at the interview stage caused some difficulty in meeting deadlines, the flexibility of the participants was very helpful in ensuring that the interview schedule was met.

In the pilot group, there was a high level of knowledge of H.R.M theory, tempered by a degree of personal experience of practical HR issues and the attempts made within different authorities to raise the profile of HR to strategic levels. This level of knowledge was, perhaps surprisingly, matched by the knowledge of those heads of HR involved in this survey of the main debates in HR over curent years. This made any discussion on the exact meaning of the questionnaires focus very simple as the respondents were aware of the theoretical debates around: strategic involvement; hard versus soft H.R.M; the role of line managers etc. While this was of concern with regard to the effect this might have on the responses received, the interview responses were not as predictable as feared. Instead of standard responses along the lines of existing debates on the H.R.M issues raised in the questionnaire, the respondents applied these arguments to the local government arena, thereby emphasising the particular experience of H.R.M in local authorities.

Chapter Six

The Findings of the Case Study and Analysis of the Results

6.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter the process through which this thesis would investigate the research questions posed was discussed. The results of those investigations are laid out below in a simple format. In order that the reader may better understand the issues discussed in the next five chapters the results have been presented in such a way that they support each research aim and can be related easily to the following chapter. The aim of this chapter is to identify the essential issues regarding H.R.M in local government found in these results.

Initially this chapter identifies the type of local government organisations approached, and shows how this sample is representative of the entire population of local authorities. The following commentary and analysis is based on the combination of interview notes, questionnaire results and other documentation used in the survey methodology. Extracts from the interviews are available in the following chapters and are used to emphasise a particular point that is held by the majority or a significant minority of those interviewed.

The responses to the second questionnaire used to elicit line managers perception of their role in H.R.M is also detailed below with a brief analysis of the results supported by interview notes, extracts of which appear in the text to Chapter Ten.

6.1.0 Demographic and Organisational Issues

6.1.1 The Survey Population

This first section not only describes the organisations which have responded to the questionnaire, it also illustrates what proportion of the total population of local authorities in England are represented amongst those surveyed.

TABLE 6.0

How would you best describe your organisation?

District Council	107
County Council	26
Unitary Authority	7
London and Metropolitan Boroughs	23

TABLE 6.1

Local Government Organisations in England in 1999

Local Government Organisations in		Local Councils Surveyed as a Percentage	
England in 1999			
69 (100%)	London Boroughs and	23 (33%)	London Boroughs and
	Metropolitan Authorities		Metropolitan Authorities
47 (100%)	English Shire Unitary	7 (15%)	English Unitary
	Authorities		Authorities
Two-Tier Authorities			
34 (100%)	County Councils	26 (76%)	County Councils
	County Councils	<u> </u>	County Councils
238 (100%)	District Councils	107 (45%)	District Councils
388 Local Authorities in England in Total 163 (42%) Surveyed			
		` ,	•

This section presents questionnaire information on the organisational structure of local authorities with an emphasis on the outplacement of HR specialists/generalist units in decentralised units (such as Direct Works or Direct Services Organisations). The questionnaire explanatory notes ask respondents to state whether their council is multi-sited or single-sited establishments referring to the main administrative offices of the council. This restriction was designed to identify multi-divisional forms of organisation and any influence structure may have on HR practice. It was considered

that this restriction would prevent respondents including care-homes and neighbourhood offices, where HR staff would not be placed, within this description of structure thereby creating an adverse and possibly misleading impression.

6.1.2 Organisational Issues

TABLE 6.2
Would you say your organisation was?

Single-sited	17
Multi-sited	146

It would appear from this result that most authorities have secondary administrative sites, most often being Direct Services Centres or administrative sites in a number of residential centres where a HR presence can be found

TABLE 6.3

Would you describe the HR function in your organisation, currently, as?

Centralised	67
Decentralised	18
Combination of Control	78

Respondents identified their HR function as being, in the main, a combination of central and decentralised. It is worthy of note that these combination HR authorities are county councils, Unitary or Metropolitan authorities, large enough to gain benefits from HR practioners being closer to operational managers. The size of the establishments has encouraged HR staff being decentralised due to operational managers being placed so far, both hierarchically and geographically from the centre of the organisation. The economies of scale apply to these organizations. The span of control of central HR staff is limited to those departmental managers within easy communication. Managers further away from the centre in the organisations structure

are not so easily reached. Decentralised HR staff have the additional benefit of being based in service departments where they can develop a HR perspective entirely grounded in the culture, function and even legislation and statutory duties relevant to that service area. The centralised HR functions described in 67 of the surveyed organisations apply entirely to the middle and lower ranks of district authorities. Oddly perhaps the lowest level of district local authority is also characterised by being totally decentralised with little or no strategic core, just a HR Manager working across the authority with administrative/secretarial support in each department, directorate or functional area.

TABLE 6.4

Is your organisation managed from its centre, is management devolved or is the organisation managed by a combination of the centre and devolved?

Central	40	
Devolved	9	
Mix	114	

In terms of management control, the majority of authorities surveyed describe the managerial control of the authority as being characteristic of H.R.M in terms of a mix of stategic centre and devolved operational management combining to achieve agreed and set organisational objectives. Six smaller authoritities and one county council stated that they had totally devolved structures for management purposes with a very small organisational core. These authorities had been run by Conservative administrations previously and seemed to have retained a strong C.C.T split despite the anticipated implementation of Best Value. The trades union presence in these authorities varied from none existence to minimal.

6.2 Strategic Issues (as a percentage).

TABLE 6.5

Is the Human Resource function represented at Chief Officers Management Team (Board Level) in your organisation? (%)

Yes	65	No	35
			ļ

With some notable exceptions, most local authorities at county council, unitary or metropolitan district level employ an HR director or equivalent post. There are a number of cases where the HR director is not a member of the Chief Officer's Group in these authorities but occupies a position slightly below chief officer and attends meetings as and when required. At county and equivalent level the director of HR rarely has additional responsibilities for other functions, but it is the case that in large districts or county councils reduced in size because of Local Government Review (L.G.R), the HR post does carry additional responsibilities. Whilst district councils do have HR directors, their involvement with the management team is often limited. It seems that the smaller the authority, the less often a senior HR post either exists or if it does exist, does it have a strategic focus. Heads of HR at the lowest district council level have a very hands-on role.

Does your organisation have a HRM Strategy?

TABLE 6.6

Yes and linked to Corporate Business Plan	71
Yes but separate from Corporate Business	50
Plan	
No	42

Once again these results contribute to a pattern that developed from the responses to

the questionnaire and the interviews that HR in its strategic form is more often in the province of county council level authorities and large district or city councils. In these authorities the ration of HR staff to employees is far higher. As such, the economies of scale mean that the creation of a strategic focus and strategic HR team are possible. In these large authorities, although not exclusively in them, business and financial planning has become far more developed as a necessity of the reduction in capital and revenue budgets over the last twenty-five years. The threat of judicial review or other legal challenge to the level or quality of service provision has also encouraged councils to more closer monitor standards and plan the use of resources better. The development of HR strategies as a separate entity to business plans has taken place in several authorities at city and large district size but not unitary, or metropolitan district councils. The production of a separate HR strategy and business strategy seems, in many respects, pointless, since the practical purpose of a HR strategy is to help the organisation to achieve its business objectives. Respondents to the interviews gave a range of reasons why a separate HR strategy was of practical use. These explanations ranged from: the HR strategy being the basis of involvement and participation between staff and managers; being created to help obtain investors in people status; being created to provide staff with a clear picture of the aspirations of councillors and senior managers as a good or model employer; to inform staff of the future intentions of the authority with regard to the shape and numbers of the workforce; being a response to managers requests for a clear structure for human resource planning; being no more than a cosmetic exercise.

The large minority which produced no HR strategy were across all sizes of authority, but most often amongst the smallest. The reason these district authorities gave for having no strategy was: that there was no strategic HR function to provide one; that

the authority was too small to require human resource planning or combination of business and people management; that because there was no decentralisation and/or devolution their was no need to involve line managers in HR issues.

TABLE 6.7

Is the Human Resources Strategy formulated centrally, by managers with devolved responsibilities or elsewhere?

Centrally	40
Devolved	92
No Strategy	34

It seemed appropriate to follow-up the last question to seek to identify what if any involvement there was in producing the HR strategy. In the responses to this question a number of heads of personnel chose to reply that while there was no formal written strategy, some of them had interpreted the question as meaning the involvement of line managers in the shaping of HR policies. The seeming discrepancy between Tables 6.6 and 6.7 reveals the existence of policy documents which are represented as strategies but are not.

In order to stem the criticism of contractor unit managers about the cost of central or corporate HR as an overhead on service departments, many heads of HR had taken steps to market HR services to managers. These measures, taken during the days of internal markets, devolved budgeting and preparation for white collar C.C.T, took the form of involvement and participation strategies, creating a forum for debate on HR issues. Such fora are still in existence and for many heads of HR this involvement constitutes an HR strategy explaining the disparity between Table 6.6 and Table 6.7. This explanation also applies, in a more rigid way, to the high numbers of respondents claiming line management involvement in the production of the HR strategy. The less

pragmatic reasons given for this involvement extend to change management issues in which heads of HR have organised special committees. These committees involve line managers not so much for the purpose of marketing the central HR unit, but more for reasons of consultation with managers prior to embarking on major change programmes. Once set up, these committees are consulted on HR policies, and their commitment to the policies and participation in their implementation sought. The objective of this exercise is to assist central HR in achieving greater control over the final use and operation of the policy. The group who formulated the HR strategy centrally without consulting line managers are, perhaps surprisingly, the largest authorities. These councils almost uniformly explain that the strategy is set by senior management, more often than not after committee approval, and is set to meet legislative, budgetary and political objectives upon which most managers would have no relevant input.

It becomes clear on analysis that there are different types of strategy with different meanings in different authorities. Although the L.G.M.B, C.I.P.D, Audit Commission amongst others have demonstrated the use and form of H.R.M strategies, it is apparent that authorities have produced corporate, operational and functional strategies, perhaps without fully appreciating the difference, which they feel meet their authorities needs. The corporate strategies produced by the county level authorities are more often linked to business planning and reveal a hard H.R.M perspective but including aspirations towards a committed, motivated and well trained workforce. Other authorities at the same level or lower seem to format their strategy document, where there is one, along the lines of a functional shopping list for managers buying services from the central and/or decentralised HR unit(s). Many of the larger district councils seem to have opted for an operational strategy involving more practical and

pragmatic plans to tackle particular elements of HR or basic personnel administration which are causing distortions in service provision. Such strategies seem to be aimed at achieving an overall approach to specific issues, for example sickness absence.

6.3 Management Roles and Training

In order that managers should be capable of constructive contributions to strategies or capable of implementing them, they require training in HR issues. In this section the response of heads of HR to the following question is encouraging for the future of devolved HR. Every authority approached was making some effort at management training, either through in-house provision or through the use of consultants, local universities business schools or independent training agencies. A number of partnerships referred to by heads of HR, either with other public or occasionally private sector enterprises, suggested that a co-ordinated approach was being taken by local authorities to meeting managers training needs. Although some of the smaller authorities did not have or use management training programmes, they did, on identification of a training need, particularly around budgetary responsibility or the implementation of new legislation, ensure that training was provided. There was also a commitment amongst all councils towards assisting professional staff with continued professional development obligations which met the authorities own core training provision. The information from those interviewed was that larger authorities were more likely to run their own in-house management training courses, for both financial and cultural reasons.

Are your managers provided with a co-ordinated management training/development programme including H.R.M as routine?

TABLE 6.8

Rarely	21
Yes	142
No	0

The less impressive results from the questions asked about management training came from the investigation of the effectiveness of that training from the viewpoint of the head of HR, often the sponsor of such programmes.

TABLE 6.9

How effective are line managers in your organisation in operating personnel policies and procedures?

Extremely	1
Very	25
Adequate	91
Poor	7
Very Poor	39

The overall results follow the pattern of the more effective managers being found at county level, but not exclusively. The majority of authorities only rate their managers as adequate in their HR role, with a significant number of authorities rating their managers as very poor. This result very much suggests that the training provision while adequate in terms of coverage of managers may be inadequate in terms of its contents, relevance or quality. There is also the suggestion that managers either willfully or as a result of being hard to train, are unable to deal effectively with the wider HR role in their devolved or decentralised structures, or even with the simple implementation of HR policies and procedures. This is despite the availability of HR

specialists, at corporate and possibly departmental level, extensive training and the use of HR handbooks and simple procedures. There must be serious issues behind the fact that 56 per cent of the local government managers included in this survey are only rated as adequate and 24 per cent are rated as very poor.

6.4 Human Resource Management Support

Specialist HR support is important to the success of any H.R.M system whether centralised, decentralised or devolved. The quality and timeliness of HR advice, especially in specialist areas such as pay, equal opportunities, health and safety, for example can assist managers in more easily achieving their HR objectives without negative industrial relations implications.

TABLE 6.10

Where does your organisation employ its HR specialist staff?

In the Centre	113
In Departments – devolved	1
Combination – Centre and Departments	49
Externally Supplied Service	0

While most district authorities stated that their specialist HR staff were employed in a central unit, one stated that HR was totally devolved with only a HR Managers left in the corporate centre. The combination of centre and departments was most common amongst larger authorities with a clear split between strategic and operational HR functions. As the results show, a considerable number of county level authorities kept specialist services centralised. This was mostly done to ensure that the policies of the corporate and strategic core specialists remained unchallenged by experts elsewhere in the organisation. The HR staff at department level were most often employed in operational work, recruitment or personnel administration, contract production and

terms and conditions of service advice, all of it highly proceduralised and standardised work.

TABLE 6.11

Who is responsible for the industrial/employee relations (trade union contact) aspects of HR policy advice being implemented (for example change management)?

Centrally located HR Specialists	93	
Line Managers	2	
Combination	31	
Department/locally based HR staff only	0	
Central and local HR staff (no managers)	37	

The results show that the strategic centre still held control over the traditional negotiating machinery with recognised trades unions across all authorities. The control of the council's joint negotiating machinery has remained under the control of the centre with only two authorities claiming that line managers control this major industrial relations function. In these two cases an open forum approach, similar in some ways to a works council, has been devised for managers to attend, under HR guidance. Control in these two small district councils (West Oxfordshire and Rushmoor) does seem to lie with managers in terms of the agenda for the meeting, however, trades union representation in both authorities is not strong, and there is an absence of specialist HR support in industrial relations. In those authorities where a combination of line managers and central specialist work together on industrial relations issues, there is a noticeable split in the sort of work they carry out independently. While HR specialists are involved in contentious issues, line managers rarely are. Nor are line managers involved either as a group or individually in authority wide HR issues requiring complex industrial relations work or collective bargaining. Managers do record a heavy involvement in certain employee relations

issues such as grievance handling, mostly because they are bound by the procedures to be involved at an early stage in resolving staff complaints.

TABLE 6.12

What type of qualifications do the Human Resource Staff in your Central HR function possess?

Qualified mainly by experience	13
Qualified by mainly CIPD examination	79
Mixture of both experience and CIPD	2

The HR Specialist staff themselves seem to be mostly qualified by examination through the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (C.I.P.D). Considering the high percentage of authorities recording their staff as being C.I.P.D qualified it was interesting to discover that this included both strategic and operational level staff and a concerted effort seems to have been made within local government to ensure that the long tradition of employing unqualified establishment officers is coming to an end. Those authorities reporting a mixture of C.I.P.D and unqualified staff and those reporting unqualifed non-C.I.P.D staff include many district authorities. These authorities report that their Head of HR and members of their staff come from an establishment officer tradition and possess either management services, administrative, legal or committee clerk backgrounds and qualifications. In these authorities the degree of centralisation of HR appears to be much greater with a distinct absence of strategic HR and a high concentration on operational HR work, personnel administration and procedural advice. There are authorities amongst the districts which even now have no CIPD qualified staff but who do have either a qualified lawyer with access to employment law advice or an administrator with a quasi-HR qualification performing the role.

It appears that the absence of HR qualifications at the corporate centre hinders the

devolution or decentralisation of HR functions. One reason given for this is the limited penetration of managerialism, in many of the smaller districts councils, in the HR sense especially, due to the lack of motivation of chief officers and councillor's, to implement business unit structures. Many small districts knew that C.C.T would not affect them because of the de-minimus limit or because the percentage of white-collar work outplaced was equivalent or greater than the percentage required for C.C.T, meaning that C.C.T would have no effect on professional services. Even so, these exceptions are relatively few, most authorities having sought to devolve or decentralise as many HR functions from the centre as deemed feasible.

TABLE 6.13

HR functions performed by Central HR, Line Managers and others

(Percentage of Councils Identifying where Responsibilities for Functions Lie)

Function	Human	Line Managers	Combination	Other	Total
	Resources				
Training and Development					
Identify individual staff	11	35	53	1	100%
development needs					
Staff Appraisal	1	72	24	3	100%
Staff Performance Review	3	59	35	3	100%
(linked to pay)					
Identify staff training needs	10	21	69	0	100%
as a group					
Recruitment					
Recruitment Selection	21	38	40	1	100%
Recruitment Administration	43	20	13	24	100%
Terms and conditions of	50	24	23	3	100%
service advice to staff (eg					
maternity rights)					

TABLE 6.13 (continued)

Employee Relations					
Redundancy and other	76	13	10	1	100%
Dismissals					
Handling Grievances	52	34	13	1	100%
Controlling Sickness Absence	50	24	23	3	100%
Dealing with local trades union	33	23	43	1	100%
representatives			:		
Dealing with full-time trades	77	6	15	2	100%
union representatives					
Specialist Areas of People					
Management					
Job Evaluation	62	6	29	3	100%
Health and Safety	48	17	20	15	100%
Welfare	36	10	39	15	100%
Occupational Health	48	5	5	42	100%
Equal Opportunities	40	15	39	6	100%
HR Strategy Development	45	6	48	1	100%

As table 6.13, above, states the most common role played in relation to generalist HR tasks was that HR staff make decisions in conjunction with line managers. This was the norm in 9 out of the 12 general HR functions listed. This joint approach attracted more responses than any single alternative, that is that HR staff or line managers had sole responsibility for decision-making. The exceptions were that managers took responsibility for appraisals and pay related performance review and HR staff took overall responsibility for redundancies and other dismissals. For example, out of a choice of four suggested arrangements, 47 per cent (n = 162) of our respondents

identified that for this role HR specialists had sole responsibility in relation to redundancy and discipline/other related dismissals. For appraisal, the figure shown was 72 per cent (n = 100) that line managers had sole responsibility; and, for pay related staff performance review it was 69 per cent (n = 134). This data, then, suggests that while it is least common for personnel professionals to make operational decisions independently, it is most common for them to share tasks and joint decision making with the line. In industrial relations issues a combination approach was again the most popular, even when dealing with full-time union officials, however this accounted for consultation on change issues and other business related matters at a non-contentious stage of the process, or dealing with matters related to individual staff members. Managers avoided direct personal contact with full-time officials without an HR representative present, especially on contentious issues. Managers avoided, and were excluded from collective-bargaining issues, formal negotiations, and the handling of final stages in the use of formal industrial or employee relations procedures. Examples of their involvement in employee relations procedures is shown in the degree of combined and HR control over absence and grievance management. Table 6.13 shows the anticipated degree of involvement of line managers in the selection part of the recruitment process. While some authorities have chosen to outsource elements of their recruitment administration, advertising and selection testing, rarely do line managers surrender the right to select their own staff, even if an HR presence is required, as is the case in many authorities. While many smaller authorities have retained a centralised recruitment function due to the economies of scale, others have sought to negotiate shared arrangements for recruiting staff, with other authorities in close proximity, in the form of a recruitment bureau in order to reduce their own costs.

6.5 Questionnaire to Second and Third Tier Line Managers

This section seeks to identify the line manager's relationship with HR strategy, HR specialists in the centre of the organisation and details concerning the changing nature of management in local government. The initial question sought to identify manager's perceptions of change to their work role. Line managers in district recorded that they had noticed less change in their management role than did those in county level organisations. In the following answer, therefore, the reader can interpret the result in terms of organisational size, with managers in larger authorities, all of which are more directly affected by the preparation for C.C.T, devolution and decentralisation programmes acknowledge the change in their job role. The identified skills changes all revolve around information technology, project management, financial, HR and work programme planning, all such changes are said to be a result of the need to do more with less. All the managers interviewed and involved in the survey report an increase in their personal and their staff's workloads.

TABLE 6.14

Do you think that there has been a change in the skills needed to be a local authority manager or not? (%).

Yes	73	No	27

This increase in workload has also affected the composition and length of the average working day. New and more complicated information technology has helped overall, although despite some investment by local authorities in-house training in IT skills has not reached many managers to the extent where they can make the most of the technology they now possess. The increase in flexibility, around the use of part-time

working and flexible-working hours is stated to be very popular amongst staff but somewhat less popular amongst the managers who find administration of the scheme difficult. This question raised the first significant dispute that line managers as a group held against central HR. The managers saw the pressure for equal opportunities 'correctness' as personnel policing their actions.

Managers stated that they were involved in initial counselling with staff suffering work related stress or voicing domestic or other concerns with their working hours. However, as soon as this became a more complex issue then absence control, and occupational health issues were involved. All the managers interviewed stated that they would pass the matter over to specialist HR at this point. The reason for this decision was, as in all contentious areas of staff related work, a lack of knowledge and skills in dealing with the situation. Once again the managers who state that their is no or little requirement for longer hours or flexible working come from the smaller district councils where, they suggest, the impact of devolution or decentralisation has been negligible due to the size of the authority, the limited degree of delegated powers from council committees to officers and the limited degree of cost-centre management. Also, the fact that these authorities were always de-minimus for C.C.T purposes is seen as a substantial reason for the retention of HR responsibility for many areas by a central HR department.

TABLE 6.15

Have you been required to adopt a more flexible approach to working methods and hours of work for your staff? (%)

Yes	76.2	No	23.8

The explanation given by managers for passing matters over to specialist HR is most

often that they do not possess the skills and knowledge required to handle complex and sensitive people management issues. Line managers have, however, received quite substantial amounts of training in practical skills related to HR, according to the Heads of HR interviewed and the survey results in this thesis. Line managers acknowledge the receipt of this training and the provision by HR specialists of handbooks and guidelines that cover all aspects of HR policy and procedure. A more detailed explanation of HR specialists continued involvement reveals that few line managers feel they have the practical hands-on experience or ability to handle sensitive issues effectively.

TABLE 6.16

Have you received training in human resource management policies and procedures

within your organisation? (%)

78.4

Yes

ı							
	TP1!		11:4-4		fianna that	immalma harra lina	
	Their concer	ns reveal	i a complicated	assortment of	i issues that	involve how line	

No

21.6

managers in local government perceive their role and authority, their concern to retain a friendly and even collegiate working relationship with peers and junior staff and a desire to avoid conflict. While, as the result below show that managers acknowledge that they have needed to develop their HR skills the training and development they have received does not tell them how to deal with the issues which concern them most. Once again, the managers interviewed feel that HR specialists are unable to grasp their concerns or provide the sort of support or training that they require.

TABLE 6.17

Have you needed to develop a broader range of human resource knowledge and skills than prior to devolution? (%)

Yes	74.7	No	25.3

A further reason given by line managers for the ineffectiveness of HR training and support is the high workload that they as managers are required to carry. The increased responsibilities placed on line managers in recent years make it difficult or even impossible, in their opinion, to become fully involved in all but the decision-making aspects of HR issues. Essentially, managers give this point as the reason why control over decentralised HR staff is attractive. Managers in all levels of council, but particularly in trading areas and specialist departments, identify the particular circumstances of their work environment, employment relationship with staff, skill or labour market needs, or the cost of central HR compared with the level of service given, as a reason why they should have specialist HR staff under their control.

TABLE 6.18

Is a broader range of management skills required in your management role than prior to decentralisation? (%)

Yes	87.6	No	12.4

These same reasons are amongst those given by line managers to justify their involvement in the development of corporate HR strategy or policy initiatives. Often in decentralised structures the HR specialists with responsibility for specific service areas or departments are the most vocal supporters of line management involvement

or for the total decentralisation of the HR function. While line managers in larger councils acknowledge that they are involved in strategy and policy development through a variety of consultation and participation fora, most see such meetings as of limited value. They also see the HR specialists as obstructive, out of touch with service needs and obsessed with notions of the model employer, employment law correctness and the application of equal opportunities principles to all situations. As such, the view given below reflects the number of line managers in districts which have no involvement structure, and the high proportion of larger authorities which have no HR strategy or no strategy linked to a business plan.

TABLE 6.19

Do you have a role in the development of your organisations Human Resource

Strategy Yes or No? (%)

Yes	57.4	No	42.6

Often in describing the shortcomings of HR specialists, line managers compare what appears to be the comparative freedom of their private sector counter-parts in determining pay and other HR issues. Those managers with private sector experience see HR in local government as more bureaucratic than the private sector, but are willing to admit that this is a subjective and situational perspective. These managers describe situations where private sector HR has been prescriptive as in some local authorities and situations where HR is responsive to line managers. They describe the relationship between HR and the line manager as crucial in the delivery of services but feel less confident in determining those areas where HR or managers should lead. All the managers with private sector background could describe situations where they had witnessed both conflict and consensus between the line manager and HR and

were all of the opinion that consensus was the only means by which progress was made.

TABLE 6.20

Is your relationship with central HR specialist mainly a conflictual one (yes) or non-conflictual (no)? (%)

Yes	67.4	No	32.6

Power relationships, especially in 'blame' cultures, was given as the main reason for conflict between the two, especially in those companies (and authorities) where HR still sought to maintain a policing role over line managers use of procedures. Once again equal opportunities policy was identified as a major area of conflict.

TABLE 6.21

From your experience, do you believe that there is a difference between the work of managers in the private sector and those in local government? (%)

Yes	87.5	No	12.5	

Line managers reported that, as the results below show, that they are quite comfortable discussing issues informally with local trades union representatives. While this comfort is notably diminished where conflict is possible, line managers have found that there is little to fear from contact with local officials employed by the authority. Relationships with full-time officials are not favoured by line managers who feel that corporate representation is more appropriately carried out by central HR specialists.

TABLE 6.22

Do you work directly with local Trades Union representatives yourself? (%)

- 1		70	No	28
	Yes	72	INO	20
1	105			I
				i
1				

TABLE 6.23

Size of Organisation and Service Provision and their Effect on HRM. (Percentage

Showing Where Responsibility for HRM Function Lies)

Comparative Analysis Percentage of Function			County/Metro/London Borough or Unitary Councils (larger organisations) percentage of HR Staff or managers		
Operated by HR or	responsible for function	OII	responsible for function		
			responsible for function		
Line Manager Function	HR	Line Manager	HR	Line Manager	
Function	пк	Liffe Manager		Enic Wanager	
Training and					
Development					
Identify individual	32	68	5	95	
staff development					
needs					
Staff Appraisal	3	97	50	50	
Staff Performance	6	94	0	100	
Review linked to					
pay					
Identify staff	14.5	85.5	8	92	
training needs as a					
group					
Recruiting					
Recruitment and	50	50	6	94	
Selection					
Recruitment	38	13	42	58	
Administration	·				

TABLE 6.23 (continued)

Conditions of				
E1		1		
Employment (eg				
maternity rights				
advice to staff)				
Employee Relations				
Redundancy and	87	13	80	20
other Dismissals	0.			
	67	33	35	65
grievances				
	60	40	60	40
Absence				
Dealing with local	62	38	50	50
trades union				
representatives				
Dealing with full-	93	7	93	7
time trades union				
reps				
Specialist Areas of				
People Management	. }			
Job Evaluation	92	8	97	3
Health and Safety	74	26	74	26
Welfare	92	8	88	12
Occupational Health	93	7	100	0
Equal Opportunities 8	87	13	71	29
HR Policy 9	91	9	92	8
Development	, •			

Table 6.23 illustrates those areas of H.R.M where managers in larger and smaller local authorities have taken over responsibility for aspects of HR proactive. This table draws a broad picture of the extent of devolution of HR activities in these two different types of local authority. The areas where HR continues to make decisions

with minimal involvement of line managers is essentially the same for large and small authorities, that is employee relations and specialist areas of HR activity. Direct involvement of line managers in training and development is greater than any other area, especially in district level councils. Recruitment and selection decision-making is another area where line managers have greater or equal involvement with HR specialists. Employee relations is still very much the province of HR specialist although grievance handling and dealing with local trades union representatives seem to be areas where line managers are heavily involved.

The most consistent message that comes from this data is that the HR function is very likely to retain direct influence in specialist areas and over issues that require employment law, policy and procedure or social skills expertise. The emphasis on devolving training, employee relations, recruitment and selection, in past years does appear to translate into greater devolution to line managers in these areas. In districts 8 out of the 12 areas listed show HR involvement in these areas to be greater or equal to that of line managers. In county level organisations 6 out of the 12 areas listed show HR involvement to be greater of equal to that of line managers. In county level organisations the involvement of HR is often at local level except in the area of dismissal, either by reason or redundancy or other contentious reason. From the interview information available on the devolution of different areas of HR, the absence of practical skills and attitudinal barriers to change have prevented further devolution. Change which results in dismissal or amendment to employment contracts has proved too complex to line managers and consequently little progress has been made by managers in adopting these responsibilities as part of their role. HR and line activities in the employee relations area indicates that HR involvement increases in accordance with the potential gravity of the activity.

6.6 Conclusion

The results provided by the heads of HR and Line managers suggest that, overall, the management of HR issues is a partnership between HR specialists and managers. Local government H.R.M is different and distinguishable from the model as represented in other sectors. The differences identified portray local government H.R.M as one where the public, community and democratic role of local authorities provide a legitimacy to the HR function which is separate and distinct from business driven need for H.R.M associated with commercial enterprises. This distinctiveness influences the relationship between HR specialists and line managers. Within this relationship there are points of consensus and points of conflict that are determined by such factors as the extent of HR decentralisation and/or devolution, the role and status of HR within different types of local government organisation (as determined by whether the HR function is strategic or not) and the degree of line management expertise in HR.

This brief description of the results findings covers all those areas of discussion carried over into the next five chapters being: the local government model of H.R.M; decentralisation and devolution of HR functions; strategic H.R.M in local government; the local government work environment and industrial relations; the relationship between line managers and HR specialists.

Within these five chapters the model of H.R.M in local government will be examined through the perception of line managers and heads of HR involved in the survey and interviews carried out for this thesis.

Chapter Seven

The Local Government Model of H.R.M

7.0 Introduction

The basic arguments discussed in the following chapters are:

FIGURE 7.0

H.R.M Arguments

- 1. Are H.R.M and personnel management, part of N.P.M and traditional administration respectively, one and the same, are they complimentary, or are they different and discrete concepts within the local government context?
- 2. Has H.R.M got a genuinely strategic role in the development and planning of local government business strategies?
- 3. Have local government organisations developed a common form of H.R.M; is it the hard or soft variety, or has it formed a hybrid?

These questions will be answered in part in this chapter with a description of the local government model of H.R.M. The specific and detailed arguments around key findings are discussed in greater detail in the following chapters, with a conclusion in Chapter Twelve.

7.1 The Development of the Local Government H.R.M Model

As was identified in chapters one, three and four the local government personnel function of the 1970s was, essentially an administrative and welfare role with responsibility for policies and procedures and industrial relations. The approach taken by central personnel to people management was a bureaucratic and administrative one (Tyson, 1987). The following decade witnessed a move towards a new kind of uniformity in HR management through the prescriptive form drawn from the

excellence literature (Guest, 1990; Du Gay and Salaman, 1992). Local government organisations, like those in the private sector, were exhorted to move away from the bureaucracy of personnel management to the apparent flexibility and responsiveness of H.R.M. The degree of genuine penetration H.R.M has had within local government organisations, which are well known for their ability to resist change, is still open to question. Following the recession of the 1990s, the potential demise of the central/corporate HR function in local government became more likely as devolution and decentralisation in H.R.M came into the ascendancy, but this has not happened. Adams (1991) put forward four ideas on how the central HR function could be replaced. Each form has been used in the different authorities that the interviewees represent. These different forms are; an in-house agency; an internal consultancy; a business within a business; and by using an external agency. Flood et al., (1995) in their recent articles on new management methods, also examine the idea of personnel management without personnel managers, with the HR role subsumed within the general management role. The redundancies and retirements of restructuring resulted in reductions in the numbers of both line managers and HR specialists, and a devaluation of staff that threw doubt on the relevance of the HR rhetoric of the 1980s for the harsh organisational reality of the 1990s (Herriot, 1995; Bach and Winchester, 1994). The picture that emerges from the 1990s is therefore confused and contradictory. The rhetoric of H.R.M and HR practitioners remains the same: that HR should have a strategic role; personnel management should be devolved to line managers; and that H.R.M has a valuable contribution to make to bottom line business performance. After almost twenty years of such rhetoric, the empirical evidence suggests that, (i) the HR function is not achieving integration with business strategists; (ii) that the devolution to the line has been problematic in the

extreme; and, (iii) the function's contribution to business performance has been questioned. This chapter and those following examine these dimensions in greater depth because they are fundamental to the definition and identification of H.R.M as a distinct entity. The first two (strategic integration and relationship with the line managers) are critical points of linkage between the HR function and the rest of the organisation. The third is an outcome of the first two.

7.2 The Differences Between Ideal-Type Human Resource Management and the Model of Local Government H.R.M

This section discusses the views of the heads of HR, interviewed in this research, as to whether a definitive model of H.R.M in local government exists. This chapter also attempts to compare their idea of what the model should contain with the descriptive models of ideal H.R.M produced by the theorists discussed in chapter one. The local government model is made up of fifteen characteristics identified from the literature review, interviews and survey data (see FIGURE 2.8; 2.9 and 2.10). The purpose of the model, as discussed in chapter four, is to draw out generalisations about Local Government H.R.M to identify key aspects and common features of practice. The ideal-type model categories are listed in the left-hand column of the tables set out in each section, with the H.R.M ideal description stated in the middle column and the version applicable to local government in the right hand column.

In the following sections the comments of those interviewed are recorded along-side the section of the model under discussion. The views of those interviewed and noted in each section are in all cases representative of the majority of the group, except where specified. The findings of the survey, other source material and interviews, have informed the H.R.M model, below, and helped identify the different levels at

which H.R.M and local government H.R.M seem to operate. Local government HRM seems, in the main, to be what Keenoy (1990a) believes it is, just tactical and pragmatic. What appears to be missing from local government H.R.M are those elements found in the ideal-type, the unitary framework and strategic role of true H.R.M. Keenoy's (1990a) perspective is shared by those heads of HR interviewed, who believe H.R.M and personnel management can be viewed as complementary rather than mutually exclusive forms of practice. Heads of HR are content working within this flexible framework, where human resources policy may be unitary or pluralistic, collaborative or conflictual depending upon the external organisational influences and the business strategy used by the council.

The heads of HR agree with the findings of Tichy et al. (1982) that a main feature of strategic H.R.M is matching available human resources to jobs, but they contest that this is a process common to both H.R.M models and to models of personnel management (Guest 1987). To that end, as one head of HR states:

There is no reason why there cannot be a strategic personnel function. The academics may call this HR or H.R.M but the processes and objectives are the same, regardless of what you call them. Managers have always had responsibility for day-to-day staffing issues while the economies of scale have caused centralisation of bulk administration such as terms and conditions work. In ensuring systems are set up to fit people to jobs, person specifications, job descriptions etc., this has also always been a shared function (Head of HR – County Council)

The heads of HR agree as a group with this statement, and many remain unconvinced that there is any practical difference between personnel and H.R.M. This underlying belief influences the perspective of this group in the production of the lLocal government H.R.M model detailed below. However, it is noticeable that they find a large number of differences between the model they produce for local government and the ideal-type H.R.M model. The group explained this by suggesting that the ideal-type does not exist and the variations of H.R.M around the ideal are so many as

to prevent clear definition of H.R.M except, perhaps, within particular contexts.

7.2.1 Time and Planning

The heads of HR have suggested that local government, because of its limited ability to predict its budget, income and expenditure, beyond the short-term is forced to adopt a short-term approach to planning. In this respect those interviewed explain the lack of an integrated HR and business plan as a consequence of the short-term planning abilities within local authorities.

FIGURE 7.1 Time and Planning Perspective of Model

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M
Time and Planning	Long-term, Proactive, Strategic,	Short-term, Pro-active in some areas,
Perspective	Integrated	Reactive Corporately. Integration
		incomplete. Strategic HR role incomplete.

As the table above shows, the shared view of local government H.R.M is different to that of the ideal-type. In this respect, the heads of HR see HR planning to be difficult in what is, essentially, a reactive work environment for HR. Individual departments may, indeed must, respond to new legislation or seek to develop some commercial advantage, using long-term projections and planning of HR needs, often within the limitations of a contract of three or five years duration. The corporate framework for coordinating such activity appears to be weak, with the heads of HR specifying this as a driver towards greater decentralisation and devolution of HR responsibility and expertise. The heads of HR point to legislative change as a reason and cause for a more reactive corporate stance, all of those interviewed pointing to C.C.T and Best Value as legislative programmes which have provoked reactive strategies from local authority HR departments.

As one head of HR stated:

Planning is always short-term, literally from budget to budget or, in HR terms, from one national pay award to the next. This limited planning cycle prevents a pro-active approach from being taken in HR terms, and denies us the opportunity to integrate the people management strategy, in a coherent way, with the business objectives set by or for the Authority (Director of HR – London Borough)

Those interviewed tend to minimise the impact of legislation specifically related to education and social services which falls on the decentralised HR unit in those departments. A representative of the heads of HR stated:

While corporate HR may assist with the implementation of such issues as the Warner Report implications, through the strategic advisor responsible for recruitment, the responsibility for the project is the Departments and the Social Services Committee. The central HR unit is responsible for the corporate HR strategy and must look at the overview (Head of HR – County Council)

This view was common amongst those interviewed many of whom talked about the overview as being one related to hard H.R.M linking future staffing needs with budget-planning. The majority of those interviewed stressed, though, that despite several attempts to introduce target setting around budget-planning in the 1970s and early 1980s, strategic business planning is still a relatively new process. The HR implications of this short-termisim varies between authorities. Some have two or three year HR strategies in place, but often, through necessity, these are not directly linked to a business strategy. The figure (FIGURE 2.5) shown in Chapter Two (Schuler and Jackson's model of Employee Role Behaviour) was shown to interviewees to seek their view on the business strategy adopted by different Authorities.

All of those interviewed chose the cost-reduction business strategy to be that which they believed most closely resembled the practice in their own council. The identification was made through those interviewed selecting those employee behaviours, under each type of business strategy shown, most closely resembling the

behaviours of their own employees. It is well to remember though, that as Chapter Eight discusses in detail, many authorities still profess to have neither a business or HR strategy. Many others possess either a business or a HR strategy and some possess both, although only some of them have produced integrated strategies. Once again the short-termism of the budget cycle is quoted as the reason for this failure to integrate strategies, as is poor budget planning by managers. In addition a majority of the heads of HR pointed to changing political leadership as a major factor in the inability to integrate the two strategies. One comment summarised the opinion of the group

The cost reduction strategy is particularly well suited to local government, employee behaviours do reflect those suggested in the strategy. It is still the case that staff exhibit relatively repetitive and predictable behaviour patterns. Also we as managers have a greater interest in the quantity of output, than quality of product, a behaviour pattern forced on us by C.C.T and staff cuts (Head of HR – Unitary Authority)

One of his colleagues stated:

The behaviour identifying that the organisation working to a cost reduction strategy exhibited primarily autonomous or individual activity reminds me of the fragmentation and lack of co-ordination we have experienced during CCT and the introduction of business units (Director of Personnel – London Borough)

Chapter One described how one of the major themes, and defining factors, running through the H.R.M literature concerned the linkage between business planning and human resource management planning. This predominantly prescriptive body of literature advocates that human resource issues should be considered in the formulation of business plans. It also clearly specifies that human resource issues are integral to strategic planning/long-range business planning. The short-termism identified by the heads of HR, in its effect on HR planning and strategy, prevents planned change aimed at achieving a new direction or emphasis for the organisation as a whole (Walker, 1980). There continues to be an emphasis on HR planning and

integration of HR planning within a business plan within the literature debating the nature and form of H.R.M. Despite this, the evidence of the heads of HR in local government have identified a degree of divergence between such material and the reality of H.R.M in terms of actual organisational practice. It can be concluded, therefore, that H.R.M in local government does not appear to be the consistent, integrated package deriving from a coherent, planned management strategy as represented in models of the ideal-type H.R.M.

The heads of HR identified two particular internal barriers to developing an integrated HR strategy; access to strategic decision-making; and, colleagues perceptions of the role of HR. The heads of HR agreed with the findings of Storey and Sisson (1994) who noted that in both the best practice and contingency models the HR department should have access to strategic decision-making. Those interviewed agreed that if given access, the business strategy would more likely be in a form where integration would be achievable. This is more likely to occur in local government than outside since only a third of the heads of HR are absent from their council boardroom compared with two-thirds of heads of HR in other organisations (see Sisson, 1995). Currently in local government, even where there is access and joint integrated HR and business strategies, those interviewed agreed that strategy was a disjointed process. This description fits that given by Mintzberg, (1988) of strategy being more often a pattern found in a stream of decisions rather than a formally-produced plan, designed and implemented in a rational manner.

7.2.2 Employee Relations Perspective

As chapter three and chapter eight discuss in more detail, local government is a highly unionised environment. Membership density varies considerably between Authorities depending on a number of factors. These factors include whether the authority is at county or district level, the political persuasion of its ruling party, the density of trades union membership and its geographical location (urban or rural). The results of the interviews and survey found that very few councils have sought to adopt a unitarist employee relations perspective. In a number of Conservative held districts the head of HR has had to create employee fora for consultation during change exercises because of the absence of trades union representation. The vast majority of councils have retained a pluralist and group approach to consultation and negotiation, albeit on a narrower range of issues than before. Those who did derecognise unions in the 1980s have developed an alternative consultation process, recreating pluralism in another form.

FIGURE 7.2 Employee Relations Perspective of Model

Dimension H.R.M		Local Government H.R.M				
Employee Re	elations	Unitarist, Individual, High Trust.	Pluralist,	Group	and	Individual,
Perspective			Medium/Low Trust			

The employee relation perspective of pluralist and unitarist, collective and individual shown in the table is intended to reflect a shift in the approach to trade unions. The shift is supposedly from the traditional collective bargaining more often associated with trade union recognition by employers and traditional personnel management to the position of low tolerance of trade union involvement associated with H.R.M. In reality H.R.M exists alongside traditional trade union and collective bargaining procedures in many organisations but particularly within the public sector. That is not

to say that significant inroads into the traditional unitarist approach have not been made and continue to be made. The heads of HR in county and unitary authorities point to the performance-related pay initiative for teachers as indicative of such inroads. The view of the majority of heads of HR is represented by one of their number, who states:

The overall HR strategy is the Government's. Through policy they can almost determine the strategic direction we take. With C.C.T everything was performance related, and perhaps even more so now. Labour seem intent on the same unitarist track but have also strengthened trade union rights and the role of collective-bargaining causing us to look more at partnership and new forms of collective consultation (Head of HR – County Council)

Another viewpoint is offered by another head of HR

We are outsourcing everything we can in accordance with the wishes of our Conservative administration. To this end our HR strategy, such as it is, is determined by the need to manage change through redundancy, the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations (T.U.P.E) or through partnership agreements with the private sector, P.F.I's or otherwise (Head of HR – County Council)

While employee/industrial relations is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Eight, the overall view of the heads of HR, for the purpose of the local government HR model, is that traditional collective-bargaining is still in place in local authorities, although its importance has diminished.

7.2.3 Preferred Structure Systems

The organisational structure of local government described in chapters two and three appears to be decentralised and to a lesser extent devolved, especially in larger authorities (see Chapter Eight). Such new structures have been implemented in accordance with the trend within public sector organisations in England (see Chapter Two and Three) to push HR and other managerial functions away from the centre and

down to line managers (Blyton and Turnbull, 1993). Despite this trend, and the survey evidence in Chapter Five, the group of heads of HR believe that decentralisation has not worked, and more obviously devolution has not taken place, to the extent that the H.R.M model requires. One of the group descibes their impression:

Managers cannot for some considerable time take on HR as a key feature of their role. They are too far stretched. We have simplified things for them through producing two or three page procedures, however, this does not help them recognise situations developing or give them the people-skills to prevent them getting bad. The majority of managers think operationally and in terms of formal bureaucratic procedure, so they welcome having local personnel to take these things away from them

(Head of HR – Metropolitan Authority)

Centralised control still exists and within different organisational contexts wars with decentralisation for mastery of the HR agenda. The heads of HR specify the; poor quality of line managers overall; their inadequate training; the current heavy workload of managers; and, the growth in the amount and complexity of employment law, as reasons why devolution has failed.

FIGURE 7.3 Preferred Structure Systems in the Model

Dimension		H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M
Preferred	Structure	Organic, Devolved, Flexible Roles	Mechanistic and Bureaucratic, Partial
Systems			Decentralisation, Partly or Undevolved,
			flexible Roles but also Specialisation

The interviewees believe that these four reasons not only explain the failure of devolution, but also the growing demand for specialist decentralised HR staff to offer local support to managers. This area of conflict between managers and HR over the availability and placement of HR specialists is only one aspect of the difficult relationship between the two parties. Many of the elements of mechanistic and bureaucratic culture are still felt to exist in local government structures, a belief which

the heads of HR see as being responsible for the constant conflict with the professional staff in local authorities. An example is, the battle between HR and professional staff in general on the issue of flexibility, which is an objective HR wish to achieve at the cost, professional staff believe, of their knowledge base. Such conflict appears inherent in the relationship between HR and line managers and professional staff (see Chapter Ten).

7.2.4 Roles within Local Government H.R.M

The models of H.R.M reviewed in Chapter One clearly identify the role of the line managers as having a key role in the implementation of HR policy. As the comments above, in Chapters Two, Three, Ten and the survey results suggest, the apparent inability of line managers to integrate HR into their managerial role has had a major influence on the design of local government H.R.M.

FIGURE 7.4 H.R.M and Line Management Interface in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M				Local Government H.R.M
Roles	Largely	Integrated	into	Line	Partly Integrated into Line Management
	Managen	nent			

The heads of HR and line managers interviewed agree that the lack of integration of strategies and absence of planning has resulted in managers not being supported in the adoption of the H.R.M role. This finding supports the evidence from the surveys carried out in the late '80s and early '90s which suggest that, while there had been changes in the way people are managed, many of these changes had been introduced as piecemeal initiatives. The reactive nature of local government organisations has resulted in H.R.M being a series of responsive changes to personnel practice, a thinking pragmatism rather than any determined strategic shift in pursuit of

prescriptive models (Sisson, 1995; Kochan and Dyer, 1995; Legge, 1995).

One head of HR represented the groups views when stating:

Until recently, about the early, mid 1990s neither the training nor the management support mechanisms, policy and procedural guidelines etc., were in place to support a strategic approach to H.R.M. C.C.T, Community Charge, financial and staff cuts have forced reactions from local authorities HR resulting in a pragmatic and quick-fix approach (Head of HR – District Council)

The inability to implement H.R.M in a strategic manner has also influenced the style of supervision of line managers, as discussed below.

7.2.5 Supervisory Style of Local Government H.R.M

The heads of HR identified the key which determines the type of supervisory style in organisations as being the degree and range of support that specialist HR staff provide to line managers. Fowler (1992) argued that there were two possible roles for the HR function in relation to line managers. Firstly, to provide basic personnel management and administrative support to line managers; and, secondly, the setting and monitoring of standards of personnel practice in the operational decision making of line managers. While the ideal-type H.R.M model also implied that the devolution of personnel management practice to the line would create a reduction in the bureaucracy traditionally associated with the specialist function (Sisson, 1989). For the HR function administration became, through the imperatives of devolution, the management of managers through procedural guidelines and directive advice (Hoggett, 1987).

FIGURE 7.5

Supervisory System in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M
Supervisory System	Front Line Management	Front Line Management and local or central HR Specialist in partnership or conflict

A county council head of HR represented his colleagues views on this subject by stating:

The supervision of staff is the joint responsibility of line managers, local HR and central HR staff. In the end, the management or supervisory style adopted is a negotiation between these three areas. The approach overall is governed by the ethics and morals of the Chief Executive and head of HR. The art is to seek to persuade managers to use the guidelines provided and adopt an open and reasonable approach and style. The other tactic is to frighten them with tails of the industrial tribunal

(Head of HR – County Council)

The cultural aspect of ideal-type H.R.M which should shape the managerial or supervisory style seem to work only in a piecemeal way. Line managers are not considered, by the majority of heads of HR, to be able or willing to take full responsibility for HR practice or adopt a style which will develop H.R.M

7.2.6 Predominant Management Style

As discussed above, the supervisory style of managers, and relationship with HR specialists are important to the successful implementation of H.R.M and HR practices. The heads of HR and line managers interviewed, with few exceptions, saw the management style as still being bureaucratic, coercive, transactional, executive and authoritarian. All of these terms were commonly used by the group in identifying and defining the predominant style. While there appear to be areas where the managers

recruited from professional groups, and who manage professional colleagues, display a more collegiate style, such relationships have grown less common. This coercive style arises, according to the heads of HR, from the contract culture regime and the interpretation of the 'right to manage' held by local government managers. These managers still believe that business need is the predominant issue for local government although often such ideas are combined with corporate drives for quality, such as Investors in People, the business excellence model and other top-down participation techniques aimed at improvement. The heads of HR noted that specific areas of their organisation were managed by 'developers' who still exhibited a transactional style of management, especially at times of change. Such developers were more likely to seek improved output and productivity from their staff with training and development costs closely controlled and carefully targeted.

FIGURE 7.6 Predominant Management Style in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M		
Predominant	Coach, Enabler, Facilitator	Coercive, Transactional, although on		
Management Style		occasion a developer and enabler		

The opinion of the heads of HR on management style was emphasised in one opinion given:

Managers, in the main, still look at the employment relationship as an exchange rather than an involvement. While managers think this way, involvement techniques, team-working and other initiateives aimed at increasing staff flexibility and commitment will never achieve their full potential. Getting staff committed requires more responsible, more strategically-minded and better trained managers

(Director of HR – District Council)

In the next section, management style is discussed further through the interviewees

views of the staff control methods managers adopt.

7.2.7 Preferred Method of Staff Control

The evidence provided by the heads of HR in this area is supported by the opinion of the line managers interviewed. Both parties state that in situations, where industrial or employee relations are becoming difficult, managers will revert to bureaucratic style behaviour, pushing the problem either up the line to a senior manager or to a HR specialist. This behaviour, according to those interviewed, reflects an absence of interpersonal skills held by managers, and the pressure on managers from HR specialists and unions to resolve conflict through the use of formal procedures. While the heads of HR recognise a growing pressure within HR to resolve conflict informally, they indicate that line managers rarely possess such skills of negotiation and compromise, and that the expectation of managers is that problems can be dumped on the HR specialist. An alternative view supplied by the heads of HR is that in unionised councils, it is more likely that union representatives can broker a deal with managers, preventing the need for formalised procedures to be used. The results of the survey do indicate that managers have developed relationships with local trade union representatives, suggesting that this observation is plausible. Despite this the heads of HR report that line managers fear being challenged over staff control issues where employment law or procedural issues are beyond their knowledge base and where they are unsure of the implications of what they are doing.

FIGURE 7.7 Preferred Method of Staff Control in the Model

Dimension	mension H.R.M Local Government H.R.M	
Preferred Method of	Personal Control	Personal (informal) control, Bureaucratic
Staff Control		(formal/impersonal) control

The view of the heads of HR are represented by the opinion of one of their group, from a unitary authority who stated:

We have tried to develop informal systems and ways of emphasising personal control, however, while some managers can work this way, many don't seem to have the interpersonal skills required to avoid the use of formal procedures (Head of HR – District Council)

Such issues as this quotation raises can, according to the heads of HR, only be resolved through the further development and training of managers, and an increase in the numbers and skill level of HR specialists supporting managers. Heads of HR themselves point to the absence of skilled and experienced HR practioners in local government during the 1980s and 1990s as a reason why H.R.M has adopted a less strategic and more operational focus in many authorities. Smaller district authorities are especially criticised for adopting a conservative and reactive approach to H.R.M which is explained by those interviewed as arising from a fear of conflict and confrontation amongst managers resulting from inexperience and a lack of effective training as much as an absence of trained HR staff.

One head of HR at borough/district council level expressed his view that this reluctance to implement commitment based H.R.M was due to:

...the highly stylized, institutionalized and conservative approach traditionally taken to the procedural and substantive regulation of the employment relationship in local authorities based on a set of terms and conditions, national job evaluation and pay awards restrict the implementation of local initiatives. Members and managers seem unable to see local agreements as authoritative and legitimate and are often unwilling to take initiatives if not already in practice elsewhere

(Head of HR – District Council)

The heads of HR suggest that preconceptions of fairness as being the use of formal procedures have been a considerable barrier to the development of managers and specialist HR staff. This has led to the strong belief that H.R.M is most applicable in non-union organisations, and may be difficult to introduce without opposition in highly unionised organisations (Kochan et al., 1986). Some clue to this proposition is evident in the absence of discussion on the notions of pluralism and of collective representation through a trade union or by any other organised group in Peters and Waterman's book (Kochan et al., 1986). H.R.M would appear to be less relevant to managers working in highly unionised settings or those with high levels of established group representation such as in the public sector.

7.2.8 Status, Authority and Pay Differentials with Nearest Subordinate

While the pay differentials for some have increased quite dramatically, the heads of HR believe that the use of job evaluation schemes, for all but the most senior managers, prevent the development of differentials amongst staff and managers across these groups. Many heads of HR feel that the rigidity of job evaluation prevents the recruitment of quality line managers from other sectors. They also feel that those senior managers enjoying higher salaries have benefited from delayering and

rstructuring and the reduction of management teams.

FIGURE 7.8 Status, Authority and Pay Differentials with Nearest Subordinate

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M	
Status, Authority and Pay Differentials with Nearest Subordinate	High	Low	

This benefit has arisen from the use of comparability with private and other public sector pay settlements denied to the rest of the staff in local government. Heads of HR point to the contracted pay scales amongst lower ranks and the pay comparisons with very senior staff as a source of dissatisfaction.

This finding is important in that it identifies a major restriction and limitation on the implementation of private sector form of management and H.R.M in particular in local authorities, even those, essentially Conservative run authorities which have derecognised trades unions in the 1980s. The restriction can be identified by the fact that despite the increasing legislative and financial pressure on local authorities introduced by the Conservative Government, few authorities sought to develop local industrial relations and pay determination systems aimed at supporting H.R.M strategies and objectives. The failure of local authorities to develop industrial relations and pay systems locally, was seen by the majority of those interviewed, as a significant barrier to local authorities introducing true, commercial sector, H.R.M. Almost all the heads of HR interviewed see the development of local industrial relations and pay systems as the mechanism by which real cultural change could have been brought about in local government. The overall opinion voiced was that a drive for greater efficiency and quality was prevented by the inability and lack of desire of local authority managers, at all levels, to address the issues of pay and performance.

One head of HR stated that:

The very centrality of pay as an issue to employees has presented local authority managers with a constant dilemma. While financial pressures have for sometime dictated the need for a confrontation over pay and performance issues, any destabilisation of the employment relationship has been considered to high a risk. Managers, especially at middle and junior level recognise the major consequences for organisational well-being and performance of getting it wrong

(Head of HR – District Council)

The shape of local government H.R.M was not determined just by pay and local industrial relations issues only though. The heads of HR interviewed identified lack of training and skills as factors which have held back the implementation of HR in local authorities. They point to the high degree of involvement of management consultants in the development of pay and performance systems due to the lack of expertise amongst HR and line managers during the 1980s and 1990s.

7.2.9 Career Opportunities

The heads of HR have expressed the view that career opportunities within local government are closed to existing staff. Despite the focus of many authorities on equality issues, as part of the new model employer philosophy, the development of succession planning and career development paths are limited. A county council head of HR stated:

Like the development of manpower staffing in local government, all the more sophisticated aspects of HR are not used in local government, either at all, or where such systems exist they are not used in an effective and co-ordinated way (Head of HR – County Council)

The heads of HR explain the absence of such processes on lack of finance for training, the fragmentation caused by the organisational culture and structure arising from C.C.T, changing skills needs in the contract culture era, and the absence of effective appraisal systems and the managers able to use them effectively.

FIGURE 7.9 Career Opportunities in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M
Career Opportunities	Open	Closed

The general belief in local authorities, in the opinion of the heads of HR, is that it is easier to buy-in skills than develop existing staff.

7.2.10 Contracts of Employment

The heads of HR have identified contract as an area of HR where there has been some success in general areas, for example, those covered by the administrative, professional, technical and clerical staff terms and conditions of employment. But, far less success has been determined in other areas where trade union representation, professional power and political resistance to change still exists. While change at local level has been piecemeal and uncoordinated due to differing political, financial and service influences, change at national level through the negotiation machinery of the national joint councils has had far wider impact. Contracts for teaching, lecturing, social services and the emergency services have come about through separation of the, once, united collective-bargaining and negotiating machinery into groups representative of the different employment groups. The heads of HR conclude that the creation of a number of different N.J.Cs has effectively split the local government unions, reduced their collective influence and contributed to the ability of managers to make changes in the employment contracts of different groups.

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M
Contract	Aim to go beyond contract	National/Local Prescription and restriction
		on developing new contract

The process of work intensification evidenced in the new contracts has not helped the implementation of H.R.M based on commitment. Work intensification through the employment contract has reinforced aspects of the individuals psychological contract which stress the compliance of employees to the rules and regulations laid down in bureaucratic form, often enforced within personnel policies and procedures. This coercive style is more likely to produce dumb compliance rather than the high level of commitment sought by the soft form of H.R.M (Penley and Could, 1988; Salancik, 1977).

7.2.11 Workplace Rules and H.R.M

The heads of HR felt that local government had a responsibility to the public purse and to the new model employer philosophy to use proper procedures in industrial relations matters. This adherence to rule was described by one head of HR as:

A responsibility towards staff to ensure that we meet the letter of the law in all respects, that no expenditure cannot be justified to the district auditor, or treatment of staff explained to the Equal Opportunities Commission or Council for Racial Equality, or that no adverse publicity emerges which publicly embarrasses elected members in their role as community leaders (Head of HR – District Council)

In terms of control, the aim of H.R.M to achieve cultural control, through the management of organisational culture, cannot be evidenced by the heads of HR. This group claim that the relationship between managers and staff, are so low-trust and so transactional that staff do not have the opportunity to become self disciplining, or to

exercise self-control. As such, the heads of HR feel that the management style and means of control exercised by local government managers reinforce the use of overt control through bureaucratic rules and regulations (Smireich, 1983; Ray, 1986; Guest, 1987; Hope, 1990).

FIGURE 7.11 Workplace Rules in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M
Workplace Rules	Can do outlook and impatience with rules	Enforcement of rules, procedural correctness important, negotiated application of rules between HR and Managers

Such a view contradicts that of many line managers, the majority of whom see HR policies and procedures as restrictions on their ability to adopt more flexible commercial approaches to staff management. It appears that in this respect, and in other related areas, local government has not achieved the management of organisational culture and the link between business planning and H.R.M planning which lies at the heart of H.R.M literature from its formative years (Kochan and Barocci, 1985). The different view on rules is only one dimension of difference between the ideal type H.R.M prescribed by Peters and Waterman's (1982) and the local government reliance of traditional administrations concept of achieving fairness through bureaucratic procedure. The use of rule and regulation seem to be part of the local government structure and culture. A Director of HR from a District council states:

Our main conclusion in assessing the Council's objectives and management processes is that it can improve its service delivery and customer care by making structural changes, but these changes will have to be supported by further changes in procedures, organisational culture and operational systems (Director of HR – District Council)

Here the H.R.M focus is on employees' behaviour being guided by and consistent

with the values and philosophies of the organisation, which set its and their cultural norms. However, the cultural norms of commercialism and the impatience with rule and regulation emphasised by managers conflicts with the procedural emphasis of both bureaucratic function and personnel administration.

In this area of the model the different issues around commercialism and the public

7.2.12. Guide to Management Action

service ethos were aired. It was acknowledged by the heads of HR that a conflict existed between managers and between managers and central HR units and often between local decentralised HR and the central HR unit. This conflict revolved around the differing priorities and objectives of each group. The heads of HR saw the continuing existence of the public service ethos as a continuing, but diminishing barrier to the creation of organisational commitment. Those interviewed believed that the many years of cost pressure, financial cut backs, redundancies and the threat of C.C.T have eroded and/or changed the form that the public service ethos has taken. The consensus view is that many staff have grafted their public service ethos onto the organisational objectives, espoused within the values and mission statement, creating a generation of local government workers who accept a quasi-commercial culture mixed with the service to people and the community which they find satisfying. The public service ethos still exists in this form, however, the heads of HR believe that as the current generation of professional and quasi-professional staff retire from local government, the ethos of service will be lost. In this regard the heads of HR believe that local government employment today sends out mixed messages to its staff. On one hand, measures are in place which suggests that soft H.R.M is in place and councils wish to treat employees as valued assets, as emphasised by the

FIGURE 7.12

Management Action in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M			Local Government H.R.M
Guide to Management	Business	Need,	Flexibility,	Business Need or often Political Need,
Action	Commitme	nt to Orgai	nisation	Flexibility limited, commitment to public
				service or professional/personal objectives

The heads of HR believe that by seeing employees as a source of competitive advantage, managers may attempt to engage the commitment of employees to organisational objectives and thus cause them to become more adaptable and to produce high quality performance (Guest, 1987). Where this fails is the manager's inability to generate commitment via good two-way communication, and their lack of motivational and leadership skills (Storey, 1987). As such, employees are not seen as resources to be nurtured and developed by humanistic policies but as potential liabilities which may need replacing at a moments notice (Beer et al., 1985; Walton, 1985).

FIGURE 7.13

Staff Behaviour in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M		Local Government H.R.M
Behaviour Referent	Values and	Mission of	Public Service, Professional or Personal
	Organisation		Career values and mission

The implementation of hard H.R.M, matching H.R.M procedures and practices and business strategy is, seemingly, limited in local government. While the heads of HR acknowledge radical structural change has taken place as a pre-requisite of cultural change, they believe that such change has only had limited influence in achieving the

commitment of staff to those values which senior management considers conducive to improved personal and organisational performance (Legge, 1989).

7.2.13 Managerial Tasks vis-a-vis Staff

The heads of HR identify the application of soft and hard H.R.M as being a situational matter. They explain this by discussing the nature of political control within their authority and through describing the industrial relations history, or lack of it, in particular councils.

FIGURE 7.14 Management Approach to Staff in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M
Managerial tasks vis-à- vis staff	Nurturing	Monitoring, Developing, Controlling

Managers take the lead for their management style, approach to conflict and relationship with staff from the senior managers in the council, the head of HR, elected members and density of trade union membership, amongst other factors. The heads of HR stress that the existence of a strong business focus does not limit the manager's ability to nurture and develop staff, and often can mean a higher degree of such treatment in the realisation by managers that staff are expensive assets to be made as skillful and flexible as possible. Equally a commitment based soft H.R.M focus does not mean that quality and performance-related monitoring is out of place. Indeed the heads of HR predict that with Best Value such a culture will predominate in local government. The interviewees seem to suggest that soft and hard H.R.M are compatible with each other, and not, in their interpretation of the terms, distinct or

opposites.

7.2.14 Conflict within Local Government under H.R.M

Conflict within local Authorities is described by the heads of HR as low-key. While industrial relations issues vary considerably between types and sizes of local authority, the heads of HR state that the predominant focus in local authorities has been on the areas identified by Bach and Winchester (1994) (see FIGURE 7.15 below). The heads of HR agreed that in this aspect of the model, conflict could not be de-emphasised, as even in attempting contract changes with individual and groups of staff a trades union presence is often involved. Similarly, the penetration of involvement and participation strategies has been limited and often has been found to be of limited effectiveness. Primarily, apart from those few authorities which do not recognise unions, the reason for this failure to de-emphasise conflict is the continuing use of traditional industrial relations machinery, which they feel resists any attempt to address staff directly at a corporate level. (see Chapter One).

TABLE 7.15 How Conflict is Approached in the Model

Dimension	H.R.M	Local Government H.R.M
Conflict	De-emphasised	Present but low key

The heads of HR understand the influence and effect of external factors on their authorities industrial relations. As Chapter Two and Three stated, the changes which the national economy and has gone through in the last twenty-five years, has brought about major changes in the practice of industrial relations and people management in local government. The heads of HR recognise how the alterations made to the legal

framework of industrial relations during the successive Conservative Governments of the 1980s and 1990s have encouraged and supported these changes. Despite this knowledge, though, they have found it inappropriate at local level to adopt private sector methods of working.

In itself, this legal framework, unitarist, anti-union and anti-collectivist provides the ideological underpinning for H.R.M (Legge, 1989; Keenoy,1990 a,b). As important for local government was the shift in values indicated by the introduction of H.R.M (Keenoy,1990b). With managers and management in the ascendancy the model or good employer work environment associated with local government, based on consensus and partnership between managers and unions was to be redefined. The introduction of a more commercial orientation within local government suggested that private sector approaches to management would impact on the local government work environment with great severity (Bach and Winchester (1994) noted in Chapter Three).

Bach and Winchester (1994) argued that only limited success was achieved in changing the traditional system of industrial relations in local government. This argument is widely agreed with by the HR professional interviewed in this thesis. While work intensification increased for both blue and white collar staff in preparation for V.C.T and C.C.T, and terms and conditions and pay was reduced for blue-collar staff under C.C.T, the impact was reduced in those authorities which sought to keep services in-house as policy. Substantively, those interviewed, both heads of HR and managers support the view that the search for efficiency and effectiveness in response to financial restraint and competitive forces required them to find ways to apply a downward pressure on labour costs. This in turn caused them to cooperate in designing ways to tighten up on working practices and cause

redundancies through delayering and work intensification schemes (Walsh, 1995; Allen and Henry, 1996). The heads of HR interviewed identified a strong link between the limited shift in patterns of industrial relations in local government and the form that H.R.M in local government has adopted.

7. 3 Conclusion -The Model of Ideal-Type H.R.M and the Local Government H.R.M Model

From the survey and interviews carried out for this thesis, clear indications of the form and characteristics of H.R.M in local government in England, have been identified. Indications from the interviews are that H.R.M within local government has itself gone through a number of changes since its inception in the early 1980s and even now continues to change. These changes arise from the initiatives imposed upon local government by central government policy. In this chapter the form and characteristics of local government H.R.M is discussed and a basic model produced. Essentially, this model shows that H.R.M in local government is a hybrid formed from elements of H.R.M and aspects of cost-reduction based N.P.M and neotaylorism.

It should be stated that there are clear indications that beyond the basic model produced here variations exist which reflect the different sizes, political orientation and management culture of different local authorities.

H.R.M as discussed in Chapter One is clearly flexible in its meaning, changing its form to reflect the cultural message of its senior managers and the business strategy they have chosen to implement. H.R.M emphasises management of the organisation's culture as the central activity for senior managers and manipulation of the culture as the means by which H.R Policy is integrated with the business strategy and whereby

employees role behaviour is shaped to produce desired outcomes. Peters and Waterman's (1982) linking of strong cultures with success has ensured that the development and management of an appropriate culture for the organisation has created much activity amongst those responsible for strategy. In most organisations this activity has focussed on the production of an integrated and internally consistent set of H.R.M policies in relation to recruitment, selection, training, development, reward systems and communications. Such systems are then used to convey to employees and line managers the organisation's core values. Integration, therefore, is the most important issue here, both integration of H.R.M policies with strategy and also the internal integration and consistency of H.R.M policies themselves to enact this strong culture. How such cultural change has been implemented in local government and the effect of such change on traditional personnel management bureaucratic systems is considered in the next chapter. The effect of such change in relation to the structure of local government organisation's, and the effect on the managers and employees working in them also forms the basis for the discussion within the next chapter. This discussion takes place within the context of the political and socio-economic conditions facing local government over the last twenty-five years and the other related and non-related change that these institutions have faced. The role for strategic H.R.M in local government will vary between two extremes on a continuum of relative decentralisation. Within local authorities where strategic planning has produced a clear institutional style based on the need for internal integration, strategic influence for HR in areas like manpower planning, internal labour markets and corporate culture, will allow strategic access. Local authorities whose business emphasis is on financial control will adopt a more pragmatic approach and a greater level of decentralisation to operating divisions. In these authorities HR

may find itself excluded from any kind of strategic role and central HR may be under pressure to meet and adopt business and operational objectives. Interference by central HR would be seen as nothing less than an incursion on the autonomy of operational units, in such decentralised structures, creating a further impetus to devolve HR from the strategic level to that of the operating units. By this means there could be greater linking of policy with specific human resource needs and short-term goals. Such moves obviously carry implications for the clear, consistent and corporate-wide approach to HR which forms part of the ideal-type model of H.R.M.

Chapter Eight

Local Government Structure and Culture under H.R.M - Decentralisation and Devolution

8.0 Introduction

In this chapter the issue of decentralisation and devolution are discussed in relation to their use in local government H.R.M. The heads of HR interviewed recognise the arguments lying behind the debate on the rhetoric and realities of decentralisation and devolution. Those interviewed focus their concern on the contradiction posed by the strong cultural control characteristic of H.R.M, and fragmentation of corporate identity and strategic control created by the devolution and decentralisation of managerial responsibility (Beer et al., 1985).

The heads of HR see the role of line managers as pivotal in the resolution of this contradiction, and the establishment of a good working relationship between central HR and line managers as the key to the successful implementation of H.R.M. The interviewees see the success of implementing an ideal-type model of H.R.M under conditions of decentralisation and devolution as dependent upon the correct management and organisational structures being in place (Channon, 1982; Goold and Campbell, 1986).

Decentralisation and devolution are established and common feature of european public sector H.R.M (see below). The adoption of similar structures in English local government seems to support the findings of this survey that operational HR functions are shared between line managers and personnel specialists. The extent of decentralisation and devolution of HR functions in local authorities seems to be in question though, especially in some district councils. The reality of devolution within

these organisational structures seems to be that while some elements of H.R.M exist, other elements do not. In this research decentralisation and devolution of HR activities was still not fully achieved in the opinion of interviewees. They stated that even after fifteen years of reorganisation some elements of HR continue to operate from the centre. Despite this pessimistic view, the pattern of decentralisation and devolution are an integral part of organisational reform. This pattern can be seen along with many other characteristics of H.R.M, as a clearly identified feature of organisations within public administration in O.E.C.D Countries. These changes include:

FIGURE 8.0 Characteristics of H.R.M across O.E.C.D Public Administrations

1	Decentralisation of responsibility for H.R.M from the center to line departments and agencies
2	Devolution of responsibility for H.R.M within departments and agencies to line managers
3	Policy frameworks or guidelines emphasiSing basic standards and good practices rather than detailed controls
4	Devolved budgeting for line departments and agencies which consolidate salary and administrative costs
5	More flexible pay, employment and staffing systems
6	Training and development measures to build skills, competencies and flexibility in the workforce to better meet programme demands and reinforce public sector reforms
7	Cost-cutting measures in the form of pay restraint, efforts to cut employment (downsizing) and pressures to produce efficiency gains
OEC	D (2000)

This begs the question as to why the decentralisation and devolution project is still continuing after so long and why the rate of progress in fully realising the benefits of this shift of responsibility have been so long in coming. The temptation is to consider to what degree things have really changed and whether HR specialists ever did carry out some of the activities that are taking so long to pass to line managers. Other issues

we will explore in this chapter are the attitudes of personnel specialists to decentralisation and devolution, the reaction of line managers and the implementation of decentralisation and devolution.

8.1 Definitions of Decentralisation and Devolution

Once again, it is necessary to recall the definitions of 'devolution' and 'decentralisation' and explain that the literature on these two processes has often been confused with the two terms being used to describe the same process (I.R.S, 1994). In this particular work 'devolution' means the reallocation of personnel activities from specialists to line managers, and, 'decentralisation' means the reallocation of activities to other specialists at different levels and/or locations in the organisation who support line managers on HR issues. Kinnie and Lowe (1990) agree with these definitions and provides a useful distinction when he argues that a decentralisation of structures is not necessarily associated with a devolution of genuine discretion. Decentralisation then could be used to apply to changes in departmental structure, and devolution to changes in the allocation of authority. The points raised by the heads of HR revolve around where HR specialist are positioned within decentralised organisational structures, and to who do they report. For example, are HR specialist centralised in the organisation, so as to provide a strong concentration of skill, expertise and influential advice and services; or are they decentralised working very closely with line managers and identifying themselves with individual departments?

Devolution, on the other hand is to do with line managers. In devolved structures HR transfers its responsibilities and activities out to line managers who have a fuller responsibility and scope to do their jobs. Kinnie and Lowe (1990) argue that devolving authority necessarily involves financial decision-making being passed to

managers as part of the process. The distinction being, that if the HR budget is not devolved, then it is responsibility, not authority that is being passed. The heads of HR discussed the devolution of HR functions in terms of three key areas:

FIGURE 8.1 Key Areas of Concern in the Devolution of HR

1	Exactly what is being devolved, as in, for example, recruitment, selection,	
	discipline and so on;	
2	What happens to the associated HR budget; and,	
3	The extent to which the relevant skills and knowledge to carry out these	
	functions have been 'devolved' to line managers.	

There was general agreement amongst the heads of HR that functional or operational responsibility should be passed to line managers, which reflects the views of theorists that basic HR functions should be owned by the line as part of the H.R.M ideal-type (see, for example, Tyson, 1995; Krulis-Randa, 1990; Kilpatrick et al., 1992). The heads of HR were less generous with regard to the HR budgets associated with certain features, which they believed should be controlled centrally. This control took several forms, such as central administration of a job evaluation scheme or central application of a pay policy designed to restrict managers at local level having more than influence in the determination of individual or group pay. Other control mechanisms identified were the setting up and monitoring of a staff establishment and recruitment request administration limiting the autonomy of local managers over staffing appointments. The heads of HR described the conflict between central and decentralised HR units over the operation and ownership of monitoring processes such as computerised personnel management systems.

8.2 The Extent of Devolution

Under the definition of devolution described above it seems difficult to consider the concept of shared authority. Even though the heads of HR interviewed describe their current working arrangements with line managers under that heading. It would seem more logical that either the line manager carries authority, and responsibility for the execution of HR functions, or HR specialists carry such responsibility. The fact remains that only in a small minority of authorities has devolution been put in place in anything like the meaning in the definition above. On closer examination of the authorities claiming a devolved system it did appear that there were line managers who exercised budgetary and functional responsibility for HR. Even so, these managers are tied by central procedures covering recruitment and other aspects of HR and the administrative processes in support of the managers are provided by a central HR unit. One line manager commented:

The structure for corporate personnel has been re-modelled to support the devolved arrangements and to ensure that the council has a strong, practical central operation to meet its needs. Adherence to the procedures agreed with staffside is mandatory and all change related employee or industrial relations work is done through an agreed change management procedure (Line Manager – County Council)

TABLE 8.0

Is your organisation managed from its centre, is management devolved or is the organisation managed by a combination of the centre and devolved?

Central	40
Devolved	9
Mix	114

The concept of shared responsibility is identified in the response to this question, which shows that the majority of local authorities surveyed have a mix of strategic HR at the centre and operational devolution or decentralisation managing HR. Some

few who reported totally devolved structures were investigated as to the full extent of HR actual practice in these authorities. The result of this investigation showed that the strategic core was reduced to a minimum HR managment role with all operational functions exercised in departments. The authorities involved were very small, in the lowest tier of local authorities. Interviews revealed that they still had traditional establishment officer posts in departments (see Farell, 1999), administrative staff without HR expertise, who carried out basic support functions under the control of an HR manager who was centrally placed reporting to a director of central services.

The most common role that our questionnaire respondents played in relation to generalist HR tasks was that HR staff made decisions in conjunction with line managers. Across the majority of general HR functions listed, this joint approach attracted more responses than any single alternative. The exceptions were that managers took most responsibility for appraisals and pay related performance review and HR staff took overall responsibility for redundancies and other dismissals. This data, then, suggests that while it is least common for HR professionals to make operational decisions independently, it is most common for them to share joint decision making with the line (see, for example, Keenoy, 1990; Kilpatrick et al., 1992). These figures, of course, only give us an impression of how decisions are distributed between HR and the line, and do not tell us the extent to which the arrangement will change in response to different internal or external pressures applied too the establishments represented in the sample. interviews with managers and heads of HR shed more light on the extent of change. All of those respondents interviewed from larger authorities stating that they had a deliberate policy to devolve personnel decisions to the line, and stated that they were actively trying to achieve.

And the second of the second o the state of the control of the state of the and the second of the second o en militar men en mår år av av forske en med en meg med forskalle en med bæd Boundary Country (Marchestor) and the second and the second second respectively. 在中国企业的企业中,在1967年,1968年, The first of the property of the state of th The state of the s en de la companya de A CONTRACTOR OF THE CONTRACTOR A CARLES A MODELLE CONTROL OF A and the second of the second second of the s The second state of the second states of the religion for the second of The second of the state of the state of the second of the state of the state of the state of the second of the and a statement of the statement of the statement of the statement and the statement of the the Constant Control of the Constant of the Co Programme and the second of th and the considerance with the first of the 1980s and the proceeding for the acand the first and the companies of the c the control to the residence of the control of the

this. For example:

The council believes that responsibilities for managing people are best devolved to line managers who are empowered, within a corporate framework and with advice from personnel, to focus and enhance the employee's contribution (Head of HR - County Council)

There was also a clear view, from district authorities still in the process of devolving, that the HR function should be an advisory and consultancy role rather than a doer role. For example, as one district council head of HR stated:

The head of HR plays a leading role giving clear and sensitive guidance to managers who are unsure what is expected of them, and how they will cope in the future

(Head of HR – District Council)

Those interviewed from both smaller and larger authorities gave examples of activities they had previously carried out in HR, and which line managers had now adopted, as represented by the following statement:

Recruitment, soft employee relations work like grievances, training and development and non-contentious work are now fully in the province of most line managers, but HR specialists are still frequently needed (Head of HR – County Council)

The initial picture from the interviews is more positive about the extent of devolution than the questionnaire results suggest, and some personnel managers were able to give clear examples of how things had changed, another quote from a district head of HR reveals:

Gradually with the inception of in-house management development programmes linked, often, to local universities business schools, and with a new generation of better qualified managers coming in, greater responsibility is being handed over

(Head of HR – District Council)

However, despite some changes towards greater devolution, there appeared to be a distinct difference between the intention and the reality of what had been achieved.

Many of the comments about devolution were couched in terms of trying to achieve

hand-over of responsibility rather than having achieved full handover:

All of us (Chief Officers) have made a great effort based on a genuine desire to bring about devolution, but real practical problems in achieving this objective have been experienced. Many areas of the organisation are unprepared for devolution or inappropriately structured to allow devolution to proceed further (Director of HR – County Council)

This suggests continued effort but little in the way of actual or ongoing change. One authority stated that they were not continuing to devolve HR responsibilities as they had tried to do this and failed. The reason given was that there was not support for the process amongst managers or HR staff. Devolution is not new, and has been part of an ongoing process since at least the mid-1980s. The lack of success reported from the interviewees is due to a lack of will by managers to take on HR responsibilities, and a lack of will from the HR function to hand responsibility or rather authority over.

8.3 Devolution Across <u>Different Functions</u>

We have drawn a broad picture of the extent of devolution, and before progressing to discuss the devolution of budgets and attitudes to devolution we will review some more detailed comparisons of the extent to which different areas of personnel activity have been devolved. The most consistent message that comes from both sets of data is that the personnel function is very likely to retain direct influence over contentious operational issues:

The fear managers show when faced with difficult, complex or politically divisive situations suggests to me that they will always cover their backs and call in HR even if all they need is a scapegoat (Director of HR – County Council)

Of those items handed over to managers, a clear emphasis is placed on noncontentious items. Management control over developmental and training issues is far greater that that sought over aspects of employee relations, recruitment, discipline and grievance. Indeed, these are (primarily) the areas where the HR function seems to retain most decision-making control. There are three explanations offered by the majority of heads of HR for this; that managers place little emphasis on devolving these areas; that there is no initiative coming from HR to devolve these areas; that due to various organisational factors HR have clawed back some of these functions.

The interview information obtained support the conclusion that despite the effort made over the years to devolve these areas, practical and attitudinal barriers have prevented progress being made.

8.4 Devolution of the HR Budgets

This was not an area enquired about in the questionnaires, as literature on this subject makes clear the confusion caused by the different labelling of budgets in different organisations. The interviews with heads of HR and managers sought to identify the allocation of HR budgets in order to confirm their place as a key issue in the devolution debate. The interviews determined whether or not HR budgets were devolved in each interview establishment. To avoid confusion the HR budget was defined within each interview. In the district councils central HR held all funds relating to staff salaries and training on behalf of line managers. In some larger districts and county level authorities departments paid central HR for its services specifically requested and contracted under Service Level Agreements (S.L.A's); or were required to pay a general sum related to the size of the line department and sometimes specific costs which had been incurred on their behalf. In other larger authorities the line department held the staffing budget for their own department, and had a greater extent of flexibility they had in making staffing choices.

It was noticeable that those establishments who had demonstrated a greater degree of

devolution of HR functions had either heavily devolved or mixed budgeting arrangements. The devolution of budgets was a pressure on the central HR function to work more closely with the line, with the attendant fear that the budget-holder might choose to seek HR advice from outside the authority under C.C.T or some other outsourcing arrangement. One result of this was that some central HR functions actively sought to market their services and offer set packages of services to line managers. The heads of HR and line managers interviewed rarely considered outsourcing to be a viable alternative but continued to play the game for internal political reasons. The heads of HR agreed with the findings of Holden and Roberts, (1996) that although many managers mentioned the positive aspects of devolution, there was an air of skepticism towards these changes. They felt pressure from managing these issues within very tight budgets, over which they felt they had little or no control, and a recognition that when cost pressures increase H.R.M becomes less important and control would be recentralised.

8.5 Attitudes of HR Staff to Devolution

Many of the heads of HR interviewed identified devolution as a mechanism to rid central HR of its basic personnel administration image and upgrade it (and the salary and status related to such work) to a strategic unit of corporate management. While the attitudes of interviewees appeared positive, only eight interviewees (out of the 30 with whom the rationale for devolution was discussed) expressed it as a more appropriate or better way to manage the organisation:

The body corporate, the employer, has sole responsibility in law for its employees. Look at commercial firms that have several divisions or companies within them. The way people are managed, what they are paid, what contracts they are on are all different, HR has little standing, managers settle conflict with money. Devolution breeds unfairness, inefficiency and inequality (Director of HR – County Council)

In five cases interviewees identified devolution as a necessary response to change, meaning the advent of C.C.T and better financial management through the creation of business units. Devolution did not appear to be perceived by our interviewees as a direct threat to them or their units (although their privileged position makes them less vulnerable to change than their staff) as they intended only to devolve function not strategy. An example of this from one interview comment emerged when a Head of HR explained a deliberate policy to devolve recruitment administration while stripping away the strategic aspects of recruiting in order to retain overall control of process and procedure, at a distance:

We will keep the overall responsibility for policy creation at the centre ensuring locally used procedures meet common authority-wide standards. We are adapting key performance indicators from the Personnel Standards Lead Body competencies which we think will enable us at the centre to monitor HR activity, standardise and quality assure the work of managers and decentralised HR staff

(Head of HR - District Council)

It is understandable that HR specialists who are expert in a particular function do not wish to replace it with a new skill. Yet in the drive for higher status HR specialists are developing a new role giving managers hands-off advice and facilitation. The heads of HR see this as an upgrading of HR's claim to professional status (see Larson, 1977; Abbott, 1988) through the assumption of a strategic advisory role. Only by getting rid of the burden of personnel administration and inglorious operational activities could this be achieved. Like Hirsh (1992) the heads of HR initially thought that decentralisation would make the HR function leaner and less costly, however, in practice it was found that decentralisation created a duplication of HR functions and the employment of an increasing number of HR staff (Bach, 1995). This overall

gent film of the state of the s

estratorio de transcribilità della constitución de la constitución de la constitución de la constitución de la

 increase in HR staff both concerned the heads of HR for fear it undermined the central HR role and lead to a redistribution of the HR budget. Uniformly, the heads of HR wished to retain control over all HR associated budgets so that they can prevent any loss of professional territory to line managers. In other words they were happy to hand over the responsibility for some unpopular HR activities, but not the authority, or control, as one director of HR describes:

Everyone thinks they can do HR work, especially at the higher level. But HR is becoming more complex as new law and new techniques come into being. Control over the HR function can only be exercised through its budgets, quality standards and management training. Managers cannot break ranks with the Authority and do their own thing if these three areas are covered. The autonomy managers have is necessarily limited (Director of HR – County Council)

This concept of appearing to give operational HR away to the line, as opposed to really giving it away, is reminiscent of Lowe's (1992) comments in which he argued that devolution could not happen in practice as the central HR function required continued control of HR practice across the activity.

8.6 Attitudes of Line Managers to Devolution

Line managers reacted in one of two distinct ways to the idea of devolution. Firstly, many enjoyed the attraction of having the autonomy and discretion associated with devolved authority for HR. Secondly, managers felt resentment at senior managers who appeared to be doing less work for more money and pushing the work down the line onto already overburdened managers. Often the excuse given for the process of devolution was associated with C.C.T and the construction and design of the contractor manager job role, which as one manager stated:

This means that I have greater responsibility within certain procedures and in general for HR issues. Issues for which I have neither the training nor the experience to carry out confidentially. I do not have an appropriate level of support staff to take on these additional functions, although I recognise that I

need to have and should take control of my own business units staffing issues (Line Manager – District Council)

The majority of line managers thought that they could not perform well at HR tasks, that HR was not a legitimate part of their job and that they did not have the skills or time (or inclination) to carry out the HR functions passed to them. In explaining why he thought his authority was not pursuing the route to full devolution one manager explained:

It is about control from the centre. Corporate HR place restrictions on managers either by writing themselves a role in local procedures, handling dismissal or other appeals, funnelling everything through the JNC (Joint Negotiating Committee), or through Personnel Sub-Committee. By this means they have the right of censure and ability to block any local initiative (Line Manager – London Borough)

Similarly, a Direct Service Organisation Manager states:

Central HR are an overhead to the business. They seek to retain traditional contracts, terms and conditions and ways of working. They are not cost-effective, but any attempt locally to go outside the Authority is prevented. I do have basic HR support but the division cannot afford specialist advice (D.S.O Manager – County Council)

The majority of managers and the heads of HR believe that while the attitudes and behaviours of line managers seem to indicate that they recognise the importance of HR, they doubt whether managers understand its complexities (Guest, 1987). The attitude of line managers to HR as a simple function, and the seeming lack of awareness of broader HR issues seems to be one of the reasons why, operational activities had not been devolved, and why the central HR function was still heavily involved. One head of HR revealed:

Tension creeps in when a manager expresses his budgetary or managerial autonomy in the process of getting rid of someone. Many cannot see the problem, people in the private sector are paid off all the time, they say. It has to be pointed out that it is the authority which is finally held responsible, not the manager. The conflict between managerial autonomy and the corporate nature

Some line managers underestimate the impact HR responsibilities have on their job, especially those managers in local government who perform professional or administrative tasks as well as managing (Leach, 1995). Regardless of this, the majority of line managers in this survey welcomed the involvement and control that the transfer of HR responsibilities gave them.

Despite the drawbacks, the majority of managers identified benefits which they had received since devolution, such as a feeling of ownership of HR functions and a perception that speedier decisions were made on HR issues. It was noted that these managers were discussing non-contentious aspects of HR, appraisal and training and development work. When more difficult, or complex conflict based issues were discussed, the degree of benefit managers accrued from involvement with HR activities was much reduced:

Managers are concerned for their reputations within the authority and their personal position and job prospects. Many fear saying or doing the wrong thing and prefer dealing with positive issues around staff development and training where they are not in an unpleasant working environment. Difficult disciplinary's are, in their book, the province of HR staff. They seem not to like face-to-face confrontation or be able to manage such situations (HR Manager – London Borough)

This perception of lack of competence in some HR activities, contentious areas, welfare and major industrial/employee relations work being amongst them, was confirmed in interviews with managers and heads of HR and reflect the survey results. While they acknowledged that appropriate courses were available in or through the organisation the managers argued that they did not have time to attend. This area was commented on by five heads of HR, out of thirty, who believed that few managers in his authority would be able to achieve the required competence in HR even after such

training. The line managers felt constrained by the way that their organisation functioned with different departments or directorate trying to adopt HR practices relevant to its own culture, while being restrained by the corporate centre against such practices. Such customisation of HR practice and procedure was commented on by all the heads of HR who believed that such practices were endemic despite the provision of support for managers in the form of toolkits, frameworks, guidelines and telephone help-lines to ensure continuity and consistency of decision-making. But whatever had been provided there was sometimes a recognition that more could have been done, as one head of HR stated:

When managers make arbitrary decisions they often mean well. The time off with pay when there is no entitlement, the formal warning when the disciplinary procedure isn't followed are examples of managers making-decisions on the hoof. In the past HR has boosted its own importance by scaring managers into using them with tales of tribunals, however, now many managers will try and deal with things themselves off the cuff rather than risk censure or be talked down too by HR

(Head of HR – Unitary Authority)

While the heads of HR talked about the need to provide training to support managers in taking on their HR role, the concept of coaching and handholding was less popular as it appeared to those interviewed to be difficult to arrange and resource.

8.7 Decentralisation in Local Authorities and the Role of HR Specialists

There is little evidence in this survey or interviews to suggest that the role of the corporate HR function in local government is in decline, in district authorities it is often the only HR function and in larger authorities central HR departments remain in place. Staffing levels in central HR have dropped as its role has changed. However, while there are less staff, those that remain have with greater HR expertise and specialist skills needed to support and advise the more administrative function decentralized to departments (Hunt and Lees, 1987). The heads of HR interviewed

suggest that decentralisation is a matter of degree and has reached different stages of development in different organizations. In those organisations with a strong corporate focus central HR departments will maintained certain corporate functions. This matter of degree has been found by the heads of HR to be the cause of the confusion experienced in trying to clearly definable the point of separation between corporate and operational decision-making (Marginson et al., 1988b).

TABLE 8.1

Would you described the HR function in your organisation, currently, as?

Centralised	67
Decentralised	18
Combination of Control	78

These findings suggests that many local government organisations are transitional and in 'half-way house' state in the decentralisation process in which HR is neither fully decentralised nor totally centralised. Corporate HR continues in its traditional role of monitoring and instructing operating units on core policy maintaining dotted line relationships with HR in operating units while providing internal consultancy services, an arrangement which one HR director describes as: (Evans and Cooling, 1985).

The worst of both worlds for decentralised staff with line management responsibility to their departmental chief officer, but dotted line responsibility to me (HR Director). This state servies no one well being a political sop to both the central HR function and the department. A service level agreement exists between the two units with specialist expertise bought-in from the central unit. As head of profession I can and do control the sort and level of work and advice the decentralised unit carries out (Director of HR – County Council)

One common feature across the local authorities surveyed identified by the heads of HR and recognised by Marginson et al., (1988b) is that those with lower levels of

cost-centre are less centralised than those which do not. The decentralised HR support teams being pushed further down the authority. The heads of HR comment on the number of larger authorities recruiting strategic HR at the top of major departments, like education and social services creating a further tier of expertise. In many ways this observation suggests that local authorities are forming into a divisional form of organisation (see, for example, Hill and Hoskisson, 1987; I.R.S, 1994). The heads of HR agree that this additional level of support and the development of strategic HR expertise at departmental level will make little differences to the degree of autonomy which individual managers have gained or to the financial controls to which they are subject by the centre (Purcell and Ahlstrand, 1994). The process of setting specific budget targets, staffing levels, job grading levels, absence levels, and a variety of other targets for local managers to meet will remain uninfluenced (Colling and Ferner, 1992). The heads of HR, express the view that central HR can retain some control over organisational procedures and staffing through setting targets for managers. Of greater concern to them is the tendency of decentralisation to support fragmentation of the corporate entity. They fear that the allegiance that staff and managers should have to the organisation will be redirected towards the business unit undermining the HR function in its role of developing employee commitment (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990). A director of HR describes HR's role in maintaining the corporate entity as:

The HR function is responsible for resolving disputes, conflict and poor communication. This role is both a traditional part of the HR function and a vital necessity of its operation today. It derives from the collective-bargaining role it used to perform, bringing staff together and creating a unified whole instead of a fragmented and unco-ordinated set of individual functions (Head of HR – London Borough)

In part, the reason that this role has lessened in importance results from the increased influence of employment legislation and reduced power of the trade unions in local

government in the 1980s and early 1990s (see Chapter Four). The heads of HR also feel that the reduced reliance on collective bargaining, as a central organisational function, is also a factor that put less emphasis on the need for the corporate HR role.

8.8 Strategy or Service Delivery

The concern over duplication of HR activities, discussed above, raises the issue of other common themes noted in the interviews with heads of HR. These involve the lack of role clarity between different HR functions, the lack of communication between different parts of the HR function and the additional overall cost of HR from the duplication of functions. The HR function in many authorities seems both divided and set against itself. The differences between the centre and decentralised units involve; qualified specialist HR staff opposed to unqualified generalist HR staff; careers for central but not decentralised HR staff; strategy development as opposed to operations. These different parts of the HR function are recognised by the heads of HR to fail to share expertise, support one another, and exchange information, (Purcell and Ahlstrand, 1994). One explanation why is that the expert power of central HR specialists is threatened by the greater line management involvement in HR functions (Oswick and Grant, 1996). As a defence against this enchroachment the central function seeks to keep control and undermine the decentralised units:

The role of devolved (decentralised) personnel staff includes advice to managers, implementing the HR strategies and policies coming from the centre, advise managers on change, administration around personnel procedures such as recruitment. The centre, has a more controlling function, determining strategic direction, monitoring and audit function, consultancy services to devolved personnel staff, managing corporate ER, and training, briefing and developing managers to manage change and meet organisational objectives in HR (Head of HR - County Council)

While the advantages of closeness, flexibility and responsiveness to departmental needs were identified as an advantage, the HR officer in the department often found

themselves in a difficult position and in direct conflict between with the central HR function. Being based in the business offers the opportunity for HR specialists to become more widely involved in its management and to develop HR expertise relevant to operational matters (Evans and Cooling, 1985). Meeting departmental needs often conflicts with central HR guidelines, policies or overall strategy, As a county council head of HR pointed out:

The provision of personnel services has been devolved (decentralised) to the directorates and a personnel protocol has been established to ensure that personnel at the corporate centre will retain a strong role, leading upon HR strategy and ensuring that good professional practice is maintained (Head of HR – County Council)

In a similar way to the findings of Bach (1995) the managers in this study were in conflict with the centre on HR issues. They described the difficulties of decentralised HR staff in maintaining loyalty to their department, its managers and their objectives, while seeking to remain within the guidelines set out by central HR staff.

In an environment where the responsibility for the management of people properly lies with managers, and specialist personnel advice to those managers is devolved (decentralised) from the centre, then the need to set out what governs the relationship between the departments and the strategic centre is crucial. The department as owner of the staff and, in effect if not in fact, the budget which pays for them should have the last say (Line Manager – County Council)

The heads of HR illustrate the point by describing the situation HR specialists often found themselves in with line managers:

The difference between local pragmatism and the central role of ensuring probity and application of procedure is very obvious at times of restructuring and redundancy. Local managers just want to get certain numbers and certain people out. This leads to either a straight fight between the centre and local HR or between departmental and corporate chief officers (Director of HR – Unitary Authority)

Other heads of HR explained how they tried to avoid exercising central control, or at least try to compromise between the aims of the centre and those of the department.

The problem created by this struggle is the inconsistency of approach to the way that employees were managed. All the interviewees both HR and managers acknowledged this but did not suggest a way of avoiding the problem of inconsistent treatment. The concern of central HR staff was that treating employees in different ways was seen to be unfair; laid the authority open to legal challenge; and, did not provide employees with a sufficient feeling of corporate belonging. These reasons were shrugged off by the managers interviewed as of secondary importance to the business of the department and at worse merely ploys to regain power of the HR function. Many interviewees recognised the need for a two-way flow between central HR and the departments and various groups have been set-up to improve communication, however the interviewees question their effectiveness.

8.9 Typology of Decentralisation

All those interviewed seem to recognise communication as a problem within decentralised H.R.M, and yet department bosses seemed unhappy to relinquish any degree of control they have over HR within their department. Francis (1995) also found in her case-study organisation that local unit HR professionals felt that corporate HR was not accessible to them and were unhelpful. In addition, they had not been involved in a consultation process as the centre had developed HR policies. However, it is not clear whether they failed to take the opportunity to be involved, or whether the opportunity did not exist. Given the general lack of communication and consultation it is not surprising that corporate HR policies were seen by the business managers as being unrealistic and not related to business needs. Francis (1995) concludes that effective communication between central and unit HR is essential in making decentralisation effective.

8.9.1 Decentralised Staff Located in Departments Line Managed by Heads of Department

This research found decentralised HR specialists reporting directly to the head of the department in which they were located, or a HR manager in charge of the unit if the authority and department were large enough to employ one.

This arrangement was the same as that discovered by Farrell (1997) in his investigation of HR in local authorities that this physical decentralisation of HR staff with departmental reporting lines is the most distinct and the most extreme form of sturucture. In this form departmental needs can over-rule corporate central HR needs and the lack of HR integration at the business level is common.

8.9.2 Decentralised Staff Located in Departments Line Managed by Central HR

In some authorities the HR specialist reports directly to central HR, even though they are located in a line department. One head of human resources explained how they had wound down the central HR department and redeployed staff out into departments. He explained how the manager of that specific group of branches would regard the HR consultant they worked with as their HR consultant. Yet all HR staff reported directly to the central HR department and not to the managers that they worked with. He described this as a matrix which worked really well. This case also illustrates how different approaches to decentralisation are combined into a particular approach which fits the needs of the individual business. This model of physical decentralisation may well ameliorate some of the problems identified in relation to the relocation model. Farrell (1997) found that this was the most popular structure with ten out of the 20 operating in broadly this way. Indeed, these ten (referred to by

Farrell as quasi-decentralisation) variously identified the advantages of their approach as providing a standardised approach, enabling concentration on strategic issues, cost effectiveness, ability to provide expert services, economies of scale and the ability to provide a corporate overview. Indeed, the advantages they identify were the same as those identified by respondents who described themselves as operating a centralised approach.

8.9.3 Decentralisation without Physical Relocation

Decentralisation of the HR function without the physical relocation of staff is the single most popular form of decentralisation in the middle to smaller sized district councils surveyed. While this form works due to the development of a close working relationship between specific HR professionals and specific departments of parts of the authority. This formation has often been based on joint management arrangements, service level agreements or service contracts where the HR advisor provides set services for a set time allocation to the specified department. Central HR in these authorities has sought to benefit from the economies of scale by ensuring each HR advisor has agreements with more than one department so as to provide cover arrangements. Keen (1995) suggests this model of decentralisation builds a closer relationship between the specialist and the line with the development of a better understanding of departmental needs and HR skills. Evans and Cooling (1985) predicted that this arrangement would result in a demand-led central unit which not only made agreements in terms of which HR specialist would support a specific department, but also marketed and sold services as a means of survival, a similar reaction of HR contractor units to the threat of C.C.T.

8.10 Conclusion

The implications of devolution and decentralisation both for HR activities and for HR specialists will be heavily influenced by the form adopted by local authorities. Devolution, within the definition supplied here, seems very limited within local authorities within the HR context. While some line managers are allowed full control over their HR budgets, staff salaries and training, few can exercise any degree of control due to the restrictions placed on them by central HR covering the cash or establishment limitation on the type and number of staff they deploy.

The findings of this research reflects that of others in that within larger authorities at county level the physical decentralisation of HR staff with departmental reporting lines is the most distinct and the most extreme form of stucture. In this form departmental needs can over-rule corporate central HR needs and the lack of HR integration at the business level is common. Even if the central HR unit in this structure tried to operate strategically, as heads of HR thought they should, there were few structured mechanisms for gaining departmental commitment to strategic objectives and no-way of translating these objectives into day-to-day activities. There also appeared to be few mechanisms for feeding departmental HR needs into the centre to inform strategy development. Departmental managers limited their HR unit to an operational role, or at most a departmental strategic rather than central HR strategic support role. In those authorities were there is a reporting relationship between the HR unit in the department and central HR a much greater degree of HR integration and standardisation took place. In these authorities the prospect of a strategic approach developing was considered possible by both those managers and heads of HR interviewed.

The decentralisation choice that authorities have made is doubtless influenced by the

relative importance of departmental needs over the need for an integrated HR approach. The political context is also, clearly, a significant influence as the rhetoric of client and contractor units, C.C.T and outsourcing, and even Best Value all have decentralising pressures built into them. There is also evidence to suggest that the specific model of decentralisation of HR that is chosen is likely to change to a greater or lesser extent, depending on changing circumstances and the perceived effectiveness of the model in use and the changing political, legislative and employment factors bearing on the authority. What should be remembered is that the authority may need to manage its staff in different ways across departments, as each will have different concerns and different HR needs. However, all staff are legally employed by the same council, thus any lack of HR integration and strategy at the local authority/business unit level may cause countless problems.

Chapter Nine

Human Resource Management in Local Government - The Effect of HRM on Local Government Employment

9.0 Introduction

Local government organisations during the last twenty-five years have been in the process of being reformed, reorientated and redesigned by means of a series of structural, cultural and systemic changes. The imposition of change, as discussed in Chapters One. Three and Four has been uneven and lacking in a coherent and universal style. Managerialism cannot be easily identified or defined in terms of a series of constant and continuing characteristics, despite its closeness to the private sector model. The managers and heads of HR interviewed recognise the attributes of the market and executive styles of management put forward in chapter two. As a group, the heads of HR suggest that N.P.M changes its form under the influence of a variety of factors including central government policy and legislative initiatives. Beyond these two styles, the heads of HR suggest that a developmental style and oldguard style of management may also be detected in N.P.M. Essentially though, as those interviewed believe, the core of N.P.M is a hybrid of public sector management, a form tailored to reflect the politics, policies and priorities of each local authority. This localism has resulted in differences appearing in the way that managers and those they manage behave towards each other within each Council at different times and at the same time in the change process.

As Chapter Two and Three discussed, perhaps the major change has been the division of many local authorities into buyers and sellers, clients and contractors, a separation now softened to different degrees in different authorities. While the divisions are in

the process of being removed in the early stages of the introduction of best value, the damage to workplace relationships caused by their presence still remain. The central feature in the division is the creation and continuing existence of the core-periphery split within local authorities, with its constituent and inherent difference in the level of reward, conditions of employment and job security. The role of the unions and that of the national bargaining system on pay and terms and conditions in influencing the change process and the form of new public management is another factor that requires consideration in any discussion of the work environment of local government.

As the results of the survey and interviews within this thesis show, the organisational division has happened at varying speeds and to varying degrees in different authorities. This is due, in part, to factors such as the size of the organisation, its internal industrial relations and its political view on the benefits or otherwise of competition, devolution and decentralisation. These same features have influenced the degree of softening of the split. Authorities which have tried to preserve the integration of service specification and service delivery have proved more enthusiastic about softening this divide. Despite this, most authorities retain an organisational structure which allows the identification of specific service and support units for compulsory competitive tendering purposes as a final result to failures to achieve Best Value. Some authorities, for example Bedfordshire County Council still aim under their Conservative majority to outsource manual workers, white-collar and professional workers services to the fullest possible extent.

The heads of HR see the retention of the core periphery model within local government organisational structures as a consequence of the devolution of responsibility and accountability that has been carried out in the majority of local authorities. The devolution process was a necessary part, as Chapter Two states, of the

fragmentation of authorities into cost or profit centres, accountable for the way they use money and for the services which they perform within the local government contract culture. Often though the strategic aspects of this devolution reflected different approaches in the degree of control retained by the centre over human and financial resources. In some cases, as those interviewed suggest, this devolution process is accompanied by increased line management authority, but not necessarily with an increased control over those resources which would be necessary to meet the accountability targets. How this process of change, and the different forms and styles of management arising from the change process, have effected the work environment of local government employees is discussed below.

9.1 Traditional Industrial Relations

When a local authority has stated that certain changes are necessary in order to handle financial pressures, the legislative programmes of central government, or change imposed by a reprioritisation of services, staff have felt they have had little choice but to accept (Armstrong et al. 1981, Terry 1989). Taken together, these factors may have intensified the inherent difficulties that staff have traditionally encountered in their devising a legitimate case against management demands for change. If local government has adopted a less understanding and responsive approach in recent years to trades union resistance to change, it becomes important to consider what long term effect this might have had upon existing patterns of co-operation. As discussed above, managers have placed less reliance upon joint decision-making and have increasingly made use of, what they see as their management prerogative, to make decisions without consultation. The heads of HR refer to management strategies to obtain employee compliance through using the threat to their job security provided by C.C.T,

outsourcing of services and the worsening financial situation in local government.

Where managers have continuously insisted upon higher standards of effort over and above that which might be considered reasonable, staff may not have offered outright opposition, but it is likely that they will have come to resent management's behaviour. Such resentments may have diminished their willingness to obey management instructions with enthusiasm, the implication of employees giving full consent is that they authorise management to govern them, thereby giving a special significance to the term authority. Management can govern without this authority by employing coercion, but it faces at best passive indifference and at worst militant hostility (Fox 1985).

9.2 Changing Industrial Relations Structures in Local Government

The industrial relations structures within different local authorities are thought by the heads of HR in local government to be indicative of the effect of the changes within local councils. The interviews with heads of HR produced the overall view that the findings of the Donovan Commission (1968), referred too in Chapter Three, that collective bargaining could reconcile the differences that existed between employers and their employees, had failed in local government. While collective bargaining was supposed to encourage the view that comprehensive workplace agreements could reduce adversarial behaviour and unite workers and managers in a common purpose, evidence of the success of this system was limited to the views of a minority of heads of HR. Despite this finding, the majority of interviewees felt that the system which prevailed up until the late 1970s, a centralised formal system of worker representation covering a wider range of workplace issues (Brown 1981; Daniel and Millward 1983) was still the preferred mechanism in local authorities. While in many authorities

formal mechanisms such as Joint Negotiating Committees still existed in some form or another, in others they had been replaced by a different forum, or new forms of centralised system. As one head of HR for a district council stated:

...the council is politically balanced and works on a consensus basis...we are delegating more responsibility to managers have set up a staff forum, the council remains non-unionised...we recognise the need to communicate to staff and involve them in consultation on change (Head of HR – District Council)

Certainly, despite the lack of union representation, this district has by design sought to construct a system similar to that of old fashioned welfare state industrial relations policy. The policy that sought to create an atmosphere in which constructive collective bargaining could take place between managers and worker representatives, still exists in the majority of councils, even if its importance has diminished in many. Even though the evidence from those interviewed is that traditional industrial relations based on collective bargaining remains an essential ingredient of local government consultative structures, an increasing number of these employers are no longer prepared to follow the orthodoxy of the past. For example, many heads of HR whose houncils had previously bargained with trades unions over an extensive range of subjects now restrict joint discussions to a narrower set of issues. Also, heads of HR in a number of local authorities have made changes to their Authorities approach to trade union representation and involvement. Only a few authorities have preferred not to recognise trades unions at all in the workplace. The changes made to the relationship have often involved a mixture of involvement and participation techniques using team-brief and individual appraisal schemes, alongside centralised consultation and negotiation.

Implementation across the authority is a centralised operation in which local managers have a secondary role:

The essence of involvement and participation schemes is the close dialogue between the appropriate managers and groups and individual members of staff. Many staff will be understandably nervous of having their individual performance examined so closely. It will be very important to have close consultation with staff representatives locally and centrally during the development of the approach. Central consultation is essential to the fair and equal implementation of the scheme (Head of HR – Unitary Authority)

Another head of HR reinforces the central HR function in change exercises and the role that elected members play as the employer:

Major change, especially when involving job losses need to be carried out in a text-book fashion with councillor involvement. Members are involved in the formal consultation and both authorise the process and hear the appeals of those dismissed, all in the glare of publicity from the local press. Those members with political reasons to oppose change need to discuss their views separately and away from the officers whose duty it is to implement that change (Head of HR – Metropolitan Borough)

The heads of HR agree that there is a role for centralised negotiation and consultation on issues affecting the majority of employees, either to meet statutory requirements or political objectives. They see collective bargaining as having failed to promote business success or to integrate the aspirations of employees with the goals of management. Those interviewed have suggested though that to some extent in different authorities managers and workers now share a similar view of the local government work environment brought about by the inability of trades unions to resist major changes, such as C.C.T. Within the accounts of those interviewed it is possible to identify two distinctive accounts of the way in which managers and workers have responded to their more competitive circumstances. The next section discusses these distinctive accounts after identifying the overall objective of change.

9.3 The Changing Employment Environment in Local Government

Heads of HR when asked to encapsulate the objectives behind the changes they have led in local government employment in recent years, agree with those identified by Howard (1994). While different authorities sought different specific objectives relevant to their political persuasion, size and function, a common theme ran throughout the changes. As one head of HR summarised for his colleagues:

...employment contracts are more explicit about job roles in relation to pay for the job, skill requirements, standards and performance expectations are more often stipulated, volumes of work are defined through minimums hours of work required or range of work expected. In essence more work to a specified standard, often with less pay

(Head of HR – London Borough)

Heads of HR also emhasise the concentration in recent years on organisational structures and restructuring as an expression of the processes of co-ordination and control. The changing power relationships between individuals, groups, professions and functions is also referred too. Delayering and decentralisation in local authorities with reorganisation from a system of departments to one of directorates containing groups of functions has highlighted the changing power of the professions through their represention in the new structures. The heads of HR agree that the effect of such change exercises has been, as one of their number states:

...to open out the career opportunities available to core staff, those in the clientside, especially, change skill requirements radically towards business and financial expertise, and reduce job security and the numbers of staff and managers overall

(Head of HR – District Council)

These change exercises have been described as coming in phases reflecting local or

national initiatives encouraging centralisation, decentralisation, delayering, matrix management or network organisations. Sometimes these approaches are appropriate for the organizations, their tasks and their environments but sometimes they are the result of the enthusiasm of a chief executive or council leader, seeking to implement a particular style of management. The two distinctive accounts, confrontation and shared understanding are discussed below, starting with the conflict approach to industrial relations.

9.4 Continuing Confrontation between Managers and Employees - New Public Management Attitudes to Employees

The approach to industrial relations adopted in N.P.M has been identified by the heads of HR interviewed to vary between two distinctive styles. These styles reflect an attitude to employees and their trade unions which are supposedly indicative of a private sector and more conflictual approach.

The heads of HR and managers describe union militancy as still in place, especially in some professions and in specific situations. While a large majority of this group consider it prudent to support a process of union marginalisation and managerial dominance, the majority do not agree. Heads of HR describe their experience of specific unions activities as reminiscent of the confrontation of the 1970s. As one comments:

While cost and time considerations prevent unions representing staff at industrial tribunal, district and regional officials are more protective of national and collective agreements. In their defence of terms and conditions, especially of professional groups, the threat of industrial action is still there (Head of HR – District Council)

The first possible explanation, offered by one head of HR, is of a traditional kind, and suggests that old attitudes have not been transformed but continue to exist, pushed

beneath the surface, their expression stifled by circumstance:

Those powerful professions, such as some of those in teaching, do not share the co-operative approach which has arisen from the development of management power in the 1980s and 1990s. These groups adopt a militant stance in selected situations regardless of the complexities of current legislation covering industrial action

(Head of HR – County Council)

This view of the work environment in some authorities, notably larger ones, held by the heads of HR, is that pressure has been placed on staff to work harder, either directly by managers or indirectly by circumstance such as C.C.T. They have responded, through want of an alternative, with compliance rather than enthusiasm, and feel resentment at this coercion. Changes in the workplace behaviour of staff towards what is seemingly greater commitment have, in the opinion of a large minority of the heads of HR, been the consequence of the altered balance of power between managers and unions in favour of the former. This point of view indicates that there has been little change in the underlying conflictual relationship between management and employees. The employment relationship is still adversarial, according to the heads of HR, even though it is less visibly so than in the past. One head of HR represents the view of the majority of his colleagues when he states:

Even professional staff have experienced unprecedented job insecurity, work intensification and reduced pay comparative to the private sector. Senior managers, regardless of patchy attempts to involve staff in decision-making, ignore the needs of staff and act without consultation. Conflict is there, represented by increased turnover, grievances, industrial tribunal cases, sickness absence and other aspects of withdrawal (Head of HR – Metropolitan Borough)

The managers interviewed on this subject gave their view that they consider it their right to insist that staff behave according to their instructions. A view that they say has grown in recent years. The phrase business need as part of the new terminology of contemporary local government management is often quoted as being the reason and justification for this right. This view is seen by managers and HR professionals to

be a point of conflict between them. The management view is seen by heads of HR to prevail at the expense of their desire to seek agreement with employees over changes in the workplace. As one head of HR commented:

The conflict between involvement and participation and the right to manage is persistent and uncompromising. While the organisation seeks to promote fairness and openness, individual managers with devolved responsibility, can and will act against organisational policy to achieve an end. Some see management in terms of the right to be directive and uncompromising (Head of HR – District Council)

The heads of HR agree with the view of Purcell (1982) who found many managers had lost all interest in securing change through agreement and sought to assert their authority to achieve change through a reconstructed form of industrial relations. This new industrial relations is based on a straight pay for work exchange in which the employees commitment to work is purely one based on an instrumental involvement.

As one head of HR states:

Managers in the commercial areas of local authorities have a far more pragmatic approach to managing manual and quasi-professional staff, being less interested in motivational approaches to increasing performance or to training and developing individual staff (Director of HR – Unitary Authority)

Evidence from these interviews suggests that local government where it was once commonplace for managers to take decisions jointly with worker representatives now has a culture where managers seek to impose their authority. A director of HR states:

Managers would rather not consult on anything, staff agreement to change is avoided wherever possible, especially if their is no or a low density of union membership

(Director of HR – City/District Council)

This view of local government manager's attitude to consultation is repeated in other sectors of British business where management's has shown a new determination to take decisions alone, discarding former processes for arriving at decisions jointly with employees (Willman and Winch 1985; Marsden et al., 1985). Other reliable evidence

of changed management attitudes are few and far between, but Mackay (1986) concluded that such uncompromising attitudes had spread to a majority of British managers.

9.5 The Attitudes of Employees and their Unions to New Public Management

The heads of HR detailed accounts not only of managers' new-found assertiveness, but also complementary accounts of workers and trades unions acquiescence in the face of change. According to the majority of those interviewed, local government staff have not offered the resistance to change that they might have done in the past, but instead have responded by working harder and supplying greater effort (Metcalf 1989). In part this arises from factors such as job security, work convenience and flexible attitudes to working. These points are summarised by one head of HR who stated:

Fifty percent of the work-force are women who are second earners in their families. You will not find many who are trades union members or any who show signs of militancy. Job security is of interest to them, so are flexible hours, especially for those with children who find working here well paid and convenient. You won't find them committed to resisting change (Head of HR – District Council)

Another head of HR at county level stated:

Most of the people employed here are averse to private sector employment. They will not under any circumstances work in the private sector, so no matter how bad things get, they will stay here. Trades union membership is about 40 or 50 per cent, about average for a local authority (Head of HR – County Council)

The compliance that staff have shown with the increasing growth of management regulation may not, however, reflect an inherent new enthusiasm for work, but rather the lack of any reasonable alternative, indicated in the quotation above. In this way of looking at things, any enhanced motivation or increased compliance has been derived

not from factors within the workplace but from lack of opportunity elsewhere.

In similar way, some heads of HR have argued that fear of unemployment has reduced the readiness of staff to take part in industrial action against their employers. This is a factor which this group point to, to explain the acquiescence shown by the trades unions which enabled local authorities to progressively restrict the range of subjects included within joint discussions. Another factor pointed to by the heads of HR is that, until the recent Employment Relations Act (1999), the law deterred workers from pressing their case against management (see Chapter Three; Metcalf 1989). Nowadays, the law offers more support for the extension of collective bargaining, and recent reforms have increased workers' ability to take industrial action in the course of disputes with employers. One head of HR represents the groups views by stating that:

Executive style management would not have been possible in the 1970s. The failure of earlier experiments at appointing 'City Managers' shows that. Union militancy had to be curbed as did the power of the professions. The new managerialism rode in on the back of job insecurity provided by C.C.T and redundancy

(Head of HR – District Council)

Taken together, these factors undermine both trades unions' and the professions ability to support their position in bargaining with effective sanctions (Nichols 1990). The view of the majority of the heads of HR is represented by one statement which says:

Industrial action is now only isolated, and rarely a threat. Unions have moderated their stance because their members got fed up of strikes and left. While UNISON have a powerful lobby amongst elected members here, they have limited support amongst staff and operate in a manner which often supports management action

(Head of HR – Unitary Authority)

The decline in local government trades union membership since 1979, has had a profound effect on the role of representatives in local authorities (Metcalf 1989). The

heads of HR are aware that, where local authorities have been restructured in order to make them more responsive to customer needs, CCT or devolved/decentralised management systems, traditional arrangements for collective bargaining have come often come under pressure. A trend to decentralise business decision-making and to bring about a more immediate relationship between producers and consumers may have caused the pattern of formal negotiations to become fragmented and less formal or ad-hoc arrangements appear. One head of HR recalls such an occassion:

Under the Lib/Dems the Joint Staff Committee of elected members (councillors) and trades union representatives still exists but doesn't meet regularly. In recent years there has been more devolution to managers of responsibility for major issues, mostly change related. Professional staff seem to prefer these matters dealt with by their own managers. A series of joint consultative committee meetings take place occassionally which are centrally controlled, mostly to involve the unions and councillors in the preparation of HR policy (Head of HR - District Council)

Some authors have suggested that these developments have been reflected in a profound loss of confidence on the part of union representatives who often end up playing only a marginal role (Tailby and Whitson, 1989). The heads of HR argue that shop stewards' concerns have narrowed to the extent that they are nowadays concerned almost entirely with local establishment issues to the exclusion of broader matters (Brown 1982). Recent change has been determined, according to those interviewed, almost exclusively by management, with workers' representatives consulted, but almost entirely uninvolved by their own volition. An example of this is given by a director of HR who states that:

We restructured the middle management tiers removing certain posts, essentially delayering the organisation by one level. Although we wrote to all interest unions whose members were involved, in proved absurdly difficult to get anyone to turn-up to represent the staff. The view seems to be that its just another reorganisation and the representatives at local and district level have more than enough to do already

(Director of HR - London Borough)

The view of the majority of those interviewed is that local government unions have been unable to exert much influence on either the pace or the direction of change since the late 1970s. A majority of the heads of HR believe that the re-establishment of the managerial prerogative has been effective and necessary to allow an H.R.M agenda to begin. The same number of heads of HR believe that the downgrading of collective bargaining though, has been sufficient, either nationally or locally, to enable local government to shift towards the individualised employment relationship that was necessary to introduce true and permanent change (Tailby and Whitson, 1989). Taken together, all the heads of HR believe that local government unions have embraced the 'new realism' of change which has undermined their willingness and ability to oppose management initiatives. Terry (1989) describes workplace trades unionism as going through a crisis of aims and identity. However, those heads of HR interviewed believe that it is the growing confidence of managers in pursuit of specific aims that has prevented the trades unions from altering or stopping the course of change.

Despite managers' new confidence and workers' reluctance to resist change, the distinctive feature of traditional industrial relations is that both parties continue to believe that employment is an adversarial relationship. As Chapters Three, Six and Seven describe, despite a general absence of visible industrial conflict, an adversarial conception of the employment relation has continued to permeate the thinking of all managers and workers. The shifts evident in the conduct of industrial relations in recent years have reflected calculations based upon narrow short-term interests and have been the product of a limited adjustment to circumstance.

9.6 Evidence of a New Industrial Relations in Local Government

A large majority of the heads of HR and line managers interviewed and using the interview questionnaire have pointed towards the growth of a new approach to industrial relations in local authorities, the aim of which has been the encouragement of a more positive and less adversarial management and union relationship. While the management of human resources has come to replace the management of personnel and industrial relations, the employment relationship remains essentially the same, founded upon mutual obligations and a sense of shared dedication towards a common goal. Heads of HR suggest that the terminology may have changed but much of the new industrial relations can be found in the common ground of old industrial relations. Contemporary management beliefs and employment practices are directed towards winning employees support in order to build a common commitment to organisational objectives. The heads of HR believe this process is less difficult in local government where a strong ideal of service and commitment already exists (Kochan et al. 1986; Capelli and McKersie 1987). For example, Guest (1989a, 1989b) has argued that the philosophical underpinning of the new industrial relations presumes that there should be no conflict between the interests of employees and the management of an organisation. In this sense, it advances a vision of the ideal organisation which amounts to a form of sophisticated unitarism. Its policy prescriptions may have eschewed the overtly brutal suppression of dissent associated with the unitarism of old (Fox 1974), but nevertheless they have advocated practices which might have inhibited employees' belief that their interests were separate and distinct from those of management. Within the perspective of a more sophisticated modern unitarism, managers may have been engaged in refashioning employee relations in ways that have encouraged workers to relate to the organisation as

individuals, rather than primarily as members of a distinctive interest group. In such circumstances, the scope for trades unions to operate may have been reduced.

These new management beliefs and policies are elaborated below.

9.7 A Shared Understanding – Partnership in the Workplace

Their shared understanding developed in recent years involves a common sense of the new realism of local government employment. This 'in the same boat' mentality has provided a foundation for a consensus upon how business and industrial relations must be conducted (see Basset 1987). The second alternative and more novel view is that managers and staff have responded to new circumstances by building more constructive relations at work. In this more positive view of a new form of industrial relations the idea of a balance of power influencing decision-making in the workplace has been surpassed by the reorientation of the workforce and its acceptance of the management agenda.

The membership of our Human Resources Advisory Group includes members of all trades unions represented in the borough. Also, our personnel sub-committee has both local and, at times of major change, district officials on it. Union membership is about fifty per cent, however, we found their presence useful, both to comply with the law on consultation, and to ensure all staff feel they have had their say

(Head of HR – County Council)

Some managers claim to have found new and successful ways of fostering an identity of interests with their workers, and workers have responded by offering their best efforts to create a spirit of mutual co-operation.

Local government heads of HR and managers, clearly state in their interviews and free-hand survey notes that they both wish to develop new ways of managing industrial relations in their authority. The stimulus for the development and application of these new techniques has been the intensification of work and

increasing cost pressures on local authorities over the past twenty-five years. The objective of these techniques is to persuade employees to be more flexible, develop broader skills and to perform more efficiently across a wider range of duties. The new industrial relations has arisen at a time when new forms of work organisation, new technology and a reciprocal need for flexibility around employment have ensured that deprivation is not inherent for employees in the demands made by managers. As one head of HR states:

The broadening out of job roles mean that one individual is effectively doing the job of two. This has, in a sense, created a programme of job enrichment. The jobs carried out by basic administrative staff encompass professional and quasiprofessional functions which are more attractive to many (Head of HR – District Council)

The interviews for this thesis suggest, like the interview survey organised by Edwards (1987a, 1987b), that managers who have in the past shown antipathy towards the HR function, have now come to believe that employee relations policies can influence employee performance. Edwards (1987a) research concluded that there is a widespread desire to go beyond reliance on traditional methods of collective bargaining so as to establish a more positive approach by all to industrial relations (Edwards 1987a). This approach was identified by line managers interviewed for this thesis, who believed that involvement and participation strategies should be adopted, aimed at establishing direct contact with staff groups. A representative view from the heads of HR stated that:

We have not always been effective in local government at engaging our staff or seeking their participation in the decision-making process. The traditional way for many authorities is to combine traditional industrial relations mechanisms such as J.N.C's with more modern and direct communication strategies such as team-brief. It is difficult to speak directly to individual staff or cause managers to discuss issues with them, apart from during formal group meetings. We see the two systems as complimentary (Head of HR – London Borough)

Not only did the managers who were interviewed state their belief that higher performance and better quality now depends upon the co-operation and integrated efforts of all employees, many of them also said that they measured their own success by the extent to which they convinced workers of their case for change, as one manager explained:

The staff respond very well to full and frank consultation and involvement in the proposals for restructuring. It seems that hiding information, just talking to the union not the staff, or just trying to sneak things through causes more trouble than its worth. By taking people with you, you at least ensure that those who survive change exercises remain here and we all get on (Line Manager – County Council)

This managers attitude like his colleagues, and the heads of HR fell that this is the right approach to take to secure a positive attitude in the workplace, where both managers and staff feel that they have coped successfully with change. The heads of HR stated from their experience that the reaction of staff and managers in change situations is far more productive if the process is based on co-operation, and not confrontation, with staff and trades union representatives (Edwards 1987b). Such views confirm the findings of Storey (1987; 1992) who argued that there has been a re-orientation of management thinking where managers have become progressively more enthusiastic about new techniques which introduced change by fostering an atmosphere of consent and goodwill.

The survey and interview notes suggest that some managers are very interested in staff motivation and development, which has become an important aspect of their work. This finding supports other survey evidence that suggests that some managers have put a belief in more open management into practice. A minority of heads of HR suggest that of this relatively small proportion of local government managers, a large number are women. The pattern of managerial behaviour this group describe suggest

that these managers fit the description of transformational leaders. An open, participative and inspirational model of management which uses consultation, teamworking and communication with staff and their representatives to maintain an effective working relationship (A.C.A.S 1991, Scott 1991). The heads of HR interviewed describe the growing use of new methods of communication and consultation directly with employees, for example through team briefing and the use of quality circles, which have sometimes augmented more traditional methods such as joint consultative committees (A.C.A.S 1991a; Millward et al. 1992).

Where such changes have taken place, they may point towards the development of a more sophisticated view of the employment relationship. The heads of HR identified this area as one where there was the potential to develop a new employment relationship, where guarantees of job security in return for guarantees of flexibility, result in a substantial improvement in trust. One of the group goes on to say:

If the short-termism of local government can be replaced by the Japanese job for life concept, then perhaps the organisational commitment, flexibility and performance that we have long sought from staff, will be in our reach at last (Head of HR – District Council)

The interviewees state quite openly that to achieve this goal managers would have to undertake a far-reaching reappraisal of their employment relationship with staff, in quite fundamental areas.

9.8 The Future Role of Local Government Trades Unions in the New Industrial Relations

The development of the new industrial relations has raised a question mark over the modern role of trades unions in local government. The heads of HR state that within this new framework many of them have simplified their dealings with trades unions by streamlining recognition arrangements. None of those interviewed would consider,

in the light of recent legislation, or this new framework, the actual derecognition of a trades union. One head of HR comments on recent legislation and his own authorities' decision to adopt a partnership approach to workplace relations:

The White Paper, Fairness at Work is a blueprint for partnership with trades unions, a sign of the Government's expectations, and an indication of the statutory right of recognition that will be within the Employment Relations Act 1999. This Act strengthens union rights in the workplace, and although that doesn't affect us, the partnership approach is going down well with members and staff

(Head of HR – District Council)

Those interviewed pointed out that the relationship arising from these agreements is different from traditional collective bargaining, in that the function of such workplace rules was to restrict the discretionary power of management. These agreements, representative of the new industrial relations suggest that an informal and flexible approach to rule-making can displace the inflexibility of traditional collective-Instead of formal structures, informal participation processes and bargaining. enhanced planning and communications are expected to serve as substitutes for the adversarial procedures which form part of the traditional collective bargaining, machinery (Kochan et al. 1986). The majority of the head's of HR suggested that developments in organisation structures, which have provided staff with greater autonomy, status and control in their work roles, has also rendered traditional collective-bargaining as obsolete. In these circumstances, the role of trades unions have become restricted to securing fairness where management makes decisions which fail to consider fully the interests of the parties concerned (Wickens 1987). This suggests that where managements have implemented the prescriptions of the new industrial relations, trades unions in local government have in general, found it increasingly difficult to pursue a distinctive and influential role.

9.9 Conclusion

Growing awareness of the new approach to industrial relations and the growing strength of managerialism in local government may have profoundly affected the way in which managers and staff have interpreted the employment relationship in recent Many accounts of change have been founded upon the idea that the imperatives of financial restraint, commercial thinking and value for money have equipped managers with a new sense of purpose and clear objectives. The heads of HR believe that many managers have either capitalised upon the weakness of trades unions at local level to make more stronger demands upon workers, or they have taken the opportunity to fashion genuinely more co-operative labour relations. Exploring developments in industrial relations inevitably raises questions about the ways in which past beliefs have coexisted or have been displaced by newer ideas. The belief that staff and managers have come to pursue more closely related goals is now commonplace, but the extent of their rapprochement, and how it has been achieved, has remained an open question. It seems doubtful from the evidence found here that managers, who are apparently free from the overt opposition of trades unions, have approached the management of labour relations with a new coherence. Piecemeal approaches to industrial relations still seem to be the routine in local government, with occasional hostility between managers and staff in some authorities and great harmony and sharing in others. The limited experimentation with alternatives to national pay bargaining, and flexibility in pay and conditions, with local and skill supplements, and upwards and downwards flexibility as a result of competition have diminished with the introduction of the new Labour Government, while, at the same time differentials, between the top and bottom of the pay scales are increasing. Competition on price for the work done by manual workers has tended to

reduce the total remuneration of, especially, women manual workers, while the introduction of specialist management roles has produced higher management salaries. In this respect at least one criteria of the ideal-type model of H.R.M may be achieved in local government.

Chapter Ten

Strategic Involvement of HRM in Local Government - The Contribution of HRM to Business Strategy

10.0 Introduction

Marginson et al. (1988a) describe in their work the habit of British business to fail to engage in any form of strategic planning, a failing which may also be applied to local government. In the previous chapters, a trend emerges in local government indicating a preference for pragmatism in responding to changing circumstances, rather than a planned response (see Chapter Seven). Such a finding conflicts with the concept of HR strategy, discussed in Chapter One, which suggests that H.R.M requires deliberate choices to be made and implemented concerning the way that employees are managed. Mintzberg (1988) characterises strategy as a pattern of behaviour which, he argues, is constantly adjusted through experience, changing circumstances and information rising up through the organisation. Although an organisation may have a written strategy, it is constantly changing, and the fact that there is no written strategy does not mean that a strategy does not exist. Strategy is formed, he argues, not formulated, and thus can be seen with more clarity in retrospect (Boxall, 1992). Much of the HR strategy literature reviewed in Chapter One emphasises the critical need to fit HR strategy with business strategy (sometimes referred to as vertical or external integration). Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna (1984) for example, explicitly describe organisational strategy as determining HR strategy. Their findings may not be as fully applicable to local government which operates in a more stable and predictable environment than those organisations examined, for example, in the Peters and Waterman (1982) study.

A second theme in HR strategy relates to internal integration, that is the need for HR strategy to be consistent and mutually reinforcing within itself (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (1988). The ideal model of HR strategy has generally been portrayed as a vertically and horizontally integrated entity, planned rationally in advance, which exists in written form so that it can be examined. A more sophisticated model of this ideal is of a fully integrated business strategy which incorporates HR strategy in a seamless manner as the whole is developed together rather than separately. In this model HR strategy ceases to exist as a separate functional strategy.

10.1 Evidence of HR Strategy in Local Government

Our evidence suggests that the heads of HR interviewed are increasingly involved in developing both HR and business strategies in their authorities. While their authorities did not have fully formed, vertically and horizontally integrated HR strategies, evidence of strategic thinking, as a response to business need clearly existed. Few councils looked towards the HR function to produce an integrated HR strategy in response to business needs, but tended more to look towards a strategic response to identified key business issues such as service priorities within the confines of limited finance and other resources. HR strategy thus tended to be in many cases reactive, in Ansoffs (1975) terms, rather than proactive, and was arrived at in a piecemeal rather than a holistic way. This is similar to Guest's (1990) findings. None of our interviewees identified HR strategy as driving business strategy, but there were many who identified business strategy as driving HR strategy. It demonstrates the HR function as being responsive to business need, and does move us on from the concept of HR producing strategy distant from the business needs of the authority (Duberley and Burns, 1991). A number of authorities have begun to see HR strategy as

essentially integrated into the business, and there were examples of how business issues were addressed strategically in an integrated, rather than functional manner available from those interviewed. The evidence from this research supports a process of evolution of strategy, as described by Mintzberg (1983) for both local government as a whole and for the HR function. Whether or not HR strategy was developed in an integrated way with business strategy, there were strong indications (both from the questionnaire and the interviews) of HR strategy being determined not by the HR function alone, but in partnership with the line. In some ways, this evidence of a developing partnership between HR and line management is one of the most important findings for local government HR.

10.2 The Integration of HR and Business Strategy in Local Government

Brewster and Hegewisch (1994) found only fifty per cent of UK companies had a written HR strategy. It is clear from the findings in this study that, a growing number of local authorities are involved in developing strategy both for their business and HR needs. The results also indicate, as Tyson (1995) suggested, that a strategy can take more than one form. Local authorities take different approaches in drawing up their strategy, with a mixture of integrated and non-integrated HR/business strategies, being used. The heads of HR indicate from the examples they have that both the formatting and content of these documents can vary widely. Those strategies which are linked to a business plan or strategy appear, in the perception of this group, to be more effective both as a means of communicating ideas and objectives, and in linking business and HR needs.

TABLE 10.0

Does your organisation have a HR Strategy?

Yes and linked to Corporate Business	71
Plan	
Yes – Separate to Corporate Business	50
Plan	,
No	42

The heads of HR all agree with Fowler (1987) when he suggested that H.R.M. represents the discovery of personnel management by chief executives and reported that a written HR strategy is one of the key elements in their acceptance of H.R.M arguments. The chief officers that the heads of HR work with have apparently a greater respect for HR as a function, and a greater desire for involvement in HR issues when they are presented as part of a strategic plan. Storey (1992) found that the HR function risked being overlooked in the development of HR strategy in favour of line management involvement. However, this is not the experience of the heads of HR interviewed for this study. While those who have produced HR strategies do note a greater desire for involvement in HR decisions, especially about budget allocation and authority, they seem content for now not to question the authority of HR to pull the strategy together. The heads of HR report, however, that the problem identified by Guest (1990) that managers believe that HR is too important to be left to personnel managers but is instead a key strategic issue demanding the attention of all managers is an issue they are increasingly facing. The heads of HR have faced similar threats to their turf throughout the C.C.T era when facing line managers who wish to ignore HR advice, reduce the cost of the HR to their department, or seek cheaper alternative advice outside the authority. The interviewees explained that the HR function did not develop such strategies in isolation but involved all managers through a process of consultation where drafts of the strategy would be produced and specific meetings

arranged to seek managers opinions. This process would eventually result in a document for approval by chief officers and members. This approach if carried out in a meaningful way might produce the results found by Freedman (1985) that in organisations where line managers have been involved in the production of the strategy there is a significant number of H.R.M innovations. At the chief officer level, the heads of HR report a far greater level of understanding of higher level HR issues, which has resulted in the heads of department becoming more aware of the benefits that can be derived from integrated planning.

Despite the likelihood of some rhetoric in the comments made by the heads of HR, there is clear evidence that the strategic involvement of the HR function and greater integration of HR and business planning in local authorities is both real and increasing. This finding is at odds with Purcell (1989) and Sisson (1995) who argue that H.R.M as a strategic activity peaked in the 1980s, however, the finding is consistent with that of Storey (1992).

Since the responses received in part one of the survey, and the main interviewees were heads of HR, this might explain why the respondents are more likely to support the success of HR and HR strategy. However, these findings are not undermined by the interviews with managers or the results from the survey of manager's which appear below. The literature and research reported in Chapter Seven suggests that the importance of the HR function at corporate level has changed to a more strategic function, while the function at business level is more likely to be operational by nature. This finding supports the impression that local government is developing a HR strategic function led or coordinated by HR specialists.

The results shown above, in TABLE 10.0 contribute to a pattern that developed from the responses to the questionnaire and the interviews, which show that HR in its

strategic form is more often found in county council level authorities and large district or city councils. In these authorities the amount of resources available to HR in terms of people are far greater per head of staff employed. As such, the economies of scale mean that the creation of a strategic focus and strategic HR team are possible. In these large authorities, although not exclusively in them, business and financial planning has become far more developed, although still short-term by nature, as a necessity of the reduction in capital and revenue budgets over the last twenty-five years. Judicial review of service provision has also encourage closer monitoring and evaluation of service provision and better planning of resources both financial and people based. The development of HR strategies as a separate entity to business plans has taken place in several authorities at city and large district size. The production of a separate HR strategy and business strategy seems, in many respects, pointless, since the practical purpose of a HR strategy is to help the organisation to achieve its business objectives. Respondents to the interviews gave a range of reasons why a separate HR strategy was of practical use.

The explanations offered by the vast majority of interviewees ranged from: the HR strategy being the basis of involvement and participation between staff and managers; being created to help obtain 'Investors in People' status; being created to provide staff with a clear picture of the aspirations of councillors and senior managers as a good or 'model employer'; to inform staff of the future intentions of the authority with regard to the shape and numbers of the workforce; being a response to managers requests for a clear structure for human resource planning; being no more than a cosmetic exercise.

The large minority who produced no HR strategy where across all sizes of authority, but most often amongst the smallest.

The reason the heads of HR from district councils gave for having no strategy was: that there was no strategic HR function to provide one; that the authority was too small to require human resource planning or combination of business and people management; that because there was no decentralisation and/or devolution their was no need to involve line managers in HR issues.

However, the positive picture painted above does not mean that all 21 organisations had an internally integrated HR strategy. Only heads of HR at county level were able to give any indication of anything like an integrated HR strategy. At district council level, while specific or individual areas had been subject to a HR strategy, the long-term perspectives used had not been considered in relation to its long-term consequences for the council as an employer. A typical example given by a head of HR was:

Flexible working patterns, terms and conditions, competence related pay, multiskilling and creation of a jobs agency were devised for the D.S.O (Direct Services Organisation) in order to increase competitiveness with local firms. This project adopted a strategic approach linking the D.S.O's business plan and stated objectives agreed with the Direct Works Board of the council with HR objectives

(Head of HR – District Council)

When asked whether their HR strategy was integrated, or just based around individual issues, the heads of HR from district councils identified key areas around which HR strategies were being developed. The explanation for this was often the diversity of needs and expectations managers wanted from staff in different departments across the authority. Corporate HR strategies were identified as separate and distinct from those which supported different areas of the authority. Often the attempt by heads of HR to differentiate between organisation wide strategies and departmental ones resulted in the identification of specific departmental strategy initiatives as projects. One head of HR confirmed this approach in support of his district council colleagues

and stated that:

Corporate strategies concentrate, basically on issues around reward, training and development and performance appraisal, all areas which have generated a lot of work. They've all been selected because those are the concerns of the Councillors and line managers across all departments. Finding common themes amongst the departments isn't easy so we address departmental issues through HR projects which are specific to the business needs of that work area (Head of HR – District Council)

This picture indicates a piecemeal rather than a holistic approach to HR strategy. This reactive and fragmented approach to HR strategy reflects the responsive nature of local government HR that generally reacts to separately identified issues rather than having a more proactive open-ended approach. It appears, from the interviews, that strategic involvement can be focussed on authority-wide issues if they are identified as such by the chief executive and chief officers. Once this group agree what contribution from the HR function is required then a more strategic approach is taken.

Leading in terms of management style and culture, implementing a common style which dictates the way we manage our staff meaning that all our existing HR policies, practices and techniques, right across the HR function, can be examined to see if they line up with every single thing the chief executive and management team want for the business (Head of HR – County Council)

One head of HR explained how the new chief executive was:

Despite this optimistic insight, other indications of a lack of integration in the approach to HR strategy can be found in the questionnaire results. When looking across the interview and survey responses for each single establishment in respect of every area of potential strategic involvement, a very inconsistent pattern was displayed. Different heads of HR and managers reported a high level of strategic involvement in some areas and none in others. This pattern suggests that either the strategy in these areas was being developed solely by HR or in another area or that specific strategic issues were neglected in terms of their strategy development,

indicating that the approach to HR strategy was not comprehensive or consistent.

While the evidence for the development of internally integrated HR strategies was limited and the general picture was one of a piecemeal rather than a holistic approach, there was much more evidence of external fit with business strategy. Most of the larger Authorities portrayed a picture of HR strategic involvement being focused on those issues identified by the business as requiring an HR strategic contribution. Specific cost-saving or performance enhancing projects were mentioned by managers and the heads of HR, and evidence supplied, which indicated that, in this sense at least, HR strategy was business driven. Many managers spoke of strategy as being 'commercially driven', especially those in front-line services or Direct Service Organisations which, still have to achieve key performance indicators under Best Value to avoid C.C.T. One D.S.O manager explained his view:

that (HR) can't shape strategies independently of managers in the Authority and especially down here. What they can do is be the key to implementing strategies which reflect business needs...the D.S.O managers determine the business objective to be achieved. What HR should do is take those objectives and implement that which impacts on the human resource side of things. In this respect of the HR overview and the practical aspects of designing and implementing change the D.S.O can't really have a strategy that doesn't involve HR

(DSO Manager – County Council)

All heads of HR were clear of the direction of fit between HR and business strategies, that business determined HR strategy. Those who had produced separate HR strategies felt that they could drive the business strategy by through their control of establishment costs, pay being the highest proportion of the authorities overall budget. The heads of HR pursuing this route were developing HR strategy designed to meet business needs with the intention of reaching agreement with colleagues on the content of the strategy to ensure it met each departments business objectives. While it is clear there are few textbook approaches used in local government to designing fully

integrated HR strategies, it is also clear that there are attempts to achieve integration going on. The different approaches described by the heads of HR indicates that there are forms of HR strategy being developed which clearly relate to business strategy with the intention of influencing the relationship between the organisation and its employees. The use of strategy in local government, albeit piecemeal, appears to becoming a reality at departmental level, and irrespective of the extent to which the HR function is involved in HR strategy. The majority of the heads of HR confirm that central government and local initiatives are forcing authorities to think strategically and plan for the future. Almost every interviewee explained that this process was forcing the central HR function to devolve its responsibilities to line managers in order that it can spend more time on strategy development.

10.3 The Attraction of Strategic Involvement for the HR Function

The heads of HR see strategic involvement as a way of emphasising the HR function, which has often been perceived, as marginal and ambiguous (see, for example, Legge, 1978), and a function whose contribution to the business has often been questioned (see, for example, Niven, 1967). Fernie et al., (1994) identify a search for legitimacy for HR that, in the past, has been accused of being both an expensive overhead to business, and a function which does not serve the organisations goals. The heads of HR acknowledge that the strategic role grants not just legitimacy, but also status, as Purcell and Ahlstrand (1994) suggested, strategy presupposes importance. Guest (1990) and Kamoche (1994), among others, have noted the attraction of strategy in the function's quest for status. The heads of HR, argue, as do Hendry and Pettigrew (1990) that H.R.M offers a focus for challenging deficiencies in attitudes, scope, coherence and direction within people management. These deficiencies can best be

addressed through the production of a HR strategy that provides a remedy for each of these problem areas.

Undoubtedly though, since all the local authorities surveyed declared that approximately seventy per cent of their budget was taken up by staff salary, the failure to use such resources in a strategic manner is of concern. Certainly this is the view held by the heads of HR who believe, as does Schuler (1989), that an increase in status for the HR function will facilitate the link between HR and the organisation's strategic business goals. The heads of HR recognise, as do Bevan and Thompson (1992) that through this elevation, HR will at last be able to leave behind its reactive functionalist (traditional personnel) past and move towards a more proactive strategic facilitator model.

In some ways, the heads of HR and managers conceived that the commercialisation of local government and contract culture of C.C.T, with associated decentralisation of the HR function, may have assisted this transition. The adoption of a strategic role, by the HR function in the centre, rather than an operational one, did change the nature of the customer/client relationship of the HR function. Those budget-holding managers who bought in HR services from central units, or operated on service-level agreements, became the key customers of the HR function, rather than the authorities employees (Amstrong, 1992). The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in its pursuit of professional status for the occupation has itself sought to ensure strategic involvement has become enshrined in its qualification structure. The Standards Lead Body Model of personnel management includes strategic involvement in their core units and in their key statement of purpose for personnel (P.S.L.B, 1993). This visibility in itself can have a powerful influence over the aspirations of C.I.P.D members and those undergoing the qualifications process. However, Gibb (1995)

argues convincingly that this does not mean that this is an accurate picture of what practitioners actually do, but a consequence of the C.I.P.D's stakeholder role in the P.S.L.B process, and perhaps the desire to reflect their own perceived level of importance.

Clearly, for the majority of heads of HR interviewed involvement in strategy is of primary importance, with all of those asked to define the strategic role describing it in terms of:

The engine room of the authority, driving through change and moving the organisation forward (Head of HR – District Council)

The level of strategic involvement appeared to be an issue of both professional and personal significance to the interview respondents, with a large minority questioning the ability of HR to perform a dual role. Firstly, the advisory role of HR as a service to managers. Secondly, the HR function's role as leader in change management and identifying the values and mission of the organisation.

10.4 Influences on Strategic Involvement - Chief Officer Group Membership

For some time, the status of the head of HR person, in terms of whether or not they are a member of the Chief Officer Group (C.O.G) or Strategic Management Team (S.M.T), has been identified as one of the major influences on the HR functions involvement in strategy. C.O.G or S.M.T membership is seen by all of those interviewed as important as it enables the head of HR to be in a position where he or she can be involved in strategy development at the outset. The heads of HR interviewed agree with Sisson (1995), who argues that HR should be involved in key decisions to ensure difficult HR issues are dealt with appropriately at the start of any planning exercise. Such was the perceived importance of S.M.T membership, that it

was almost taken for a proxy for strategic involvement. Access to the SMT cannot be taken for granted though.

Millward et al. (1992) found that in 69 per cent of establishments the HR function was represented on the senior management group. Brewster and Smith (1990) found 63 per cent of corporate HR functions were represented on the main senior management group, and Poole and Jenkins (1996) report that two-thirds of their respondents stated that the most head of HR was on the senior management group, or top policy committee. Purcell (1995) found declining HR representation on the senior management team in his nine longitudinal case studies. In this research, board membership reaches 65 per cent as shown in Table 10.1, which suggests two-thirds of organisations have the HR function represented on the senior management group, with some fluctuation in that figure.

TABLE 10.1

Is the Human Resource function represented at Chief Officers Management Team (Board Level) in your organisation? (%)

37	65	No	35
Yes	03	110	33
1	1	i i	1
1			
		·	

With some notable exceptions, most local authorities at county council, unitary or metropolitan level employ a HR director or equivalent post.

There are a number of cases where the HR director is not a member of the Chief Officer's Group in these authorities, and at district level, but he or she occupies a position slightly below chief officer and attends C.O.G meetings as and when required. At county and equivalent level HR directors rarely have responsibility for other functions, but it is the

entra i la la 180<mark>0 de 2000 de</mark>

1.35 14.75.83

uanalie (a. omienigo il teannile). Più tri teoria en montre e parcipali di argentina de la constitue de grandi Vidi ti tra estrettino aggino tri esco

THE MENT OF A STORY OF

A CONTROL OF CONTROL OF CONTROL OF SERVICES AND SERVICES AND CONTROL OF CONTR

case that in large districts or County Councils reduced in size because of Local Government Review (L.G.R), the HR post often does carry additional responsibilities. While district councils do have HR directors, their involvement with the management team is often limited. It seems that the smaller the authority, the less often a senior HR post either exists or if it does exist, does it have a strategic focus. Heads of HR at the lowest district council level have a very hands-on role and are often skilled in another discipline than HR.

Depending upon individual circumstances and changing political control, a small number of establishments were identified where the most senior HR person had been a senior management team member, but when they left the new appointee to head the HR function was at a lower level.

The heads of HR identified a key point in the factors influencing S.M.T membership and the importance of the HR function, a point noted by Brewster and Bournois (1991) that a close personal working relationship with the chief executive, aided the advance of HR. However, those interviewed pointed out that the relationship was often pragmatic and functional, factors which, as Tyson (1995) concluded, did not guarantee that a strategic approach to HR was adopted.

In part this lack of support for a strategic approach to HR issues is compensated for by evidence of a commitment to people issues in local authorities were HR is represented in the management team.

10.5 The Nature of Strategic Involvement for Line Managers

So far we have considered to what extent heads of HR in local government are involved in HR strategy and what form that strategy takes. But, the development of strategy requires the participation of line managers and HR specialists jointly if it is

going to be successful. Martell and Carroll (1995) found that line managers play a role in HR policy making in partnership with HR specialists. This finding was contradicted by that of Towers Perrin (1991) who reported that HR strategy was predominantly defined by HR department's (39 per cent) rather than shared with the line (28 per cent).

TABLE 10.2

Do you have a role in the development of your organisations Human Resource

Strategy Yes or No? (%)

Yes	57.4	No	42.6
			ļ

The findings in this study, supported by the interviewees from HR and line management, indicate that managers do have a substantial input to HR strategy, almost exclusively in those authorities with HR or integrated business and HR strategies. In many district authorities the HR function is still seen as being isolationist, operating from a distance, and often trying to impose its views on the organisation without any consultation on business issues (Nkomo, 1984). Returning to TABLE 10.2 there is a clear indication from these results that HR strategy is, at least in places, codetermined with the line rather than being the province solely of the HR function. The interviews provided us with many illustrations of how this works in practice. On an issue basis many HR interviewees reported that line colleagues were involved from the outset in discussing HR policy/strategy decisions, in order to incorporate their critical input. Other councils had formed cross-functional semipermanent advisory groups where key HR issues could be debated. In other councils the process was less formalised and less focused. In these cases senior personnel staff would use political and campaigning skills on a continuous basis with senior and line

managers to develop a joint understanding of the HR strategy that was needed to be developed, anticipating that this process would take years rather than months. As one HR director commented:

Getting people on board, and getting them to take HR seriously as a front-line issue is difficult. For years managers at all levels have spent seventy per cent of the budget on staff withour considering what to do with them. Seeing the wider picture is impossible for many managers who just seem to want nothing to do with managing staff at an operational or a strategic level (Head of HR – London Borough)

In another council the head of HR reinforced this message:

Because we were getting nowhere with a joint approach to the HR strategy a project was undertaken, involving consultants and an internal cross-functional team. After 18 months working on an overall strategy for the council the consultants gave us a strategy, which the internal group were unable to give us. The sticking point was the delegation of budgets and powers on HR issues, managers not wanting corporate prescription, but wanting the money and HR staff (Head of HR – District Council)

Although, clearly, the heads of HR know that strategies that are jointly developed across functions are more likely to integrate HR and business issues, achieving this objective has proven far from easy. While evidence of a changing approach towards strategy development generally exists, and a realisation of the need for integration rather than functional separateness, exists, those interviewed are concerned that the HR function is not always seen as the integrating factor:

Often integration arises from a corporate communication, strategy or policy-making unit, with these different functions vying for control of the strategy production process, developing policies or strategies in each others areas of expertise, to demonstrate control Where evidence exists of HR having the opportunity to be an integrating factor the Head of HR is more often given the role of co-ordinator of the organisation's strategy

(Head of HR - District Council)

In the next section the mechanisms used by the Heads of HR to involve line managers are discussed.

and so that the control of the control of the consecutive beautiful and accommodate of the consecutive Fig. 40.4 in the second to the base, the West the medical engineering stage and and

Åvarskar samt og til

in server dan in traver in the contraction of the contraction of the server in the server of the server of the The fifth that the first the first section will be a likely becomes which also a first and the skill that it is the certain of a supposition date as where its certain good HART I A SECTION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE SECTION OF 医异性性 医结肠 经分别 经工资证 医大胆 计连续 医皮肤病性

al and a straight of the series and a series of the series

er en de les de la Francisco de la figura de la estada en la figura de la composição de la composição de la fi and the party of the fill of the still the state of the and the second of the control of the second of the control of the control of the control of the control of the of the same for the second of the second of the same o The second of th The Market Number of the Control was a control with the Market Number of the Control of the Cont

a make develope bijari pri great nativa pojaki in da alike desigi in da and the state of the companies of the companies of the period of the state of the s gradical services and the services and the services and the services are services are services and the services are services the consistency of many control of the first of the control of the ting all of the last field of the last of the particular of the particular and the second of the sec Charles agree to the contract of the

THE PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF TH was a new top the rate of the control of the control of the first of the control of in and great consider the contract of the configurations of the contract of th interior de glaborar de seglio graves de la la recipio propieta completa de la la completa de la la recipio de destribility of ADA (Arabit

un tradicione de la francia de Malaca de Calabara, la compata fina de la compata de la compata de la compata d

10.6 Involving Line Managers in Strategy

The basic tactic developed by the heads of HR is to develop strategy in a cross functional way, involving all levels of the organisation. The use of multi-disciplinary working parties involving representatives from a range of departments and of differing levels, with a remit to discuss the design, content and implementation of a strategy, was selected by the heads of HR as the most often adopted approach. Examples of task teams or working parties preparing work on specific strategy areas, under the control of a steering group were given, by the interviewees. While labelled by the heads of HR as bureaucratic, not as productive as they might be, and often as non-strategic in their outcomes, they clearly met the requirement of the organisation in terms of encouraging input from managers into strategic planning in the organisation.

TABLE 10.3

Is the Human Resources Strategy formulated centrally, by managers with devolved responsibilities or elsewhere?

Centrally	40
Devolved	92
No Strategy	34

A number of heads of HR who chose to reply that they had no formal written strategy, had interpreted the question as meaning the involvement of managers in the shaping of HR policies. In order to stem the criticism of business unit managers about the cost of central or corporate HR as an overhead on service departments, many heads of HR had taken steps to market HR services to managers. These measures, taken during the days of internal markets, devolved budgeting and preparation for white collar C.C.T, took the form of involvement and participation strategies, creating a forum for debate

on HR issues. Such fora are still in existence and for many heads of HR this involvement constitutes an HR strategy explaining the disparity between Table 10.0 and Table 10.3. This explanation also applies, in a more rigid way, to the high numbers of respondents claiming line management involvement in the production of the HR strategy. The less pragmatic reasons given for this involvement extend to change management issues in which heads of HR have organised special committees. These committees involve line managers not so much for the purpose of marketing the central HR unit, but more for reasons of consultation with managers prior to embarking on major change programmes. Once set up, these committees are consulted on HR policies, and their commitment to the policies and participation in their implementation sought. The objective of this exercise is to assist central HR in achieving greater control over the final use and operation of the policy. The group who formulated the HR strategy centrally without consulting managers are, perhaps surprisingly, the largest authorities. These councils almost uniformly explain that the strategy is set by senior management, more often than not after committee approval, and is set to meet legislative, budgetary and political objectives upon which most managers would have no relevant input.

It becomes clear on analysis that there are different types of strategy with different meanings in different authorities. Although the L.G.M.B, C.I.P.D, Audit Commission amongst others have demonstrated the use and form of HR strategies, it is apparent that authorities have produced corporate, operational and functional strategies, perhaps without fully appreciating the difference, which they feel meet their authorities needs. The corporate strategies produced by the county level authorities are more often linked to business planning and reveal a hard H.R.M perspective but including aspirations towards a committed, motivated and well trained workforce.

Other authorities at the same level or lower seem to format their strategy document, where there is one, along the lines of a functional shopping list for managers buying services from the central and/or decentralised HR unit(s). Many of the larger district councils seem to have opted for an operational strategy involving more practical and pragmatic plans to tackle particular elements of HR or basic personnel administration which are causing distortions in service provision. Such strategies seem to be aimed at achieving an overall approach to specific issues, for example sickness absence.

10.7 Impact of the External Environment on HR Strategy

The interviews revealed that not only is the content of HR strategy driven by the business and reactive, but the extent to which the personnel function was involved in strategy was also heavily influenced by the circumstances facing the business. Six of the thirty interviewees explicitly expressed a view that the current role and importance of the function (and this included specifically their involvement in strategy) was affected by the business environment. The impact of this was in all cases that the development of strategy had become more centralised as it became more important and that managers as a consequence were less involved. A head of HR commented that:

Where changes in legislation threaten an area of the organisation and major change is required, the central departments, the corporate centre seems to cut itself adrift from the rest. The L.E.A is struggling, as is Social Services, yet at this crucial time for their service delivery, strategic planning seems frozen to their plight rather than being pro-active in tackling the problems they face (Head of HR – Unitary Authority)

The director of personnel in a county council argued against this view and stated that HR at authority level was of increasing importance as a result of two factors. First, that a less centralised industrial relations structure at national level has provided councils with greater freedom to be pro-active and independent of action; secondly,

the influence of senior employees appointed from the private sector who had a greater expectation of the role that the HR function should play. Other interviewees raising the same issue, commented on how changes being currently experienced were bringing HR issues to the fore and hence the central HR function, with its strategic emphsis, was now seen as key to change within the organisation.

10.8 Conclusion

The interviews with the heads of HR revealed that HR practitioners were wholehearted in working together with the line rather than apart from it. This reassuring finding reflects a change of stance away from the imposition of functional best practice towards co-determination of the most appropriate way forward on HR strategy for the business. Functional best practice is still in the thoughts of all the Heads of HR who still recognise the proprietary role of HR in local government regardless of whether their careers have been in the private or public sector. In one sense this limits the freedom of the function to provide a distinctive perspective, but in another sense it is more likely that their efforts will be translated into business functioning which reflects the very real restraints on local government. In the previous chapter we saw how, in a decentralised environment, department managers would tailor or avoid the business level HR strategy and policy guidelines if it did not fit with their immediate business need. Partly this was because they felt they had no ownership of the original strategy or policy and not been consulted or involved in the development process. This appears to be an issue that most heads of HR are engaging and responding to, getting managers on-board at the early planning stage. Perhaps, the experience of line managers not using corporate policy has pressured the heads of HR into this new approach, which as Storey (1992) identified, has the changed the role of HR practitioners. Undoubtedly, though the business imperative and the perspective of the chief executive has also driven the extent to which HR practitioners are involved in HR strategy production. Circumstances have provided a window of opportunity for the HR function to make a greater contribution to local government through its understanding at a strategic level of the issues involved in H.R.M. In summary, the involvement of the personnel function in HR strategy has increased, and this increase has been influenced by the business imperative, critical skills of the heads of HR and the perspective of the chief executive and management team in individual authorities. Heads of HR and their practitioner staff are increasingly being viewed as partners with managers in the area of strategy development. However, there were indications in the research that if business circumstances changed the role of personnel would be reconsidered. Strategic HR involvement is an optional extra rather than being seen as a basic minimum, though, which suggests that the increasing involvement of the HR function in HR strategy is more about business need and less about changing the status of the function itself.

Chapter Eleven

Line Management and Human Resource Specialists

11.0 Introduction

The picture drawn throughout the last three chapters has been one of conflict between the HR function and line managers. This picture reflects much of the existing theory on the nature of HR-line work relations which has focused on the conflictual perspectives of the two parties (Dalton, 1959). The tension and ambiguity inherent in the HR role and HR's tendency to operate in a pragmatic and opportunistic manner (Sisson, 1989; Storey, 1992) have frequently been identified as factors in this conflict. More recently this conflict focus has not been as salient in the literature on the relationship between HR and line managers (Torrington and Hall, 1996; Poole and Jenkins, 1997). Not even in the coverage of the debate about the prospects for survival of the HR function in the context of the devolution and outsourcing of HR work (Cunningham and Hyman, 1999). This indicates, as our interviewees confirm, that conflict is now more sporadic and the line and HR seem to have reached a degree of understanding in most Authorities, on what HR issues are shared and which belong to one or other of the two parties. Despite this new understanding, few authorities have developed the management style labelled as 'organic' (Turnbull and Wass, 1998; see H.R.M model Chapter Seven), where few rigid distinctions between line and HR staff exist (Tyson and Fell, 1986). In the next section aspects of the HR and line relationship are examined as is the process by which this, apparent, new understanding has been achieved.

11.1 The HR Role in Local Government

The heads of HR interviewed for this study believe, in the majority, that the nature of public bureaucracy, with its centralised control, meant that line managers might share responsibility for various personnel tasks but rarely take full responsibility. The heads of HR had a new series of classifications put to them that reflected the changes in local government, personnel and HR roles and employment legislation throughout these thirty years and since. Those interviewed identified less well with the 1960s establishment officer, often a lawyer, who carried out basic administrative functions and interpreted the national scheme of terms and conditions of service, of the day. The majority could recognize much of their current job in the role played by the 1970s personnel manager, working in a centralised personnel department policing policy and procedure throughout their authority. The 1980s role of the HR Specialist, working in the decentralised, quasi-devolved contract culture advising customer managers on issues involving redundancy to T.U.P.E was seen as an ideal. The complexity and amount of employment law has grown at a time when change has caused an upheaval in the culture and structure of local government. As a result the role and skills of the personnel/HR profession have changed and grown to meet the needs of local government organisations. Line managers are now able to share more HR related tasks and have achieved greater expertise in their individual management skills. The next section examines how this progress was made.

11.2 Management Development in Local Government up to the Mid 1980s

The heads of HR agree that the development of management training schemes has been one of the most important areas they have contributed to in the modernisation of local government. The group discussed in interview and focus groups this gradually increasing focus on management training from a position where local councils, in the 1980s and 1990s experimented unsuccessfully with early training programmes. One head of HR recalled that:

Some authorities, in the early 1980s, introduced staff assessment systems linked to management training courses, while others tried succession planning to forecast future management needs. Those that developed internal training for senior managers, on-the-job coaching, or secondments to industry found that they were expensive and made little impact. Even the target-setting and management by objectives training was largely ineffectual (Head of HR – District Council)

All of the heads of HR agreed in identifying two main failings in this training; the inability of local authorities to place all relevant management activities in one integrated development programme (Fowler 1994) and; a failure to introduce a private sector model of management, but instead try to replicate the existing perception of management as an administrative function (see Chapter Three). It was not until the 1980s that local government examined a model of generic management alongside integrated development, including the use of a work-based learning environment. Willcocks and Harrow (1992) reported that even where the concept of organisational learning was talked about in local government, trainers tended to look for ideas and models of management externally. Meanwhile, the lessons to be learnt from local government management were lost due to a failure to communicate learning from individual managers internal experiences to their colleagues. The heads of HR suggest that this explains the introduction of private management styles into local government. They emphasise the importance of external styles which bring the new

and wider skills required of local government managers today. A few of the heads of HR point out that the management lessons arising within the organisation include cultural influences on management style arising from local government's response to central government initiatives. These influences are indications, according to those interviewed, of internal organisational factors which have produced variations in N.P.M such as the executive and market styles. The heads of HR went on to suggest that Best Value would produce a third variant, based on the development role of managers seeking improvements in quality through staff assessment and consultation. There is no doubt of the views of managers in local government, however, which are that their skill needs have changed, as the table below states.

TABLE 11.0

Do you think that there has been a change in the skills needed to be a local authority manager or not? (%)

Yes	73	No	27

To summarise the opinion of the majority of the heads of HR, they see management development as having evolved from; firstly, preparing people to be administrators to preparing them to become managers; and, secondly, moving from ad hoc management development towards a more integrated and formal processes. The development of managers in the 1990s in local government has been one of defining new public managerialism and increasingly seeking to produce generic managers.

11.3 Does Management Development Meet Staff and Organisational Needs?

The opinion of the heads of HR is that management development as it currently stands is appropriate and sufficient to allow managers to carry out everday staffing related

functions. The majority group note that within local authorities, at the moment, management development is treated very much as formal education and training, and rarely includes experiental learning, which might provide managers greater opportunity to develop their own style. The groups shared experience is that management development, where it occurs, is top down and centrally determined, underplaying middle managers' self-defined needs in place of ensuring a corporate and collective message, and management style, is put across to them. Those heads of HR and managers interviewed suggested that even in authorities with formal management development programmes staff found new skills were demanded of them, not taught on the programme and for which they had no organisational support.

TABLE 11.1

Is a broader range of management skills required in your management role than prior to decentralisation? (%)

	Yes	87.6	No	12.4
١				

There is no doubt that many of the additional skills arising in management roles have accompanied the devolution and decentralisation process. The competence route, led by the Management Charter Initiative (M.C.I), where competence can be defined as the demonstration of appropriate knowledge, ability and skill to do a particular task to a determined level, has been one approach adopted by local government to dealing with this issue. The heads of HR and managers interviewed agreed with the view of Talbot (1993) that generic management competencies are inadequate for local government managers.

By ignoring the local government context in which they work, the M.C.I activities of middle managers do not relate to what specific managers do within these

competencies. A more useful approach would be for each organisation to devise its own strategy, building on existing frameworks, but tailored to the activities and strategy of the specific context.

TABLE 11.2

Have you received training in human resource management policies and procedures within your organisation? (%)

ĺ	Yes	78.4	No	21.6

The heads of HR are aware that through the use of competencies a management development strategy can be made to underpin the cultural message and management style the corporate centre wishes to introduce. The interviewees suggest that, despite the fact that many local authorities are engaging in management development courses aimed at making managers more business-like, it is uncertain they are providing sufficient training to allow managers to fully adopt the H.R.M role. While, as the above results suggest, most managers feel they are given training in the H.R.M role, those interviewed feel that the absence of opportunities for practical training limits the effectiveness of devolving HR functions to line managers. Clearly, the reality of management development programmes is that their effectiveness is varied, with contradictions between the rhetoric and practice of the HR training. This has meant that development processes have often proved to be inadequate for either preparing managers as new managers, or in helping them manage the new demands they are experiencing.

As the heads of HR comment, there are examples of contradictions in development between the espoused values of the organisation and what managers experience, especially around the lack of career progression for managers. Management development can suggest the possibility of advancement for staff which a failure to realise will cause a feeling of deep demotivation in staff.

The heads of HR are aware that in most local authorities management development is inadequate for preparing middle managers to meet the new managerialist challenges that result from their jobs, is not part of an integrated on-going management development programme, nor do they encourage managers to learn how to learn from experiences drawn from their work context.

11.4 The HR Management Role in Action

The heads of HR criticised the overall inability of many managers to operate across many areas of HR policy and practice. This had, they believed, delayed the development of central HR in achieving strategic status, as well as preventing wider devolution. In detail though, those interviewed agreed with Marsh and Gillies (1983) that day-to-day HR and industrial relations activities inevitably lie with line managers and subordinate supervisors. The majority of heads of HR felt that such managers would never have more than modest competence in HR, a view reflected by many of the line managers themselves, but who make the point that they retain the authority for their staff. Between them the heads of HR and managers seem to reach common ground in that managers are willing to accept the advice of HR specialists, but refuse to be subject to their direction, as managers accept HR as part of their job. This acceptance is situational, as the heads of HR indicated, and Leicester (1989) found in his research, line managers do fail to take responsibility for areas where interpersonal skills, conflict resolution or other people management skills used in confrontation or change situations are required.

TABLE 11.3

Have you been required to adopt a more flexible approach to working methods and hours of work for your staff? (%)

Yes	76.2	No	23.8

The question posed above sought to elicit managers responses to their role in change management work. In the commercial sector the HR involvement of managers has been recorded by such as Edwards' (1987) study of factory managers. In local government, however, the role of the line manager as the delivery mechanism for new industrial/employee relations is less clear. The managers interviewed agree with McGovern et al. (1997) that line managers are more assertive due to the existence of organisational cultures in local government that support greater autonomy and discretion for managers. Certainly the reports of the survey and interviews support this premise and confirm the evidence of line manager involvement in HR supplied by Legge (I.R.S, 1995).

TABLE 11.4

Have you needed to develop a broader range of human resource management

knowledge and skills than prior to decentralisation? (%)

ĺ	Yes	74.7	No	25.3

The results shown above lead on from the points made above, in that managers have noted that the decentralisation process in their authority has had an influence on their management skills. This conclusion is drawn from their experience of working with

HR staff in their own department. They recognise that they have needed to widen their own expertise, often on an experiental basis, to enable them to: maintain control over local HR; to understand the full implications of the advice they are given, and how to implement it. One head of HR comments:

This should not be surprising in that decentralisation may be viewed as a step on the road to full devolution. Initially HR directs at local level aspects of basic personnel work. After that, and incrementally other aspects of the central function are fed down to the decentralised function. As each aspect of HR is fed down, line managers take from the decentralised unit those aspects in which they have been trained and had experience of operating (Director of HR – District Council)

This quotation suggests that the opportunity is available for line managers to increase their role and status under devolved management and H.R.M and recreate the middle-level line manager role in the form of a business manager, who is both subject to and more involved in the new practices of people management.

The heads of HR concede that the autonomy of this new role, especially if it includes budget management, will, as Storey (1992) indicates, be of concern to those at senior management level. The view of the heads of HR is that their peers would wish to have a more active role for line and general managers in deciding HR policy direction, but for such arrangements to be limited, with central HR controlling the function, in lieu of genuine cultural control.

TABLE 11.5

Do you work directly with Trades Union representatives yourself? (%)

	Vec	72	No	1 2
1	1 03	12	140	10
1				
1		1	l	

Many line managers have progressed so far as to be comfortable with local union representatives in jointly dealing with HR issues that arise. The heads of HR suggest that this is mostly informal discussions on items of little contentiousness between

managers who cannot, procedurally make a final decision, and a part-time union representative employee with little remit to argue. Certainly, the heads of HR react strongly to any idea that managers have made any in-roads into traditional industrial relations areas. The managers interviewed contend that the work environment of local government is unstable with increasing amounts of employee relations issues arising. These consist of sickness absence, stress, discipline, grievance, performance change and redundancy issues arising from a continually changing work environment, and in their opinion, a continually fragmenting one. One of their number represents their view by saying:

Meeting with the local steward at least ensures that we keep in touch with the problems in-hand and those developing. Often there are things we can do at a local level, infomally, with the local reps support that will prevent and avoid the need to use formal procedure. The right word at the right time and matters can be dealt with without the formality and defensiveness that HR involvement brings

(Line Managers – District Council)

At this level the heads of HR had little cause for comment on the activities of line managers, although the shadow of employment law, and their responsibilities as guardians of the authorities propriety were referred to often. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that line managers accept these new responsibilities dealing with local union representatives, overall with some ease.

11.5 HR-Line Work Relations: The Current Context

All of those interviewed for this research stressed the evidence of consensual relations between HR and line managers. The overall feeling of all these findings is that there is, clearly, an increased HR role for line managers and that the majority of managers are optimistic about this change with little evidence or expectation of tension between the two parties (White and Hutchinson, 1996).

One head of HR states that:

Central HR, especially since the customer-care and C.C.T ethos arrived in the mid 1980s has become used to being a commercial outfit advising and supporting managers rather than controlling their activities. The influx of new, young I.P.D staff in the last fifteen years has helped with this process, as has the I.P.D's commercial sector ethos that the advisory, support service role is universally applicable in the relationship with managers. This means we have the right attitude to managers as partners and customers (Director of HR – County Council)

The overall results of this research show the high proportion of shared areas in local government HR that fits well within the findings of other recent research which indicates a looser arrangement in other sectors (Torrington and Hall, 1996) or a greater degree of sharing of responsibilities (Poole and Jenkins, 1997). The interviews confirm that the consensual approach produces a general trend towards increasing line manager involvement in HR work, as was noted in Cunningham and Hyman's (1995) study.

A director of HR at district level noted that:

While the future of HR staff remains generally uncertain, general predictions can be made. Line managers will absorb more HR expertise and take over more traditional personnel functions. This means that HR staff will have to specialise, which in local government means going strategic, or they will have to concentrate on developing their expertise in a specific functional area (Director of HR – District Council)

Another senior HR professional saw that line managers welcomed change but noted that:

Managers are just that, until they perceive people as the most important resource, ahead of money, estate and equipment, they will not do more than work on the periphery of HR. While the appearance is of greater line involvement the reality is that this is still at the fringe. Unless you remove all HR staff, preventing managers from pushing work back to them, they will never accept the full HR role, but pick and choose the areas they wish to accept (Head of HR – District Council)

Both heads of HR and managers accept that different departments and managers varied as to how receptive they were to accepting HR tasks and initiatives. They also understood that line managers showed a degree of resistance to empowerment initiatives, for example, that might threaten their own position. As such, consensual arrangements broke down when HR initiatives threatened their own position. With HR staff taking on what the I.R.S (1995) called an 'internal consultancy' where traditional HR activities have been devolved to line managers or decentralised, such resistance could mean that many initiatives are stalled from inception.

This situation may prove problematic, since there are sound reasons why organisations have devolved or decentralised responsibility for HR. As the I.R.S (1996) found half its respondents had devolved or decentralised responsibility in the last two years the main reasons being to:

FIGURE 11.0 Reasons for Devolution and/or Decentralisation

1	Increase local management accountability	
2	Improve the speed of decision-making	
3	Introduce policies more appropriate to the locality	
4	Cut costs	

Perhaps the concerns of the heads of HR that managers may block HR policy unfavourable to their position, is more a reflection of the concerns of HR staff as the devolution of HR work to line managers decreases their professional power base (Oswick and Grant, 1996). Such concerns do not seem plausible to Poole and Jenkins (1997) who examined the extent of line management responsibility for HR practices, and concluded that line managers were more responsible than assumed. McGovern et al's (1997) study found line managers can be reluctant in taking on HR responsibilities, viewing them as an illegitimate part of their job:

No line managers wants to be involved in consultation. Most would like to deal with industrial relations issues by memo or letter but not face-to-face. The

reason managers give for this, in the main, is a lack of knowledge and experience

(Director of HR – County Council)

The current and continuing agenda for HR and line managers is how the prospects for devolution to the line might occur considering the short-term business pressures on managers, and their poor technical skills (McGovern et al., 1997). In this situation the line managers directly involved in HR activities will be subservient to the specialist HR function. The findings to their research produced key issues such as consistency of implementation of policy, quality of practice by line managers, limited reinforcement institutionally of HR practices, short-term managerial approaches which very closely echo the concerns of those interviewed for this research McGovern et al. (1997).

The heads of HR point out that shared working arrangements not only liberate the HR Specialist to work strategically but also legitimise the role of HR in pursuit of the bottom line. In this respect their views are confirmed by Gennard and Kelly (1997) who report the existence of joint working arrangements between HR and other directors at director level, and between line and personnel managers, in their study. This partnership resulted in their depiction of a business driven partnership to improve performance deriving from a number of factors that make HR directors more influential (Kelly and Gennard, 1998).

So it is in the interest of all parties to work together in partnership on HR issues at all levels. Other studies, have, however, found clear barriers remaining to the adoption of general joint arrangements within organisations due to, as stated above, empowerment initiatives and managerial responses to them (Denham et al., 1997). General issues of line managers acceptance of their responsibility for HR (Thornhill and Saunders, 1998), and issues of functional flexibility among HR managers and managers

concerns over HR wanting to replace them and become general managers, also arise (see Clarke, 1998). These issues of conflict and consensus are discussed below.

11.6 Conflictual Relations Between HR and the Line

The heads of HR and managers can give examples of situations when there has been conflict between the line and HR function over both the method and authority used in HR work. The heads of HR believed, as Strauss and Sayles (1960) stated, that HR specialists were in as powerful a position as the council's solicitors or accountants in ensuring there advice that is almost impossible to ignore, ensuring they as the 'expert' had the last word (Eisenstat, 1996). While hardly a situation to endear HR to managers, this raises questions about organisational power, especially during the C.C.T era, which raises the question as to how HR played the role of both adviser and executive. The heads of HR talk about the negotiated order of HR issues during C.C.T when line managers were supposedly in control of 'buying in' HR services from the centre, yet equally were expected to follow HR instructions. Some authorities removed central HR from the contracting arrangements, maintaining the unit as; strategy only; a pure corporate policeman; an advisory unit unable to trade and so free from criticism.

Conflict also arose as the result of the HR function being an executive arm of the chief executive and senior management (Tyson and Fell, 1986). The heads of HR presented the local government answer to a problem raised in the study by Storey (1992) who noted that relations between HR and the line were eased when HR policies were embraced by the appropriate level of senior manager (Storey, 1992). The heads of HR believed that the client manager and under them the contractor unit manager for each area under C.C.T should have responsibility for H.R.M within that

area, resolving role conflict and ambiguity in determining the responsibility for H.R.M/HR policy of each level of manager (Kahn et al, 1964). With the softening of the C.C.T split the situation appears in most authorities to have returned to a more fluid state with concerns from both HR and the line over roles and responsibilities (Allen, 1991; Clark, 1993). Although the general view from both Heads of HR and line managers was that the post-C.C.T HR-line set-up produced satisfactory work relations, conflicts were apparent on a number of issues.

From the line, one manager questioned the corporate coordination role of staff development in the central HR unit at a time when Best Value was placing greater responsibility on line managers. He stated that:

The continual tussle is between corporate control of systems to ensure equity, equality comparability and fairness, our role as line managers is just to get the job done, and ensure staff have the necessary training to fulfill our business objectives

(Line Manager – County Council)

To this end the heads of HR and managers agree that too often new systems introduced by HR would be too difficult, too time-consuming, or be targeted at achieving a result different from that required by line managers. In this respect the role of decentralised HR comes of greater importance, since a HR presence had appeared in departments or directorates, the us and them barrier had mostly disappeared and often local HR acted as a conduit for the communication of ideas. Much of the success of this depended on the relationship between HR and line at senior manager level and the degree of formality within the organisation, and degree of central control.

11.7 Consensual Relations Between HR and the Line

The favoured approach of the heads of HR to the line is, of course, one of partnership. Those interviewed found, as did Tyson and Fell (1986) that, negotiating with managers their requirements of the HR function, has produced an opportunity for a dialogue. This exchange has been found to create a feeling of partnership with senior line managers, which has allowed them to feel in control of exercises which have to produce the changes they require. The heads of HR suggest that this is more often the relationship in smaller authorities, and those under Labour control, due to the more settled political environment and emphasis on non-conflictual approaches to working. As such these relationships, which Storey (1992) described as a 'full-team member' is very exceptional, although this approach remains a prominent theme of the North American literature (Tomlinson, 1993; Eisenstat, 1996).

The heads of HR suggest that in their experience, building such a partnership was not easy and could only come about by creating a consensus on corporate HR agendas across all managers. This as discussed in Chapter Nine, is not easy, and requires an orchestrated approach across operating units on how best to address the HR agenda (Schuler and Huselid, 1997). The heads of HR interviewed raise the issue of interchangability, with HR professionals acting as strategic business partners with other senior line managers, a possibility raised by Ulrich (1997). Just as Ulrich (1997) sees HR as the responsibility of a community whose membership and balance can vary between HR and line managers, the overriding imperative is that: line managers or HR professionals do not act in isolation from each other. In the new decentralised and devolved structures of local government line managers should bring authority, power, and sponsorship to the HR community, just as HR professionals bring technical expertise (Ulrich, 1997, pp. 236-7). But, as such arguments depend, as

chapter seven debated, on whether decentralisation and devolution of 'authority, power, and sponsorship' have actually occurred in the local government context.

Throughout these last five chapters, and in Chapter Three, the lesson is repeated that H.R.M can only succeed in local government if HR and line managers adopt a collaborative style (Bleeke and Ernst, 1994). This as those interviewed believe, is a situation which cannot exist unless both parties subscribe to it, and put the conflict of the past behind them. Those interviewed believed that if central and decentralised HR can achieve the business manager status alongside the operational professional and finance managers giving HR advice and aimed at meeting managers business targets they will achieve a recognition denied them before. As one Head of HR stated:

...the reason HR works well in some directorates is because everybody respected each other's professionalism, because HR and line had been working together, it meant that HR were viewed as a valuable and integral part of the team

(Head of HR – District Council)

The possibility of partnership may mean that in time the skills of all but the most specialist HR professional will transfer to line managers. When this occurs, if it occurs, the idea of complete devolution of HR responsibilities to the line, part of the ideal-type HRM model may finally come about in local government.

11.8 Conclusion

The heads of HR concluded that both HR and line managers exercise their power, expertise and strategic positions in the organisation to engage in both conflictual and consensual work relations. There is, in their opinion, an ongoing and healthy dialogue going on between HR Specialists and managers on a day-to-day basis, covering when and how shared work issues should be split between them. What is surprising is that consensual relations emerged strongly, seeming to contain elements of team-working

and reciprocal exchange of information. This was achieved through managers working together in cross-functional work groups, with their rationale seeming to be a need to both resolve organisational issues and to ensure their own survival. Both HR and line management's interest in partnership emerged strongly, with the line using their expertise and knowledge on operational work, and HR having aligned themselves with the concerns and targets of managers, their own HR expertise. There is no doubt that, putting the propriety role to one side, HR specialists have developed the ability to see the managers case and shape their advice and support to achieve an acceptable outcome. Part of this experience is that employment in local government has become generally more intense and less secure, as a result of the emphasis on rule and regulation becoming less central to HR processes (see Chapter Six). Management roles tend to be broader with control over decentralised HR and greater devolved HR responsibilities. New skills, not simply professional competence, are now demanded of managers, such as the abilities to control, if not to manage staff budgets and information; to be politically astute; to be innovative within parameters; to manage a variety of hierarchical and lateral relationships; and to manage projects and contracts as well as ongoing services. Management development in local government, in response to the growing skill needs of managers, has changed to form two objectives. Firstly, the development of management training from preparing people to be administrators to preparing them to be managers. Secondly, management development has mirrored that more generally in Britain, with the elevation of management skills above professional specialism. The earlier discussion on the inadequacy of generic M.C.I competencies, illustrated the degree to which the management activities of local government middle manager roles are distinctive. As such local authorities need to take a more integrated approach to management

development, as a starting point towards creating a learning organisation approach to continuous skills development. Furthermore, whilst authorities may have a vision and policy initiatives for the future, these are not always translated into action and are not always seen by managers as helping them meet the increasing demands of their jobs. To the extent that authorities have devolved personnel activities to line managers and are attempting to tailor staff development to strategic organisational objectives, there is evidence of a new approach to H.R.M, as distinct from the personnel management of the past.

Chapter Twelve

Conclusion to the Thesis – H.R.M in Local Government

12.0 Introduction

The preceding chapters confirmed the presence of some aspects of H.R.M in local government. The characteristics that define local government H.R.M have also been identified in the descriptive model discussed in Chapter Six. The conclusion of this study is that there is more rhetoric about the form of H.R.M in local government than reality. H.R.M similar to the ideal-types described in Chapter Two is more likely to operate in larger councils, which suggests that the size and complexity of the organisation contributes to the presence of more of the characteristics of H.R.M in the style of the people management it uses. Even so, H.R.M in local government is at best a hybrid between traditional Personnel Management and H.R.M.

The reasons for this are explained in the preceding five chapters. Essentially, though, despite the issue of size, it is the absence of truly devolved management responsibility, the poor calibre of line management training, and the undeveloped integration of HR with organisational strategic objectives that explain the inability of local government to fully implement H.R.M. Essentially, the line management issues will never be dealt with successfully until the main differences between H.R.M and N.P.M are reconciled.

These main differences between H.R.M and N.P.M are:

FIGURE 12.0

H.R.M	N.P.M
Strategic focus (in hard model) long-term planning	Pragmatic and short-term focus
Commitment oriented (in soft model) seeking performance through staff commitment	Work intensification and performance management seeking performance through target setting
No conflict, shared vision with staff and unions, management through nurturing and leadership	Conflict with staff and unions and coercive/punitive approach to management
Staff as assets worth investment and development	Staff as assets whose cost needs to be minimalised or outsourced

Local political control has also contributed to this inability, as elected members have maintained a grip on personnel policies at the corporate centre in many authorities, a grip likely to tighten under the modernisation agenda of the Labour Government. This has meant that there has been the continuation of the model employer concept in some form, in some authorities, quite often through commitment to equal opportunities, family friendly policies, consultative practices and union recognition will continue. This 'model employer' concept is itself under fire, however, from the extreme view of N.P.M, which in some authorities is influenced by a political agenda that still pursues the enabling authority concept and its associated programme of outsourcing services. Elected members still continue to exert a strong influence over the management of people and this means that the employment policies of councils reflect, though not always, the political perspectives of those members. Indeed, it is the continuing involvement of members in the details of decisions over staff numbers, pay grades and individual posts below chief officer level which the Audit Commission viewed as problematic (1995).

This view is by no means universal with both Labour, Liberal Democrat and

Conservative councils seeking to reduce costs through outsourcing central administrative and direct service departments alike to a range of commercial providers. Such activities suggest that, despite the rhetoric of shared vision and employee friendly policies common in local government recruitment and publicity literature, the style of H.R.M is strategic and hard in its view of staff as resources. The compulsory redundancies of the mid 1990s, required as part of the de-layering and restructuring exercises implemented in preparation for white-collar C.C.T, has meant that local authority senior managers and elected members were forced to accept a new reality in terms of what was a 'model employer'.

If the vision of the Conservative Governments of the 1980s and 1990s of an enabling role for councils had continued this would have led to services becoming increasingly impermanent, with contracts awarded for specified periods and no guarantee of renewal. Concepts such as job security, lifetime commitment to council-service and career development would no longer have been part of local government employment, or the traditional model employer role, as had been the case.

It might be thought that this threat to the traditional model may have ended when the Labour Government came to power in 1997 with its local government modernisation programme, Best Value and the establishment of new employment law rights for individuals and unions. However, despite these new initiatives the resurgence of local government personnel management in its traditional form has not appeared, despite the programme of recentralisation of HR in some authorities.

The reason for this is that control of public expenditure remains a high priority, whichever political party is in power, and this fact alone will be the key influence shaping H.R.M policies in local government for the foreseeable future.

Guest (1987) expressed the view that no one approach to H.R.M can be recommended

as 'best practice' in all circumstances. What is 'best' is contingent upon the particular circumstances. Even so, there has been a persistent failure amongst local government managers to take a long-term strategic view, to communicate effectively with employees, and systematically select, appraise, and reward employees in an integrated way. Indeed, managers in local government at all levels have failed under N.P.M to develop the new skills and make the break with past approaches to people management and traditional industrial relations systems required if progress towards H.R.M and improved performance are to be achieved.

12.1 H.R.M as a Function of Size

The survey results indicate that the characteristics used to identify the presence of H.R.M in local authorities are more often to be found in larger councils than smaller ones. county councils, metropolitan and London boroughs and unitary authorities are more likely to have some form of devolved or decentralised structure and an H.R Strategy.

All local authorities, but particularly the larger ones, have struggled in the past with the inability of central control or co-ordination to positively affect the quality of the services delivered to the local community. The multiple tiers of the bureaucratic hierarchy have long been held responsible for miscommunications, delay in service delivery, unresponsiveness to change and a lack of managerial accountability synonymous to local government. These problems have been at the centre of the debate about the effectiveness of bureaucratic structures throughout the last century and form much of the 'excellence' message. As such, providing managers working closer to the public with the resources to provide a service and making them responsible for its delivery seems the appropriate answer to the problem. This view is reinforced by the formality of the larger councils, the complexity and the scale of their

financial and human resources that suits a strategic and planned approach to H.R.M. The C.C.T split of larger organisations into business units of contractors and commissioning units of client officers ensures the formalisation of communication and encouraged the view of managers that staff are assets in a production process determined by a system of internal trading, service level agreement and competitive practice.

Larger councils find themselves better resourced and able to introduce aspects of H.R.M as recommended by the Audit Commission and other bodies (see Chapter Four). Managers of large departments and business units set within the complex organisational structure of large councils have operated within internal markets which have until recently used time-recording and work measurement as part of the contract culture associated with C.C.T and the neo-taylorism of N.P.M. Given these facts, it is unsurprising that the forms of N.P.M described in Chapter Three more closely reflected the hard variety of H.R.M in its view of employees as assets of varying value. In larger councils such managers were allowed greater freedom by reason of their distance from central control to follow the cultural lead set by N.P.M and C.C.T to intensify the workloads of their staff and pursue a bottom-line in terms of cost and turnover prescribed by the rules of C.C.T. Managers in larger councils who sought control over HR functions at a local level had the staffing resources available, due to economies of scale, to carry out basic functions and free themselves, to some extent, from the strictures placed on them by corporate H.R.

In smaller local authorities the trend was somewhat different. Corporate control remained stronger and the economies of scale did not favour the devolvement or decentralisation of H.R functions that were more cost effective if carried out by a central H.R Department. The influence of central H.R Departments at an operational

level remained very much the policing and regulatory function it had always been. However, without actually carrying out the H.R functions themselves the ability to police H.R processes and procedures became difficult. As Chapter Ten shows relationships between Direct Service Organisation Managers in all sizes of council were often particularly sour. The main complaint from the commercial wing of local authorities was that they did not receive value for money for the percentage of their budget clawed back to pay for the charges imposed on them by the central H.R department.

Smaller authorities found devolvement or decentralisation of H.R tasks too costly and inefficient especially where such a process would have resulted in the duplication of job roles and an associated increase in costs.

12.2 Local Government H.R.M as a Hybrid

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that H.R.M in local government is a hybrid. The descriptive model set out in Chapter Six indicates aspects of the ideal-type models described in Chapter Two mixed with elements of the traditional administrative model of people management described in Chapter Three. Local government is by its very nature different from the commercial sector. The restrictions placed on people management practice by the managerial accountability at each level of local council organisations, and the need to show probity and adherence to regulation, is present throughout the local government model of H.R.M. The national agreements which bind local councils to collective bargaining on pay and terms and conditions for the vast majority of its staff, similarly, provide restrictions on each authorities ability to pursue many of the aspects of the ideal-type H.R.M models. Clearly, the influence of central government initiatives which produced N.P.M have

sought to determine the nature of H.R.M across local government. C.C.T was a strategy aimed at removing local authority workers from the employment of their councils to that of private companies. This process, described in Chapters One, Three and Four, was intended to change, to some extent, the terms and conditions of employment in local government service for the majority of council employees. Best Value, like C.C.T, has been introduced with the objective of obtaining improved cost efficiencies and better quality of service provision with failing services being outsourced to the commercial sector or another public service provider. The contradiction is the new HR strategy discussed in Chapter One which reflect the aspirations of local government employers representative bodies and central government to encourage high standards of commitment and performance from employees through a soft H.R.M approach to how they are managed.

The message sent out to local government employees and their unions through the new HR strategy is at odds with the reality of Best Value and the possible outsourcing of services for which it provides.

H.R.M in local government, as in other organisations, as Chapter Two discussed, can operate at different levels and be different things depending on the particular pressures arising from the financial or political situation in which it finds itself. Outsourcing and redundancy may occur in one part of the organisation simultaneously with the development of policies aimed at encouraging employee development and commitment. The occurrences reported in the course of this research which reflect this duality are common in the perception of the heads of HR in local government.

The reason for this contradictory behaviour is explained by the heads of HR as the pragmatism and lack of planning which is endemic in local government. Local government cannot escape the restrictions that come with public service and the

requirement that large numbers of its staff adhere to national agreements on pay and terms and conditions of working and the requirements laid on it as a statutory body to exemplify best practice in the treatment of its staff.

12.3 Absence of Devolved Management

The effectiveness of devolved management within local government organisations differs. In those councils where budgetary responsibility for staffing has been fully devolved managers are unable to make decision independent of corporate regulation. The centralised system of job evaluation that large authorities maintain, together with complex systems for monitoring establishment costs, equal opportunities, fair recruitment and selection processes and procedures ensure that the corporate centre retains control over managers actions. The development of an audit culture based on financial regulation alongside those systems developed by corporate HR specialists to ensure continuity and consistency provide a degree of accountability and control designed to restrict the freedom of managers. While managers can and do bend the HR regulations they do so at their peril.

This culture of central control is further emphasised by the use of corporate mission statements, agreed published corporate, departmental and unit objectives and management development programmes all designed to ensure a common approach to the management of HR systems.

It is not that managers with devolved responsibility have no control over aspects of HR, clearly, there is an element of control over the soft non-conflictual areas of recruitment, training and appraisal. Managers seem not to want to have responsibility for areas of HR that might attract conflict, such as pay, grievance and discipline, while others grasp these areas with enthusiasm. The difference between these

managers is not just one of attitude but of training and experience.

The view expressed quite commonly in this research was that line managers feared to be held responsible for areas of HR that they felt should be under their control but which they believed they did not understand. The inability of training programmes to correct this attitude or provide this understanding was blamed very frequently on the operational workload of managers and the perceived low importance placed on HR issues at senior level in the council.

N.P.M is therefore governed by cost considerations in its use of H.R.M. Those benefits of H.R.M which local government managers see as effective and affordable have been adopted in many cases. However, managers in local authorities seem caught between a cost-control and directive-autocratic management style producing work intensification and reductions in the cost of staff training and pay and the H.R.M message of commitment, values and mission. Such tensions have produced the model shown in Chapter Six that describes H.RM in local government as a half-way house. This half-way house reflects the partial replacement of traditional personnel management by N.P.M and the partial adoption of both hard and soft models of H.R.M conditional on, and subject to, the size of the authority, its structure, political and management ethos and labour relations history. These variables govern key aspects of the transition from traditional personnel management to N.P.M and the degree of adoption of H.R.M through such processes as the degree of de-centralisation and/or devolution and the use of outsourcing.

12.4 Poor Line Management Training

Management development programmes have been in existence within local authorities as in-house training, or through colleges and universities for many years.

Despite the investment made by local government in developing and training line managers there remains a generally accepted view amongst heads of HR and managers that such training often fails.

The often repeated explanation for this failure is the perceived lack of relevance of what is taught about HR issues to the actual operational needs of line managers. The freedom to manage still seems interpreted by local authority managers as approval for the use of a macho or transactional approach to staff relation issues. Such attitudes still prevail in local government and are reinforced by structural and cultural aspects of what, essentially, are still male dominated hierarchical bureaucracies, despite the de-layering exercises of the 1980s and 1990s.

The guidance from the Department of the Environment and Transport (D.E.T.R, 1998) to local authority chief executives seeks to influence them to recognise the importance of a well-trained and motivated workforce and managers as essential for the delivery of high quality services. Local authorities seem to be actively encouraging quality standards such as 'Charter-Mark' and Investors in People which include the impact of training and development on organisational performance as part of their assessment criteria. It remains to be seen whether Best Value actually encourages local authorities to focus on learning and development for all staff and particularly managers or whether the attainment of the awards is a triumph of illusion over reality as is the case with H.R.M.

12.5 Underdevelopment of H.R.M Strategy and Poor Integration of H.R.M in Strategic Planning

There still exists amongst local government councillors and senior managers an inability to integrate HR strategy within strategic and business planning.

The reason for this inability lies in a lack of understanding of the role of HR in a developing strategy and an absence of experience and training in the relationship between organisational strategic planning and HR.

HR is still a prisoner of its past with a large minority of senior managers still viewing the function as an operational and subordinate role within local councils. It is understood by them that HR is no longer the welfare or establishment function of former years, however, resistance exists amongst senior managers to the notion of interference by HR in staffing issues within their areas of responsibility. The lack of understanding and ownership of HR issues has meant that HR based initiatives rarely arise from senior managers outside HR. Often members of the management team find discussions on HR issues to be of secondary importance to discussion on the deployment of other resources.

This view results in some strange reasons being given for discussing HR within overall strategy, such as the credibility of the head of HR, which was often quoted as the most important factor in ensuring the integration of HR into the organisational strategy. Only the influence of a chief executive promoting a HR perspective in discussions on strategy is deemed more important by the heads of HR. This fact indicates the distance that some authorities have to travel before HR is incorporated into overall strategy. The report of the International Labour Organisation (I.L.O, 2000) promoted by the Government to demonstrate the benefits that can be achieved by alignment of people management policies, practices and individual development and market strategy seems to have little impact on local authorities. The importance of the contribution made by employees, to the success of projects that push their organisations forward, and which improve processes and customer service is well known, but local government still struggles to allow its staff the freedom to contribute

12.6 Negative Influence on H.R.M of Political Control

The appointment of senior managers in local authorities has often been based on an understanding that they share the political beliefs and aspirations of the ruling party. As such, the strategic vision and mission statement issued to managers and staff through training and briefing meetings has involved the recipients in the assimilation of a political message about change. Managers claim not to understand the messages of soft H.R.M, or are resistant to the changes in management skills and attitudes required to bring about H.R.M, which explains in part the failure of management development programmes to implement organisational objectives when those objectives are contrary to those of the managers themselves.

12.7 Future Research

This study has provided an analysis and model of H.R.M in local government. This model is a hybrid of the ideal-type model of H.R.M. The areas of the local government model which differ most from the ideal-type model are described and discussed in Chapters Seven through to Eleven and finally in this chapter, the conclusion. Future research should concentrate on the impact on H.R.M in local government of Best Value, the Modernisation Agenda and the H.R strategy produced by the Employers Organisation for Local Government. The deeper reasons for the failure of local government management to implement H.R.M successfully would also benefit from further investigation.

These deeper reasons appear to lie in: the political influence on management practice in local government and the way in which the political complexion of the Government

of the day and the political party controlling the particular authority can influence or even determine the form of H.R.M; the failure of local government management development programmes to address the inability of managers to implement soft H.R.M approaches; the failure of local government to develop meaningful and integrated H.R.M strategies; and, the failure of local government to implement workable devolution and decentralisation programmes, genuinely transferring power and authority for H.R.M to line managers.

Postal Survey Questionnaire on H.R.M in Local Government

Appendix One Page One

How would you best describe your

Council?

District County Unitary

London or Metropolitan

Would you say your Council was?

Single-sited Multi-sited

Does your Council have a HRM or

Personnel Strategy?

Yes

Yes and linked to Corporate Plan

No

Would you describe the HR function

In your Council as?

Centralised

Decentralised/Devolved Combination of Both

Where does your Council employ

Its HR specialist staff?

Centrally
Divisionally
Departmentally
Combination
Not at all

How would you best describe your Councils

HR specialist staff (if applicable)?

Qualified by experience Professionally qualified (IPD)

Part qualified Non-qualified

Combination (of above)

Does your organisation send its Managers on Management

Training courses?

Rarely Yes No

Is the structure of your Council

best described as?

Centralised (rigid central control) Divisionalised (centralised/delegated

control)

Totally Devolved control

Is the formulation of HRM or

Personnel Strategy?

Centralise (no consultation with line

managers)

Devolved (in consultation with line

managers)

Not Applicable (no strategy)

What is the medium term Future for the HR function

In your Council?

Remain Centralised

Devolution Centralisation

Is the strategic HR/Personnel

Function in your Council performed

by?

Entirely HR specialists Entirely Line Managers Mainly HR specialists Mainly Line Managers

Combination

How "able" are your Councils Line managers in operating

HR/Personnel policies/ procedures

Extremely able Very able Adequate

Less than adequate

Combination

Appendix One Page Two

Is the HR/Personnel function represented at Strategic management level?	Is the HR/Personnel function directed at supporting the needs of the Council?
Yes	Yes
No	No
Do line managers have a say in determining Staffing levels in their departments?	Do line managers have involvement in setting Council strategic HR/Personnel objectives?
Yes	Yes
No	No

Which role, HR/Personnel or Line Manage	ment is Responsibl	e for the fol	lowing f	unctions:
(please "tick" the box where the majority	of the function take	es place)		
Function	HR/Personnel	Line	Other	Combination
	Specialist	Manager	Staff	
Recruitment and Selection of Staff		ļ		
Identifying Training Needs (group)				
Staff Development (individual)				
Staff Appraisal (individual)				
Staff Performance Review (group)				
Redundancy Consultation		_		
Sickness Absence Procedures				
Welfare Counselling				
Occupational Health Visits				
Health and Safety Advice				
Equal Opportunities Monitoring and				
Advice				
Grievance Handling				
Job Evaluation Assessments				
Consultation with Staff on Change				
Exercises				
Consultation with Unions on Change				
Design of HR/Personnel Policy				
Design of Change Exercises				
Introduction of Flexible Working				
Agreements				
Administration of the HR/Personnel				
Function				

Freehand Comments Area

Code Identification []

Semi-structured Interview Question Pro-forma - Heads of HR/Personnel

Appendix Two Page One

In what ways, if any, has the HR/Personnel function changed in your Council over the last twenty-five years?

Are you aware of literature on HRM and its meaning within local councils? Are you and your council HRM or Traditional PM or something different? If so what?

Which of the following characteristics most/least closely match your view of HR/Personnel in local government and in particular your council – read from HRM Models in Chapter Three.

Why was HRM introduced to local government (LG)? If you agree it was introduced, how was it introduced? What has shaped HRM in LG? How has HRM been reflected in Management Style? How has HRM/Personnel integrated with types of New Public Management; CCT; Best Value etc.,

If there has been change in the HR/Personnel Function, what have been the main internal and external drivers for change? Which has been the most powerful?

Has this change been managed by the HR/Personnel Function? Or controlled by the Senior Management Team? Has it involved managers across the council?

Has the HR/Personnel Function designed a strategy? Was the management team involved? Consulted? Elected Councillors? Were line managers involved? Consulted? Unions consulted/involved?

Is the involvement (degree of involvement) of managers/unions/staff in the planning, preparation, design or production of the strategy influenced (in your opinion) by the political complexion of your council or the degree of member involvement in the councils management?

Was the strategy integrated with the councils' business plan? If not, why not?

How long is the strategy for? How many years does it cover? What is the format of the strategy? Is it written? Does it have aims and objectives?

How is the strategy linked to HR/Personnel policies? Does it include a mission statement? Is the statement true? Has the strategy been agreed with line managers?

Were staff consulted? If so by whom? Were unions consulted (i) at local level?; (ii) at regional level? If so by whom? What were the means and mechanism of consultation? What was the union response?

Is your organisation devolved or decentralised, in your opinion, as far as HR/Personnel decision-making is concerned?

Does the size/number of staff/number of sites/degree of member involvement/trades union membership/political complexion/degree of skill of HR staff/degree of skill of line managers influence devolution and/or decentralisation? If so how and why? If not how and why?

What is the relationship between HR/Personnel and line managers like? When is the relationship strained, if it ever is? When does it work best?

Is recruitment handled mostly by line managers? Selection? Administration? Budgetary control? Advertising?

Are managers comfortable taking advice from HR/Personnel staff? Do they comply with advice? Procedures? Are they suitably trained? If not, why not?

Do you believe that local councils try to be model employers? If so what do they believe is a model employer? Are local councils businesses?

If so what role does HR/Personnel play in the business? If not what role does HR/Personnel play in the business?

Are line managers interested in becoming 'Human Resource Managers'? If so, has this always been the case? If so why? If not why?

What functions do line managers avoid and why?

Follow up Interview Questionnaire

Appendix Three Page One

In a recent survey, the following views have been given by Heads of HR/Personnel in a number of local authorities – to what extent do you agree?

HR functions performed by Central HR, Line Managers and Others

(Percentage of Councils Identifying where Responsibilities for Functions Lie)

Function	Human	Line Managers	Combination	Other	Total
	Resources				
Training and Development					
Identify individual staff	11	35	53	1	100%
development needs					
Staff Appraisal	1	72	24	3	100%
Staff Performance Review	3	59	35	3	100%
(linked to pay)					
Identify staff training needs	10	21	69	0	100%
as a group					
Recruitment		•			
Recruitment Selection	21	38	40	1	100%
Recruitment	43	20	13	24	100%
Administration					
Terms and conditions of	50	24	23	3	100%
service advice to staff (eg					
maternity rights)					

Appendix Three Page Two

TABLE (continued)

Empleyee Deletions	г	<u> </u>	I		
Employee Relations					
Redundancy and other	76	13	10	1	100%
Dismissals					
Handling Grievances	52	34	13	1	100%
Controlling Sickness Absence	50	24	23	3	100%
Dealing with local trades	33	23	43	1	100%
union representatives					
Dealing with full-time trades	77	6	15	2	100%
union representatives					
Specialist Areas of People					
Management					
Job Evaluation	62	6	29	3	100%
Health and Safety	48	17	20	15	100%
Welfare	36	10	39	15	100%
Occupational Health	48	5	5	42	100%
Equal Opportunities	40	15	39	6	100%
HR Strategy Development	45	6	48	1	100%
•					

Please also signify if you agree with the responses to these questions shown below:

Appendix Three Page Three

TABLE 1

Do you think that there has been a change in the skills needed to be a local authority manager or not? (All figures in percentages).

1	Yes	73	No	27

Comments:

TABLE 2

Have you been required to adopt a more flexible approach to working methods and hours of work for your staff?

			,
X	76.2	No	23.8
Yes	10.2	110	22.0
†			
			<u> </u>

Appendix Three Page Four

TABLE 3

Have you received training in human resource management policies and procedures within your organisation?

Yes	78.4	No	21.6

Comments:

TABLE 4

Have you needed to develop a broader range of human resource knowledge and skills than prior to devolution?

Yes	74.7	No	25.3
103	1	1	

Appendix Three Page Five

TABLE 5

Is a broader range of management skills required in your management role than prior to decentralisation?

Yes	87.6	No	12.4
	•		

Comments:

TABLE 6

Do you have a role in the development of your organisations Human Resource Strategy Yes or No?

Yes	57.4	No	42.6

Appendix Three Page Six

т	٨	D	rı		7
1.	А	к	1	۲,	-/

Is your relationship with central HR specialist mainly a conflictual one (yes) or non-conflictual (no)?

Yes	67.4	No	32.6

Comments:

TABLE 8

From your experience, do you believe that there is a difference between the work of managers in the private sector and those in local government?

Yes	87.5	No	12.5	

Appendix Three Page Seven

TABLE 9

Do you work directly with local Trades Union representatives yourself?

Yes	72	No	28

Comments:

Freehand area for comments

Appendix Three Page Eight

TABLE 6.23

Size of Organisation and Service Provision and their Effect on HRM. (Percentage Showing Where Responsibility for HRM Function Lies)

Comparative	District Councils (smaller organisations)		County/Metro/London Borough or		
Analysis Percentage	percentage of HR Staff or managers		Unitary Councils (larger organisations)		
of Function	responsible for function		percentage of HR Staff or managers		
Operated by HR or			responsible for function		
Line Manager		T		T. 3.6	
Function	HR	Line Manager	HR	Line Manager	
Training and		r			
Development				,	
Identify individual	32	68	5	95	
staff development					
needs					
Staff Appraisal	3	97	50	50	
Staff Performance	6	94	0	100	
Review linked to					
pay					
Identify staff	14.5	85.5	8	92	
training needs as a					
group					
Recruiting					
Recruitment and	50	50	6	94	
Selection					
Recruitment	38	13	42	58	
Administration					
Terms and	75	25	50	50	
Conditions of					
Employment (eg					
maternity rights					
advice to staff)					

Appendix Three Page Nine

TABLE 6.23 (continued)

Employee Relations				
Redundancy and other	87	13	80	20
Dismissals				
Handling staff grievances	67	33	35	65
Controlling Sickness	60	40	60	40
Absence				
Dealing with local trades	62	38	50	50
union representatives				
Dealing with full-time	93	7	93	7
trades union				
representatives				
Specialist Areas of People				
Management				
Job Evaluation	92	8	97	3
Health and Safety	74	26	74	26
Welfare	92	8	88	12
Occupational Health	93	7	100	0
Equal Opportunities	87	13	71	29
HR Policy Development	91	9	92	8

Comments:

Thank you for Responding to this Questionnaire

Bibliography for the Thesis

Abbott, A. (1988) The System of the Professions. London:University of Chicago Press.

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (1991) *Total Quality Management*. London:ACAS

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (1991a) Consultation and Communication: The 1990 ACAS Survey. Occasional Paper No. 49. London: ACAS

Ackroyd, S., Hughes, J. and Soothill, K. (1989) "Public sector services and their management". *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 6, pp.603 –619.

Ackroyd, S. and Soothill, K. (1994) "The New Management and the Professionals: Assessing the impact on Public Sector Services", Paper presented at the 1994 ERU Conference, Cardiff.

Adams, K. (1991), 'Externalisation versus specialisation: what is happening to 'personnel?' *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 4, Summer, pp. 40-54.

Allen, K.A. (1991), 'Personnel management on the line: how middle managers view the function', *Personnel Management*, June.

Alexander, A. (1991) "Managing Fragmentation – Democracy, Accountability and the Future of Local Government", *Local Government Studies*, November-December, 1991, pp. 63-76.

Allen, J. and Henry, N. (1996) "Contract service work and the shift towards precarious employment", in Crompton, R., Gallie, D. and Purcell, K. (Eds), Changing Forms of Employment, London: Routledge.

Ansoff, H. (1975) "Managing Strategic Surprise by response weak signals", California Management Review, Vol. 18, No. 2. pp. 21-33.

Anthony, P. and Crichton, A. (1969), *Industrial Relations and the Personnel Specialists*, London: Batsford.

Appleby, J.,, Robbinson, R. Ranade, W., Little, V. and Salter, J. (1990) "The use of markets in the health service: the NHS reforms and managed competition", *Public Money and Management*, Winter, pp. 27-33.

Armstrong, M. (1992) Human Resource Management: Strategy and Action. London: Kogan-Page.

Armstrong, P. (1989) Limits and possibilities of HRM in an age of management accountancy, in J. Storey (ed.), New Perspectives on Human Resource Management. London: Routledge. pp. 154-66.

Armstrong, P. Goodman, J.F.B. and Hyman, J.D. (1981) *Ideology and Shopfloor Relations*, London: Croom Helm.

Ashton, D., Maguire, M., and Spilsbury, M., (1988) Global Markets, Industrial Concentration and the Reorganisation of the Labour Process in Britain. Paper prepared for the International Working Group on Labour Market Segmentation, Porto, July, Labour Market Studies Group, University of Leicester, England.

Atkinson, J. (1984) "Manpower strategies for flexible organisations", Personnel Management, August: 23-7.

Atkinson, J. and Meager, N. (1986) Changing Working Patterns. London: NEDO.

Aucoin, P. (1960) "Administrative Reform in Public Management: Paradigms, Principles, Paradoxes and Pendulums", *Governance*, Vol. 3 No. 2 pp. 115-117.

Audit Commission (1990) Competitive Counsel, London: H.M.S.O.

Audit Commission (1988) The Competitive Council. London: HMSO.

Audit Commission (1995) Paying the Piper. People and Pay Management in Local Government. London: HMSO.

Audit Commission (1996) Getting the People Right – Recruitment and Training in Local Government: London: HMSO.

Bach, S. (1995) "Restructuring the personnel function: the case of NHS trusts". Human Resource Management Journal, Vol. 5, No.2.

Bach, S. and Winchester, D. (1994) "Opting out of pay devolution? The prospects for local bargaining in UK public services". *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 32, No. 2.

Bains Report (1972) *The New Local Authorities, Management and Structure*. London: HMSO.

Barnes, S., Kaase, M. et al., (1979) *Political Action: Mass participation in five Western democracies.* London: Sage.

Bassett, P. (1987) Strike Free. New Industrial Relations in Britain. London: Macmillan

Batstone, E., Ferner, A. and Terry, M. (1984) Consent and Efficiency, London: Blackwell.

Beardwell, I. and Holden, L. (1997) *Human Resource Management*, London:Pitman. Beer et al, (1984), in Torrington, D. and Hall, L., (1995) *Personnel Management: HRM in Action*, Third Edition, Hemel Hempstead, England: Prentice Hall.

Beer, M., Spector, B. Lawrence, P.R., Mills, D. and Walton (1985) *Managing Human Assets*. New York: Free Press.

Beer, M., Spector, B., Lawrence, P., Quinn Mills, D. and Walton, R. (1985) *Human Resource Management: A General Manager's Perspective*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Bennett, C. and Ferlie, E. (1994) "Management by Contract – Rhetoric or Reality?" paper presented at the Employment Research Unit Conference, "The Contract State", Cardiff Business School, September.

Bevan, S. and Thompson, M. (1992) An overview of policy and practice, Performance Management: An Analysis of the Issues. London: IPM.

Bleeke, J. and Ernst, D. (1994), 'Collaborating to compete", Directors and Boards, Winter issue, in Mintzberg, H. and Quinn, J.B. (Ed,) (1998), Readings in the Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts, Cases (3rd international ed.), Prentice-Hall, NJ, pp. 174-8.

Blyton, P. and Turnbull, P. (eds.) (1993) Reassessing Human Resource Management. London: Sage. p.156, table 9.1.

Boxall, P. E (1992) 'Strategic human resource management: beginnings of a new theoretical sophistication?' Human Resource Management journal, 2(3), 60-78.

Brehm, S. and Kassin, S. (1993), Social Psychology, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, MA.

Brewster, C. and Smith, C. (1990) "Corporate Strategy: a no go area for personnel?" Personnel Management, July, pp. 36-40.

Brewster, C. Gill, C. and Richbell, S. (1983) "Industrial Relations Policy. A Framework for Analysis", in K. Thurley and S. Wood (eds) Industrial Relations and Management Strategy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brewster, C. and Hegewisch, A. (1994) "Policy and Practice in European Human Resource Management". London: Routledge.

Brewster, C. and Bournois, E (1991) 'Human resource management: a European perspective', *Personnel Review*, 20(6), 4-13.

Brooke, R. (1989) Managing the Enabling Local Authority. London: Longman.

Brown, M. (1982) Introduction to Social Administration in Britain. London: Hutchinson.

Brown, W. (ed) (1981) The Changing Contours of British Industrial Relations, Oxford: Blackwell.

Bryman, A. (1989) Research Methods and Organisation Studies. London: Routledge. Bryson, C. et al. (1993) "Decentralisation of Collective Bargaining: Local Authority Optouts". Local Government Studies. Vol. 19, no. 4.

Buller, P.F. (1988) "Successful Partnerships: HR and strategic planning in eight in eight top firms", *Organisational Dynamics* (Fall): Vol. 17, No.43.

Burrage, M. (1992) "Mrs Thatcher Against Deep Structures: The Ideology, Impact and Ironies of her Eleven Year Confrontation with the Professions", Working Paper 92-11, Insitute of Government Studies, University of California at Berkeley, quoted in "The New Management and the Professionals: Assessing the impact on Public Sector Services", Ackroyd and Soothill (1994), Paper presented at the 1994 ERU Conference, Cardiff.

Butcher, T. (1995) Delivering Welfare Services. Buckingham: Open University

Campbell, B. (1995) "Old Fogeys and Angry Young Men: a critique of communitarianism." *Soundings*, Issue 1, Autumn, pp. 47-64.

Capelli, P. and McKersie, R.B. (1987) "Management strategy and the redesign of work rules", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 5.

Carter, N. (1991) "Learning to measure performance: the use of indicators in organisations", *Public Administration*, Vol. 69, pp. 85-101.

Channon, D. (1982) 'Industrial structure', Long Range Planning, 15 (5): 78-95.

Charlesworth, J., Clarke, J. and Cochrane, A. (1996) "Tangled webs? Managing local mixed economies of care." *Public Administration*, Vol. 74, pp. 67-88.

Child, J. (1984) *New Technology and the Service Class*. Work Organisation Research Centre, Working Paper No. 7.

Clark, J. (1993), "Line managers, human resource specialists and technical change", *Employee Relations*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 22-8.

Clarke, M. (1998), 'Can specialists be general managers? Developing paradoxical thinking in middle managers', *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 191-206.

Clarke, J. Cochrane, A. and McLaughlin, E., eds., (1994a) *Managing Social Policy*. London: Sage.

Clarke, J. and Newman, J. (1997) The Managerial State. London: Sage.

Clarke, M and Stewart, J. (1987) "The Public Service Orientation and the Citizen", Local Government Policy-Making, Vol. 14, No.1, June 1987.

Coalter, F. and McNulty, T. (1995) "White Collar CCT and the Politics of Professionalism in Local Government", Paper presented to the 2nd International Conference on Managers and Professionals, Stirling University, August 1995.

Cochrane, A. (1991) "The Changing State of Local Government: Restructuring for the 1990s", *Public Administration*, Vol. 69, Autumn 1991, pp. 281-302.

Cochrane, A. (1993a) "Local Government, in Managing the United Kingdom", Maidment, R. and Thompson, G. (eds.), London: Sage.

Colling, T. and Ferner, A. (1992) "The limits of autonomy: devolution, line managers and industrial relations in privatized companies", *Journal of Management Studies*. Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 209-227.

Colling, T. (1993) "Contracting public services: the management of compulsory competitive tendering tendering in two county councils", Human Resources Management Journal, Vol. 3, No.4 Summer

Cooper and Lybrand (1993) Report on the percentage of legal services to be subjected to CCT. London: DOE

Cousins, C. (1987) Controlling Social Welfare. Brighton: Wheatsheaf.

Commission for Racial Equality (1995) *Race Relations in Local Government*. London: HMSO.

Cully, M., Woodland, S., O'Reilly, A. and Dix, G. (1999), Btitain at Work, Routledge, London.

Cunningham, I. and Hyman, J. (1995), 'Transforming the HRM vision into reality: the role of line managers and supervisors in implementing change", *Employee Relations*, Vol. 17 No. 8, pp. 5-20.

Cunningham, I. and Hyman, J. (1999), "Devolving human resource responsibilities to the line: beginning of the end or a new beginning for personnel? *Personnel Review*, Vol. 28 No. 1/2, pp. 9-27.

Cuming, M.W. (1975) The Theory and Practice of Personnel Management (3rd edn), London: Heinemann.

Dalton, M. (1959) Men who manage, New York: Wiley.

Daniel, W. and Millward, N. (1983) Workplace Industrial Relations in Britain. London: Heinemann.

Davies, A. and Kirkpatrick, I. (1995b) "Performance indicators, bureaucratic control and the decline of professional autonomy: the case of academic librarians", in I, Kirkpatrick and M. Lucio (eds.) The Politics of Quality: Management of Change in the UK Public Sector. London: Routledge.

Deakind, N. and Walsh, K. (1994) "The Enabling State: The Role of Markets and Contracts", Paper presented to the Employment Research Unit 1994 Annual Conference, Cardiff Business School.

Denscombe, M. (1998) "The Good Research Guide", Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Department of the Environment and Transport (1998) *Managing Local Government*.. in touch with The People. London: HMSO.

DETR/HMSO (1998) Best Value and Modern Local Government. London: HMSO. Donaldson, P. and Farquhar, J. (1991) Understanding the British Economy. London: Penguin.

Donovan, Lord. (1968) Royal Commission on Trades Unions and Employers Associations, London: H.M.S.O.

DTA (1999) Best Value and Modern Local Government. London: DTA.

DTI (1997) White Paper – Partnership at Work. London: HMSO.

Duberley, J. and Burns, N. (1991) "Organisational Configurations: implications for the human resources/personnel management debate". Personnel Review, Vol. 22, No.4 pp.26-39.

du Gay, P. (1994) "Making up managers: bureaucracy, enterprise and the liberal art of separation". *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 45, No.4, pp.655-674.

du Gay, P. (1994a) "Colossal immodesties and hopeful monsters: pluralism and organizational conduct". *Organisation*, Vol. 1, No 1, pp. 125-148.

du Gay, P. and Salaman, G. (1992) "The Culture of the Customer". *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 5, pp. 615-633.

Dunleavy, P. (1991) Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice. London: Harvester

Dunleavy, P. and Hood, C. (1994) "From public administration to new public management", *Public Money and Management*, July-September, pp. 9-16.

Dunn, S. (1990) "Root metaphor in the old and new industrial relations." *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 1-31.

Dyer, L. (1983) "Bringing human resources into the strategy formulation process", Human Resource Management, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 257-271.

Dyer, L. (1984) "Studying Human Resource Strategy", *Industrial Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 156-169.

Dyer, L. (1988) Human Resource Management: Evolving Roles and Responsibilities, Washington DC: Bureau of National Affairs.

Eccles, R. and White, H. (1988) "Price and authority in inter profit center transactions", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 49, pp. 17-51.

Edwards, P.K. (1987a) "Factory Managers: their Role in Personnel Management and their Place in the Company, *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp. 479-501.

Edwards, P.K. (1987b) Managing the Factory. Oxford: Blackwell.

DTI. (1999) Employment Relations Act 1999, London: HMSO.

Eisenstat, R.A. (1996), 'What corporate human resources bring to the picnic: four models for functional management', *Organisational Dynamics*, Autumn, pp. 7-22.

Evans, E. and Cooling, A. (1985) Personnel's role in organisational restructuring. *Personnel Management*, January: pp.14-17.

Farnham, D. (1978) "Sixty years of Whitleyism" *Personnel Management*, Vol. 10, No. 7.

Farrell, B. (1997) The Effectiveness of Human Resource Management in the Decentralised Environment, MA Dissertation.

Flynn, N. (1993) Public Sector Management. Brighton: Harvester.

Flynn, N. (1999) Management in Local Government. London: Routledge.

Fombrum, C., Tichy, N. M. and Devanna, M. A. (1984) Strategic Human Resource Management, New York: Wiley.

Fowler, A. (1987) "When chief executives discover HRM", Personnel Management, May.

Fowler, A. (1988a) Human Resource Management in Local Government. London: Longman.

Fowler, A. (1988b) Personnel Agenda for Change. Luton: LGTB.

Fowler, A. (1992) "How to Structure a Personnel Department", *Personnel Management Plus*. January, pp. 22-23.

Fowler, A. (1994) "Personnel's model army", Personnel Management, September.

Fox, A. (1974) "Beyond Contract: Work, Power and Trust Relations", London: Faber.

Fox, A. (1985) "History and Heritage: the Social Origins of the British Industrial Relations System", London: Allen Unwin.

Francis, C. (1995) "Decentralisation of Industrial Relations" M.A. Dissertation.

Freedman, A. (1985) "A New Look at Wage Policy and Employee Relations", *Report No. 865, Conference Board Inc.*

Friend, J. and Jessop, W. (1960) Local Government and Strategic Choice. An Operational Research Approach to the Processes of Public Planning. London: Tavistock.

Fryer, R. (1989) "Public service trade unionism in the 20th century", in Mailly, R., Dimmock, S. and Sethi, A. (eds.) Industrial Relations in the Public Services. London: Routledge.

Ferris, G. (1999) "Human Resource Management: some new directions", *Journal of Management*, May-June, 1999.

Gamble, A. (1988) The Free Economy and the Strong State. London: Macmillan.

Geeson, T. and Haward, J. (1990) "Devolved Management – the Berkshire Experience", *Local Government Studies*, Jan-Feb, pp. 1-9.

Gennard, J. and Judge, G. (1999) Employee Relations. London: IPD.

Gennard, J. and Kelly, J. (1997) "The unimportance of labels: the diffusion of the personnel/HRM function", *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 15-32.

Gennard, J. and Kelly, J. (1998), "The effective personnel director", *Employee Relations Review*, Spring, pp. 17-24.

Gibb, S. (1995) "The lead body model of personnel management – a critique", *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 5.

Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967) The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Chicago: Aldine

Glover, I. and Hughes, M. (1996) Professions at Bay: Control and Encouragement of Ingenuity in UK Management. Aldershot: Avebury.

Glueck, W. (1974) "Personnel: a diagnostic approach", Dallas: Business Publications Goldsmith, W. and Clutterbuck, D. (1984) The Winning Streak, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Goold, M. and Campbell, A. (1986) Strategies and Styles: The Role of the Centre in Managing Diversified Corporations. Oxford: Blackwell Griffiths 1990

Griffiths, W. (1990) "Kent County Council: a case of local pay determination", *Human Resources Management Journal*, Vol.1, No.1 Autumn.

Guest, D. (1987) "Human resource management and industrial relations." *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp. 503-521.

Guest, D. (1989a) "Personnel and HRM: can you tell the difference?", *Personnel Management*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp48-51.

Guest, D. (1989b) "Human Resource Management: its implications for industrial relations and trade unions", in J. Storey (ed.), New Perspectives on Human Resource Management, London: Routledge, pp.41-55.

Guest, D. (1990b) "Human resource management and the American dream", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp.378-397.

Guest, D. (1991) "Personnel management: the end of orthodoxy?", *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 29, No.2, pp.149-176.

Guest, D. (1992b) "Right enough to be dangerously wrong: an analysis of the In Search of Excellence phenomenon", in G. Salaman et al. (eds.), Human Resource Strategies, London and Milton Keynes: Sage/Open University Press, pp.5-19.

Guest, D., Peccei, R. and Thomas, A. (1993) "The impact of employee involvement on organizational commitment and "them" and "us" attitudes", *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp.191-200.

Gunn, L. (1988) "Public management: a third approach?" Public Money and Management, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 21-25.

Hall, S. (1984) "The rise of the representative/interventionist state." In G. McLennan, D. Held and S. Hall (eds.) *State and Society in Contemporary Britain*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hall, S. (1988) The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left. London: Verso.

Hambleton, R. (1994) "The Contract State and the Future of Public Management", Paper presented to the Employment Research Unit 1994 Annual Conference, Cardiff Business School.

Handy, C. (1976) Understanding Organisations. London: Penguin.

Handy, C. (1989) The Age of Unreason. London: Arrow.

Harrison, R. (1993) *Human Resource Management: Issues and Strategies*, London: Addison-Wesley.

Harrison, S., Hunter, D.J., Marnoch, G. and Pollitt, C. (1992) *Just Managing: Power and Culture in the National Health Service*. London: Macmillan.

Harrison, S. and Pollitt, C. (1994) *Controlling Health Professionals*. Buckingham: Open University.

Headrick, T. (1962) The Town Clerk in English Local Government. London: Simon Shand.

Hendry, C. and Pettigrew, A. (1986) "The practice of strategic human resource management", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 3-8.

Hendry, C. and Pettigrew, A. (1990) Human resource management: an agenda for the 1990s", *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 1, No.1, pp.17-44.

Herriot, P. (1992) The Career Management Challenge. London: Sage.

Hill, C.W.L. and Hoskisson, R.E. (1987) "Strategy and Structure in the multi-product firm", Academy of Management Review, Vol. 12 No. 2 pp. 331-342.

Hill, C.W.L. and Pickering, J.F. (1986) Divisionalisation, decentralisation and performance of large UK companies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 23 (1): pp.26-50.

Hirsch, W. and Jackson, C. (1989) Women into Management – Issues Influencing the Entry of Women into Managerial Jobs, Paper No. 158, University of Brighton: IMS.

Hofstede, G. (1980) Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work Related Values, Beverley Hills: Sage.

Hoggett, P. (1987) Farewell to mass production? In P. Hoggett and R. Hambleton (eds.) *Studies in Decentralisation and Democracy*. Bristol: School for Advanced Urban

Hoggett, P. (1990) "Modernisation, political strategy and the welfare state." Studies in Decentralisation and Quasi-markets. Occasional Paper no.2. Bristol: School for Advanced Urban Studies.

Hoggett, P. (1991) A new management in the public sector? *Policy and Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp.243-256.

Hoggett, P. (1994) "The politics of the modernization of the UK welfare state." In R. Burrows and B. Loader (eds.) *Towards a Post-Fordist Welfare State?* London: Routledge.

Holden, L. and Roberts, I. (1996) "European Middle Managers: the search for identity in a conflicting role and an uncertain role", Contemporary Developments in Human Resource Management, Paris: Editions ESKA.

Hood, C. (1991) "A public administration for all seasons?", *Public Administration*, Vol. 69, No. 1, London: Blackwell

Hood, C. (1995) "The New Public Management", Accounting, Organisation and Society, Vol. 20, Nos. 2/3, pp. 93-109.

Howard, M. (1994) Disreali Lecture, St Stephens Club, Central Office, London.

Hunt, J. and Lees, S. (1987) "Hidden extras – how people get overloaded in take-overs", *Personnel Management*, July, pp. 24-29.

IDEA/DETR (2000) HR and Best Value Framework for Local Government. London: HMSO.

Incomes Data Services (1988) Salaries and Benefits in Local Government: Policies and Procedures. Incomes Data Services Public Sector Unit/KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock, May.

Incomes Data Services (1989) Paying for Performance in the Public Sector: A Progress Report. Incomes Data Services Public Sector Unit/Coopers and Lybrand. April.

Incomes Data Services (1994a) *Public Sector Labour Market Survey*. Incomes Data Services Report 676, November.

Incomes Data Services (1994b) Local Government Unions Accept Two-Stage Offer. Incomes Data Services Report 676, November.

Income Data Systems (2000) People Management and Customer care, IDS Study 684, February.

Income Data Services (2000) Strategic HR: Aligning Human Resources with Corporate Goals, London: Business Intelligence.

Income Data Services/Institute of Personnel Management (1989) Customer Care: the personnel implications, October.

International Labour Organisation (2000) *High Performance Working*, London: International Federation of Training and Development.

Industrial Relations Review and Report (1991) "Trades Unionism in the 1990s", I.R.R.R No. 492, pp. 7-15.

I.R.S (1989) IRS Employment Trends. No. 441, June.

Ingham, M. (1985) "Industrial Relations in British Local Government", *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1.

Institute of Personnel Management (1987) Contract Compliance: the UK experience, *Personnel Management*, October.

Industrial Relations Service (1994) "The center cannot hold: devolving personnel duties", *IRS Employment Trends*, pp. 6-11.

Isaac-Henry, K, and Painter, C. (1991) "The Management Challenge in Local Government: Emerging Themes and Trends", *Local Government Studies*, Vol. 17, No.3, pp. 69-90.

Jervis, P. and Richards, S. (1995) "Strategic management in a "re-invented government": Rowing 1 Steering 0". Paper presented to the strategic management society 15th Annual Conference, Mexico City, October.

Johnson, G. (1987) Strategic Change and the Management Process. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kamoche, K. (1994) "A critique and proposed reformulation of strategic human resource management," *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 414, pp. 29-43.

Keat, R. (1991) "Introduction: starship Britain or universal enterprise?", in R. Keat and N. Abercrombie (eds), *Enterprise Culture*, London: Routledge.

Keat, R. and Abercrombie, N. in R. Keat and N. Abercrombie (eds), *Enterprise Culture*, London: Routledge.

Keenoy, T. (1991) "The roots of metaphor in the old and new industrial relations", *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 313-328.

Keenoy, T. (1990a) "HRM: A Case of the Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?", *Personnel Review*, Vol.19,No.2,p.3.

Keenoy, T. (1990b) "HRM: rhetoric, reality and contradiction", *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp.363-384.

Keenoy, T. and Anthony, P. (1993) "HRM: metaphor and morality", in P. Blyton and P. Turnbull (eds) *Reassessing Human Resource Management*. London: Sage, pp.233-255.

Kelly, A. (1991) "The "new" managerialism in the social services", in P. Carter, T. Jeffs and M.K. Smith (eds) *Social Work and Social Welfare Yearbook 3*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Keen, L. (1995) "Organisational decentralisation in local government: a case of middle management autonomy?" Human Resource Management Journal, Vol. 5 No. 2 pp. 79-98.

Kessler, I. (1990) "Personnel management in local government: the new agenda". *Personnel Management*, November.

Kessler, I. (1991b) "Workplace industrial relations in local government". *Employee Relations*. Vol. 13, No. 2. Special Issue.

Kessler, I. (1993) "Workplace industrial relations in local government: themes and issues", in M. Ironside, I. Kessler, R. Seifert and G. White. *Public Sector Industrial Relations in the 1990s*. Thames Valley Business Paper No. 19, University of Greenwich.

Kilpatrick, I. and Martinez-Lucio, M. (eds.) (1995) *The Politics of Quality in the Public Sector*. London: Routledge.

Kilpatrick, I. Lore-Davis, A and Oliver, N. (1992) "Decentralisation – friend or foe of H.R.M?" in P. Blyton and P. Turnbull (eds) *Re-assessing Human Resource Management*, London: Sage

Kinnie, N. and Lowe, D. (1990) "Performance related pay on the shopfloor", *Personnel Management*, Vol. 22, No. 11, pp.45-49.

Kochan, Thomas A., Katz, Harry C. and McKersic, Robert B. (1986) *The Transformation of American Industrial Relations*. New York: Basic Books.

Kochan, Thomas A. and Barocci, Thomas A. (1985) Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations... Text, Readings and Cases. Boston: Little Brown.

Kochan, T. and Dyer, L. (1992) "Managing transformational change: the role of human resource professionals", paper for the Conference of the International Industrial Relations Association, Sydney.

Kochan, T. and Dyer, L. (1995) "HRM: An American view", in J. Storey (ed.) Human Resource Management: A Critical Text, London: Routledge.

Krulis-Randa. J. (1990) "Strategic human resource management in Europe after 1992", *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 131-139.

LACSAB (1990) Pay and Personnel Information Systems. London: LACSAB.

LACSAB (1987a) Recruitment and Retention. Vol. 1-4, October, London: LACSAB

LACSAB (1987b) An Employers Strategy? A Consultative Document. November, London: LACSAB.

LACSAB (1988) Summary of Replies Received to the Consultative Exercise. April. London: LACSAB.

LACSAB/LGTB (1990a) Recruitment and Retention Survey 1989, Report 4, Employment Strategies (APT&C Staffs) III Use of Staff. December. Luton: LACSAB

LACSAB/LGTB (1990b) Recruitment and Retention Survey 1989, Report 7, Employment Strategies (APT&C Staffs) VI Working Hours and Related Measures. December. Luton: LACSAB

Laffin, M. (1989) Managing under Pressure: Industrial Relations in Local Government. London: Macmillan.

Lansley, S. Goss, S. and Wolmar, C. (1991) Councils in Conflict: The Rise and Fall of the Municipal Left. London: Macmillan.

Larson, M.S. (1977) The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis. Berkely: University of California Press.

Lawton, A. and Rose, A. (1994) Organisation and Management in the Public Sector. London: Pitman.

Lawton, A. and Rose, A. (1991) "Organisation and Management in the Public Sector", London: Pitman.

Leach, S. (1995) "The Strange Case of the Local Government Review", in J. Stewart and G. Stoker (eds.) *Local Government in the 1990s*. London: Macmillan.

Leach, S., Stewart, J., and Walsh, K. (1994) The Changing Organisation and Management of Local Government. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Leach, S. /Local Government Association (2000) HR Framework for Local Government. London: LGA.

Lee, S. and Piper, A. (1988) "Organisational control, differeing perspectives: the management of universities", *Financial Accounting and Management*, Vol. 4, No.2, pp. 113-128.

Leicester, C. (1989), 'The key role of the line manager in employee development', *Personnel Management*, March, pp. 53-7.

Legge, K. (1978), Power, Innovation, and Problem Solving in Personnel Management, London: McGraw-Hill.

Legge, K. (1989), 'Human resource management: a critical analysis', in Storey, J. (Ed.), New Perspectives on Human Resource Management, London:Routledge.

Legge, K. (1995) Human Resource Management: Rhetorics and Realities. London: Macmillan.

Lengnick-Hall, C. and Lengnick-Hall, M. (1988) "A perspective on business strategy and human resource strategy interdependence", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 454-470.

Local Government Association (1998) HR Framework for Local Government. London: LGA

Local Government Employers Organisation (1998) HR Framework for Local Government. London: LGEO.

LGMB (1992b) Recruitment and Retention Survey. Luton: LGMB.

LGMB (1993a) Pay in Local Government. Luton: LGMB.

LGMB (1993b) Managing Tomorrow. Luton: LGMB.

LGMB (1994a) The Changing Role of the Human Resource Function. Luton: LGMB.

LGMB (1994c) Performance Management and Performance Related Pay Survey. Luton: LGMB.

LGTB (1988) Personnel: the Agenda for Change. Luton: LGMB.

Local Government Training Organisation (1999) *HR Framework for Local Government*. London: LGTO.

Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1985) Naturalistic Enquiry. Newbury Park: Sage.

Loughlin, M. (1996) Legality and Locality. The Role of the Law in Central-Local Relations. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lowe, J. (1992) "Locating the line: the front-line supervisor and human resource management", in P. Blyton, and P. Turnbull, (eds), *Re-assessing Human Resource Management*, London: Sage.

Lowndes, V. and Stoker, G. (1992a/b) "An Evaluation of Neighbourhood Decentralisation Part 2: Staff and Councillor Perspectives, *Policy and Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 143-152.

Meek, L. (1988) "Organisational culture: origins and weaknesses", in G. Salaman (ed) *Human Resource Strategies*, London: Sage.

MacInnes, J. (1987) Thatcherism at Work: Industrial Relations and Economic Change. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Mackay, L. (1986) "The macho manager: it's no myth", *Personnel Management*, Vol. 18, No.1, pp. 25-27.

Mabey, C. and Salaman, G. (1995) "Strategic Human Resource Management", Oxford: Blackwell.

Marchington, M. (1999), 'Professional qualification scheme: core personnel and development exam papers and examiners' reports: May 1999', Institute of Personnel and Development, paper given to the IPD Professional Standards Conference, University of Warwick, July.

Marginson, P., Armstrong, P., Edwards, P., Purcell, J. and Hubbard N. (1993), *The Control of Industrial Relations in Large Companies: An Initial Analysis of the Second Company Level Industrial Relations Survey*, Papers in Industrial Relations, No. 45, IRRU, University of Warwick, Coventry.

Marsh, A.I. and Gillies, J.G. (1983), "The involvement of line and staff managers in industrial relations", in Thurley, K. and Wood, S. (Eds), *Industrial Relations and Management Strategy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 27-38.

Mansfield, R. and M. Poole. (1991) *British Management in the Thatcher Years*. Corby: British Institute of Management.

Marginson, P., Edwards, P.K., Martin, R., Purcell, J. and Sisson, K. (1988), *Beyond the Workplace: Managing Industrial Relations in the Multi-Establishment Enterprise*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Marginson, P., Edwards, P.K., Martin, R., Purcell, J. and Sisson, K. (1988) Beyond the Workplace: Managing Industrial Relations in Multi-Plant Enterprises, Oxford: Blackwell.

Marginson, P., Edwards, P.K., Purcell, J. and Sisson, K. (1988b) 'What do corporate offices really do?' *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 26 (2): 229-45.

Marsden, D. Morris, T., Willman, P. and Wood, S. (1985) *The Car Industry: Labour Relations and Industrial Adjustment*, London: Tavistock.

Martell, K. and Carroll, S. (1995) "How Strategic is HRM?" Human Resource Management, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp.253-267.

McGovern, P., Gratton, L., Hope-Hailey, V., Stiles, P. and Truss, C. (1997), 'Human resource management on the line?', Human Resource Management Journal, Vol. 7 No. 4, pp. 12-29.

McIlroy, J. (1988) "Trades Unions in Britain Today", Manchester: Manchester University Press.

McNulty, T. (1997) The Barbarians at the Gate: Ethnic cleansing, the "New Public Management" and Local Government in Britain, in L. Montanheiro, R. Haigh and D. Morris (eds.) *Understanding Public and Private Sector Partnerships*. Sheffield: Hallam University Press.

Metcalfe, L. (1993) "Conviction politics and dynamic conservatism: Mrs Thatcher's Managerial Revolution." *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 351-371.

Metcalfe, L. and Richards, S. (1990) Improving Public Management. London: Sage.

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994) Qualitative Data Analysis. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Millward, N., Steven, M., Smart, D. and Hawes, W.R. (1992), Workplace Industrial Relations in Transition: The ED/ESRC/PSI/ACAS Surveys, Dartmouth Publishing, Aldershot.

Millward, N., Steven, M., Smart, D. and Hawes, W.R. (1994), Workplace Industrial Relations in Transition: The ED/ESRC/PSI/ACAS Surveys, Dartmouth Publishing, Aldershot.

Mintzberg, H. (1979) *The Structure of Organisations*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Mintzberg, H. (1983) Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organisations. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Mintzberg, H. (1989) Mintzberg on Management. New York: Free Press.

Mitchell, W. (1988) Government As It Is. London: Institute of Economic Affairs.

White Paper. (1998) Modern Local Government. London: HMSO.

Moody, K. (1987) "Reagan, the business agenda and the collapse of labour." In R. Miliband, L. Panitch and J. Saville, (eds.), *The Socialist Register 1987*, London: Merlin.

Murray, N. (1989) "A Service Business", Local Government Chronicle, August.

Newman, J. and Clarke, J. (1993) "The right to manage: a second managerial revolution?", *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 427-441.

Newman, J. and Clarke, J. (1994) "Going about our business? The managerialisation of public services." In J. Clarke, A. Cochrane and E. McLaughlin, (eds.) *Managing Social Policy*. London: Sage.

Nkomo, S.M. (1984) "Prescription vs practice: the state of human resource planning in large US organizations." Paper presented at the Southern Management Association meeting. November, New Orleans

Osborne, D. and Gaebler, T. (1992) Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector. Reading MA: Addison-Wesley.

Oswick, C. and Grant, D. (1996), 'Personnel management in the public sector - power, roles and relationships', *Personnel Review*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 4-18.

Ouchi, W. (1981) Theory Z. Reading MA: Addison-Wesley.

OECD (2000) Report on Organisational Structure and Public Administration cross Europe. Brussels: European Union.

Parry, J. (1990) "Organisational culture in a district general hospital", unpublished MA Dissertation: University of Portsmouth.

Peters, T. J. and Waterman, R. H. (1982) "In Search of Excellence", New York: Harper and Row.

Pettigrew, A.M. (1985) "Awakening Giant", Oxford: Blackwell.

Penley, L. and Gould, S. (1988) "Etzioni's model of organization involvement: a perspective for understanding commitment to organizations". *Journal of Organisation Behaviour*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 43-59.

Pollitt, C. (1990) Managerialism in the Public Services. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pollitt, C. (1990a) "Measuring university performance: never mind the quality, never mind the width?", *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 60-81.

Pollitt, C. (1990b) Managerialism and the Public Services: The Anglo-American Experience. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pollitt, C. (1993) Managerialism and the Public Services. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pollitt, C., Hunter, D., Marnoch, J. and Harrison, S. (1992) *Just Managing: Power and Culture in the National Health Service*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Poole, C., (1990) "What is HR Management", London: Routledge.

Poole, M. and Jerkins, G. (1997), 'Responsibilities for human resource management practices in the modem enterprise", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 26 No. 5, pp. 333-56.

Pratchett, L. and Wingfield, M. (1994) *The Public Service Ethos in Local Government*. London: Commission for Local Democracy.

Preston, A.M. (1991) Budgeting, Creativity and Culture. Issues in Management Accounting. Ed. D. Ashton, T. Hopper and R.W. Scapens. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.

Purcell, J. (1989), 'The impact of corporate strategy on human resource management' in Storey, J. (Ed.), *New Perspectives on Human Resource Management*, Routledge, London, pp. 67-92.

Purcell, J. (1994) "Personnel earns a place on the board", *Personnel Management*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 26-29.

Purcell, J. and Alhstrand, B. (1987) 'Business strategy and employee relations structures', Paper presented to BAM Conference, Warwick: Warwick University Press.

Purcell, J. and Alhstrand, B. (1994) *Human Resource Management in the Multi-Divisional Company*, Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Purcell, J. and Sissons, K. (1983) "Strategies and practice in the management of industrial relations", in G.S. Bain (ed.), *Industrial Relations in Britain*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Ray, C.A. (1986) "Corporate culture: the last frontier of control?", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 23, No.3, pp.287-297.

Ridley, N. (1988) The Local Right. London: Centre for Policy Studies.

Robbins, S. (1987) Organisation Theory. Hemel-Hempstead: Prentice-Hall.

Salamon, G. (1981) Class and the Corporation. London: Fontana.

Salamon, M. (1992) Industrial Relations Theory and Practice. London: Prentice-Hall.

Salancik, G.R. (1977) "Commitment and control of organizational behaviour and beliefs", in B.M. Staw and G.R. Salancik (eds), *New Directions in Organisational Behaviour*, Chicage: St Clair Press.

Savage, Stephen and Robins, Lynton (eds) (1990) "Public Policy Under Thatcher", London: Macmillan.

Scase, R. and R. Goffee. (1989) Reluctant Managers. London: Routledge.

Schein, Edgar H. (1983) 'The role of the founder in creating organizational culture', *Organisation Dynamics*, Summer: 13-28.

Scholes, K. and Johnson, G. (1997) *Exploring Corporate Strategy*. London: Prentice-Hall.

Schuler, R. (1989) "Strategic HRM and industrial relations", *Human Relations*. Vol. 42, No. 2, pp.157-184.

Schuler, R. and Huselid, M. (1997), 'HR strategy in the United States - examples of key issues identification and execution", in Tyson, S. (Ed.), *The Practice of Human Resource Strategy*, London: Pitman, pp. 174-203.

Schuler, R. and Jackson, S. (1987) "Linking competitive strategies with human resource practices". *Academy of Management Executive*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 209-213.

Sisson, K. (Ed.) (1989), Personnel Management in Britain, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Sisson, K. (1990) "Introducing the Human Resource Management Journal", *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-11.

Sisson, K and Skullion, H. (1985) "Putting the corporate personnel department in its place", *Personnel Management*, December, pp. 36-39.

Smircich, L. (1983) "Concepts of culture and organizational analysis". *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 28.

Smith, M. (1986) The Consumer Case for Socialism. Fabian Pamphlet No. 513. London: Fabian Society.

SOCPO (2000) Framework for Strategic HR and Best Value, London: SOCPO.

Spence, P. (1990) "The effects of performance management and performance related pay in local government". *Local Government Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4.

Stanyer, J. (1976) Understanding Local Government. London: Fontana.

Stewart, J. (1971) Management in Local Government: A Viewpoint. London: Allen and Unwin.

Stewart, J. and Norton, A. (1973) "The Bains Impact", Local Government Chronicle, March.

Stewart, R. (1984) "The Nature of Management? A Problem for Management Education", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 323-330.

Stewart, J. (1995) "The Internal Management of Local Authorities", in J. Stewart and Stoker, G. (eds.) *Local Government in the 1990s*. London: Macmillan.

Stewart, J. and Ransom, S. (1994) *Management for the Public Domain: Enabling the Learning Society*. London: Macmillan.

Stewart, R. and Walsh, A. (1992) "Change in the management of public services", *Public Administration*, Vol. 70, pp. 499-518.

Stoker, G. (1989) "Regulation theory, local government and the transition from Fordism". In D. King and J. Pierre, (eds.), *Challenges to Local Government*. London: Sage.

Stoker 1990) "Creating a local government for a post-Fordist society: the Thatcherite project?" In J. Stewart and G. Stoker, (eds.), *The Future of Local Government*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Stoker, G. (1991) "The Politics of Local Government", London: Macmillan.

Storey, J. (1987) "Developments in the management of human resources: an interim report", Warwick Papers in Industrial Relations, 17, IRRU, School of Industrial and Business Studies, University of Warwick (November).

Storey, J. (1989) New Perspectives in Human Resource Management. London: Routledge

Storey, J. (1992), Developments in the Management of Human Resources, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Storey, J. (ed.) (1995) *Human Resource Management: A Critical Text*, London: Routledge.

Storey, J. and Sisson, K. (1993) *Managing Human Resources and Industrial Relations*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Tailby, S. and Whitson, C. (1989) "Manufacturing Change", Oxford: Blackwell.

Taylor, G. (1993) "Challenges from the margins." In J. Clarke, (ed) A Crisis in Care? Challenges to Social Work. London: Sage.

Terry, M. (1989) "Reconceptualising shop floor industrial relations: some case study evidence", in S. Tailby and C. Whitson (eds.) *Manufacturing Change*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Thomhill, A. and Saunders, M.N.K. (1998), 'What if line managers don't realize they're responsible for HR? Lessons from an organisation experiencing rapid change', *Personnel Review*, Vol. 27 No. 6, pp. 460-76.

Thurley, K. (1981) "Personnel management in the UK – a case for urgent treatment?", *Personnel Management*, August, pp. 24-28.

Tichy, N. (1983) The Challenges and Context of Strategic Human Resource Management, Vol. 22, pp. 45-60.

Tichy, N., Fombrun, C. and Devanna, M. (1982) "Strategic human resource management", *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Winter, pp. 47-61.

Tomlinson, J. (1993), 'Human resources - partners in change', *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 545-54.

Torrington, D. (1989) "Human resource management and the personnel function", in J. Storey (ed.) New Perspectives on Human Resource Management, London: Routledge.

Torrington, D. and Hall, L. (1987) *Personnel Management a New Approach*. London: Prentice-Hall.

Torrington, D. and Hall, L. (1996), 'Chasing the rainbow: how seeking status through strategy misses the point for the personnel function', *Employee Relations*, Vol. 18 No. 6, pp. 81-97.

Torrington, D. and Hall, L. (1998) *Human Resource Management*, Hemel-Hemstead: Prentice-Hall.

Towers Perrin, (1991) "Priorities for competitive advantage: a 21st century vision, a worldwide human resource study" London: Towers Perrin/IBM.

Tyson, S. (1979) "Specialists in ambiguity: Personnel management as an occupation", PhD thesis, University of London.

Tyson, S. (1983) "Is this the very model of a modern personnel manager?" *Personnel Management*, April, pp. 22-25.

Tyson, S. (1987) "Management of the personnel function", *Journal of Management Studies*. Vol. 24, No. 5, pp523-532.

Tyson, S. (1995) Human Resource Strategy. London: Pitman.

Tyson, S. and Fell, A. (1986) Evaluating the Personnel Function. London: Hutchinson.

Ulrich, D. (1997), Human Resource Champions: The Next Agenda for Adding Value and Delivering Results, Cambridge and Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

UNISON (1999) Report on Human Resource Management. London: UNISON. Vincent-Jones, P. and Harries, A. (1996) Local Government Management. Local Government Studies, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 187-209.

Waldergrave, W. (1993) "The Reality of Reform and Accountability in Todays Public Services", London: CIPFA.

Walker, James W. (1980) Human Resource Planning. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Walsh, K. (1982) The Role of the Personnel Officer in the Corporate Personnel Department. London: SOCPO.

Walsh, K. (1991) "Competitive Tendering for Local Authority Services: Initial Experiences", London: HMSO.

Walsh, K. (1993) "Local Government" in: A. Harrison (ed.), "From Hierarchy to Contract". Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Walsh, K. (1995) Public Services and Market Mechanisms: Competition, Contracting and the New Public Management. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Walton, R. (1985) "Toward a strategy of eliciting employee commitment based on policies of mutuality", in R. Walton and P. Lawrence (eds.) *Human Resource Management: Trends and Challenges*, Boston: Harvard Business School.

Walton, R. (1987) "Innovating to Compete: Lessons for diffusing and managing change in the workplace". San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Ward, S., Warman, D. and White, G. (1988) Competitive Tendering in the Public Sector. London: IPD.

Weber, M. (1947) The Theory of Social and Economic Organisations. New York: Free Press.

Weightman, S. (1998) "Managing People". London: IPD.

White, G. (1993) "Public sector industrial relations – change and continuity", in M. Ironside, M. Jary, I. Kessler, R. Seifert and G. White. *Public Sector Industrial Relations in the 1990s.* Thames Business Paper No. 19, University of Greenwich.

Wickens, P. (1987) The Road to Nissan, London: Macmillan.

Williams, R. (1992) "Management selection in local government: A survey of practice in England and Wales". *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol. 3, No. 2.

Willman, P. and Winch, G. (1985) *Innovation and Management Control, Labour relations at BL Cars*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, D. (1993) A Strategy of Change, London: Routledge.

Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (1990) Employee Relations in the Workplace London: HMSO.

Yin, R.K. (1994), Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 2nd ed., Sage Publications, London.

Additional Texts Used in the Thesis

Department of the Environment (1999) "The Beacon Council Scheme: How will it work?", DETR: HMSO.

The Maud Committee (1967) "The Management of Local Government", London: HMSO.

Audit Commission (1997) "Representing the People: The Role of Councillors", Audit Commission: HMSO.

Thornhill, W.(ed) (1971) "The Growth and Reform of English Local Government". London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson.

IRS Employment Trends (1995), 'Changes in personnel', No. 598, December, pp. 4-9.

IRS Employment Trends (1996), 'The changing world of personnel', No. 604, March, pp. 4-1 1.